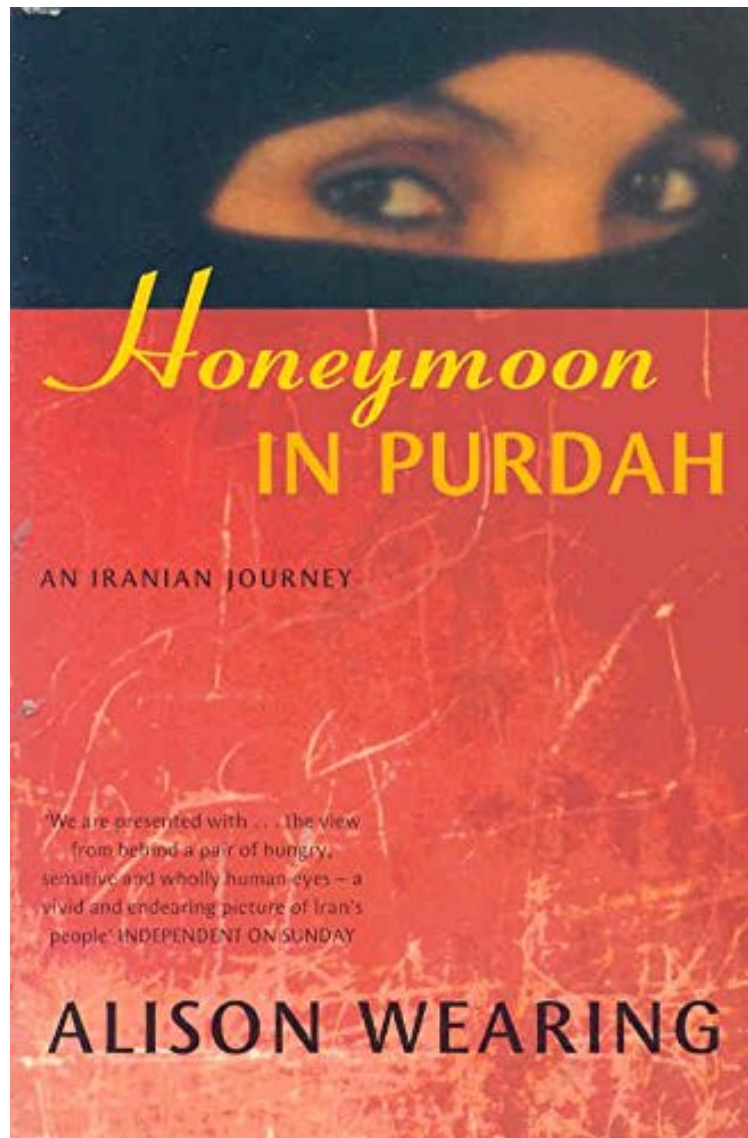


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Honeymoon in Purdah: An Iranian Journey

Alison Wearing

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Alison Wearing : Honeymoon in Purdah: An Iranian Journey before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Honeymoon in Purdah: An Iranian Journey:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Favorite book everBy nancy wFavorite book ever!!! I have read it so many times, and given it a gift to some of my favorite friends. The title is misleading. It's really about a "couple" from Canada, (a straight female and her gay male friend.) They fake it as a married couple honeymooning across Iran, the lovely hospitality they receive from the Iranians, the adventures they had and unnerving journey home. This will

reinforce your faith and compassion in humanity.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Breath of fresh airBy Jo IngramA pleasant surprise of a book. I was aware of the generous nature of the Irani people, but never have I seen it put so eloquently before. The stories told are not just fun but they seem to touch the soul to give an awareness of what's missing in the west. With so many negative stereo-types of the Irani people, it is like a breath of fresh air to finally see the true colors of what these people are all about! They have a sense of what is important in life - Family, Friends and even Strangers - PEOPLE over THINGS. This seems to be a consistent theme throughout the middle east. The people will take their last tomato from their garden, slaughter their only goat and give their company the best of what they have to offer. Their sense of joy comes from watching those around them be sated. I can't recommend this book enough! It is especially easy to read and would be a good book for a young adult as well as the sophisticated reader. Plenty of laughs as well.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A true adventure in the heart of IranBy A CustomerThis book shows why travel writing is alive: we are able to lead an adventurous life without having to subject ourselves to the rigors and stress of decyphering a foreign culture, a strange land, different habits or even having to mimic a language unknown to us. Ms. Wearing's sensitive rendition of the people she met in Iran and her willingness to put herself in their care, allowed her to sketch an intimate portrait of the people: sensitive, humorous and captivating. This book is not only informative, it is entertaining. Throughout its pages, Ms. Wearing lifts the veil hiding Iranian country life from us; she shows some of the habits in the mosques, conversations with religious people and attitudes of Westerners living there. It may not be the best way to learn about Iran, but it is certainly an interesting way to expand our knowledge of the people and of the culture.

Alison Wearing went on a trip beyond the legacy of revolution, religious fundamentalism and veiled women to find the real people of Iran. Posing as a honeymooner, but accidentally on purpose setting out on her own at every opportunity, Alison Wearing reveals an irresistible curiosity at every turn. With a novelist's love of language and an eye for dramatic detail, she takes the reader into the homes and hearts of the people who welcome her, feed her, and send her off on one adventure after the other. Alison goes to hidden places of interest that recall the romance of Persia, on interminable trips into the desert, and to fading palaces by the sea - wherever she finds herself, she offers startling insights into daily life in Iran, an enigmatic country. "Honeymoon in Purdah" is beautifully written, fresh and fascinating at every turn, and is a glorious account of a hardcore holiday. "We are presented with the view from behind a pair of hungry, sensitive and wholly human eyes - a vivid and endearing picture of Iran's people" - "Independent on Sunday".

.com Twenty years after the Iranian revolution, most westerners still imagine Iran to be a warren of anti-American rhetoric, terrorism, and fanatical repression, especially of women. Not surprisingly, only an unusual woman would choose to travel there, and Alison Wearing is certainly that. "I refused to believe that such a place of unalloyed evil truly existed," she writes. "I like to look for saints where there are said to be demons." Since it is the only country the world traveler could not imagine going to alone, she takes her fussy, gay roommate Ian, along with a fake wedding certificate and a story that they're on their honeymoon. Then she dons a black cloak, scarf, and chador (the full body covering required by Shiite Islam) for a five-month journey from the Caspian Sea (breaking into the Shah's ramshackle summer palace) to the holy city of Qom (and Khomeini's shrine) to a hidden Zoroastrian prayer site (where she faints from heat stroke). From the moment she steps into the country, she's surrounded by Iranians touched by her eagerness to learn about their country. There is the housewife who challenges her to a game of Ping-Pong in her long robe and scarf, offering food to her guests in between killer serves, and the Anglican minister who is "wholly enthralled by the art of living." There is the couple who spirit her away to a mountain oasis when she complains of the heat (leaving a message for Ian, "Mister Canada, we take your wife. We make her cold"), and the mother who tries to marry off her doctor son, joking that Wearing can't leave "not without my doctor" (a reference to the American film Not Without My Daughter). Wearing has a gift for connecting with others and the humility to let them tell their own stories. She also sees the hilarity in the most absurd situations. As it turns out, so do the Iranians, which makes for some wonderful laughs. Wearing is also a poet, and she unveils the Iranians with innocence and grace--their hospitality, their quick acceptance and easy intimacy, and the real life of women beneath the veil. And while there are strict defenders of the revolution, most are philosophical: "Friends, please forgive us, but our country is not perfect.... it will make us very happy if you enjoy. Keep your hearts in our people, my friends. We are strangers, but we try to be kind." This is a gem of a debut. --Lesley ReedFrom Publishers WeeklyTo blend in on their recent visit to Iran, journalist Wearing and her gay roommate pose as a married couple, complete with wedding rings and a forged marriage certificate. Wearing also purchases a chaador (literally "tent"), made of heavy black polyester, which she wears throughout her journeyD110-degree heat notwithstanding. From that point forward, the friends can't go anywhere without receiving copious offers of gifts, dinners, invitations into people's homes, free taxi rides and fruit from Iranians who are delighted by the Westerners' attempt to understand and appreciate their customs. The characters Wearing meets are extraordinary in their ordinariness, and the author deftly shows that our opinion of the Middle East is really our opinion of Middle Eastern government. She seeks out the most intriguing of the people around her, then steps back and lets them take

center stage. Tip, for instance, spent 12 years in California. Now in his early 20s, he's been stuck in Iran doing odd jobs for three dollars a day, so to save money he started a side business selling opium. Another Iranian they meet, deeply religious, explains to them why Iran is superior to the West, while other Iranians apologize profusely for the conditions of their country since the fall of the Shah 20 years ago. Wearing lets readers glimpse the anti-Americanism, oppression and miserably inefficient bureaucracy portrayed in the American news, but again and again she demonstrates the generosity of the Iranians. With this engrossing account, Wearing casts a sympathetic eye on the real people of Iran, so often invisible to the West. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal One can only applaud Canadian journalist and travel writer Wearing for her evenhanded reportage of a five-month journey through Iran. Traveling in the company of pseudo-husband (her gay male roommate), Wearing sets out to explore a country replete with contradictions and to record her experiences with compassion, humor, and objective observation. The natural hospitality of the Iranian people is a constant thread throughout the author's journey; for example, new acquaintances go in search of candy as a busload of people cheerfully delay their departure to accommodate the casual query of the Canadians for a place to buy chocolate bars. All is not wonderful in Iran, and Wearing doesn't gloss over the restrictive atmosphere that particularly affects women. Through her stay, she agrees to address as an Iranian woman despite the discomfort of being swathed in fabric from head to toe. The moments of high humor are delicious, as when Wearing's "husband" is informed by telephone, "Mr. Canada, we take your wife. We make her cold" when a kind family takes her for a drive in the countryside to cool off. This is a very special travel, both entertaining and enlightening. Highly recommended. Janet Ross, Sparks Branch Lib., NV Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.