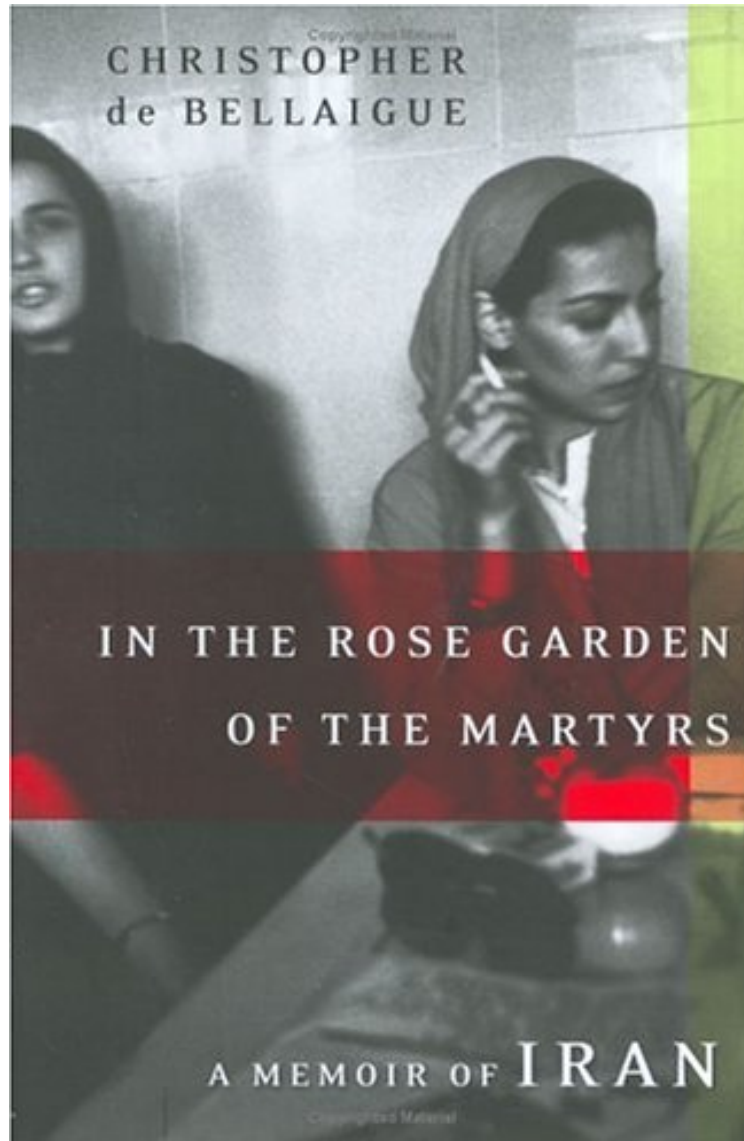


(Free and download) In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs : A Memoir of Iran

In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs : A Memoir of Iran

Christopher de Bellaigue

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Christopher de Bellaigue : In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs : A Memoir of Iran before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs : A Memoir of Iran:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. and war reporters will most enjoy the gruesome realities suffered by the Iranians at home ...By Thomas RicksChristopher de Bellaigue [pronounced "deh bellog"] has written a wrenching account of contemporary Iran (2000 to 2002) in considerable detail. As a British journalist, he had visited Tehran

several times prior and after the period he focuses on with the aim of understanding the Iranian political culture and its leaders' fascination with martyrdom particularly during the post-Khomeini 1998 era and the disastrous Iraq and Iran - more than 2 million Iranian casualties. What follows is a much detailed account from one Iranian veteran or family after another carefully interviewed and documented by de Bellaigue who is fluent in modern Persian and at home in Iran with his Iranian wife and in-laws in Tehran. De Bellaigue follows up lead after lead of Iran's veterans in the capitol and provinces including the province of Khuzistan where much of the early war was fought by the Iran against the invading forces of Saddam Hussein from lower Iraq amidst Iran-Iraqi oil fields. De Bellaigue even visits some of the bloodiest battlefields, villages and towns, such as Khorramshahr (Date-Town) whose name was changed to "Khooneenshahr (Bloody Town) due to the vast devastation of people and buildings. The narrative is unrelenting in dissecting the eight-year war including the 1983 peace offering from Saddam Hussein which Ayatollah Khomeini turned down thus extending the massive blood-letting of Iran's eligible male population including 10-14 year old youth called the "basij" force. De Bellaigue also interviewed the fallen veterans' families in villages and towns giving the heaviest detail to the agonies and rationales for such bloody history so very new to Iranians whose last comparable conflict in longevity and fatalities can only be found in the twelve-year Ottoman-Iranian war along the Turkish/Iraqi borders with Iran in the last parts of the 16th century (AD 1578-1590), a cluster of wars by Iran's mid-16th-17th cc. Safavid shahs in the Caucasus, and in the dynasty-killing Afghani Occupation of Iran in the early 18th c. (1722-25) - In other words, most horror display of misguided nationalist outburst for 20th century Iran. The thousands of black wreaths that decorated the doors of fallen veterans' homes remain a rivetting and most unpopular collective memory of the present Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian academic specialists, graduate students in international relations or conflict resolution, Iranians themselves, and war reporters will most enjoy the gruesome realities suffered by the Iranians at home and in diaspora. I don't believe that too many others will. The overall picture of Iran, wittingly or not, portrayed by de Bellaigue is vastly unfavorable to the Iran the wine drinking, poetry reading, picnicking, and sufi mystical Iran/ancient Persia many of us know. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Ideal for Any Westerner Who Wants a Better Understanding of Iran By Robert F. Howe Like David Remnick's "Lenon's Tomb" and its treatment of the dissolution of the USSR, "Garden of the Martyrs" explores the issues, lifestyles, culture and history of the Iranian nation through intimate portraits of individuals living it. Focuses mainly on the years since the Revolution, with some particularly engaging and intriguing insight into the Iran-Iraq war. But also gives the novice an historical outline/framework for understanding the Prophet Muhammad and the evolution of a nation that has been invaded and occupied by countless powers/armies over the centuries and that is still a complex work in progress. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thought-provoking but somewhat scattered By Gordon Eldridge The book opens and closes with descriptions of scenes from an Iranian festival celebrating the martyrdom of the Imam Hossein, hero of Iran's Shia Islam. Sandwiched in between are snippets of the country's history, snatches of the personal experiences of the author's life as a Westerner in Iran and descriptions of the lives of ordinary Iranians and their experiences of the Revolution, the Iran-Iraq war and life in post-revolution Iran. The theme of martyrdom seeps through all of these encounters and experiences, and we are presented with an assortment of attitudes to the sometimes senseless, sometime noble aspects of martyrdom in Iranian history. The book has moments of thought-provoking brilliance as the author presents us with some of the dilemmas and paradoxes faced by ordinary Iranians. It also has moments where things become disjointed and it is easy to lose the thread. In the end, the idea of martyrdom is not enough to hold together a loosely structured narrative that jumps back and forth in history and alternates historical explanations with the anecdotal stories of a large number of diverse characters. De Bellaigue never claims to have no personal opinions on the issues he is writing about and in fact he presents his own biases plainly on occasion. This does not prevent him from offering up alternative points of view, however, and these are the moments that become thought-provoking. It is a struggle to give this book a star rating. At some points it deserves 5 and at others 2. The author's masterful command of language rates a 5 throughout. All in all though, I would say it is a worthwhile read.

The history of Iran in the late twentieth century is a chronicle of religious fervor and violent change -- from the Islamic Revolution that ousted the Shah in favor of a rigid fundamentalist government to the bloody eight-year war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. But what happened to the hostage-takers, the suicidal holy warriors, the martyrs, and the mullahs responsible for the now moribund revolution? Is modern Iran a society at peace with itself and the world, or truly a dangerous spoke in the "Axis of Evil"? Christopher de Bellaigue, a Western journalist married to an Iranian woman and a longtime resident of a prosperous suburb of Tehran, offers a stunning insider's view of a culture hitherto hidden from American eyes, and reveals the true hearts and minds of an extraordinary people.

From Publishers Weekly This portrait of the Islamist revolution's heartland is far from the "axis of evil" caricature so often associated with the regime that held Americans hostage in 1979-1980 and is actively pursuing nuclear arms today. Rather, Ballaigue, who covers Iran for the Economist, presents a textured view of a complex society, struggling with an ancient culture, a radical ideology and a Westernized elite. Drawing inspiration from George Orwell, who chronicled the Catalonian revolution of the 1930s and its betrayal by Stalinists, Ballaigue charts the Islamist revolution

from its origins in the repressive regime of the Shah and the fiery sermons of the Ayatollah Khomeini, through its triumph and the taking of the hostages of the "Great Satan," the war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Iran-Contra scandal and the waning of the Islamist revolutionary fervor as educated Iranians became disillusioned with the mullahs and thirsted for greater cultural and intellectual freedom. The book is peppered with interviews with and vignettes of the many Iranians the author has met during his years in Iran; the title refers to a cemetery in Tehran where the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war are interred "rose garden" being an ironic rendition of rows of headstones. (On sale Jan. 4)

Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist If Pollack's Persian Puzzle [BKL D 1 04] is the policy wonk's view of today's Iran, British journalist de Bellaigue's memoir is closer to the ground. Outsiders might see Iran as an emerging nuclear threat, but de Bellaigue also sees a country terribly spent from decades of autocratic rule, revolution, ultrafundamentalism, a ruinous war with Iraq, the Iran-Contra scandal, and ongoing hostilities with America. The author, who lives in Iran and writes for the New York of Books and the economist, discusses these issues at length, but he also guides us through city streets and into the lives of Iranian citizens. There is Mr. Zarif, who agitated for the Ayatollah's return to Iran and now wonders why his Iranian-manufactured Paykan car is so poorly built. And the war veteran Amini, whose forehead carries 60 pieces of shrapnel and who has resigned himself to letting Esfahan teens dance in public. Readers will find here a detailed picture of Iranian life that has too long been out of reach. Alan Moores Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Readers will find here a detailed picture of Iranian life that has too long been out of reach. (Booklist) De Bellaigue is a defiantly literary writer, and he gives us a sense of Tehran [that is] immediate and insistent. (Pico Iyer, New York Times Book) De Bellaigues . . . anecdotes and interviews provide tremendously valuable context for many of today's headlines. (Washington Post Book World) Incisive analysis. . . . Through eloquent human stories, Bellaigue frames the murky politics of Iran in a telling, intimate scale. (Newsweek (International Edition)) An intimate exploration of the revolutions denouement... The intellectual honesty de Bellaigue brings to bear is worthy of praise. (San Francisco Chronicle Book) A highly original and disturbing portrait of the Islamic republic. (BusinessWeek) An important book that deserves to be read by both defenders and detractors of the Islamic republic. (Times Literary Supplement) De Bellaigue gives us a sense of daily life in Iran . . . cynical, conflicted, and bitter, yet surprisingly vibrant. (Chronicle of Higher Education)