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The Silenced Cry: One Woman's Diary of a Journey to Afghanistan

Ana Tortajada

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Inspired by a lecture in Barcelona given by a leading member of RAWA (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan), the radical feminist women's group who work under cover as the only real opposition to the Taliban, Ana Tortajada, an experienced Spanish journalist, decided to make a trip to Afghanistan in the summer of 2000. She wanted to learn more about the lives of Afghan women, to visit their homes and the places where they worked as clandestine teachers and doctors, to meet their families, to listen to their stories, and see how they lived under the veil.

Tortajada's journey takes her from the slums and refugee camps in Peshawar, along the Pakistani-Afghan border, to Kabul. She writes about the revolutionary efforts of RAWA, the genocidal campaign of the Taliban to extinguish the Hazara ethnicity in Afghanistan, the failure of the international community to ameliorate the alarming situation of Afghan refugees, and offers a first-hand account of the atrocities Afghan women have been suffering at the hands of the Taliban.

The Silenced Cry is not only timely, but also compelling. With extremely evocative and poetic writing, Tortajada conveys the beauty of the landscape, and the wonderfully inspiring optimism of the people. In heart-wrenching detail, we see just how debilitated and wretched the conditions were, yet we also see people who still fought for freedom, democracy, and basic human rights. Candid and compassionate, never condescending or pitying, *The Silenced Cry* is a human, approachable, and provocative look at the best and worst in the human spirit.

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