



The Man Who Would Be King: The First American in Afghanistan

Ben Macintyre

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The riveting story that inspired Kipling's classic tale and a John Huston movie

The true story of Josiah Harlan, a Pennsylvania Quaker and the first American ever to enter Afghanistan, has never been told before. Soldier, spy, doctor, naturalist, traveler and writer, Josiah Harlan wanted to be a king, with all the imperialist hubris of his times. In an amazing twenty-year journey around Central Asia, he was variously employed as surgeon to the Maharaja of Punjab, revolutionary agent for the exiled Afghan King, and then commander-in-chief of the Afghan armies. In 1838, he set off in the footsteps of Alexander the Great across the Hindu Kush and forged his own kingdom, only to be ejected from Afghanistan a few months later by the invading British.

Using a trove of newly-discovered documents, Harlan's own unpublished journals, and with a revised Preface detailing the unexpected discovery of Harlan's descendents, Ben Macintyre tells the astonishing tale of the man who would be the first and last American king.

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