



Chicken Street: Afghanistan before the Taliban: Clearing the Deadly Remnants of War

John Lane

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This captivating work tells of Afghanistan before the Taliban - a land of majestic mountains and arid plains, terrain contaminated by the deadly remnants of war; landmines and unexploded ordnance, silent killers ready to kill and maim the innocent and unsuspecting. A historic and timeless land of fearless warriors and never ending-conflict. A country where there have been many losers in years gone by - and where there will be many more ... A no-man's land where no-one wins.

This is the true story of civil war and the broken lives of everyday citizens caught in the crossfire of events in Afghanistan, a tale of courage and stoicism, domesticity and death in the turbulent times that followed the Soviet withdrawal of 1989, and which saw the rise of Taliban control and the destructive succession of events since that time, all of which sets the context for the current conflict. It is a story of the perilous endeavour of the disposal of the debris of war, bringing tragedy in its wake, interwoven with the earlier transitory triumphs and debacles of the British Empire, sweeping from the heights of the northern Hindu Kush through the gauntlet of the Kabul Gorge roadblocks of murdering warlords and thieving bandits, across the opium-producing poppy fields beyond Jalalabad to the Khyber Pass and onwards to the intrigues of Peshawar, in what was then the North-West Frontier Province and is now called Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa - land of the Pashtun.

Here is a glimpse of a wild, alien and inaccessible country, offering a revealing perspective and insight to the present day continuance of the violent repetitiveness of Afghanistan's long and restless history. Chicken Street is an absorbing and evocative book for all those interested understanding more about Afghanistan, its recent past and how that relates to present-day events. It is a tribute to those hazardously engaged in humanitarian mine action. And once again, it serves as a salutary reminder that in Afghanistan no one wins. If you are to read just one book on the history of Afghanistan then make it Chicken Street.

REVIEWS

"John Lane has an ear for dialogue and irony and an eye for detail and history. He casts light on our present grim predicament by explaining what came before it. If only our politicians had shared his understanding of the history of Britain's three Afghan wars, set out in the back-light of these pages, they might not have opted for our fourth." SOURCE: Martin Bell, Journalist and Former MP

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