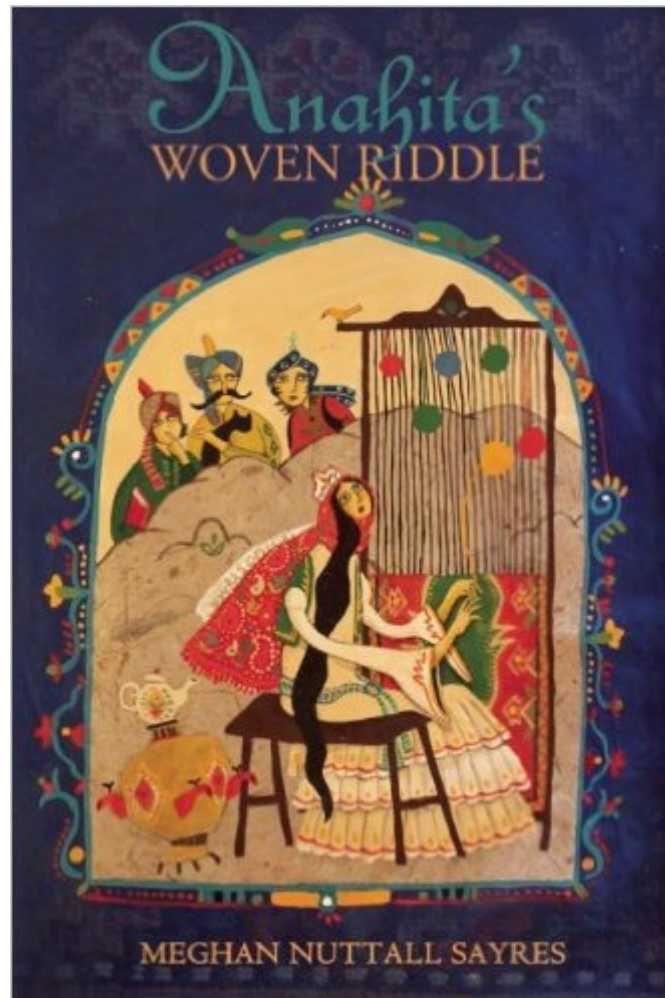




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Anahita's Woven Riddle



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Synopsis

"A richly textured, carefully researched novel . . . excellent use of Sufi poetry and a strong cast of characters make this more than memorable. Romantic, delightful and educational too!"—Kirkus Reviews"An engrossing story that weaves in Persian culture, history, and surroundings, and portrays the life of a unique young woman and her quest for love."--—School Library Journal"Anahita's Woven Riddle offers a glimpse into a world not many books enter. Sayres does an excellent job developing characters that intrigue and tug at the heart."--—Historical Novels Review When Anahita, a nomadic weaver in nineteenth-century Iran, learns that her father wants her to wed the leader of her tribe—a man she finds repulsive—she designs her own fate by weaving a riddle into her wedding carpet, which suitors must guess to win her hand. Anahita's Woven Riddle includes a discussion and study guide, Persian interior art, and brand new cover art by award-winning Tehran-based artist Rashin Kheirieh. Meghan Nuttall Sayres is a tapestry weaver who has traveled in Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia, where she has met with scholars, carpet weavers, dyemasters, and merchants to study the age-old techniques, symbolism, and Sufi poetry that infuse many rugs woven throughout the Middle East. Her debut novel Anahita's Woven Riddle has been translated into several languages. Among other distinctions, it was chosen as an American Library Association (ALA) Top Ten Best Book, an American Booksellers Association Book Sense/Indie Pick, and an ALA Amelia Bloomer Feminist Choice Book.

Book Information

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in ÃÂ Books > Children's Books > Religions > Islam

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up – Teenager Anahita, a nomad living in early-20th-century Persia, has been promised to the khan, or chief, of her tribe. This man, whose three previous wives have mysteriously died, is considerably older than she is, and she wants nothing to do with him. She convinces her father to let her choose her own husband by having potential mates solve a riddle that she has woven into her wedding carpet. Doing so goes against Muslim principles and causes controversy within the tribe, and trouble for them, as the khan exacts his revenge by taking away their migratory and water rights. Despite these circumstances, Anahita's father agrees to continue with the competition. The main contenders-the khan, a schoolteacher, a shepherd, and a prince-all play an important role in Anahita's life. She finds it difficult to go through with the contest, only knowing whom she does not want to marry, but an unexpected twist forces her to choose. This is an engrossing story that weaves in Persian culture, history, and surroundings, and portrays the life of a unique young woman and her quest for love. A Farsi glossary and a brief history of the time period are included.

– Shannon Seglin, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Richly textured, carefully researched... romantic, delightful, and educational too."--Kirkus "A satisfying read." ----VOYA

I didn't know much about Persian culture or nomadic lifestyles, but I am interested in rugs and weaving. Even if I weren't, this would be a fascinating and engaging novel. It captures the confusion and emotions of young love well, too! In the process of reading this engaging novel, I got as a bonus an intriguing introduction to classical Persian poetry. I learned about whirling dervishes and Sufism, too. I read this on a cross-country trip and was hooked from start to finish!! I should note that this is marked as a young adult novel, but it makes a good adult read, too. Highly recommended!

A wonderful book for teens. I enjoyed it as an adult. It teaches as it entertains and it has a spiritual message as well that is universal

I had the privilege of living in Iran for five years in the 1970's and I fell in love with the people and the culture. This book was researched for 10 years before it was written and the details are highly accurate but it is much more than that. It is a beautiful loving story which could have only have been

written by someone who knows and loves Iran. For this reason the author was invited to present her book at the First International Children's Book Festival in Kerman. Her work speaks to the qualities we identify as goodness that transcend all cultures and boundaries; it describes what we recognize as the qualities of compassion that we humans share, as well as the generosity, good naturedness and kindness that so predominate the common culture of the Iranian people at a time that a propaganda war has been mounted against Iran in a run up to another possible war. A book that puts Iranians in such a positive light and speaks of their past struggle for a constitutional monarchy in 1906 to curb the excessive power of tyrannical monarchs and empower the elected parliament, their struggle against Tzarist Russian expansionism, their struggle between traditional ways and modern change, between nomadic life style versus settled, their struggle between material and spiritual values, all helps those ignorant of Iran to better understand the Iranian experience and to put a human face on Iran. Most of all this book makes the characters very believable...the struggles of a young girl against the social pressure to be married off in an arranged political union to someone she cannot love, which would benefit everyone in her tribe except her own chance at happiness, her struggles with the inevitable transition from childhood to adulthood, her first encounters with legitimate feelings of romantic love, her rivalry with her girl cousin, the humorous aspects of human existence, the admirable leadership qualities of her father, his fairness and courage to stand up against corruption, the self sacrificing loyalty of her childhood friend Daryioush, the noble qualities of the prince and the mystery of love at first sight which will always remain a mystery...In the end this book leaves you with a heart warming glow and it becomes a friend you want to spend time with and not put down until it is read. It is not a Polly Anna fairy tale but rather quite realistic and yet the good guys win and the bad guys are brought to justice in a comic rather than cruel way...and the theme of weaving the carpet from sheep to work of art runs through the whole story, dying it, tying it together and leaving no loose ends until they tie the knot...and by the way, it is a suspenseful tale and full of surprises which will keep you riveted to it until the very end...I highly recommend this book for the young and the young of heart, Brian H. Appleton

What a wonderful story with just the right amounts of every good story telling elements. I will be able to share this book with my daughters and friends. Awsome!

This is a simply enchanting book. Originally published in 2006, it was a 2007 American Library Association Top Ten Best Books YA. From the first I was transported to two places: the life of the nomads in Iran 100 years ago, and my childhood reading of fairy tales like *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Arabian Nights
Riddle is a fairy tale worth reading. It is without magic, without didactic messages, and without the heavy portentous tone found in many adults' fairy tales. I found it a page turner, not only for its plot but also the wondrous colour palettes that depicted the carpets and Iran's panoramic landscape, and for the depiction of a lifestyle totally different from ours in the West. I highly recommend this fabulous, realistic book. The romance is tender and hopeful. Anahita is sixteen at the start of the novel, and seventeen at the end. At this tender age, she is facing the prospect of marriage to a stranger. Not just any stranger, but the much-older khan who is her father's boss. During the space of a year, we see Anahita suggest an alternative to the arranged marriage with someone she could never imagine a life of love or romance, and the ruckus that follows. Follow her and her clan on their journey to greener pastures for their flock, with the colourful and lively sights sounds of Mashhad. Learn how to weave tapestries from harvesting dyes to shearing sheep to preparing the loom and finally the weaving of stories with sheep's yarn. Meet potential suitors that Anahita could fall in love with. Admire Rumi's poetry. What of the ending? It is very satisfying, even for a hard taskmaster / reviewer.

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