



The Root of Wild Madder: Chasing the History, Mystery, and Lore of the Persian Carpet

Brian Murphy

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From the remote villages of Afghanistan and Iran, down the ancient trade routes travelled for centuries, to the bazaars of Tehran and the markets of the Western world, every Persian carpet has a story to tell. Coming from a region known for its instability, this art form is one of the few constants, transcending religious and political turmoil. Woven into Persian carpets are centuries-old mysteries of faith and humanity, whirled into colours, patterns and symbols that represent the key to understanding. Each carpet tells a story in its fibres and design and carries a deeper tale in its forgotten history and the anonymity of its maker. How can a man sell a carpet to feed his family when he believes the soul of his grandmother is borne up in its intricate knots? Carpets, as both art and commodity, represent basic survival as well as the search for human perfection. Told in exquisite prose befitting one of the world's loveliest art forms, THE ROOT OF WILD MADDER offers accessible explanations of the patterns, knots and origin of these carpets. From how to tell a quality carpet from a cheap copy to where the dyes come from (madder root provides red), the book presents practical information about carpets while exploring the artistic, religious and cultural complexities of this enigmatic region. Part travelogue and part exploration into the enduring mysteries of Persian carpets, THE ROOT OF WILD MADDER brings readers to far flung corners of the world that few Westerners will ever see in person.

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