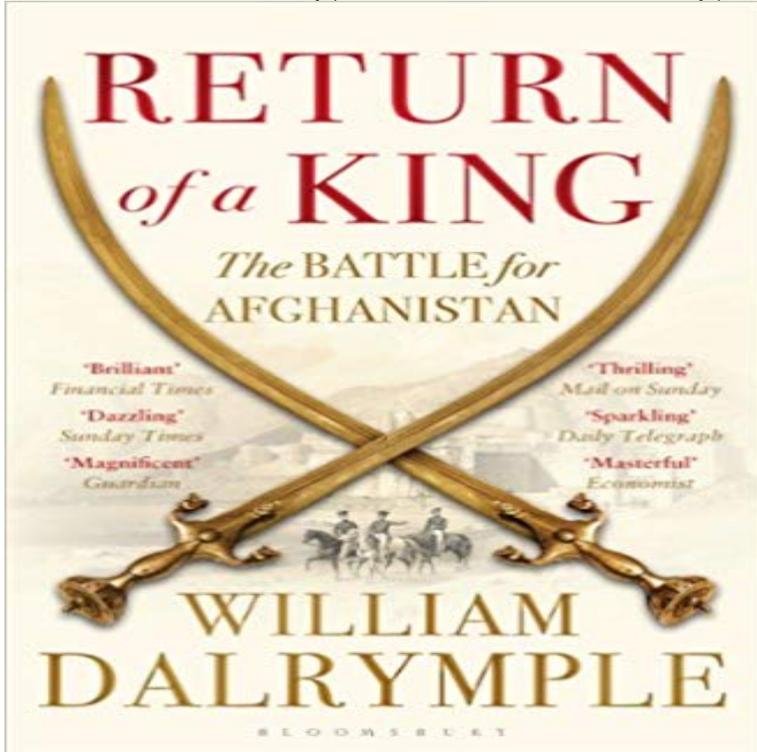


Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan



In the spring of 1839, the British invaded Afghanistan for the first time. Led by lancers in scarlet cloaks and plumed shakos, nearly 20,000 British and East India Company troops poured through the high mountain passes and re-established on the throne Shah Shuja ul-Mulk. On the way in, the British faced little resistance. But after two years of occupation, the Afghan people rose in answer to the call for jihad and the country exploded into violent rebellion. The First Anglo-Afghan War ended in Britain's greatest military humiliation of the nineteenth century: an entire army of the then most powerful nation in the world ambushed in retreat and utterly routed by poorly equipped tribesmen. Shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize 2013, *Return of a King* is the definitive analysis of the First Afghan War, told through the lives of unforgettable characters on all sides and using for the first time contemporary Afghan accounts of the conflict. Prize-winning and bestselling historian William Dalrymple's masterful retelling of Britain's greatest imperial disaster is a powerful and important parable of colonial ambition and cultural collision, folly and hubris, for our times.

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