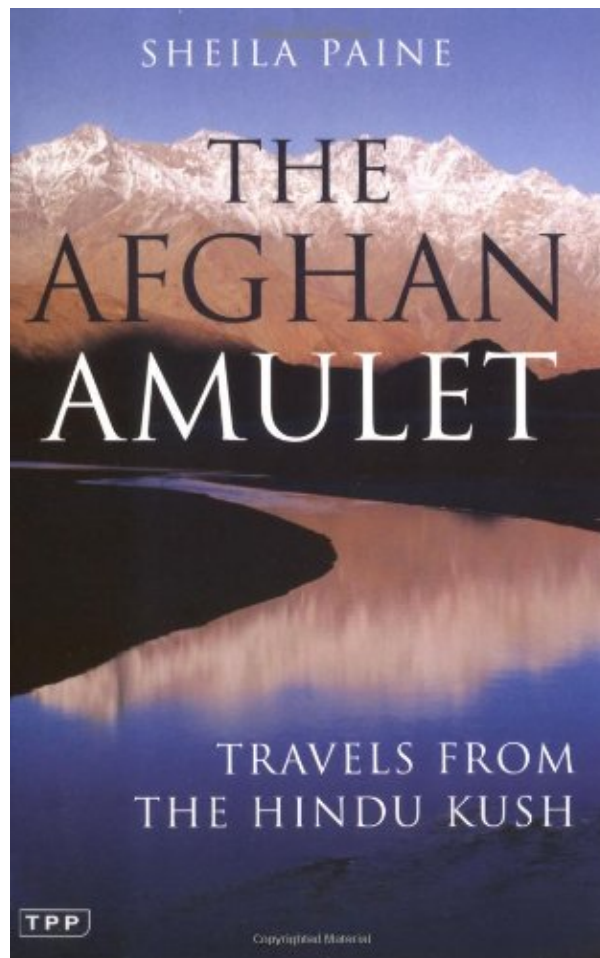
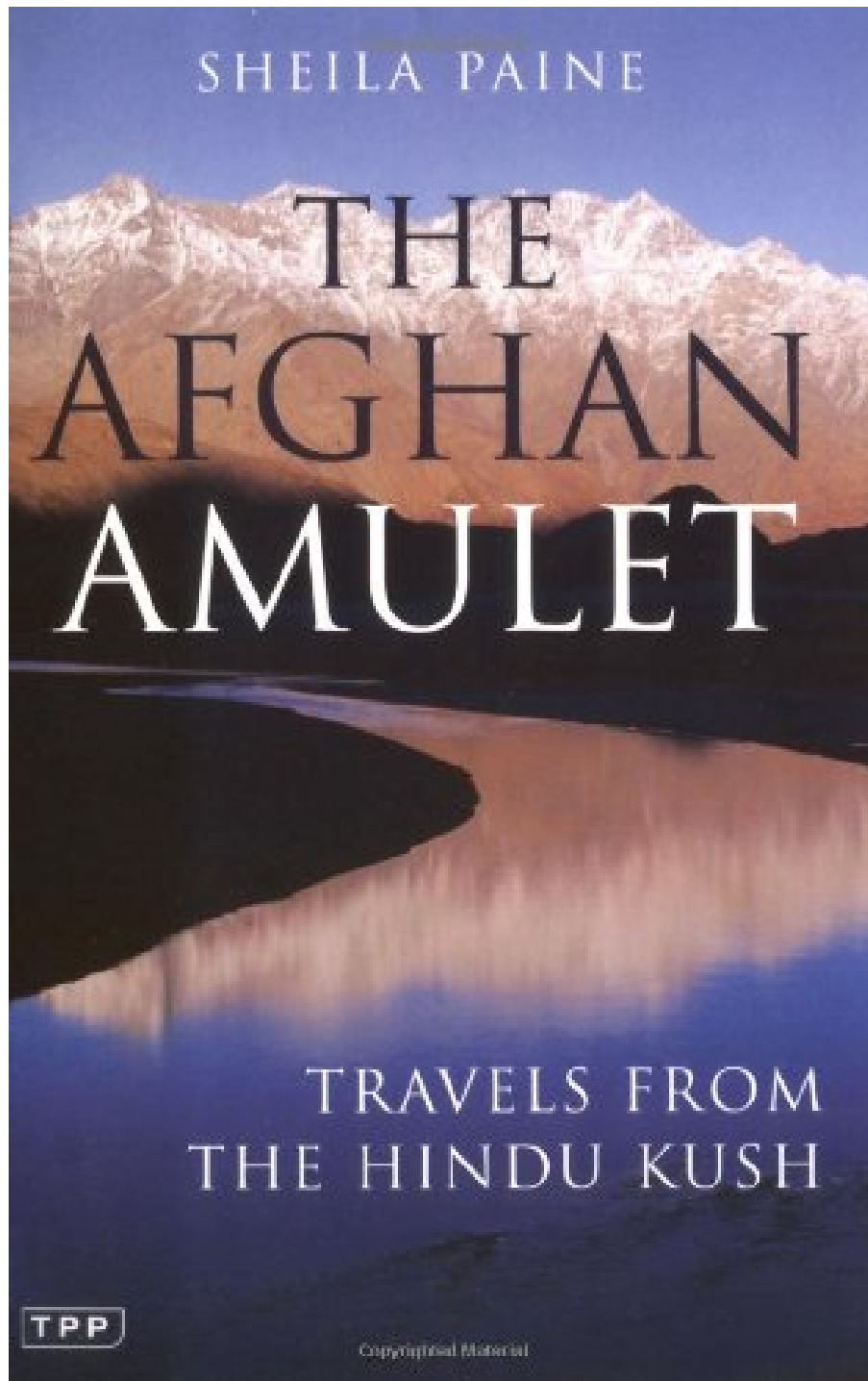


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Intrigued by an exquisite and mysterious amulet on an antique dress from Kohistan, 'land of mountains' in Pakistan, Sheila Paine began an epic quest that took her from the peaks of the Himalaya to the shores of Greece. In this, the first part of her journey, she set off alone and undaunted for the wilds of the Hindu Kush, her only possessions a tiny rucksack and a litre of vodka. Over the course of several months she followed endless clues – the patterns on a woman's dress, pendants hanging outside village houses to ward off djinns, scraps of embroidery in a bazaar - that took her to some of the most remote and inhospitable places in the world. She travelled to Makran, in Pakistan, an area closed completely to foreigners, and to Iran, where she was constantly watched by government minders. She was smuggled into Afghanistan by a band of mujahedeens, and then forged on into Iraq and Turkish Kurdistan from Iran, before one final piece of evidence led her to the small town of Razgrad in eastern Bulgaria and news of the amulet she so tirelessly sought

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- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Sounds like it would be more interesting than it is.

By A. F.

Paine has apparently traveled extensively throughout this region which frankly impresses me. She's obviously a skilled traveler and manages to get in--and more importantly, out--of some very tricky and delicate situations. This would be impressive for a man recounting the story, but for a Western woman traveling alone, it's quite remarkable.

I was disappointed, then, in the overall reading of this book. Paine is downright stingy when it comes to her writing. It's almost as if she translated verbatim her travelog. A few words here about this situation, a few words there. There is virtually no "story-telling," no emotional engagement between her reader and the landscapes through which she is traveling. Rarely do any of the characters that she meets come to life in her pages. Rather, the reader is subjected over and over and over to very plain recounting of various situations that are either boring, depressing, or downright scary. She has almost completely sucked dry the excitement and pleasure that I see in other books about traveling through equally difficult circumstances.

I can't help but wonder if maybe this book is some kind of dud; surely she must have had some success as an author to have had several books published? Paine has my respect for her travels and her stick-to-it-iveness.

Not many of us would be willing to travel the way she does just to get some questions answered. But, it was quite a boring slog to get through this book and I'd be fairly reluctant to chance another purchase.

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