

# [PDF] The Man Who Would Be King: The First American In Afghanistan

**Ben Macintyre - pdf download free book**

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**Books Details:**

Title: The Man Who Would Be King: Th

Author: Ben Macintyre

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## **Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** While many know Sean Connery as "The Man Who Would Be King," few know 19th-century maverick Josiah Harlan, whose adventures probably inspired John Huston's version of Kipling's tale. But the research of British journalist Macintyre (*The Englishman's Daughter*) gives readers both Harlan's story and a thought-provoking perspective on the history of superpower intervention in Afghanistan. Born to a Pennsylvania Quaker family in 1799, the self-educated Harlan studied Greek and Roman history before becoming a Freemason and shipping out to Calcutta at age 21. Jilted by his fiancée, Harlan decided to seek his fortune on the Asian subcontinent. Calling himself a doctor, he briefly served as a military surgeon with the British army in the Burma War, before tales of Afghanistan fired his imagination. Disguised as a Muslim holy man, Harlan wheeled and dealt his way to Kabul, buying up mercenaries and bribing tribal leaders

like a seasoned Afghan warlord. In 1838, Harlan was crowned king of the fierce Hazara people, although the British overthrow of the sitting Afghan ruler soon forced his departure. While mapping Harlan's adventures, Macintyre entertains readers with odd episodes (e.g., Harlan visiting an Afghan sauna fueled by burning night soil) and myriad ironies (e.g., Freemason Harlan trading secrets with an old Rosicrucian sorcerer in an Afghan cave). Harlan's story alone is fascinating, but its resonance with modern-day struggles—Harlan urging the British to try "fiscal diplomacy" (i.e., gold) instead of "invading and subjugating an unoffending people"—makes it compelling. Maps not seen by PW.  
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**From** A broken heart can lead men astray, but few have wandered as far off course as Josiah Harlan, a Pennsylvania Quaker. In 1822, after sailing to Calcutta on a merchant ship, he learned that his fiancée in America had married another man. He set out on a journey that ultimately brought him to Afghanistan, with the mad hope of carving out a kingdom for himself. Amazingly, he halfway succeeded. Trading on little more than a flair for diplomatic pomp, Harlan became a confidant of Afghan princes and a player in the Great Game between Russia and Britain. Macintyre recounts Harlan's travels with dispatch, and draws on unpublished journals to let his subject's voice seep through. Harlan was relentless in cataloguing his obsessions, which included camels, alchemy, and fresh fruit; the first American to visit Kabul, he wrote memorably about the sherbet sold in the bazaar there, made with snow carried by donkey from the Hindu Kush.

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