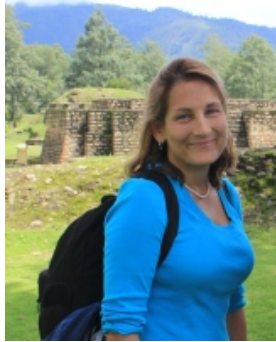


The Dressmaker of Khair Khana, by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon



Review by: Genie Bolduc

Written by former ABC News reporter Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, this story of Kamila Sadiqi reminds me of the strength, common sense and persistence of women micro entrepreneurs whom I have met.

The story starts with the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban, limiting Kamila and her sisters' freedoms overnight and taking her from being a teacher to being almost cloistered in her house due to the imposition of Sharia law. Despite her frustration and virtual imprisonment she sees the possibility for a business out of her home as long as she and the other women participating are discrete. Despite impediments to her freedom of movement and ability to work when women were the only ones available to earn a living to support the family, Kamila Sadiqi defies boundaries imposed on her by the Taliban and in that way helps her entire community.

She proceeds not only to learn to sew herself, but to create a business employing many neighborhood women, making clothes which she takes, at great risk to herself and family, to town to sell, creating prosperity for her family and her community.

The book is an interesting portrait of the effect of the Taliban on the men, and particularly the women, of one family and their entire community through the imposition of very strict religious law. It is told in the fashion of a novel versus a historical account or documentary and in that way helps you to feel the growing imposition of restrictions, despair and danger and the ultimate victory of the entrepreneurial spirit in a compelling way.