



2016

Torn

Lisi Hong

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Book Review

Title: Torn

Author: David Massey

Reviewer: Lisi Hong

Publisher: Chicken House

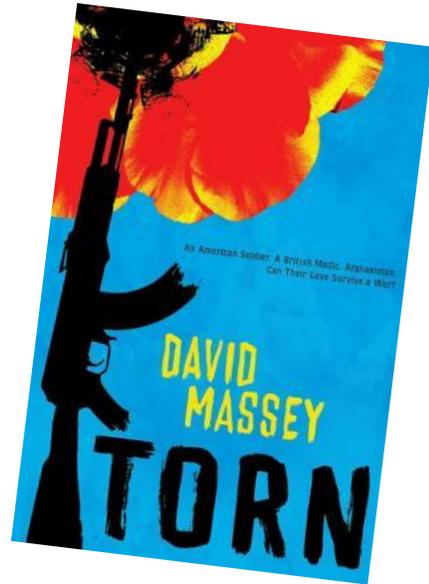
Publication Year: 2013

ISBN: 9780545496452

Number of Pages: 288

Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable



Review

Hours after arriving in Afghanistan on her first tour as a British medic, Elinor—or Ellie for short—saves a soldier’s life, upsets her superiors, and survives her first firefight. It would have been an ordinary day on the front line, if it weren’t for the fact that the sniper’s on the hill were not ordinary Taliban fighters—they were children. Resolved to bring justice to the Young Martyrs, the group fighting to avenge the deaths of their parents after their village was bombed by an American drone, Ellie, her unit, and some visiting American soldiers travel to the village to find the truth. Along the way, they uncover renegade Afghan soldiers, a Taliban warlord who infiltrated the Afghan government, and the plot that convinced the Americans to bomb the village. Ellie succeeds in bringing peace to the Young Martyrs, clears the American’s name, and returns to her home in England proud of who she became on the front lines in Afghanistan.

David Massey’s story pulls you right into the midst of Afghanistan with the goal of showing the reader the emotional, physical, and mental strains of being a soldier, but he falls just short of that goal. Elinor’s character has loads of potential, but Massey fails to take her, and subsequently the reader, to the depths the story offers. The book lacks insight into her reasoning to join the army, which Massey tries to portray as the driving force behind her actions, and the romance towards the end of the book detracts from the heart-wrenching moments that should follow the deaths of many of Elinor’s friends and leaders. With that in mind, the plot of the novel keeps the reader completely invested and anxious to find out what happens. If Massey would have focused more on character development, the novel would be much more successful.

*Contains mild language and moderate violence.