



John Clark's review of *Unexpected Grace* (2019)

This is a very readable autobiography of a remarkable life. Dr Farifteh Robb wrote it to help her Scottish born children and grandchildren understand her unusual background as an Iranian, varied experiences in life and her journey to Christian faith, and to Scotland.

Born in Geneva (where her father worked with the United Nations) and raised in an Iranian Muslim family, she was educated at an international Swiss school becoming trilingual in Farsi, English and French. Graduating from Tehran University in English literature, she earned a doctorate on the romantic poets from Nottingham University, going on to lecture in Tehran before leaving the country in 1979 to train as a nurse in London. Following

marriage to a Scottish orthopaedic surgeon she became an active member of the Scottish Episcopal Church, took up the viola and is part of a chamber string ensemble.

In describing her early years, she also introduces Iranian life, culture and customs. She later describes the upheavals of the Islamic Revolution which obliged her to leave the country for London after Ayatollah Khomeini's seizure of power. With no job available for an English literature lecturer she decided to train as a nurse and midwife—and it was during that training that she renewed links with a medical doctor she had first met and fallen in love with at Nottingham, and whom she was to marry.

Her journey to Christian faith took her via experience of Roman Catholicism (including three months in a convent, and experience of the Ignatian spiritual Exercises at the Jesuit Centre of St Beuno's North Wales as part of her doctoral researches); participation in the welcoming Methodist Student Society and Church in Nottingham, and it culminated in baptism and confirmation by Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti in the Anglican (Episcopal) Church in Tehran in 1978.

Farifteh Robb brilliantly tells her journey of faith and love across two cultures. I found it captivating and could not put it down. Her children and grandchildren must be fascinated and proud to have such a gifted mother and grandmother.

John Clark, Chairman of the Friends of the Diocese of Iran