



Burned Alive

Souad

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Burned Alive Souad

When Souad was seventeen she fell in love. In her village, as in so many others, sex before marriage was considered a grave dishonour to one's family and was punishable by death. This was her crime. Her brother-in-law was given the task of arranging her punishment. One morning while Souad was washing the family's clothes, he crept up on her, poured petrol over her and set her alight.

In the eyes of their community he was a hero. An execution for a 'crime of honour' was a respectable duty unlikely to bring about condemnation from others. It certainly would not have provoked calls for his prosecution. More than five thousand cases of such honour killings are reported around the world each year and many more take place that we hear nothing about.

Miraculously, Souad survived rescued by the women of her village, who put out the flames and took her to a local hospital. Horrifically burned, and abandoned by her family and community, it was only the intervention of a European aid worker that enabled Souad to receive the care and sanctuary she so desperately needed and to start her life again. She has now decided to tell her story and uncover the barbarity of honour killings, a practice which continues to this day.

Burned Alive is a shocking testimony, a true story of almost unbelievable cruelty. It speaks of amazing courage and fortitude and of one woman's determination to survive. It is also a call to break the taboo of silence that surrounds this most brutal of practices and which ignores the plight of so many other women who are also victims of traditional violence.

Burned Alive Details

Date : Published 2005 by Bantam (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780553816303

Author : Souad

Format : Paperback 359 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review Burned Alive for online ebook

Meaghan says

Attention everyone: THIS IS NOT A REAL MEMOIR. This is a fictional story which was dressed up as a memoir, and the alleged author may not even exist. I was suspicious of it when I read it because the book described things which were, quite frankly, impossible. NO ONE could survive burns over 90% of their body without immediate and good medical treatment. For that matter, I doubt anyone could survive being burned that badly even if they got the best medical attention right away. I looked the book up online and found an essay by a reputable scholar noting its many historical/cultural inaccuracies. You can read the essay here: <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/ttaylor.p...> This is not a true story. It's a novel, and not a very good one.

It frankly disgusts me that some person could take advantage of a real, very sad situation -- the plight of women in the Middle East -- and write this fake, inaccurate and xenophobic "memoir" which preys on Western anxieties and misconceptions, in order to make a buck.

?Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✨*♥️ says

I'm aware there is some degree of doubt as to veracity of this story. I don't care about it: fact-checking is not the important thing here. In fact, it would have warmed my heart enormously, had this plotline been created just by some writer's overactive imagination. However, it's not the case: we all know for a fact that victims of burning and chemical attacks, whose horrific experiences could have been used as the plot guideline for this book, do exist.

So, well, this book is not for the weak-hearted. **It's either is a true story, in which case I'm extremely sorry for all the pain the protagonist went through, or a fictitious one, inspired by horrible situations created in real life, in which case it might be considered a memorial for all those women and girls who suffered terribly and either lived or not.** In any case, it might be an eye opener for some people, myself included. And as such, it's perfect. Storytelling worked perfectly here to make me aware of this horror in threat of which many women live daily.

Johara says

What a book full of crap!!! I can't believe that people bought it under the impression that it was a real story based on real facts! It's obviously fiction, and not pretty good!

It was a major punishment for me to read the whole book, and was just hoping that it will finish as soon as possible. I would have thrown out the book way before half way through the book, but wanted to see what's the end with our Souad and her dreadful way of being as pessimistic as she possibly can.

Being from the Middle East myself, she doesn't have her facts right. Honor crime does indeed exist in the region, that's the sad part of it ... but how could you be so stupid as to make a mistake and continue to think it's the next best thing you ever did in your life!

Very badly written, dragged on forever, the ending was still as bad as you would feel throughout the book, and you would wish that somewhere somehow Souad would show some sort of gratitude toward her new life. Noooo.

Please don't buy the book and waste time, feeling and energy on a very lame book. I can't even rate the book, but gave it a star just for the effort!

Cindy says

Ok I am a little confused and gave this book a 5 star rating thinking it was true but have come to find out that most likely this is not a true account so I am giving it one star. If it is true then its a five star.

Loveliest Evaris says

Does this ever happen to you?

You're in a lull in time, bored, just thinking. And then your brain for no other reason than to be weird shoots a random memory or thought in your head. These little snippets are usually things like book or movie synopses.

It always happens to me. As an afterthought I was thinking about a book I read a few years ago about a young girl in the Middle East who was doused in kerosene and set on fire to protect her family's "honor".

So the day I am writing this, I was looking through my school library shelves and I found this! As soon as I saw the spine I was like, "I FOUND YOU!"

...

Okay onto the story.

This was a true account of the harsh, cruel, and totally UNFAIR treatment of women in certain societies. This takes place in Palestine, apparently. I always had the idea it was in a remote village in Afghanistan or something.. Does that make me ignorant? I don't care if it does.

Women in the Middle East like in Palestine--and quite a few cultures in Africa-- are considered less than a second class citizen. The modesty idea is taken to the extreme; women must work, work, work, work, work! "Don't take your eyes off the ground, you whore!" "Stop looking at that dude, you skank!" "Why can't you milk 300 goats in 20 minutes, you looseless wench?!" Basically that is the whole idea.

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EDIT:

I've been seeing reviews that this book is apparently not a real memoir. Despite that revelation, I will maintain my score because I still thoroughly enjoyed it. Just because this may be fake does not mean that

women are still not treated in this way and that honor killings aren't an issue; they still are.

Jean Sasson says

When I first read this book years ago, I was drawn totally into the story. I feel differently after reading a lot of other reviews and sadly came to the conclusion that perhaps this is not true. IF Souad exists, I wish she could come out and hold a press conference. Sometimes that is not possible, but I wish that she could do this.

However, I remind myself that whether Souad does or does not exist, such things do happen frequently to women in the world, and we can't let any disappointment in a book stop us from trying to save women from such brutalities.

Ruxandra Ionita says

Superba carte. Nu ma asteptam sa fie atat de buna si sa transmita atat de bine emotiile, durerea, disperarea, toate sentimentele si incercarile la care a fost supusa aceasta femeie.

Cata says

eu até que tinha gostado mais ou menos do livro até descobrir que são memórias falsas. Sou mesmo burrinha, tendo queimado 70% ou 90% do corpo é óbvio que ela não sobreviveria (dahhh :x).

Acho desprezível escreverem uma história bem pesada, cheia de acontecimentos horríveis como se fosse uma história verídica.

Alabbadmohd says

Since I am a reader with Arabic background, i see this book representing our Past precisely, where women used to be treated as slaves.

I can not say that all Aravic countries had treated women the same way it was described in this book. But, i can say that most of it was true.

What I did not like is that Souad did not mention the good things about being raised in Arabic County.

Overall, it is a short story that will bring hate, anger & happiness to your heart at the same time.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Be thankful if you do not live in the country where Souad grew up!! It's shameful how women are still treated in some parts of the world.

Saleh MoonWalker says

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Nicole says

I honestly don't know how to rate this book. I don't know if it's a true story, nothing can prove it. If it wasn't I would give it a star and less if I could for using a situation like this to make money.

Souad is a **girl** born in a traditional small village in Palestine. Girls were worth less than a cow in the eyes of society. Women have no rights, they are only slaves of men. They can beat you, hurt you, kill you and no one will say a word. It is okay because they are men and the women must have done something wrong and worth it. Like you know, picking a green tomato or giving birth to a girl. And the worst of it, all the girls are submissives. They were born like this and so they'll die. Just like their mothers and daughters later. Girls only can go to the market with someone older and look at their feet if they aren't wed. So by marriage, a girl can get her freedom even if her husband would still beat her deadly but at least, she can go out alone. She can easily be called a whore and a slut, for a mere whisper and rumor.

In an atmosphere like this one, you can only imagine what would happen to a girl who loses her virginity, let alone gets pregnant before marriage. And that what happened with Souad. A seventeen years old girl who dreams of being wed to serve her husband and most of all, be free. But unfortunately, the older sister must get married first. And hers is almost 20 and still single. That's how she fell in love with the neighbour who broke his wedding promise after he got her pregnant. Having sex before marriage is the most dishonourable taboo. And it's all about honor their. Her brother-in-law was responsible given the task to end her life. By burning her with the baby. **She was burned alive. And survived.** After a long journey, Souad tells her story how she escaped this society and was introduced to a world where women equal men.

First, I'd like to say that I'm from the Middle-East. I've heard a lot about women suffering from similar conditions (not burning though). And we have studied a lot about these communities. No one had survived anyway and came back to tell his story. Still, I was surprised to know that in Palestine we still have something horrifying like this in the 60s. If it's a girl who's born they kill her or even sometimes bury her alive. That isn't humanist. And I'm disappointed to know that there aren't rebellions from women and enough organisations who look in these cases.

This book shows the story of a woman who survived so many hardships and came back to tell her unbelievable story.

Some Arabic words aren't pronounced correctly. For example, it's not "majmouma", it's "majnouna" meaning insane. And "halouf" isn't even a word. It's translated as pig in the book but the real word is "(k)hanzir". Maybe she was mistaken with "(k)harouf" which means a lamb.

Silviu ST says

Mi-a plăcut foarte mult această carte, mai ales felul în care a fost scrisă, sunt unele persoane care consideră că nu este o memorie adevărată și chiar dacă este fictivă sau nu ea este scrisă așa fel încât să te întrebi dacă este adevărată?. Ce s-a întâmplat în viața lui Souad te poate întrista însă te și învață unele lucruri. Felul ei de a lupta m-a fascinat. Dacă este fictivă sau nu această poveste este una foarte frumoasă ce merită citită, povestită și arătată lumii.

Kylene Jones says

I am so glad I have read this book. I also do not believe it has anything to do with religion as much as cultures. What so many of us in the modern world seem to forget is that the rest of the world does not "progress" at the same rate. Women have had to fight to get our rights everywhere, it is much slower in isolated places like this. The women do not know better so they just accept it. Also, as another journalist mentioned, women are beaten and murdered here in the states. There are still men here (white Christian ones, too) that truly believe it is their right to beat their wives and there are women that stay with them. If you know anything about psychology, you understand that self worth has a huge impact on whether you tolerate things like this. Women that are beaten like this, have no self worth or love so they stay cuz "they deserve it" Our culture doesn't accept it but where Souad is from, it is still accepted so how can we expect them to have the courage to fight for their rights. I hope that someday, it will be taboo there, too, and there will be less of this all over the world. We also know that children that watch their moms beaten, tend to be abusers so the men in areas like this also have no hope of change at this time. Education is imperative to changing things like this.

About the book itself, I cannot imagine the pain she has had to endure and the strength and courage to get to where she is today. I applaud her for speaking out about this taboo subject. Good for her.

Louise says

This was a harrowing book to read! To think that in this day and age people can act so barbaric and commit unspeakable crimes against loved ones is truly horrendous. I am so stunned at Souad's story that I don't feel I could do her justice by writing my own review. What this woman has been through is atrocious, frightful, appalling and extremely sad. I wouldn't want in any way to shame Souad or make her feel that I said something in my review to hurt her feelings so I will leave you with the synopsis on the back of the book.

“When Souad was seventeen she fell in love. In her West Bank village, as in so many others, sex before marriage is considered a grave dishonour to one's family and is punishable by death. This was her crime. Her

brother-in-law was given the task of meting out her punishment. One morning while Souad was washing the family's clothes, he poured gasoline over her and set her on fire.

Miraculously, she survived, rescued by women of her village, who put out the flames and took her to a local hospital. Horribly burned over seventy percent of her body and still denounced by her family, Souad was able to receive the care she needed only after the intervention of a European aid worker. Now in permanent exile from her homeland, she has decided to tell her story and reveal the barbarity of a practice that continues to this day.

BURNED ALIVE is the first true account ever published by a victim of an "honor crime." Souad's inspiring testimony is a shocking, moving, and harrowing story of cruelty and incomparable courage...and an inspiring call to action to end a heinous tradition."

I give Souad a standing ovation for having the strength and courage to tell her story. To stand up and be counted both as a woman and a human being and to be immensely proud of who she is and what she has accomplished...my heart and my prayers will be with you always, Souad!!
