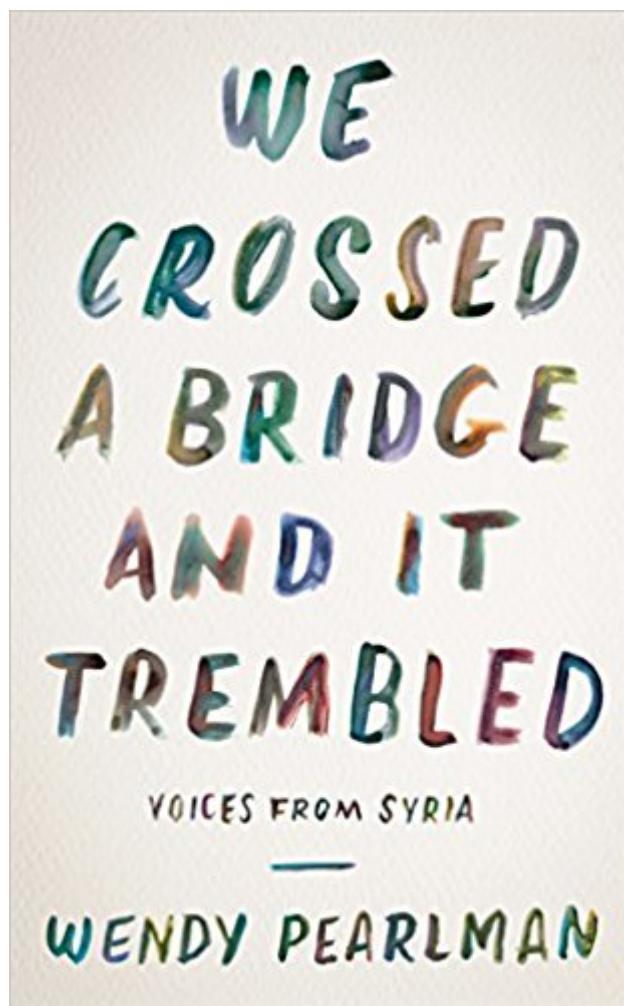


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We Crossed A Bridge And It Trembled: Voices From Syria



Synopsis

Reminiscent of the work of Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich, an astonishing collection of intimate wartime testimonies and poetic fragments from a cross-section of Syrians whose lives have been transformed by revolution, war, and flight. Against the backdrop of the wave of demonstrations known as the Arab Spring, in 2011 hundreds of thousands of Syrians took to the streets demanding freedom, democracy and human rights. The government's ferocious response, and the refusal of the demonstrators to back down, sparked a brutal civil war that over the past five years has escalated into the worst humanitarian catastrophe of our times. Yet despite all the reporting, the video, and the wrenching photography, the stories of ordinary Syrians remain unheard, while the stories told about them have been distorted by broad brush dread and political expediency. This fierce and poignant collection changes that. Based on interviews with hundreds of displaced Syrians conducted over four years across the Middle East and Europe, *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled* is a breathtaking mosaic of first-hand testimonials from the frontlines. Some of the testimonies are several pages long, eloquent narratives that could stand alone as short stories; others are only a few sentences, poetic and aphoristic. Together, they cohere into an unforgettable chronicle that is not only a testament to the power of storytelling but to the strength of those who face darkness with hope, courage, and moral conviction.

Customer Reviews

“Many of these voices are unforgettable...Pearlman shapes her subjects’ narratives, winnowing interviews down to stirring examples of human adaptation...essential reading.” (New York Times Book Review) “Pearlman spoke with hundreds of displaced Syrians. Common among the spare and haunting testimonies of these mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters are the loss and reappearance of hope, humanity, and dreams of new freedom. This powerfully edifying work of witness is essential reading.” (Booklist (starred review)) “It’s unsurprising to see the anger not just toward Syrian president Bashar al-Assad but also toward the international community...Nonetheless, the book is filled with hope, informed by an understanding of the unity possible in spite of the discord sowed by Assad.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) “A heartbreakingly human, and necessary book. Recommended for anyone who wishes to better understand the Syrian conflict.” (Library Journal) “A timely and useful exploration into the events leading up to and following the Syrian uprising and ongoing refugee crisis.” (VICE) “A gut-wrenching collection of true experiences of Syrians whose lives have been transformed, often torn apart, by the ongoing

conflict. A breathtaking yet haunting work of nonfiction, this necessary book could not have come at a better time. (Bustle) "Profoundly important" Pearlman, an accomplished political scientist, has chosen to let her Syrian interlocutors speak for themselves. What emerges is a complex, engaging and difficult oral history, which deserves a wide readership. (Mark Lynch, Professor of Political Science at George Washington University and author of *The New Arab Wars: Anarchy and Uprising in the Middle East* and *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*) "An important book for anyone who wants to understand the root causes of the Syrian tragedy" There are many different competing "realities" of the Syrian conflict and the many voices recorded in this book capture this perfectly. (Andreas Krämer, Ambassador for the Negotiations on Syria, Federal Foreign Office of Germany) "Incendiary" •this heart-wrenching testament could not be more timely. Beyond headlines or breaking news or political posturing, this work of witness allows real people to expose Syria's terrifying heart. (Luis Alberto Urrea, author of *The Devil's Highway* and *Into The Beautiful North*)

In 2011, against the backdrop of the wave of demonstrations known as the Arab Spring, millions of Syrians took to the streets demanding freedom and dignity. The government's ferocious response, and the refusal of the demonstrators to back down, sparked a brutal war that escalated into the worst humanitarian catastrophe of our times, including the deaths of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, incalculable destruction, and the flight of millions of Syrians from their homeland. Yet despite the vivid reporting and powerful images that have emerged from the disaster, no book has truly allowed us to understand the conflict as Syrians have experienced it. *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled* changes that. Based on interviews with hundreds of Syrians conducted over four years across the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, it chronicles the war from its origins to its present horror, solely through the words of ordinary people transformed by its unfolding. Parents, children, students, teachers, web designers, artists, playwrights, bloggers, poets, doctors, engineers, lawyers, activists, government employees, rebels, refugees, military defectors, prisoners, hipsters, Christians, Muslims, shopkeepers, grandparents •these are just some of the voices that cohere into a breathtaking mosaic. Some of the gathered testimonies are eloquent narratives that could stand alone as short stories; others are only a few commanding sentences. Together, they form a testament not only to the power of storytelling but also to the resilience of those who face darkness with hope, courage, and moral conviction. "It was the

revolution that allowed me to see people for who they really are,â€“ one woman from Aleppo tells us. â€“It showed me that every Syrian has a hundred stories in his heart. Every Syrian is himself a story.â€“ Here are some of those stories.

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