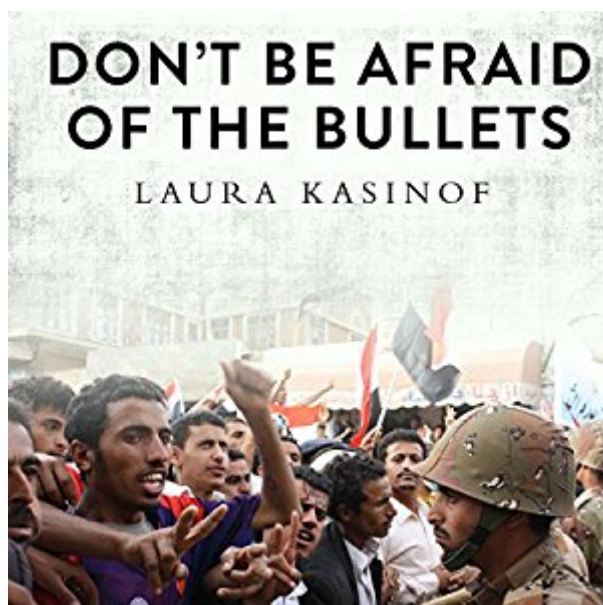


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Don't Be Afraid Of The Bullets: An Accidental War Correspondent In Yemen



Synopsis

Laura Kasinof studied Arabic in college and moved to Yemen a few years later - after a friend at a late-night party in Washington, DC, recommended the country as a good place to work as a freelance journalist. When she first moved to Sanaa in 2009, she was the only American reporter based in the country. She quickly fell in love with Yemen's people and culture, in addition to finding herself the star of a local TV soap opera. When antigovernment protests broke out in Yemen, part of the revolts sweeping the Arab world at the time, she contacted the New York Times to see if she could cover the rapidly unfolding events for the newspaper. Laura never planned to be a war correspondent, but found herself in the middle of brutal government attacks on peaceful protesters. As foreign reporters were rounded up and shipped out of the country, Laura managed to elude the authorities but found herself increasingly isolated - and even more determined to report on what she saw. *Don't Be Afraid of the Bullets* is a fascinating and important debut by a talented young journalist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I couldn't put this book down! Ms. Kasinof is not only an excellent journalist who covered a situation when no one else was brave enough to do so, her work also makes it easy and fun to learn about the Yemeni protest movement. Kasinof gives many examples that get to the heart of the beauty (and the sadness) of the Yemeni people and the situation they face - bad governance, a weak state, poverty, dwindling resources, etc. What emerges is a narrative that reveals that Yemen is far more

than just the battleground against Al-Qa'ida depicted in the U.S. media. The author is honest about her own weakness and insecurities. She gives us some insight into the brave (and perhaps slightly deviant or naive!) young people who commit themselves to immersion in Arabic language, culture, and politics. Kasinof is frank about how little she knew going into the situation, as well as what it was like becoming one among a small minority of experts on Yemeni politics. In addition to being informative, the book was also funny. I particularly enjoyed her tale about becoming a Yemeni soap opera star! Full disclosure: I am an academic who studies the politics of the Middle East. That said, I would recommend Kasinof's book to any person interested in getting a taste of the complexity of Yemeni political issues. It is readable, funny, sad, and true.

Don't Be Afraid of the Bullets gives the reader insight into both the personal struggle of living in a conflict zone as a foreigner as well as the national struggle that Yemen faced during the revolution in 2011. It provides excellent context for the continuing conflict in Yemen today. Her writing style also brings the reader into the world of Yemeni culture, leaving you feeling connected to the country long after you've finished reading (even if you've never set foot there!). It's a must read for anyone interested in Yemen, journalism, conflict zones, or the Middle East more broadly.

Kasinof does an incredible job at taking an immensely cryptic and foreign place and making it accessible to the reader. Throughout the book, the personality of so many Yemenis shines just as brightly as they do on the streets of the old city of Sana'a and they become human beings, just like the rest of us, and not just a headline from a strange place. The indefatigable humor and good will of the Yemeni people is interrupted throughout the book by violence inflicted upon them by their government. Learning about their struggle alone makes this book worth reading. Luckily, the author has done an incredible job of crafting an enthralling story about them as well as her struggles covering the conflict. Highly recommended.

I found Laura's story of covering the revolution in Yemen very entertaining and insightful, as I did not know the details of Yemen's revolution prior to reading this book. As a woman who has also lived in the Middle East in her twenties as an aid worker, I could relate to many of her stories and feelings, and it made me want to get on the next flight back. Definitely recommend this book for anyone interested in how life is like when you are completely out of your element.

Don't Be Afraid of the Bullets is a compelling and thoughtful story about a young journalist

caught up in the protests and violence of Yemen's Arab Spring. Kasinof skillfully balances her own story with Yemen's, pulling the reader into the front lines of action while also taking pause to reflect on the weight of these events. The author breathes refreshing honesty into the complicated mix of emotions, personal desires, and sense of purpose that motivated her to stay and report despite the dangers it posed. In doing so, she opens up a world previously unknown in Yemen, a place of striking beauty, rich culture and political intrigue. Ultimately, it's the perseverance and fortitude of the young protestors that help define her journey, and Don't Be Afraid of the Bullets endures in its conviction to find meaning amidst the flood of history.

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