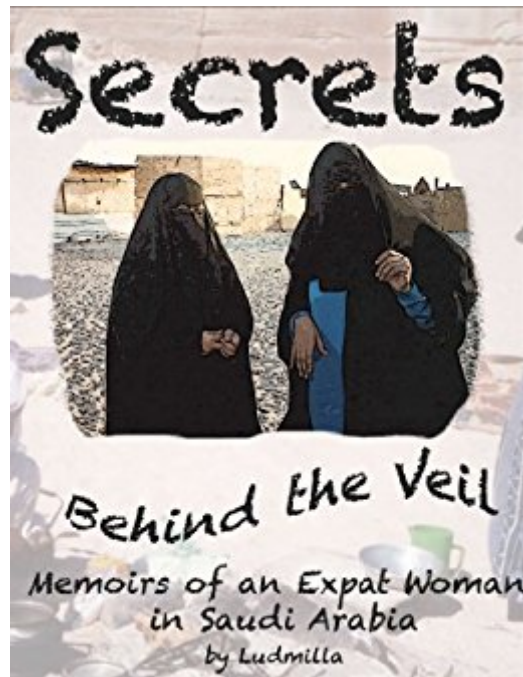


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Secrets Behind The Veil: Memoirs Of An Expatriate Woman In Saudi Arabia



Synopsis

Since the first coalition war with Iraq in 1990, the Middle East, specifically the largely inaccessible country of Saudi Arabia, has been the focus of intense media exposure and public interest. As an expatriate western woman working as director of nursing for a major hospital in Riyadh from 1995 through 2001, Ludmilla captures the reality of surviving as a woman in Saudi Arabia, where women's rights are not a high priority or even a consideration. You may have heard about the plight of women in this Kingdom, but now you can experience the reality through the words of someone who lived it day to day. *Secrets Behind the Veil* takes an uncompromising look at the realities of life in a strictly Islamic society, delving into every aspect of daily life while managing the restrictions imposed by Saudi society. From women spending time in jail for riding in the front seat of a taxi or the constant risk of getting blown up by a car bomb, life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia involves a great deal of culture shock for westerners, in particular western women. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the major oil producing countries in the world. The King and his brothers, along with a large number of extended family members, rule the country in such a manner that allows the average person a relatively affluent lifestyle. By most definitions Saudi is a "man's country" where women are not allowed to drive a vehicle or ride a bicycle, must wear a full length black body covering, a scarf and full or partial veil covering the face. Men and women are discouraged from socializing together in any way unless they are related to each other. Most homes have two separate living rooms for this purpose. We hear generalized, global information about the Saudi culture, religion and traditions, while at the same time not internalizing the actual impact this has on the women who live there and the misfortunes born upon them through this ultra-restrictive culture. Should the Western World care about their plight or any forms of mental or physical torture they must endure? Many expatriates (people living in the kingdom for the purposes of work, but not Saudi citizens themselves) of different nationalities and religions were required to live and work together in a Kingdom where the belief in only Islam was accepted. The Religious Enlightenment Officers (Mutawa) were intolerant of and persecuted any person who was not following the laws, rules and customs of the Kingdom. *Secrets Behind the Veil* takes not a glance, but rather an uncompromising and persistent gaze behind the veil, exposing beauty, hypocrisy, misogynistic behavior, and vast cultural differences present for those who chose to live and work in Saudi Arabia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although I enjoyed some of the stories in her memoir, that's all it was..an expat memoir. She had nothing to do with Saudi women and their lives, nor did she have to wear a veil or even headscarf herself. It just talks about all the social activities, parties, and vacations she would take and gifts she would buy. Only other expats' lives were mentioned, but nothing that reveals what life is like for a Saudi woman. Also, the writing style is a bit amateur as it discusses many irrelevant details (ie, the moonstones I made into beautiful earrings) and terrible transitions to each paragraph. One minute she was talking about a holiday, then an episode at work, then something else. I understand it's a self-published memoir and I didn't expect a professional style, but the story just didn't flow very well.

I understand that the author is not a professional writer and that personal narratives of experiences such as hers are important, however the writing is of such a low quality that it distracts from the narrative. I got just a short way into the book before giving up.

Although the author had a life-changing experience, she sadly misses the mark with this account of her time in Saudi. I would have loved to hear more about the people she encountered and their struggles under the political regime and less about her vacations.

There are better books written about Saudi Arabia. This author tells more about her first class travels and Boast about her pampered treatment. If you want to read about how to break rules than this book is for you. Drinking , partying and affairs seem to be the main subject that stands out.

A Canadian woman in Saudi Arabia -- amazing. I once thought about teaching English in Saudi Arabia but talked myself out of doing so. I can't recall what year this book was written but if it was written years ago, I wonder how much it has changed -- if at all. The thought of a moral/religious police going around is enough to scare anyone.

This book told the story of a non Muslim in an islamic nation. I feel that she was unbiased, mostly true to the nature of things. Of course the times have changed but most of the experiences are the same. She has removed some of the mystery behind the veil. I enjoyed it.

This book was informative and interesting. It gave insight as to what a person's life was like living in Saudi Arabia.

Jumps about somewhat not told in chronological order, felt like a tell and brag account rather than a recount. Okay but nit brilliant

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