



Stolen: Escape from Syria

By Louise Monaghan, Yvonne Kinsella



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In the vein of *Not Without My Daughter*, *Stolen: Escape from Syria* is a memoir recounting a mother's crusade to rescue her kidnapped daughter from her abusive ex-husband during the tumultuous days of the Arab Spring

In the middle of one of the worst civil wars in Syria's history, Louise Monaghan walked across a heavily guarded border to save her six-year-old child from the father who had callously snatched her from her home in Cyprus. Fearing for her daughter's future under the oppressive Sharia law, the Irish mother returned to her ex-husband, Mostafa Assad, to bide her time until she could escape with her daughter.

Once in his homeland, she too was held captive, locked inside a run-down house with little food and no hope of deliverance. Severely beaten by Mostafa —she was even left unconscious on the ground in front of their child—she and her little girl miraculously escaped.

This suspenseful account will pull at your heartstrings, enveloping you in harrowing events that no mother would dare imagine and culminating with the triumphal feats this mother achieved. Smuggled across a heavily patrolled mountain range in the dead of night through bomb attacks and sniper fire, Monaghan and her daughter speak to the transcendent bond between mother and child.



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Stolen: Escape from Syria By Louise Monaghan, Yvonne Kinsella Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #811851 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-06-18
- Released on: 2013-06-18
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

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Part thriller adventure, part tender mother-child drama, this memoir dramatizes today's Middle East conflict through the author's personal experience of capture and rescue. Divorced from Mostafa Assad, her abusive Syrian husband, Irish-born Catholic Monaghan focuses her life on their lovely six-year-old daughter, May. Then, after Assad kidnaps May from their home in Cyprus, Monaghan travels to war-torn Syria, pretends that she wants to make a go of their marriage, and suffers brutal abuse as his prisoner while she tries to plan an escape with her child. Always on her cell phone, she is in close contact with her loyal sister in Dublin and with the Irish consulate in Damascus, but many officials look the other way. Some smugglers help, but others take her money and abandon her. Eventually, though, with support from many sides, Christian and Muslim, she does finally make it across the border with her child. Set against the horrors of civil war, the domestic conflict brings home the personal suffering and the courage behind the news images. --Hazel Rochman

Review

"This is a courageous, and ultimately engrossing, story of a woman's quest to bring her daughter back to safety." *?Kirkus Reviews*

"In this intense memoir, Monaghan undertakes a terrifying journey to rescue her daughter following the child's kidnapping by her father. Their treacherous trek out of war-torn Syria into Lebanon to safety was suspenseful. But it is the staggering physical and psychological abuse Monaghan suffered during her relationship with her ex-husband Mostafa that is the most disquieting aspect of her narrative. A native of Ireland and a successful sales consultant, Monaghan was living in Cyprus when she met her future husband. Early on there were signs of trouble: At one point Mostafa nearly killed her--she'd discovered he had a wife and children in Syria. Still, Monaghan continued the destructive relationship and acknowledged the absurdity of her actions: "It was a stupid way of looking at life, but I knew no other, so I just endured what I had to, as long as it didn't affect my child." Following the couple's divorce, her ex-husband kidnapped their daughter taking her into war-ravaged Syria. Monaghan bravely recounts this intimate family disaster with hopes her story will spark discussions about the rights of women in Muslim societies." *?Publishers Weekly*

"An incredible journey to the hell of the Syrian warzone." *?Sunday World*

"Reads like a thriller . . . an extraordinary story." *?Irish Sunday Independent*

About the Author

LOUISE MONAGHAN studied travel and tourism before working as a senior travel consultant. She is now trying to rebuild her life in Cyprus surrounded and protected by a large group of friends.

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