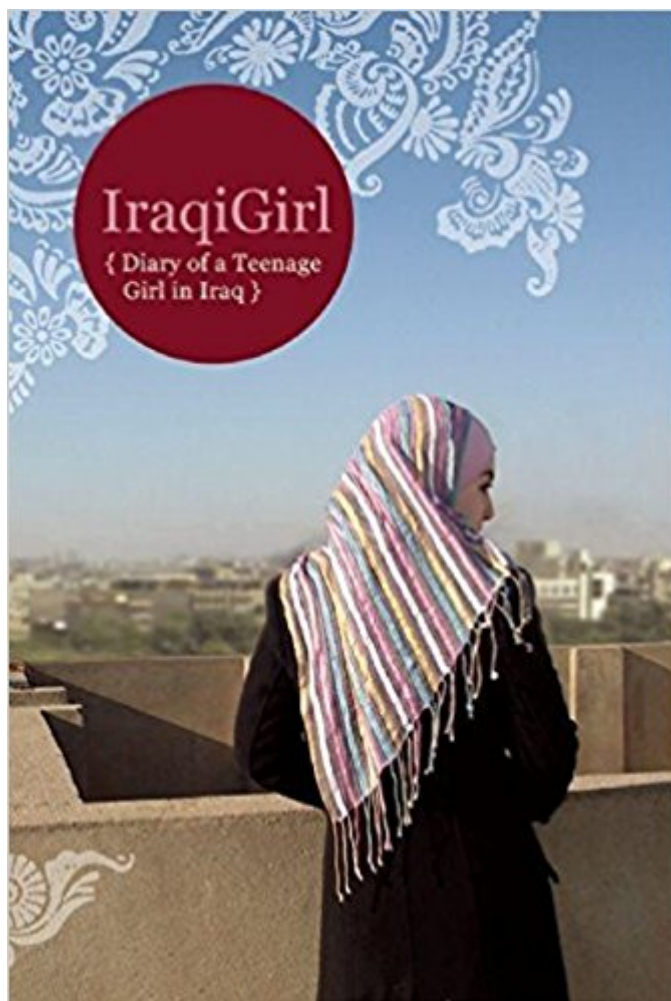


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# IraqiGirl: Diary Of A Teenage Girl In Iraq



## Synopsis

I feel that I have been sleeping all my life and I have woken up and opened my eyes to the world. A beautiful world! But impossible to live in. These are the words of fifteen-year-old Hadiya, blogging from the city of Mosul, Iraq, to let the world know what life is really like as the military occupation of her country unfolds. In many ways, her life is familiar. She worries about exams and enjoys watching *Friends* during the rare hours that the electricity in her neighborhood is running. But the horrors of war surround her everywhere—weeklong curfews, relatives killed, and friends whose families are forced to flee their homes. With black humor and unflinching honesty, Hadiya shares the painful stories of lives changed forever. “Let us go back, she writes, “to my un-normal life.” With her intimate reflections on family, friendship, and community, *IraqiGirl* also allows us to witness the determination of one girl not only to survive, but to create, amidst the devastation of war, a future worth living for. “Hadiya’s authentically teenage voice, emotional struggles and concerns make her story all the more resonant.” Publishers Weekly “Despite all the news coverage about the war in Iraq, very little is reported about how it affects the daily lives of ordinary citizens. A highschooler in the city of Mosul fills in the gap with this compilation of her blog posts about living under U.S. occupation. She writes in English because she wants to reach Americans, and in stark specifics, she records the terrifying dangers of car bombs on her street and American warplanes overhead, as well as her everyday struggles to concentrate on homework when there is no water and electricity at home. Her tone is balanced: she does not hate Americans, and although she never supported Saddam Hussein, she wonders why he was executed... Readers will appreciate the details about family, friends, school, and reading *Harry Potter*, as well as the ever-present big issues for which there are no simple answers.” Hazel Rochman, *Booklist* “*IraqiGirl* has poured reflections of her daily life into her blog, reaching all over the cyber-world from her home in northern Iraq. She writes about the universals of teen life—school, family, TV, food, *Harry Potter*—but always against the background of sudden explosions, outbursts of gunfire, car bombs, death. [A]n important addition to multicultural literature.” Elsa Marston, author of *Santa Claus in Baghdad and Other Stories About Teens in the Arab World* “A book as relevant to adults as teenagers and children. Hadiya’s clear, simple language conveys the feelings of a teenager, offering a glimpse into the daily life of a professional middle-class Iraqi family in an ancient-modern city subjected to a brutal occupation.” Haifa Zangana, author of *City of Widows: An Iraqi Woman’s Account of War and Resistance*

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 740L (What's this?)

Paperback: 205 pages

Publisher: Haymarket Books (August 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931859736

ISBN-13: 978-1931859738

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.5 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #656,927 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Biographies > Political](#) #243 in [Books > History > Middle East > Iraq](#) #243 in [Books >](#)

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Age Range: 12 - 16 years

Grade Level: 7 - 11

## Customer Reviews

IraqiGirl was fifteen years old in 2004-2005 and living in Mosul, Iraq, when she began blogging the story of her life under American occupation.

It was a very fragmented and repetitive account. The girl was evidently from a wealthy family however did not comment on Hussain's atrocities. She would have known about this.

Although it was so very sad, it made me think about how we take our every day life for granted. We always have clean water and electricity. Iraq wasn't a third world country far from it. What a pointless war, so many lives lost. With all the bombing, lack of electricity, it is amazing that her exam marks were excellent. This book should be available in all schools in the UK so that teenagers can see how much lives are affected by the mistake of war and how lucky they are.

Great book, timely delivery.

Easy to read, holds your interest and provides a look into the life of a family affected by the war,

I was disappointed that I wasted \$10.00 on this book. It is a collection of blogs written by an Iraqi

teenager over the course of 2 years while she lived in Mosul during some of the worst fighting in Iraq. Calling this a book is really a stretch. Although I am impressed by her grasp of English at such a young age and I think she was much more mature than her contemporaries in the U.S. and elsewhere given the situations she had to deal with on a daily basis. What I have the biggest problem with is that this book/her blogs are put out as truth. There were several times she claimed that American Soldiers killed people she knew. The only proof she had of this was hearsay, and she didn't go into the circumstances leading up to these people's death. So in her writing it seemed to come across as U.S. Soldiers were just indiscriminately killing Iraqis (young & old) instead of setting up the situation that maybe these people were caught in the cross fire of a firefight between U.S. forces and insurgents. Either way, I could respect her disdain and hatred of the American Soldiers if she showed the same contempt and hatred for the insurgents, terrorists and her fellow Iraqis who were participating in the sectarian violence that plagued Iraq after Saddam's fall. Instead she would mention car bombs and the like but never ranted about the perpetrators of those acts. The book had a forward by an elderly fellow who had acted as a human shield at the beginning of the war (he wasn't Iraqi). So it started the book off with a feeling of anti-American rhetoric. The most disturbing thing to me was at the end of the book there is a timeline of events and on September 10, 2007, this book claims that the U.S. Military arrested an 8 year old girl in Mosul and that she was only released after many people protested outside of the building she was being held. Now I'm a vet of the U.S. Air Force. I did not support the Iraq War nor am I a fan of G.W. Bush or his administration. So for people who may think I'm a conservative with an agenda, you'd be wrong. I just think that this book is irresponsible. What she says in her blog is being put out as fact. If the book only dealt with her thoughts and feelings that would be one thing, but she spoke many times of political things she didn't know anything about and her stories were never corroborated with any reliable outside sources who may have witnessed the shootings or deaths she spoke of. If you really want to read this, get it from your library and read it for free.

This book was brought to my attention by one of my high school students and I can't thank her enough for it. This is a terrific YA book about a young woman who begins a blog about her life in Mosul, Iraq at age 15 in 2004. The topics she covers are the profound and banal, but life isn't very banal when bombs kill people everyday and the family can't go out of their homes. Under the pseudonym, Hadiya, the young woman talks about how life has changed drastically during and after the war. Under Saddam it was a place where the family could go out for ice cream at midnight. Now the courage to go out for ice cream at all was unnerving. Hadiya doesn't mince words about how the

United States ruined Iraq. She points out the difference between Shi'ite and Sunni were practically unknown to Iraqis and didn't matter, now it matters quite a bit. Life is hard and a place where people die everyday and gasoline and food prices have skyrocketed. Relatives die and people are scattered all over the Middle East as refugees or residents of Iraq. The ability to leave is a hard fought battle with many consequences. Even Hadiya tries to pick her major based on the idea that some professions are more portable than others. The book comes from original blog posts from the Iraqigirl website. There are some questions and answer sessions with her editors and some students from the same area. Great job and I'm so glad my student told me about this wonderful book.

This was a fabulous insight into the war from a teenager's point of view. Certainly it was somewhat anti-American but just what I would expect from any teen anywhere faced with the circumstances. Aside from the war issues and issues that just come from living in Iraq, it was wonderful to see that teens are teens no matter where they live, no matter their religion. There are the same issues with siblings and parents and friends. This book is basically her blog published and I loved when there were comments from off the blog included at the end of posts. It was interesting to see what she was dealing with in terms of readers as she created her blog. I also appreciated the odd explanation of events that she would refer to but not explain. Hadiya's voice is nothing short of poetic. The inclusion of pictures and the odd piece of school work was just gravy. I loved this book and have tried to contact the author and tell her so. Who knows if she will ever receive my email or where she might be now but I hope she reads this review and knows that her words touched my heart.

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