



The Day Nina Simone Stopped Singing

Darina Al-Joundi , Mohamed Kacimi , Marjolijn De Jager (Translator)

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Raised on Charles Baudelaire, *A Clockwork Orange*, and fine Bordeaux in 1970s Lebanon, Darina Al-Joundi was encouraged by her unconventional father to defy all taboos. As the bombs fell, she lived an adolescence of excess and transgression, defying death in nightclubs. The more oppressive the country became, the more drugs and anonymous sex she had, fueling the resentment by day of the same men who would spend the night with her. As the war dies down, she begins to incur the consequences of her lifestyle. On his deathbed, her father's last wish is for his favorite song, "Sinnerman" by Nina Simone, to be played at his funeral instead of the traditional *suras* of the Koran. When she does just that, the results are catastrophic.

In this dramatic true story, Darina Al-Joundi is defiantly passionate about living her life as a liberated woman, even if it means leaving everyone and everything behind.

The Day Nina Simone Stopped Singing Details

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From Reader Review The Day Nina Simone Stopped Singing for online ebook

Ara Tozlikian says

Wonderful story.

If you want a glimpse of the lives of Lebanese secularists during the civil war, this is the book for you. Value of women, idea of liberty, religion as a tool for destruction: check, check, check.

Renee says

When I started reading this book I thought it was a funny coming to age story where the dad is joking about getting your period and warning you about bras. By the end of the book I was so moved and so in awe of the life of this woman the coming of age idea seemed to vanish in the air.

You don't understand violence that you don't see or experience in your lifetime. If it didn't happen in your country or to someone you know it's almost like it doesn't exist. This book was a real eye opener about a civil war that really happened, even if no one I know lived through it or no one's family had to come from their country to mine. Taking place during the Lebanese War Ms. Al-Joundi describes the war through her eyes and all the things life has happen even if war is occurring: sex, drugs, and terrible violence and all.

Anna Holland says

Ha sido un a lectura curiosa, 1/62 obligado porque mañana tengo examen y eso. Tampoco ha sido el libro de mi vida, y haberlo leído en francés me ha quitado mucho mucho, porque me he enterado de lo justo, pero bue :)

Mattilda says

This book starts out as something of a quirky coming-of-age story, but soon becomes one of the best books I've ever read about war, the hypocrisies of power, and the continual impact of violence, in this case the violence of the Lebanese civil war and its aftermath. Take this excerpt: "People recognize their loved ones by their clothes only, they were too disfigured. I held women up as they identified the dead, and I wept and vomited. It went beyond rage, grief, and even madness. I felt as if my own throat had been caught. What frightened me most in Sabra weren't the dead but what could be read on the faces of the living. I had just turned 14."

Sabine says

La guerre du Liban de l'intérieur, un livre dévoré !

Sodatime says

un tord boyaux ...

dragonflyy419 says

The book describes the life of an independent woman in war torn Beirut, Lebanon. She is raised by a secular freedom loving father who brings her up to live life as a “liberated woman.” Al-Joundi does just this while also going through the difficulties of living through war and the constant changes that occurred in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s. It is a tragically comical coming of age story.

Al-Joundi tells a brilliant story of her life and of her father. It is filled with clever quips, enlightening statements, and brilliant imagery. Much of the discussion follows war and the simple state of growing up as a young woman

Scenes of death and war are interspersed throughout this book. One moment you will find yourself laughing at a simple scene and the next there will be a scene of such dread.

The remarkable descriptions and language used within the book make it an endearing tale and one that reaches deep into your being and stays with you. The imagery is unforgettable and the story is one that is different. It goes beyond war and discusses the issues a wild and reckless female encounters in life. The part that makes it so fascinating is that she is attempting to live an independent life in a place where it is not common for a woman to be independent.

This book is a coming of age tale that has you laughing out loud and also shocks you to the core. It is much more than just a story of a woman coming to age: It is a tale of a woman living in a war torn country, a tale of a woman’s love for her father, a tale of a woman’s desire to be free in a country that is anything but, and it is a tale that shouldn’t be ignored.

Overall, I couldn’t put this book down once I picked it up. It is not only a worthwhile read, but one I think most people would enjoy thoroughly. Though I must warn that there are some scenes describing not only war, but sex and it can be rather graphic. It is a poignant, beautiful, and funny memoir that is by far worth the time it takes to read.

Josée R. says

Tombée dessus par hasard alors que je cherchais un oeuvre contemporaine écrite par une personne Libanaise d'expression francophone à traduire vers l'arabe. Toutefois, le témoignage est un genre qui ne m'a jamais vraiment attiré, mais ce livre est particulièrement poignant et déroutant, cru et violent, qui ne laisse pas le lecteur indifférent.

Alexandra says

Le contexte historique d'une guerre incivile.

Une histoire personnelle de liberté, de libertinage et de liberticide.

Et les deux qui s'enlacent et se complètent pour ne faire qu'un. Une union intestine au point que l'un ne pourrait exister sans l'autre: ni Darina sans la guerre ni la guerre sans Darina.

On ne sort jamais indemne d'une guerre ni de cette écriture d'ailleurs, qui, crue et intense, mêle drame et humour comme se côtoient la vie et la mort.

Zain Duraie says

BRILLIANT BRILLIANT BRAVE BRAVE STRONG AND HEART WRENCHING!

Xenia Germeni says

να βιβλίο για την Νταρνα...και για τους αισθανονται Νταρνες..κι όμως καμια δεν μπορε να πει οτι ζησε οσα η Νταρνα Αλ-Τζουντι. Οι περιγραφές της Μ?σης Ανατολ?ς των δεκαετι?ν '70 και '80 με τη ματι? μας ομορφης και ατιθασης νεαρης..Που μαθε να ζει ελευθερη, που ζησε τη νεανικη ζωη της στο μαξιμουμ-πολεμος, ναρκωτικα, εκδιωξεις, θρησκεια, σεξ, ερωτας, καταπιεση, εξευτελισμος, ελευθερια..Τελικα για μας τις Δυτικες γυναικες που ολα ειναι τοσο σχετικα ευκολα και που η επανασταση μας ειναι να ξεμυτισουμε απο την πορτα του σπιτιου μας οταν ειμαστε 12 ? που μπορει να καπνισαμε το πρωτο μας τσιγαριλκι στα 14 ? 16 ? ακομη και να καναμε σεξ στα 14 ολα ειναι σχετικα και ανεκτικα στο Δυτικο πλανητη μας...Ο αγωνας και η χειραφετηση μιας νεαρης γυναικας στο 20ο αιωνα και στον 21ο στις μουσουλμανικες χωρες ακομη εχει πολυ δρομο! Οσο αφορα αυτο που συμβαινει και σημερα στη Μεση Ανατολη, προτεινω να διατρεξετε τις σελιδες του βιβλιου για να καταλαβαιτε οτι τιποτα δεν αλλαξε ολο αυτο το διαστημα και η Ιστορια, δυστυχως επαναλαμβανεται...

Audacia Ray says

Intense and horrifying, all about freedom and punishment and chaos.

It's a lightning fast read, and left me wishing there was more of it and more in depth from the writer. The style is very matter of fact - this terrible thing happened, then another. It will definitely stick with me, but I wish the writer was more introspective.

NADIOUCHKA says

Une écrivaine libanaise : Darina Al-Joundi et un écrivain algérien : Mohamed Kacimi, se sont joints pour ce roman à quatre mains : « Le jour où Nina Simone a cessé de chanter ».

Darina y raconte son enfance dans son pays en pleine guerre civile.

Mohamed nous explique sa coopération dans l'Avant-Propos : « Au mois de juin 2006, j'organisais une manifestation autour de Beyrouth dans un théâtre parisien. A l'issue des représentations, une jeune femme, habillée en noir, timide, effarouchée même, est venue vers moi, elle m'a donné un manuscrit et dans dire un mot elle a disparu. Je l'ai lu le soir-même. C'était une lettre ouverte à son père, qui avait rêvé pour sa fille la plus grande des libertés et qui allait justement, à cause de cette liberté, connaître la pire des servitudes. (...) Toute la presse nationale a parlé de sa performance ».

Ce livre n'est pas très épais (158 pages) mais s'il est vite lu cela ne l'empêche pas d'être étonnant de vérité, très fourni en événements vécus par Darina.

On apprend ainsi, que par son père, la femme devait être LIBRE. TOUT était permis : « Quand nous posions la question à notre père, il répondait :

- Vous êtes des filles libres. Un point c'est tout. « page 24).

D'ailleurs, l'écrivaine va connaître toutes sortes d'expériences dès sa plus tendre enfance : la boisson, la cigarette, la sexualité... Elle ne manque d'ailleurs pas de tout raconter par le menu à son père qui la conseille en conséquence. Ce qui prime d'abord dans ce livre, c'est l'amour : celui d'un père pour ses filles - celui de ses filles envers lui et surtout celui de Darina.

La première scène se passant lors de la veillée du corps de son père est particulièrement touchante car Darina prononce les paroles suivantes : « De derrière la porte, je criais à mon tour :

- Ce Dieu n'est pas le Dieu de mon père ! Il n'a jamais eu de Dieu, mon père. Il m'a fait jurer : Ma fille, fais gaffe à ce que ces chiens ne mettent pas du Coran le jour de ma mort. Ma fille, je t'en prie, je voudrais du jazz à ma mort, et même du hip hop, mais surtout pas du Coran ; je veux bien lui mettre Nina Simone, Miles Davis, Fairouz, et même Mireille Mathieu, mais pas de Coran. (...)

J'ai enlevé la cassette du Coran et j'ai mis à la place Save Me de Nina Simone. » (page 9).

Et le livre continue sur un témoignage humain, touchant. Élevée dans la guerre, elle ne sait plus vivre sans, au point de toucher à la drogue...

Si ce livre est émouvant (en passant outre les scènes de sexe très osées : ça fait partie de la libération de la femme, la fillette a de bons professeurs et les explications sont bien explicites), c'est qu'il relate très bien la violence ; c'est une forme de confession que l'histoire de cette jeune libanaise qui a connu de nombreux tourments alors que son but était la liberté, toutes les libertés.

Ce drame a été mis en scène pour le théâtre d'Avignon et a connu un grand succès d'autant plus que Darina elle-même y a joué son propre rôle.

Je ne m'attarderai pas plus sur ma critique mais je voudrais dire que le lecteur ne peut pas rester indifférent. A mon avis, cet ouvrage est « un cri de vie ». Darina endure toutes les souffrances même conjugales et son expérience démontre bien la bataille pour l'égalité entre hommes et femmes. Heureusement qu'elle rencontre aussi des moments de bonheur et d'amour.

C'est en prenant connaissance du Festival d'Avignon et de la présence de cette inconnue qu'est Darina Al-Joundi qui a enthousiasmé le public avec cette pièce du même nom que j'ai découvert le talent de cette écrivaine.

Si le récit est dur, très dur, cela ne fait que conforter la vérité des faits cités.

L_manning says

Unsettling doesn't even begin to describe this book. For such a short book, it was a hard read. This book follows the life of Darina Al-Joundi. Born in Beirut in 1968, her life was one of constant chaos. In times of almost constant war, Darina grew up never knowing if she'd live to see the next day. Her family constantly moved around to avoid the danger around then, but often ended up back in Beirut.

I can't say that I enjoyed this book per se, but it was a good book. Darina had no identity to speak of. Because of her parentage, she had no claim to citizenship anywhere. She was told to speak one language at

home and one at school. With no stability due to the war, her life was one of chaos. Thinking she would die at any moment, she threw herself into drugs and sex with anyone she ran into. Honestly, I thought it was a wonder she survived to tell her story.

This was certainly a sad tale. It was also cautionary to some extent. The horrors of extended war are detailed. More than anything though, I felt like Darina really missed out on security and stability while growing up. Without those things, she bounced from one thing to the next trying to find what could make her feel good about herself. This book was harsh, but I think she was brave to be able to tell about everything that happened. I am curious to find out if she has found some peace living her life on her terms now. I hope she has.

Book won in online contest.

Tuck says

another winner from the feminist press (if ya ever just want to reach down in the sack and snag a good book with your eyes closed, you can't go wrong hardly with FP) about growing up in lebanon. it aint pretty. funny how humans can make life and culture about as miserable, dangerous, sad, unsustainable, bigoted, greedy, ugly, sadistic, unhopeful, heartbreaking, deathly...just look at baltics, balkans, oklahoma, south dakota, ukraine, st petersburg, buchenwald, inner mongolia, bolivia and in this story;s case, levant.

but despite it all individuals, families, clans, tribes, nations still embrace love, empathy, art, food dance nourishment of the body and soul, to keep "this machinery of joy" running and laughing and drinking and singing and fucking and having kids and writing books, despite ourselves.
for a good look at lebanon, israel, palastine,and syria, this book is good place to start.
