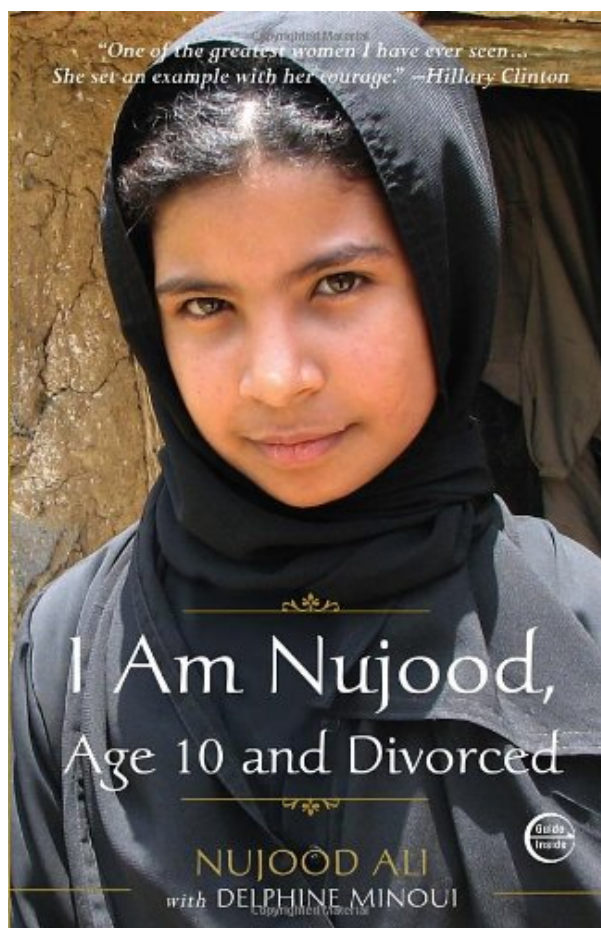
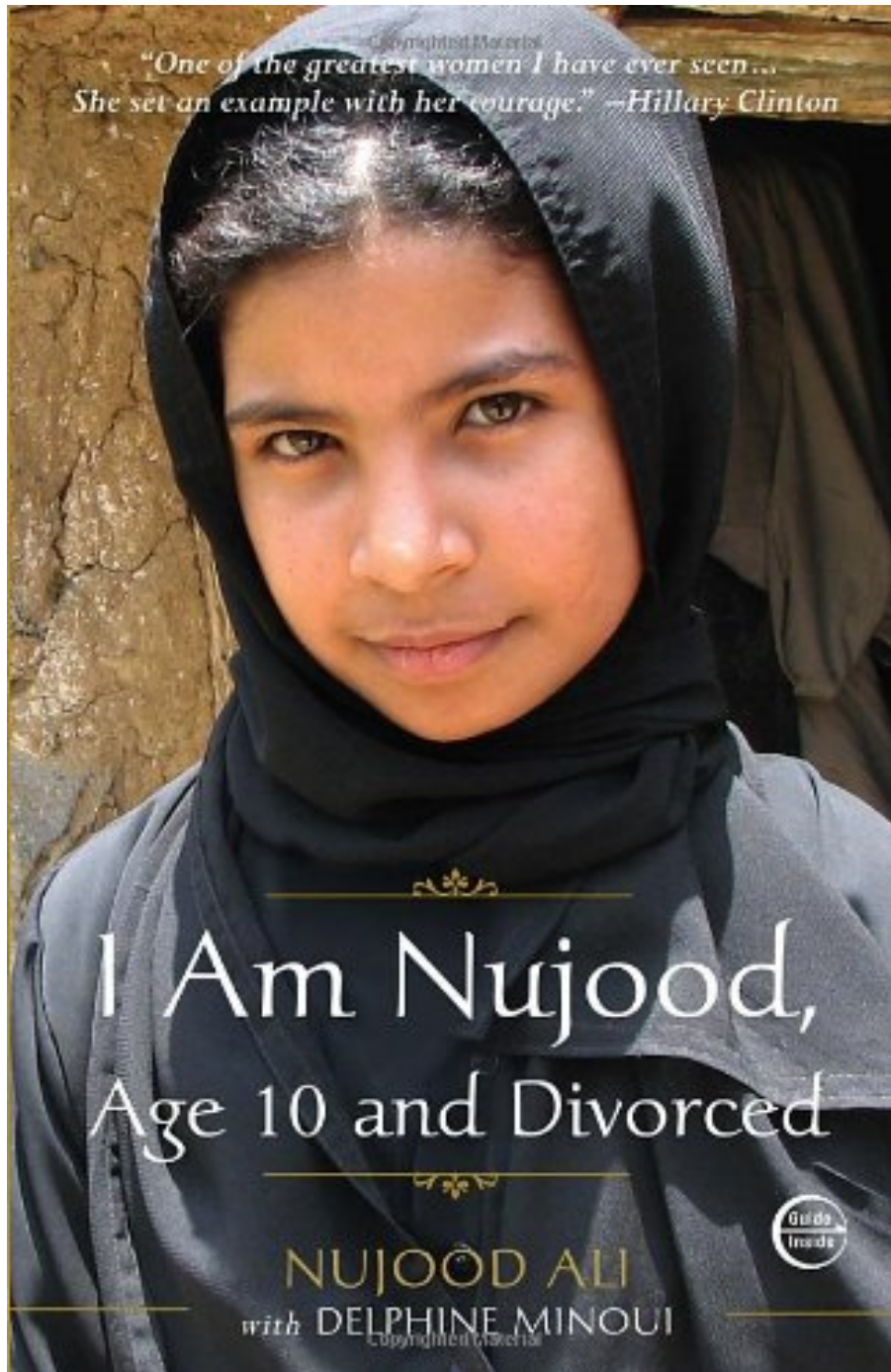


I AM NUJOOD, AGE 10 AND DIVORCED BY NUJOOD ALI, DELPHINE MINOUI



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“I’m a simple village girl who has always obeyed the orders of my father and brothers. Since forever, I have learned to say yes to everything. Today I have decided to say no.”

Nujood Ali's childhood came to an abrupt end in 2008 when her father arranged for her to be married to a man three times her age. With harrowing directness, Nujood tells of abuse at her husband's hands and of her daring escape. With the help of local advocates and the press, Nujood obtained her freedom—an extraordinary achievement in Yemen, where almost half of all girls are married under the legal age. Nujood's courageous defiance of both Yemeni customs and her own family has inspired other young girls in the Middle East to challenge their marriages. Hers is an unforgettable story of tragedy, triumph, and courage.

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Features

- Great product!

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A startling, eye-opening glimpse into another culture

By K. Harriger

This short book, which I read in a single sitting, astounded me with its narrative and left me feeling a mix of anger and incredulity upon completing it. Before reading this book, I'd read about Nujood Ali, who has been described as possessing a "precocious self-assurance." After reading the book, it's clearly an accurate description of a young girl who refuses to accept a situation that she knows is wrong. In doing so, it turns out, she opens the door for long-overdue change.

Nujood doesn't live an easy life as a young girl in Yemen, but she still finds time to enjoy her childhood. Her father, who has two wives, seems incapable of supporting them on his meager salary, and the rest of the family must find ways to make ends meet. Her father, in an effort to ease his own burden, agrees to an arranged marriage with a man three times Nujood's age, with the condition that he not consummate the marriage until one year after her first period. The new husband breaks that promise on the very night of their

wedding, and from that point forward continues to beat her and rape her nightly. This is not consensual sex, but child rape, pure and simple.

The story that unfolds from that point forward is nothing short of amazing. It's also heartening to learn that right from the beginning of her ordeal, several Yemenese men stepped forward to stand up for her rights, even while knowing that Sharia law and local customs would be working against them. It is also important to realize that educated, empowered women in these countries are also willing to step forward and challenge such destructive customs and laws, and one of them, Shada Nasser, becomes her lawyer and champion.

It is my hope that this book, and the fall-out from the divorce trial, will continue to help change the lives of women living within this type of culture, although perhaps not quickly enough. No matter how many times I read about situations like this, I still find it astounding that a man can rape a woman, as was the case with Nujood's older sister Mona, and it somehow becomes the fault of the woman that shame comes to the family name. How can this possibly be? How can a young woman be raped in her own home, and somehow it becomes her fault, and the males must protect their own honor by condemning the females? This horribly twisted logic (or the complete lack of it, truth be told) boggles the mind, and books such as this one help break down barriers by exposing dark secrets.

Nujood's father continually justified marrying off his ten-year-old daughter by pointing to the example of Muhammad, who married Aisha when she was but six, and consummated the marriage when she was nine years old. Some apologists insist that Muhammad didn't marry her until she was nine, but Aisha's own words, found in Bint al-Shati's *The Wives of Prophet Muhammad*, tell a different story.

"The Prophet married me when I was six years old and the marriage was consummated when I was nine. The Prophet of God came to our home in company with men and women who were among his followers. My mother came [to me] while I was in a swing between the branches of a tree and made me come down. She smoothed my hair, wiped my face with a little water then came forward and led me to the door. She stopped me while I calmed myself a little. Then she took me in. The Prophet of God was sitting on a bed in our home, and she sat me in his lap. Everyone jumped up and went out, and the Prophet consummated his marriage with me at our house."

It is time people stopped justifying this as a cultural/religious custom, and call it what it is: a crime against children that continues today, 1400 years after it was given credence by a man who claimed to be godly. Please understand that my comments here are not an attack upon Muslims, but on a custom that enjoys religious support because it was associated with the founder of a religion. It may have been a custom in times past, but it remains no less of a crime. Books like this are important because they expose this crime to the rest of the world.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A young girl struggle against overwhelming odds

By The Good lif

Many people do not realize in most Arab nations girls are often married before their teen years or even puberty. In theory they are brought into the household of their husband's family as a sister until they are old enough to take on the role as wife, in actual practice most are little more than a slave to the household. Often the husband will force the child into sexual relationships. Many young girls become pregnant at the onset of puberty before she is mentally or physically ready to have a child.

Nujood's story is of one a child traded into marriage in exchange for money and to avoid the honor destroying shame brought to the family and especially the father if a girl is raped. Such a rape to an older sister had already shame and great financial loss to the family.

Nujood was an extremely young and naive small village girl. I feel her lack of fully understanding how severe her task of seeking a divorce was the thing that made her discover the great strength she had within herself to try this unheard of feat. That she found such understanding and helpful support in the legal system is encouraging.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

10 Years old and divorced!

By Nicole

This story takes place in Yemen and it is a true story. The Yemeni Culture is so very different from ours in the West. Child trafficking is almost a common occurrence and very often, no one pays much attention to it. This ten year old girl, Nujood, was a very brave little girl and is bringing it to the attention of the world by writing this book. Don't miss it. It is so shocking and so hard to believe. Because of her bravery, other little girls are coming forward and asking for divorces. Imagine!! At the time, she was clad in a niqab and a black robe that were miles too big for her but she had no choice because she was a married woman.

I think what shocked me the most was that one little twelve year old girl died within three days of her wedding night. As if that wasn't bad enough, the girl's parents were so distraught over her death – not because their daughter was dead – but because they had sold a defective 'product' – they actually offered the groom their seven year old daughter. We ask, is that possible? Yes, it happens! Honor in these families is the be all and end all of their lives. If a daughter brings shame on the family, she is killed, tortured or punished severely. As a mother, I can't even phantom this but such is the worth of women in these countries. They are always – always – under the leadership of their men, fathers, brothers, uncles, etc. They cannot go anywhere without the express permission of a man and also accompanied by a man known to them. Disobedience is punished very severely.

The courage of Nujood is almost unbelievable but she did run away and went to the court house to speak to a judge. It absolutely amazed me that he was so horrified at her situation – thank God – but it still was a shock for me. Girls in Yemen are supposedly not to be married until the age of fifteen but it is a very well accepted practice to sell girls as young as seven for marriage..... horrible!

There are programs (such as Entelak) now to help these girls who are forced out of school – they cannot attend school if they are married. Some progress has been made to help these girls continue their education but these programs are not welcomed by the men in their lives.

Delphine Minou has supplied notes for the convenience of the reader. I really took advantage of these notes to try to understand – they really helped. Also at the back of the book, there is a Reading Group Guide which is fascinating to read all by itself and helps us more, not to accept, but to understand these practices that are so apparently "normal."

As shocking as this book was, I am so glad that I read it. These girls need a lot of help and oodles of prayers!

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