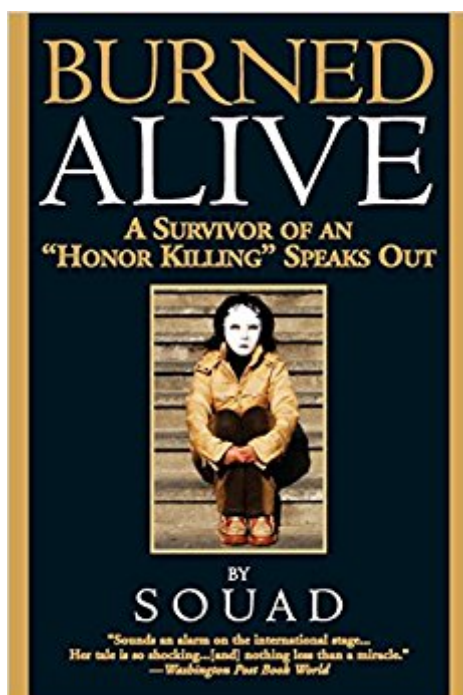


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# Burned Alive: A Survivor Of An "Honor Killing" Speaks Out



## Synopsis

When Souad was seventeen she fell in love. In her West Bank village, as in so many others, sex before marriage is considered a grave dishonor to one's family and is punishable by death. This was her crime. Her brother-in-law was given the task of meting out her punishment. One morning while Souad was washing the family's clothes, he poured gasoline over her and set her on fire. Miraculously, she survived, rescued by women of her village, who put out the flames and took her to a local hospital. Horribly burned over seventy percent of her body and still denounced by her family, Souad was able to receive the care she needed only after the intervention of a European aid worker. Now in permanent exile from her homeland, she has decided to tell her story and reveal the barbarity of a practice that continues to this day. *Burned Alive* ...is the first true account ever published by a victim of an "honor crime." Souad's inspiring testimony is a shocking, moving, and harrowing story of cruelty and incomparable courage...and an inspiring call to action to end a heinous tradition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When she was 18, her brother-in-law poured gasoline on her and set her aflame. She was meant to die because she was pregnant and unmarried, bringing disgrace to her parents. But she survived, and now, 25 years later, "Souad" bears witness to the horror of "honor crimes" that kill thousands of women every year in many countries across the world. She begins with a bitter account of what it was like to grow up female in a remote Palestinian village in the Occupied Territory. "Being born a

girl was a curse." Unlike her brother, she never went to school. Her father beat her daily. She worked as a shepherd, a "consenting slave." She barely glimpsed the city, where women were free to work and move around. Her rescuer was Jacqueline, a European aid worker, who was in the Middle East to care for children in distress and who arranged for the badly burned young woman to be flown to Switzerland, where she and her newborn baby received medical care and support. Today Souad is "somewhere in Europe," married with three children, her testimony still anonymous for her protection. Occasional chapters by Jacqueline fill in the wider context, but it's the immediacy of the shocking first-person narrative that drives home the statistics. Like Mende Nazer's *Slave* [BKLD 1 03], this book is a call to action. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Souad lives with her husband, and must still keep her identity and location secret from her family

Riveting, fast-paced and well written, *Souad*, the victim of an attempted honor killing in the West Bank during the late 1970s, penned her memoir, *Burned Alive*, some twenty years later, from an undisclosed location in Europe. Souad believes she was born in 1957 or 1958, but cannot be sure, as records of females births were not kept in her village. A family member, determined to reclaim the honor of their family and their village, attempted the honor crime in which Souad nearly died. As Souad awaits death in the hospital, suffering from severe burns, she meets a woman determined to help her. The Swiss founded organization, SURGIR, familiar with cases such as Souad's rescues her. In 2003, at the time of writing her memoir, some twenty-five years after the honor crime, Souad assumed her age at forty-five years old. Souad describes in vivid detail, the treatment of females in her village; for her safety, she refuses to name the village. Book translated to English by Judith Armbruster in 2004.

This book will educate you about the terrible plight of being born female in many countries, but especially the Middle East Arabic countries. In these places being born female dooms one to a lifetime of unspeakable abuse, neglect, and little more than a life of servitude totally resembling what we know as slavery, being treated from infancy to the grave as someone's property, with no personal rights or freedom to make even basic choices such as whom one will marry, or how one structures their daily routine of work chores. Read this book and weep for these poor souls. If possible contribute to Humanitarian organizations trying to help stop these outrageous customs and practices. If you can do nothing else attempt to educate others about the horror of Honor Killings,

and pray that these countries will put an end to these atrocities as soon as possible. Please do read the book. Thank you most sincerely. Kathy R. Blackman

It's hard to believe this kind of barbarity and ignorance still exists in our 21st century of supercomputers, space flights, and mega universities but, sadly, it does. And it shows once again how religion and traditions can cause enormous amounts of pain, fear, and horror. How this courageous woman managed to survive and prevail is truly amazing. And then to have her own mother join in with the cruelty and ignorance is mind-boggling. Some parts of the book are slow-moving but her experience with the acid attack are graphic and horrifying. But the truth needs to be told.

An almost unbelievable story of this young ladies tragedy and how she survived and is now thriving. I was shocked by how Muslims can so brutally kill members of even their own families in the name of this religion. It is intolerable and I commend this young lady for speaking out against honor killings!!

I really liked this book. The victim lived in the Ghaza strip in a small village. There she grew up traditional where women had not rights and weren't educated. She grew up in a family where unfortunately the mom only had one boy and a string of girls. Not all of her sisters grew up and as one of the older girls she was allowed to live after she was born. She ended up being the victim of what they call in her society honor killings. She didn't die right away and was left to her own devices in the hospital where her family was still trying to kill her. She was found by a Western humanitarian aid worker and with the help of the aid worker was transported to Europe. By a miracle she survived and slowly made a life for herself and found happiness. Even in Europe it was hard for her to find a way to live in a world where women have rights and are respected. She didn't know how to live independently and over years had to learn how to live as a person who has rights and can make her own choices. She also learned a new language and a bit to write and read. Her upbringing was so ingrained in her that she struggled decades to find a way to live in peace. Great book and I can only recommend it. I did find it sad that even today there are places where women are treated so badly even though the only crime they committed was being born a female.

She is a very brave woman. I first heard of honor killings when it happened here in America. I already knew about forced slavery and children being sold but this was beyond my understanding. I

knew women had no say in the west bank and other countries. I did not fathom mothers smothering their infant girls. Souad you are blessed. I am an evangelical Christian. I don't hate you or your people. God has a Son named Jesus who will make things right. That time is coming soon. Keep telling your story. In Christ's love.

Very good but the last 1/3 of the book was a little short on details and had me wondering about a few things.

From reading this book, I felt great compassion to this young lady (the author) who experienced the most horrific abuse from the family who was supposed to be her protector because of the honor killing mentality in some Muslim countries. For outsiders like me it is impossible to imagine what is going on to these women by their own families and no one seems to stop them.

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