



In a Time of Monsters: Travels through a Middle East in Revolt

Emma Sky

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Emma Sky's *In a Time of Monsters* is transportative, introducing a region rife with conflict and hope.

For many, the Middle East seems abstract, or a homogeneous idea associated with turmoil and violence. While in some places that may be accurate, *In a Time of Monsters* is deft about drawing distinctions, and highlighting differences, between the countries, regimes, activist movements, and cultures of the Middle East.

Sky, who was opposed to the Iraq War, volunteered to help Iraqis rebuild their country in 2003. She ended up staying for seven years. Ever since, she's been enamored with the region and its complex politics. Even after returning to London, she found ways to visit the Middle East in a personal capacity. *In a Time of Monsters* is the culmination of her travels over five years, delving into the historical context and contemporary zeitgeist of various countries.

A fantastic blend of personal anecdotes and interviews with factual material, every subjective observation in the book is strengthened by objective information. Sky is expert at addressing US and British military interference in the Middle East and the deadly consequences and long-lasting legacy of such actions. Her outsider's perspective on US actions is illuminating, and several interviewees comment on then-president Barack Obama and his presidency.

One of the book's most intriguing elements is the sense of interconnectedness that it imparts. Actions in one country are shown to directly impact another nation, which in turn influences yet another country, and so on. Sky's book becomes a reminder that we are a part of a truly global community and should treat each other with respect and care, regardless of nationality.

MYA ALEXICE (July/August 2019)

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