



## **Invasion Occupation Awakening**

*Haitham Alsarraf*

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When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, many traumatic experiences were molded. Each chapter details different characters that undergo the seven-month occupation and consequent liberation of the country. Through turmoil of war to self-examination, the characters come to grips both psychologically and philosophically with their newly acquired environments and face their freshly constructed realities. In them, their humanity is not only invaded and occupied, but it is metamorphosed and awakened.

## **Invasion Occupation Awakening Details**

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Author : Haitham Alsarraf

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## From Reader Review Invasion Occupation Awakening for online ebook

### Connie Anderson says

I was married to a Lebanese man. We met in 1984. He had extremely horrifying dreams from when the U.S. laid siege of Beirut in 1982. His family kept hearing air raid to go to the underground parking while bombing took place. We were still together when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Like one girl in the book said, all we learned came from CNN (and they basically kept the truth from us). This book tells ten different vignettes about what different people endured and saw first hand. This book is not for the faint of heart, as any veteran of war can explain. Even so, I believe that these stories needed to be told. Americans back home can't understand what people in that part of the world see, hear, and experience all of the time. So many children grow up knowing nothing but war and hatred all their lives. These stories scared me into getting nauseous, if not straight out terrified out of my wits. I was only reading about the atrocities that most of the teens and young adults who were the main characters in the stories had to deal with. Their experiences all change each and every one of them in some very profound way. I am glad that Mr. Alsarraf, through each of his stories, let us get a taste of what people in the Middle East have been going through for decades (after WWII when Palestinians were displaced from their homelands to create Israel). We are so spoiled here when we have to go crazy over a parking space close to the door.

\*This is a Goodreads FIRST READS book.

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### Kris says

'Invasion Occupation Awakening' was not quite what I expected. I was expecting stories and/or accounts from people who had lived through and experienced the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Although Alsarraf provided stories the reader was left unsure which, if any, were real-life accounts, were an amalgamation of several stories with the names changed, or were works of fiction. As a reader, I know Alsarraf felt deeply about the topic but I couldn't connect with his writing style or the stories he shared. At times I felt the sadness, frustration, and horror he wanted to convey but I rarely wanted to continue reading. Although the topic is important, 'Invasion Occupation Awakening' would not be my first recommendation to someone wanting to learn more about the conflict. I am glad I had the opportunity to read it through GoodReads though.

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### Thamia says

I have recently finished reading Haitham Alsarraf's *Invasion Occupation Awakening* and what a book it was. It was a page turner and it kept me wanting to anticipate every sentence. It was one of those books that I didn't want to end, so I was savoring every word. This collection of short stories that took place during the seven-month occupation of Kuwait is nothing but a true reflection of what really happened. Each character takes you through his personal journey of transformation.

Haitham's style of writing made me see every detail in the scene, every feature of his characters. It made me feel every moment of panic and every second of hatred. I felt for all the characters and saw things from different sides, different nationalities, and sympathized with all of them. I may have hated several characters

at the beginning, and it is justified, but cleverly Haitham “reveals” what really moves them, and what their true intentions are.

It is compact and intense, really moving the reader on different levels. I have personally teared-up reading several chapters. The way he leaves the endings open for the reader’s own interpretation is what really makes it extra special.

I loved it and really recommend it. Looking forward to his next creation.

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### **Gwen says**

The stories in Invasion Occupation Awakening were interesting, true to life and informative. The author, Haitham Alsarraf, was thoughtful in that he included descriptions of what unfamiliar Arabic words and phrases meant, which was very helpful.

However, the book was hard to follow in some places. English words were used differently than their normal usage and this made the flow of the book difficult for me to follow. I had to stop and figure the meaning of the particular word in the context of the rest of the story. This is the reason for the four star rating instead of five.

If you wish to get an insight into the Desert Shield and Desert Storm campaigns this book is a good one for you, just be aware if you are used to everyday English usage you will be having to concentrate on the more obscure meanings of some of the words chosen in the writing.

I received this book free from Good Reads First Reads.

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### **MonaAlzufairi says**

Invasion Occupation Awakening talks about real events that occurred in our country of Kuwait. He has showed us how Kuwaiti people stayed in Kuwait in order to help it resist the Iraqi occupation. I was not born at that time, but the book helped me to know more about the history of my country.

My overall assessment is that it is an outstanding and excellent book because it captures the realism of the war and how different civilians experienced it. Also, this book contains advanced words that have helped me to learn. I am proud we have a Kuwaiti writer who writes in English. There are only few of them. The style of the writer is very wonderful. He uses an interesting and attractive style of words and ideas that compels the reader to read every chapter in a sitting.

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### **Paulette says**

Excellent writing by Mr. Al Sarraf. These stories are important for us to hear and ponder.

The author did an excellent job of capturing the psychological as well as spiritual impact of war on people's lives. He captures many perspectives throughout each story. I got the sense that he was a young man during the invasion and that he held onto, and pondered deeply, what happened to himself and those around him during that time. There is no condemnation of any group of people or individual in his writing. He simply tells the stories and allows the story itself to bring its own awakening to his characters, as well as to his readers.

Although it is dark and full of horrifying scenes - war - I found myself oddly uplifted. I found an awakening for myself through his words. I highly recommend this book of stories to any who were involved in the invasion. And if you did not live through it, I very highly recommend you read this and other accounts of that time.

Learn, ponder, awaken.

'It was a testing time for her, for she tested her own ideologies of what she thought were true and false. Tested in ratio to what were false and true.' From the Chapter 'Metamorphoses'

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### **Yesim Insel says**

Watching TV in the late summer of 1990 was like seeing a live reality show to many. "Operation Desert Storm" was the name of that show. What really was happening in Kuwait was illusionary to everyone, including a younger myself.

Reading this book was like finding a time machine to those dark days. As soon as I finished the first episode of Invasion Occupation Awakening, I did nothing but staring at the green waters of the Gulf - the same Gulf witnessed the pain and the fear.

Haitham Alsarraf tells naked stories. His descriptions pull you inside the pages. You find yourself looking at a mirror with along with Mariam. Or, you might be sitting in a restaurant watching Youssef and his friends ordering food not knowing what will happen next in their lives when they take a detour.

Compared to many wars of modern times, Kuwait invasion may be valued a short one. But, not according to Kuwaitis who bravely stayed in their own land. This book is about them. Stories are from their heart, pains are from their aching souls and the facts are from the shameless history.

This book is probably the only one you can read about these people's truth of what really happened that year.

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### **Nazreen says**

Picked it up while strolling through charming little Shuwaikh Market yesterday, from an unmanned stall whose caretakers had to be phoned by a neighborhood employee and asked for its price (Friday, slow day pfft). I quickly checked for expat perspectives and glanced through a chapter titled "The Tea Boy". As I read though, found the book exquisitely peppered with stories revolving around diverse characters throughout the seven-month occupation. The author's occasional errors from writing in a second language though visible to pedants do not interrupt the flow of his storytelling and ability to captivate. A lovely find for a Saturday read

in August when invasion-time memories are patriotically recalled and honored.

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### **Frederick Wilcott says**

I think this is an outstanding book for several reasons. First, I grew up in Kuwait and left the country just weeks before the invasion occurred. The author captures the feeling of the early 1990's perfectly. I can completely identify with the characters in the opening chapter. Private school boys that at best have only read about war. And then completely thrown into a war situation literally overnight.

Second, I identify with how this war changed those who were and chose to remain in the country throughout the occupation. Many of my friends in Kuwait did so and as I have heard their recollections over the years I hear in their voices and see in their eyes how the things they saw and experienced emotionally altered their lives forever.

Third, I really admire how the author wove these stories through the lives of several characters and their unique experiences each dealt with in various parts of the city. For me I can easily envision myself exactly where the author puts them. For someone that does not know Kuwait I think it is also an excellent book worthy of taking the time to read and reread.

Overall I applaud the author for waiting to write this book now as opposed to just after the end of this war. I think it is a book that took many years to gestate. I recommend it enthusiastically for anyone interested in this genre, a history of this war and what war can do to the human psyche.

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