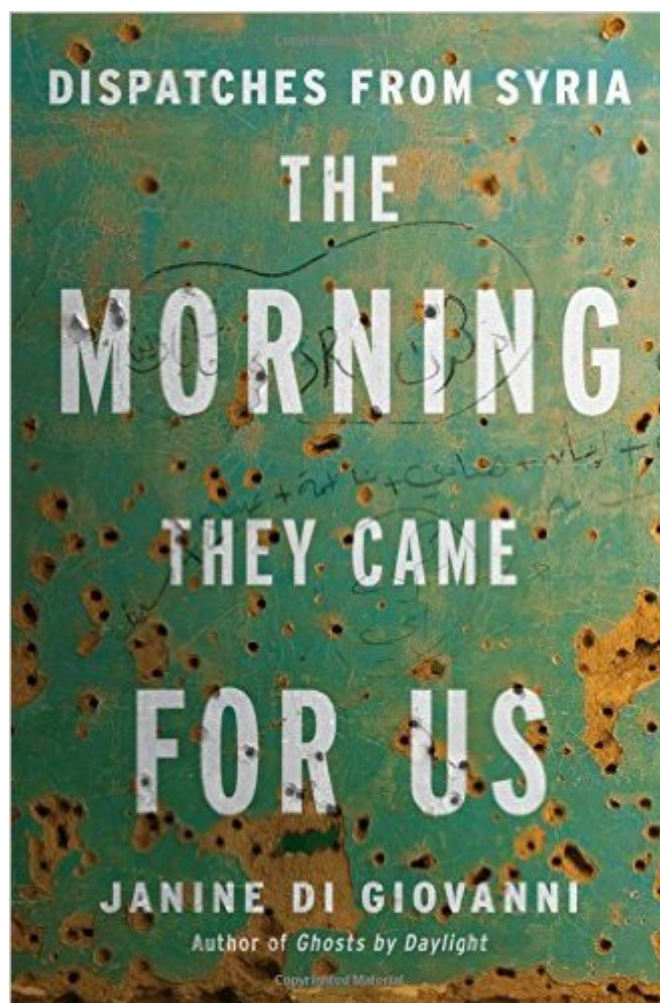


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# The Morning They Came For Us: Dispatches From Syria



## Synopsis

Once in a decade comes an account of war that promises to be a classic. Doing for Syria what Imperial Life in the Emerald City did for the war in Iraq, *The Morning They Came for Us* bears witness to one of the most brutal, internecine conflicts in recent history. Drawing from years of experience covering Syria for *Vanity Fair*, *Newsweek*, and the front pages of the *New York Times*, award-winning journalist Janine di Giovanni gives us a tour de force of war reportage, all told through the perspective of ordinary people—among them a doctor, a nun, a musician, and a student. What emerges is an extraordinary picture of the devastating human consequences of armed conflict, one that charts an apocalyptic but at times tender story of life in a jihadist war zone. Recalling celebrated works by Ryszard Kapuszcynski, Philip Gourevitch, and Anne Applebaum, *The Morning They Came for Us*, through its unflinching account of a nation on the brink of disintegration, becomes an unforgettable testament to resilience in the face of nihilistic human debasement. 30 illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Haunting and memorable, *The Morning They Came for Us*, chronicles the brutal reality of a nation in peril and moral descent from the perspectives of ordinary people. Their stories brought everything to life for me and left me with a chilling and unsettling feeling in my stomach - the same way I feel when I watch a horror film... except it was real. Highly recommend for a thought provoking read!

So with all of the headlines, I really knew very little about the war in Syria. Why and how did it start?

Who are all of these different groups? Ms Giovanni provides all of that information through an agonizing presentation of the people she met along the way during several visits to Syria and the lives destroyed by the war. Her background as a correspondent in the Bosnian war gives her great credibility in comparing all of the most recent wars while most of the world stood and watched from the sidelines. I recently read a book where the author pondered whether any author could write about war in a manner in which we would stop them. Ms Giovanni has written it. It is up to the rest of us to read it and start doing something in any way that we can.

I never write reviews but this book deserved one. I received this book 24 hours ago and I was glued to it. It's moving, emotional it shows the ugly side of humans yet brings the best in them out. Beautiful just beautiful.

At page 30, di Giovanni interviews a rape victim (WARNING: the following content may be disturbing to some readers)"When we first met, she cowered when I touched her hand in greeting. She seemed broken, vulnerable. She would not use the word rape. She told her story in staccato. But after a while of sitting quietly, her face changed into a myriad of emotions-sadness, pain, then the heavy flood of memory, and finally revulsion."At page 77 she interviews a survivor of the Daraya massacres who describes:"the bombed-out tailor's and greengrocer's shops, the blocks of flats with their top floors blown off, the rank trash piles on corners, uncollected. There was an unmistakable smell of rotting corpses inside houses."These quotes give a good sense of what "The Morning They Came For Us" is about. Di Giovanni has stuck her neck on the line in the most horrific conflicts of our time. Here she visits Syria repeatedly, collects stories from all sides of the conflict and recounts through her characteristic, touching style. Other books have analyzed the causes and the events of the Syrian civil war. I have reviewed "Burning Country" and "Blood Year". This book contains some analysis but the focus is on people's feelings-their fears, their suffering and the incredulity at what is happening."The Morning They Came For Us" deserves every bit of the praised heaped on it. And them

These dispatches from 2012 remind us that while war is waged collectively, on whole populations, suffering is on an individual level, felt by each and every person. In this respect, this book is as much about all war as it is the civil war in Syria. Torture, death, maiming, injury are parts of all wars, but the suffering visits each one by one, and is endured individually. Identities are destroyed by war, which this book so graphically illustrates. The writer's accomplishment here that she has made this

so clear. I've been involved in humanitarian and human rights work for decades, and worked with torture victims from the Bosnian war. However, the graphic descriptions of torture here are harrowing and difficult to read, and the suffering of the victims difficult to comprehend. Torture can be justified for any reason in the minds of those who use it. This is made clear by the comments of the perpetrators here. In this respect as well, this book is about the use of torture throughout history; the motives are the same, the victims dehumanized, their suffering justified. It winds together the human capacity to justify torture, and war, and to rationalize its use: from early human history to the Nazis to the Khmer Rouge to the Russian gulags to our own country's use by the Bush administration, its use is always justified in the minds of the torturers. Also, in this and other ways, this book shows how the fabric of society--the collective experience of whole populations--breaks down and becomes fragmented in war. Like in Bosnia, these Syrian people who once identified as "Syrian" broke down into smaller tribes and factions. War destroys commonalities and can make neighbors and relatives enemies. Last, what further makes this such a painful read is that the Syrian war is ongoing--still going strong and mercilessly. For those who are surviving through it, their suffering continues day after day, by each and every one.

Discovered the book from the NY Times review and wasn't disappointed. A lot has been written about Syria over the years, but nothing took me inside the country like this. These stories really are haunting and promise to stay with you long after you finish the last page. Will recommend to friends.

I am not finished with it yet but it is pretty intense so far. Somewhat disturbing in parts but that is what it is all about. Gives you a good feel for what is really happening in the middle east for the western folks who haven't got a clue.

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