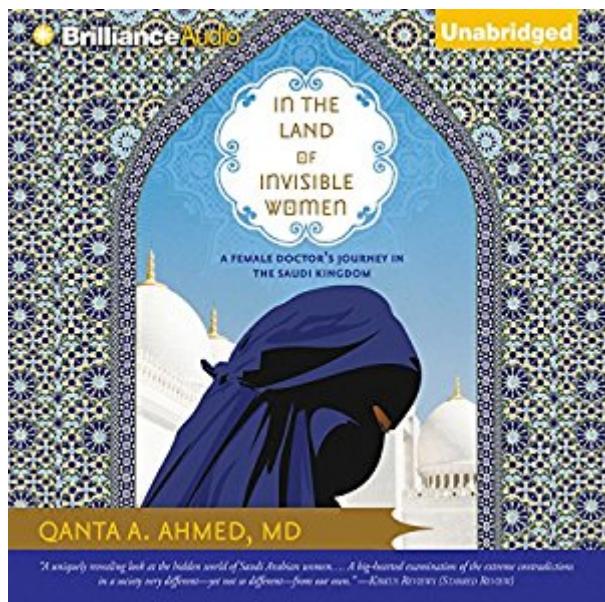


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# In The Land Of Invisible Women: A Female Doctor's Journey In The Saudi Kingdom



## Synopsis

The decisions that change your life are often the most impulsive ones. Unexpectedly denied a visa to remain in the United States, Qanta Ahmed, a young British Muslim doctor, becomes an outcast in motion. On a whim, she accepts an exciting position in Saudi Arabia. This is not just a new job; this is a chance at adventure in an exotic land she thinks she understands, a place she hopes she will belong. What she discovers is vastly different. The Kingdom is a world apart, a land of unparalleled contrast. She finds rejection and scorn in the places she believed would most embrace her, but also humor, honesty, loyalty, and love. And for Qanta, more than anything, it is a land of opportunity. It is a place where she discovers what it takes for one woman to recreate herself in the land of invisible women.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a Saudi female myself and lived my whole life in this country I found it a very detailed book, you could really understand how life is in the Kingdom and Islam, as Dr. Ahamed in my opinion reflects the true meaning of a moderate Muslim. It's beautifully written and I do recommend it for those who want to have a sense of life in Saudi Arabia and Islam.

I almost gave up on this book after just a few pages, frustrated by the sub-par writing and editing. Editing is one of those jobs that's invisible when done well. Not here. But: I'm glad I kept reading. The substance of the book is compelling and important, and the author's perspective is sane and

intelligent. If you adjust your expectations of writing as art, you can enjoy and appreciate this book. I only wish it were dystopian fiction and not 21st century reality.

In the Land of Invisible Women: A Female Doctor's Journey in the Saudi Kingdom Dr. Ahmed provides an intimate look at life in Saudi Arabia through the eyes of a highly trained female physician. She graciously dealt with the severe restraints upon her personal and professional life there because of her being a woman, and described encouraging views of some significant challenges to them. I was especially touched by her description of the Hajj which had a profound effect on her as it put her in touch with her Muslim roots. Having lived for eight years in Indonesia in the sixties I was particularly impressed with the contrast between these two Muslim countries. During my time in Indonesia women enjoyed a great deal of freedom, and freedom of religion was guaranteed by the constitution.

I purchased "In the Land of Invisible Women" because I was interested in learning about Saudi Arabia and how women's rights were influenced by Sharia law. In this respect, the book succeeded. I am taken aback by some of the rights that women in Saudi Arabia are denied. For example, women cannot drive, which effectively places their comings and goings in the hand of male relatives. I believe that this book is a good read for the informational value alone. I think that people in the West should read and learn about the harrowing situation in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries so that we can oppose the oppression of women there. However, I was distracted by all of the flaws in the book and the author's writing style. For one, the book was WAY too long. It could have been more effective at around 200 pages (instead of 400). The author threw in tons of superfluous writing and felt the need to be overly descriptive, so much that it went on for pages and pages. Furthermore, I feel that Qanta is fairly unlikeable throughout the narrative. She is often nosy and overly judgmental of her Saudi friends. She often wavers on her opinions, sometimes deeply condemning the laws in Saudi Arabia, and other times supporting the laws for keeping her safe and railing against Western courtship ideals. The last thing, which others have pointed out, is that she seemed oddly preoccupied with designer fashion and wealth, which did little to add to the narrative. Overall, I would recommend this book just for sheer information value. I enjoyed, but despite its relatively many flaws, I can give it only 3 stars.

I read this over the weekend, based on the Dianne Rheme interview and I couldn't put it down. The language is very descriptive in a very personal and equally unconventional way. There are dozens

of images and scenes that I can picture vividly. This was a real joy!

There are so many better books on this topic. You don't need to buy this one. First, as many other reviewers have said the language in this book is entirely too flowery. The book would have been way better at half the page length. The book reads as if the author took out an old list of SAT words and was trying to work every single one into the book. The sentences are contrived and overly complicated and add nothing to the actual book. The other major problem I have with the book is that while the author is an intelligent person, she isn't particularly insightful. The concept of a book on Saudi Arabia from the prospective of a Muslim Westerner has promise but this isn't the right author for this vehicle. For one thing, the author comes off as strangely naive. In the beginning of the book she leaves for Saudi Arabia knowing less about the country that I do, and I'm not Muslim. For someone who is so highly educated and apparently has travelled to other Muslim countries before moving to Saudi Arabia, she seems oddly ignorant. At the same time, she also seems oddly sympathetic. She spends surprisingly little time in the book really talking critically about Saudi society. Instead, she spends whole chapters romanticizing the misogyny and poverty that is rampant in the society. Despite the fact that she is a Westerner and has benefited from the many freedoms that we have, she seems strangely sympathetic to the rampant sexism and racism that exists in Saudi culture. She seems to feel that even though she would likely never had had the chance to be a doctor in Saudi Arabia, she somehow lost out on not having lived the repressed life of a Saudi woman. And even more disturbing, she seems to have no real insight into this clear inner conflict which exists within herself. Personally, this author should stick to what she is good at, science and medicine, and you should hold onto your money and buy a different "Westerner goes to live in Saudi Arabia" book.

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