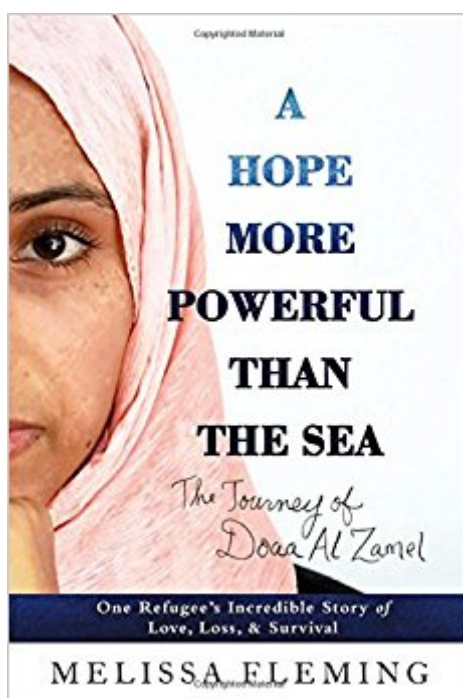


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# A Hope More Powerful Than The Sea: The Journey Of Doaa Al Zamel: One Refugee's Incredible Story Of Love, Loss, And Survival



## Synopsis

The stunning story of a young woman, an international crisis, and the triumph of the human spirit. Adrift in a frigid sea, no land in sight—just debris from the ship's wreckage and floating corpses all around—nineteen-year-old Doaa Al Zamel floats with a small inflatable water ring around her waist and clutches two children, barely toddlers, to her body. The children had been thrust into Doaa's arms by their drowning relatives, all refugees who boarded a dangerously overcrowded ship bound for Sweden and a new life. For days, Doaa floats, prays, and sings to the babies in her arms. She must stay alive for these children. She must not lose hope. Doaa Al Zamel was once an average Syrian girl growing up in a crowded house in a bustling city near the Jordanian border. But in 2011, her life was upended. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, Syrians began to stand up against their own oppressive regime. When the army was sent to take control of Doaa's hometown, strict curfews, power outages, water shortages, air raids, and violence disrupted everyday life. After Doaa's father's barbershop was destroyed and rumors of women being abducted spread through the community, her family decided to leave Syria for Egypt, where they hoped to stay in peace until they could return home. Only months after their arrival, the Egyptian government was overthrown and the environment turned hostile for refugees. In the midst of this chaos, Doaa falls in love with a young opposition fighter who proposes marriage and convinces her to flee to the promise of safety and a better future in Europe. Terrified and unable to swim, Doaa and her young fiancé hand their life savings to smugglers and board a dilapidated fishing vessel with five hundred other refugees, including a hundred children. After four horrifying days at sea, another ship, filled with angry men shouting insults, rams into Doaa's boat, sinking it and leaving the passengers to drown. That is where Doaa's struggle for survival really begins. *Hope More Powerful Than the Sea* is an emotionally charged, eye-opening true story that represents the millions of unheard voices of refugees who risk everything in a desperate search for the promise of a safe future. Melissa Fleming sheds light on the most pressing humanitarian crisis of our time and paints a vivid, unforgettable portrait of the triumph of the human spirit.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Flatiron Books (January 24, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250105994

ISBN-13: 978-1250105998

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 24.8 x 216.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 85 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #11,579 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > Law > Constitutional Law > Human Rights #15 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Human Rights #22 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Emigration & Immigration

## Customer Reviews

"[Doaa's] inspiring story is urgently required reading." — People — "Some books should be required reading. A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea is one of those books. Not simply because the tale of a Syrian refugee is so timely, or the topic so important. But because of its lessons about persistence, selflessness, and hope, which are the heartbeat of this true story." — Christian Science Monitor — "Written by an official in the U.N.'s refugee agency, this deeply affecting book recounts the story of a young Syrian, Doaa al Zamel... Fleming brings a moral urgency to the narrative. Doaa is now safe in Sweden, but Fleming pointedly asks, 'Why is there no massive resettlement program for Syrians—the victims of the worst war of our times?'" — The New Yorker — "Fleming deftly illustrates the pain of those who choose to leave Syria" | [She] recounts their narrative with compassion and without melodrama, and her book is ultimately a story of hope | The message is to try to humanize one young woman, to tell her tale so that the migrant crisis does not become a bunch of nameless, faceless people fleeing a war but human beings with families, with needs, and with desires." — Newsweek "Poignantly illuminates some of the reasons why our fellow humans embark on such perilous journeys to reach Europe." — The Times (UK) "A moving story of survival...required reading." — Tribune magazine (UK) "Melissa Fleming's tale of a young Syrian woman's search for peace and safety is a book written for our times. On every page, loss and hope tangle. On every page, the human toll of the worst humanitarian crisis of our time is painfully, heartbreakingly brought home. This is an emotional read, at times painful, but it is above all a poignant tribute to hope, to resilience, and to the capacity for grace and generosity that dwells deep in the human heart." — Khaled Hosseini, author of The Kite Runner and And the Mountains Echoed "An astonishing and important story." — Neil Gaiman "I think Melissa Fleming is one of the most important people in the world. As the world's foremost advocate for refugees, she has worked tirelessly to put a human face on the greatest crisis of our time. There is no more important calling than this. Millions have been displaced by the wars in Iraq and Syria, and their situation is

desperate. Yet everyone who has worked with refugees is amazed by their resilience and spirit. There is no better way to demonstrate this spirit than with the power of a single story. Melissa has found that story. The story of Doaa is dramatic, riveting, and ultimately hopeful. A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea provides a portrait of the refugee crisis that cannot be matched by any amount of cable news coverage." • Brandon Stanton, Humans of New York • "We need hopeful stories more than ever, and this incredible real-life story about Doaa, a Syrian refugee, is one that will open hearts." • Bustle "Doaa's incredible fight to live, one of only a few refugees to survive four days in a sea of corpses, is recounted by Melissa Fleming in her moving new book." • New York Daily News

MELISSA FLEMING is chief spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). She travels to war zones and refugee camps to give voice to the millions of people forcibly displaced from their homes. She is frequently quoted in international media, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, and NPR. She first told Doaa's story on the TED stage and her talks are featured on TED.com.

Thank you for writing this emotional story. It should be required reading for everyone...

If you are looking for a book that poignantly captures one of the largest humanitarian crises of our time through the lens of one young Syrian refugee's experience - this is the book for you. A powerful story of both loss and hope, it's as heart wrenching as it is uplifting. Also a page turner, I couldn't put it down. Beautiful book.

This book does a lot of things very well: impart empathy onto the reader, tell the story of someone who endured incredible loss with incredible bravery, and allow the reader to step inside someone else's shoes and consider what they would've done in their situation. Though the prose is a tiny bit clunky, the plot is so astounding that I still tore through this book in less than a week.

Told from the point of view of one family, this book beautifully paints a picture of Syria before and during the protests that threatened the Bashaar regime. These protests, though peaceful to begin with, became violent when the Syrian military killed peaceful protesters began using tear gas, and then bullets, to deter protesters. As an all out war broke out in Syria, many became refugees. This is the story of one such family. As you read, you learn what a typical Syrian family is like--an insight

into the family organization and values. Their journey to Egypt is one of the earlier ones and is in stark contrast to those that came later. Reading about Doaa and her fiancé and their desire to build a better future is a story we can all connect with--and the lengths they go to to get there are lengths many of us would go to as well. To be free, to leave a war torn country behind, to find work and make a good and honest living, to support an extended family....these are honorable dreams. What happens next is horrific and no one deserves the massacre that follows. I finished this book after reading several other books (mostly focusing on refugee camps) and am now, more than ever, moved to do more for refugees in my country and abroad. My heart goes out to Doaa and millions like her. I am thankful for this book and the way it was written--a story told to open hearts and minds.

Highly recommend. Doaa's story is wonderfully told in a way that will keep you turning pages while gaining a better understanding of what was really going on in Syria to lead to such a refugee crisis. Buy this book, read it, then pass it on to a friend.

This story really helped to bring the humanity of the Syrian refugee crisis into perspective. It helped me to understand how the crisis came to be and why it was necessary for so many to flee...and to keep moving once they were in nearby countries. This woman's story is incredible. I'm amazed at the resiliency of so many refugees.

I'm halfway through this book. It is from the point of view of a young girl and then the same girl as a young woman. It shows so clearly that her family as so many others just wanted to make a living and buy food and take care of their families. But the government totally annihilated everything. The government brought tanks and started to demolish buildings that people were still living in. This family did not want to leave Syria but if they stayed they were afraid that they would be killed or worse. It is heartbreaking but told in a way that is very easy to read. I'm learning a lot from this book. About how this never ending war started and why it continues and how all the refugees would love nothing more than to go home but it's all been destroyed. At least their home towns have been destroyed. I'm at the point in the book where the heroine is just getting on the boat to try and get to Europe. Very nervous about this.

The writing was a very dry, documentary style, but it is a story that everyone should read as it is so relevant in our world right now. Everyone needs to know what is happening to people in the region.

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