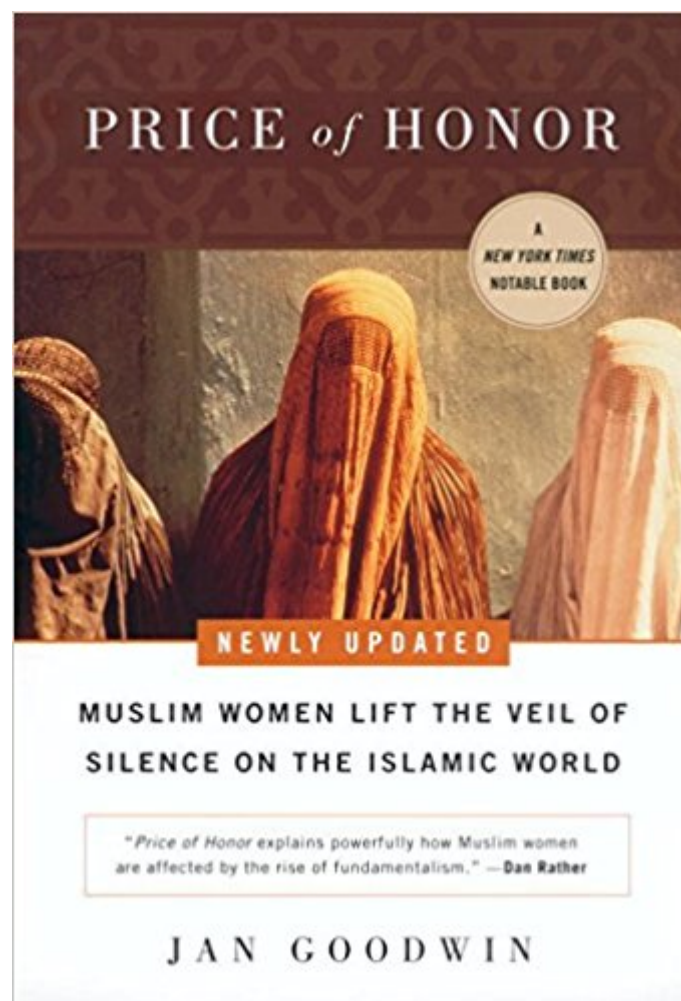




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# Price Of Honor: Muslim Women Lift The Veil Of Silence On The Islamic World



## Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK “Explains powerfully how Muslim women are affected by the rise of fundamentalism.” —Dan Rather  
In recent years, the expanding movement of militant Islam has changed the way millions think, behave, dress, and live, but nowhere has its impact been more powerfully felt than in its dramatic, often devastating effect on the lives of women. Award-winning journalist Jan Goodwin traveled through ten Islamic countries and interviewed hundreds of Muslim women, from professionals to peasants, from royalty to rebels. The result is an unforgettable journey into a world where women are confined, isolated, even killed for the sake of a “code of honor” created and zealously enforced by men. Price of Honor brings to life a world in which women have become pawns in a bitter power game, and gives readers a provocative look inside Muslim society today—in their own words.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Spurred by her experiences as a young girl's mentor in Pakistan, American journalist Goodwin ( Caught in the Crossfire ) here surveys 10 countries in the Islamic world, interviewing hundreds of women and many men, concluding that the treatment of women is a barometer of the twin forces of modernity and Islamic extremism. Her book is solidly researched (she relates that Islam originally enhanced women's rights) and stylishly written, though her dependence on long quotes makes a few sections ponderous. Some of her stories are shocking: the sad fate of a girl bartered in marriage at age 11; the sexual abuse in jail of numerous women in Pakistan arrested for sex outside marriage ; the death threat against a Jordanian television commentator who criticized a smear campaign

against women. Goodwin's account also includes thoughtful interviews with an Afghan resistance leader trying to use Islam to fight fundamentalism and an American-educated woman in the United Arab Emirates trying to balance freedom and faith. Goodwin suggests that the United States, overly dependent on imported oil, should beware of Islam's growing fundamentalism. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this astonishing book, the product of four years of living in the Islamic world, journalist Goodwin ( *Caught in the Crossfire* , LJ 3/15/82) examines the movement that is aggressively spreading a fundamentalist version of Islam throughout much of the world. Her interviews with Muslim women in ten countries both fascinate and disturb, for their candor reveals the movement's profound and often devastating effects on them. Maintaining that Muslims understand the West far better than Westerners understand Islam, Goodwin warns against the Western ethnocentrism that could jeopardize both security and energy resources. Instead, she urges greater understanding of "the world's fastest growing religion" and of its treatment of women, who "are the wind sock showing which way the wind is blowing in the Islamic world"--or as one interviewee put it, "the canaries in the mines." The work itself enhances this understanding. A necessary purchase.- Cynthia Widmer, Downingtown, Pa.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The first thing to know about *Price of Honor* by Jan Goodwin is that it was written in 1995 and last updated in 2003. This is a substantial challenge for a book that is all about the "current status of things" in the Middle East. It's certainly understandable that the entire chapter on Egypt seems fairly dated as it talks about the long term issues of the "current regime" and Mubarak. It was only February 2011 that the revolution happened, and I'm reading the book in August 2011, so even a freshly written book would have trouble keeping up with that. Similarly, reading the book's guesses about Osama bin Laden and where he is are understandable since he died in May 2011. It's harder, though, to read about the long term issues of Saddam Hussein, who died back in 2006. It's even more challenging to be reading about the face-offs between Yasser Arafat (who died in 2004) and Ariel Sharon (who has been in a vegetative state from a stroke in 2006). Those things happened so long ago to seem almost ancient history in a sense of modern politics. The book is greatly in need of some updating. So let's put all of that aside and accept that this book is a glimpse into the mindset of what it was like to be in a variety of Muslim locations in 2003. The book goes chapter by chapter through life in Egypt, Pakistan, Iraq, Jordan, and other locations. In each place the author talks to

real men and women about the lives they are leading and the struggles they face. She generally tries not to judge and lets the individuals speak for themselves. One man admits he keeps his college educated wife locked in a tiny apartment with his two children and aging parents. He feels he is not being cruel; far from it, he feels he is gentle and kind with her, and is keeping her safe from the dangers he sees all around. The story heard time and time again is that women are thought of as weak-brained inferiors who need the guidance and protection of men. If a man feels physical discipline is the only recourse for a given situation, then that is his duty. As one grandmother sadly stated, watching her granddaughter being beaten, "a man has the right to beat the women in his family. There is nothing you can do." The story intertwines a great deal of politics which can sometimes make the reading become dry, especially when the politics are far out of date. Still, it's important to put much of the situation into the oil-context, as Goodwin explains. The US used to only import 36% of its oil in 1973, and by 2003 it was up to a whopping 60%. Most of this of course came from the Middle East, fueling a vast gulf between rich and poor. The US also uses 25% of the world's oil. The US's thirst for oil in vast numbers is in essence causing many of the problems seen in the Middle East, because the US has not learned how to be as frugal and efficient as other nations have done. As the poor get poorer, women and children are often the ones to suffer. Men do not want to let women out of the house, or to see a male doctor, and instead they die. 97% of pregnant women in Pakistan are anemic, causing high maternal deaths during and after childbirth. 72% of women in Pakistan who end up in police custody end up being abused. 80% of sex workers are HIV-positive and most only survive 2 years once infected. They are continually replaced by other women who have no other recourse to feed their families. Many chapters in the book explain how the laws intended to protect women from harm end up preventing them from being able to feed their families or themselves, and they die. In Saudi Arabia a woman can't stay alone in a hotel room unless she produces documentation proving she's not a prostitute. This could cause women not to be able to get to a distant hospital that took more than one night's journey. Baby girls are thought of as worthless burdens, since they cost the family dowry money and their skills are all handed over to the husband's family once she marries. Many fathers blame the mothers for the birth of a child - even slapping them when the sex of the newborn is announced - even though it's the man's sperm which determines the gender. A woman who produces girls often gets pushed aside for a "second wife" who will hopefully do better. In Islam, the prophet Muhammad had about 13 wives including one who he first began sleeping with at age 9. Modern Islamic teachers usually instruct that a male should have only 4 wives maximum, treat each one equally, and the purpose of having more than 1 is to help support widowed and abandoned women who would otherwise be without care. However,

Goodwin's research found that in practice most Muslim men she met tended to "trade up" every few years, getting younger and younger versions, and neglecting the older wives as they acquired the newer ones. While Muslim instructions should indicate that the existing wives should always be consulted and give permission for any subsequent marriage, Goodwin found that many men engaged in "secret second wives" who were only found out about by the main family at the man's funeral. I think Goodwin does a reasonable job of trying to make the point that \*Islam\* as a religion has many great teachings about treasuring women, caring for them, and giving them rights. Muhammad's own first wife was a businesswoman, smart, well educated, and he was loyally monogamous to her for the 25 years of their marriage, until she passed away. Goodwin finds, in her interviews, that it is the \*interpretation\* by various men who often have never read the Koran that causes many of the issues we find in our modern world. In addition, the horrific poverty and continual violence found in some locations make it unlikely that women would be treated well regardless of what religion was in place. I give the book four stars because the dated material is so infiltrated throughout the book and often has to be read past in order to get back to the meat of the story. I would love to see an updated version of this that retained the stories and polished out some of the long political what-if scenarios which are no longer applicable.

I am a US citizen, blond, pampered and naive. Due to geographical relocation, to further my husband's career, I have given up working as a Registered Nurse in a busy emergency department in the US. Living in the Middle East in I have plenty of time, I decided, to educate myself as to why am I actually wearing the abaya and what is it's purpose? This book was an absolute wealth of knowledge. It made me think and look at the United States in a completely different light. I appreciated the author's vast knowledge and the reinforcement of teachings of the Koran versus man's interpretation of the Koran. I admired these women and their courage. I often had to put the book down to reflect on exactly what these women endured. My emotions ran from deep compassion to complete madness. Truly wonderful read and has heightened my quest to learn more about where I am currently living.

Broken down into chapters that are by country, this book looks at the everyday lives and conditions for women in Islamic countries, whether they be Islamic majority ruled by secular law, or ruled by Islamic law. Although since this book was written, leadership and governments have changed in some of the countries, it is still a fascinating read. Whether you are interested in the rights of women, societies in countries that are completely different from the U.S. (or other Western

countries), or even current events, this is a must read. A great resource book.

Jan Goodwin is a intelligent, fair, clear and compelling author of a journey through 10 Islamic countries who explores what place women hold and what it's like to be a woman in each one. With political awareness, compassion, and honesty she reveals the brutal truth of what it's like to be a woman of Islam subject to oppressive governmental regimes and fundamentalist pressure to strip them of any rights beyond the functions of motherhood and being a spouse to the chosen gender: the men. I am disturbed by what I've learned from this book but grateful to have had my eyes opened.

Amazingly shocking book. This is my second purchase and updated since my first copy years ago. I needed another copy as the previous book was worn out from friends/family sharing. The stories in this book are heart wrenching, and will heighten ones appreciation of our own freedoms that we so often take for granted. A must read.

This book was so riveting I really wanted more at the end. This book was published in 1996(?), so I really wish the author would write a current assessment of the state of Islam, and an update on some of the involved people that she wrote about. This author gives us a clear picture of the heart of Islam, and the factions that are bent on twisting the tenets of the religion for their political and personal power gain. The book gave me a new appreciation for being born female in America, and not somewhere in the Middle East.

"Price of Honor" is a shocking story because every word of it is true. It will make you weep and feel thankful that you live in a country that promotes free-thinking. The book includes factual information and true stories of woman who have zero rights. I did take off 1 star only because it was written in almost a text-book like format. But this would be a great book for anyone studying humanities, ethics or anyone interested in women's or social issues. If you're interested in more books along the same topic, I strongly recommend *Â Princess: A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*.

I like how it was written by someone who fully emerged herself into the culture to see how these women live. She is the voice that most of them will never get to speak and she tells their stories for the world to know. Amazing Book!

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