



## Thura's Diary: My Life in Wartime Iraq

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Nineteen-year-old Thura al-Windawi kept a diary during the conflict in Iraq, saying that it was her way of “controlling the chaos.” The diary, which documents the days leading up to the bombings, the war itself, and the lawless aftermath, puts a personal face on life in Baghdad. As Thura describes her life and that of her two younger sisters, she shows readers the many small details that illuminate the reality of war for Iraqi families, and especially for Iraqi children.

Reminiscent of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and the recent national bestseller *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*, *Thura's Diary* gives the perspective of a young woman caught in the midst of a turbulent time and puts a face, a name, and a voice to the word “Iraqi.”

## Thura's Diary: My Life in Wartime Iraq Details

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Author : Thura al-Windawi , Robin Bray

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## **From Reader Review Thura's Diary: My Life in Wartime Iraq for online ebook**

### **Esther says**

I had hoped this would be an educational and interesting account of Iraq during the war, from a young adult's point of view.

Instead it was a weakly written propaganda piece aimed at pandering to Western sensibilities without giving any real information or a sense of time and place.

Some reviewers compare it to The Diary of Anne Frank. Anne Frank's diary is an honest, heartfelt and unselfconscious account. We get Anne Frank warts and all.

Thura rarely describes her own feelings or those of her friends and family. She relays a rather superficial narrative of the events going on around her without showing even an immature insight into what is happening to her family and her country but does manage to include a few clumsy pleas for our sympathy.

I feel truly sorry for anyone, especially a child, having to suffer through the Iraq war but rather than eliciting my sympathy Thura's diary left me irritated by a spoilt middle class teenager who cynically tried to profit from a terrible situation.

Extremely disappointing.

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### **Rebekah Craven says**

This book was an autobiography by a girl living in Iraq during the Iraq war. This book was written as a series of journal articles written by 19 year old, Thura, about her experiences during the war. Thura's journal articles detail the experiences her and her family go through during the raid of Iraq by the American soldiers and the struggles her people and her own family face. Luckily the diary ends with Saddam's capture and the war ending, although the country still faces controversies as they attempt to rebuild their country after a long period of fighting and destruction. I really liked this book because I had never read anything like it. Before reading this book, I also did not have much knowledge about the war on Iraq, so this book provided me with a lot of knowledge on the subject and a different perspective. I also really liked the format of this book in that it was written as entries of Thura's diary, as well as it highlighted specific words in the text that went along with a foot note of the definition for students that might not understand the meaning. I think this book would be appropriate for fourth or fifth grade students because I think students any younger may be a little confused by the content and not be as interested in the content.

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### **Suzanne says**

This is the diary of a 19 y/o girl in Iraq from right before the "Shock and Awe" bombings (3/20/03)began until the end of 2003.

This book was difficult to read I was alternately horrified with what the US was doing and saddened by the destruction of Iraqi life.

Thura's family was middle class and pretty normal/stable. Her PhD father had been a Baptist although they were not fans of Saddam. The story tells how they coped with the death, destruction and constant fear. I was ashamed that the U.S. were the aggressors.

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### **Erin G says**

This book is a autobiography about a teenage girl named Thura living in Iraq with her family during times of war. She talks about the struggles and fears she had to go through living with the bombing and shooting in her neighborhood. She also must face a hard decision, will she stay with her friends in the city while the bombing are still going on, or will she move to the country side with her family away from all the chaos and stress.

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### **Stacey says**

I just started reading this book last night, but hearing Thura's perspective of being in a war is a powerful one. I remember watching Bush's "Shock and Awe" attack on TV. Thura account of how her family prepared for the war and lived through days of bombing is bone chilling. A must read.

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### **4willauer C says**

The book Thura's Diary is autobiography about a girl and her experiences during the Iraq war, it is an intense and thrilling book that shows you some different perspectives and challenges of war. Next Thura and her family knew that at any time an explosion could hit their building. Every night there were "series of explosions" that would happen through the night and continue "going off" until the night was over (48). Picture the felling of explosions going off within your proximity knowing that at any time it could be your last moment on earth. The bombs themselves were not the only thing Thura and her family had to worry about during the war. Anytime bombs went off it would cause a huge aftershock causing "glass" to "shatter" and hurt anyone in the same room (43). Since glass would shatter if bombs would go off it forced Thura and her family to leave the windows opening, even if it was freezing in the night. Not only did her family have to worry about Bombs and aftershock but there were possible health issues as well. The Iraqi government believed burned oil would confuse American misses, so there would be "black smoke" everywhere making "breathing difficulty" (26). If bombs and aftershock weren't enough, huge bursts of polluted air should do the trick. Overall Thuras experiences were bad, but not as bad as some other, since she didn't lose anyone in her immediate family.

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## **Aleya Portigue says**

i hated it

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## **Breana says**

### **Book review on Thura's Diary**

The book that I read was "Thura's Diary". It is written by Thura al-Windawi during wartime Iraq. She used this journal as a way out. It was her relief from all of the war going on around her. This is not like a normal teenage girls diary, this book will touch tons of people and make them take a step back and see how privileged they are. People around the world can understand what it is like to have fighting and war around them.

This book made me really look at my life and see how fortunate I am to be living the life that I am. For three months they had no idea what was going to happen next. They had no clue if they would see their friends and family ever again, "All of us are worried about Uncle Ali. Where is he right now? With the bombardment getting harder, what has happened to him? We started to think the worst - things we didn't even want to think, like; Is he dead? Maybe he is injured." If we don't talk on the phone or text a friend every couple hours we feel out of the loop and sometimes wonder if everything is okay, but they went weeks and months without talking to their loved ones. Not knowing if they will still be alive days later. "We were all looking around and listening for each bomb. How far away are they? How near? It makes me terrified, always thinking, Am I going to live or am I going to die? We didn't know if we were going to live or die last night." Thura worked really hard at what she wanted to succeed at in life and how she wanted to be known. She went to school in times that no one wanted to even leave the house. She studied in her free time. Unlike most of the kids in the United States she and her sisters cherished the fact that her parents paid for her to go to school and that she had the opportunity to get a good education. "I've heard that I'll be able to go back to college on Friday. I'm so happy." They were happy for the little things that they got that we dread like uniforms or books.

Thura wrote this book so you almost feel as though you are there. You feel scared for them, you are happy with them, you get to hear her whole thought. She didn't leave anything out for the book or for others to read, she was honest with how she felt about different things. You could hear the noises and see the war around you. "We saw plenty of Americans close up. One was around my age. He had beautiful sunglasses, and when I got close I could see he was very handsome. I don't know why this soldier in particular caught my eye- it wasn't just the colour of his skin, it was something about him, his way of standing. I had all sorts of questions to ask him." I could see this picture in my head so clearly. This is like a lot of other passages in the book that you can paint a picture in your head with.

It was a great book. I didn't want to quit reading it, even though I don't usually like to read. I would strongly suggest that everyone take time to read this book. Thura's way of looking at life really opens your eyes to how fortunate we all are, and also through everything that we go through we should be positive because it will get better.

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## **Medeia Sharif says**

This is the journal of a young Iraqi woman in her late teens writing about what she and her loved ones went through during the "shock and awe" bombing of 2003. The writing was dry and I didn't fully connect with

Thura--I wasn't sure if it was because feelings were lost in translation or if Thura's writing is naturally dry. The style didn't impact me emotionally, although I can still appreciate the book for it's gritty realism.

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### **Noorulhuda says**

I loved this book. Because it remind me of my country. And the characters they trying to keep them safety. That made me integrating to keeps reading and trying to know if they save in the war time. And I like the style of write it looks like a letter for someone. And I learned how to try my best to over difficulties. If you like the action you better to read this book

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### **MACKIE O'Brien says**

not good

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### **S10\_Abby Alley says**

Grade Level: 7 and up

This book is the diary of a nineteen-year-old Iraqi girl, Thura, during the days leading up to and the months after the “shock and awe” bombing in Iraq. Thura is very honest and consistent in her worries about what life will bring day-in and day-out. Thura’s family has to deal with leaving their home in near Baghdad for safer shelter, finding insulin for Thura’s diabetic sister, rationing water so they don’t run out, and figuring out whether or not it is safe to go back to school (what was left of it) once the bombing calmed down. In the afterward we learn that Thura was offered a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. While she was there, Saddam Hussein was captured and her reaction was probably the most politically open she was in the book. She and her family were excited, but she never explains why she feels that way.

Even though I think it is impressive a nineteen-year-old girl this book and I enjoyed hearing her perspective on that time period in her life, I was left unsatisfied. I was left underwhelmed (if that’s a word) reading about what went on in Iraq during the “shock and awe” phase President Bush enforced and what came in the days and weeks after that. I remember watching it on TV being horrified for all the innocent bystanders whose lives were either taken or completely ruined. Although Thura described some tragedies I didn’t feel emotionally connected to what she was going through. I wish she let us into her heart rather than just her head. Additionally, she didn’t get into how Iraqis felt about Americans or Saddam Hussein. It almost seemed like Thura didn’t blame the Americans for being there. It would have made the book more complete to get at least her views, if not a general idea about the Iraqi sentiments about the war. I think the best use of this book in the classroom would be to expose the realities and consequences of war. It might be interesting to compare newspaper articles from the same dates to Thura’s experience. One of the themes in this book is the oppression of women in Iraq, which is also a theme in Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis and even though the two books are set in different countries, they could be tied together through this theme.

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### **Gisela Morales says**

Una joven de 19 años Relata de forma Autobiográfica lo que fue la guerra de Irak desde su posición como joven adolescente, lo que sintió, lo que vio, como vivió con su familia la guerra. El escribir a diario sus vivencias le hacían mas llevaderos esos días y narra en él la experiencia de vivir en un país en guerra, como su familia afrontó esos días y asoma un poco como es vista y cual es la función de las mujeres en su país y en su religión. Al conocer unos periodistas de la BBC de Londres, estos la entrevistan y publican parte de su diario. Su testimonio commovió a los directivos de la Universidad de Pennsylvania en Estados Unidos, quienes otorgan una beca para que pudiera seguir estudiando su carrera de Farmacia. Interesante y triste historia a la vez.

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### **Traci says**

Pop sugar challenge 2018: book about an issue facing society today (war, religion, politics, women's rights...you name it!)

This sat on my classroom bookshelf for 4 years and I finally decided to teach it. It's been eye opening for a lot of students who aren't exposed to different cultures. We've had a lot of good discussions and I hope they'll take something away from it.

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### **Brina says**

Like Anne Frank and Zlata before her, Thurs al-Windawi provides a unique look into wartime childhood. She does well to focus on the positives, while not mincing the danger and fear that affects the region.

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