



# **Barefoot in Baghdad: A Story of Identity-My Own and What It Means to Be a Woman in Chaos**

*Mandal Omar*



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*"Walk barefoot and the thorns will hurt you..."* —Iraqi-Turkmen proverb

A riveting story of hope and despair, of elation and longing, *Barefoot in Baghdad* takes you to the front lines of a different kind of battle, where the unsung freedom fighters are strong, vibrant—and female.

An American aid worker of Arab descent, Manal Omar moves to Iraq to help as many women as she can rebuild their lives. She quickly finds herself drawn into the saga of a people determined to rise from the ashes of war and sanctions and rebuild their lives in the face of crushing chaos. This is a chronicle of Omar's friendships with several Iraqis whose lives are crumbling before her eyes. It is a tale of love, as her relationship with one Iraqi man intensifies in a country in turmoil. And it is the heartrending stories of the women of Iraq, as they grapple with what it means to be female in a homeland you no longer recognize.

"Manal Omar captures the complex reality of living and working in war-torn Iraq, a reality that tells the story of love and hope in the midst of bombs and explosions." —Zainab Salbi, founder and CEO of Women for Women International, and author (with Laurie Becklund) of the national bestselling book *Between Two Worlds: Escape from Tyranny: Growing Up in the Shadow of Saddam*

"A fascinating, honest, and inspiring portrait of a women's rights activist in Iraq, struggling to help local women while exploring her own identity. Manal Omar is a skilled guide into Iraq, as she understands the region, speaks Arabic, and wears the veil. At turns funny and tragic, she carries a powerful message for women, and delivers it through beautiful storytelling." —Christina Asquith, author of *Sisters in War: A Story of Love, Family and Survival in the New Iraq*

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