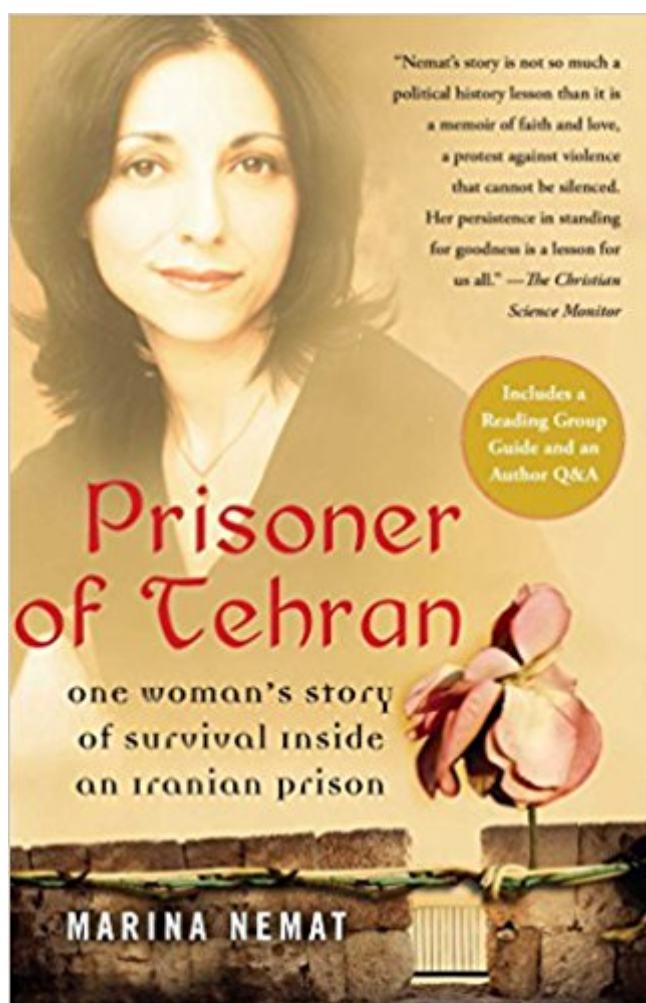


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# Prisoner Of Tehran: One Woman's Story Of Survival Inside An Iranian Prison



## Synopsis

In her heartbreaking, triumphant, and elegantly written memoir, *Prisoner of Tehran*, Marina Nemat tells the heart-pounding story of her life as a young girl in Iran during the early days of Ayatollah Khomeini's brutal Islamic Revolution. What would you give up to protect your loved ones? Your life?

In her heartbreaking, triumphant, and elegantly written memoir, *Prisoner of Tehran*, Marina Nemat tells the heart-pounding story of her life as a young girl in Iran during the early days of Ayatollah Khomeini's brutal Islamic Revolution. In January 1982, Marina Nemat, then just sixteen years old, was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to death for political crimes. Until then, her life in Tehran had centered around school, summer parties at the lake, and her crush on Andre, the young man she had met at church. But when math and history were subordinated to the study of the Koran and political propaganda, Marina protested. Her teacher replied, "If you don't like it, leave." She did, and, to her surprise, other students followed. Soon she was arrested with hundreds of other youths who had dared to speak out, and they were taken to the notorious Evin prison in Tehran. Two guards interrogated her. One beat her into unconsciousness; the other, Ali, fell in love with her. Sentenced to death for refusing to give up the names of her friends, she was minutes from being executed when Ali, using his family connections to Ayatollah Khomeini, plucked her from the firing squad and had her sentence reduced to life in prison. But he exacted a shocking price for saving her life -- with a dizzying combination of terror and tenderness, he asked her to marry him and abandon her Christian faith for Islam. If she didn't, he would see to it that her family was harmed. She spent the next two years as a prisoner of the state, and of the man who held her life, and her family's lives, in his hands. Lyrical, passionate, and suffused throughout with grace and sensitivity, Marina Nemat's memoir is like no other. Her search for emotional redemption envelops her jailers, her husband and his family, and the country of her birth -- each of whom she grants the greatest gift of all: forgiveness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Nemat tells of her harrowing experience as a young Iranian girl at the start of the Islamic revolution. In January 1982, the 16-year-old student activist was arrested, jailed in Tehran's infamous Evin prison, tortured and sentenced to death. Ali, one of her interrogators, intervened moments before her execution, having used family connections with Ayatollah Khomeini himself to reduce her sentence to life in prison. The price: she would convert to Islam (she was Christian) and marry him, or he would see to it that her family and her boyfriend, Andre, were jailed or even killed. She remained a political prisoner for two years. Nemat's engaging memoir is rich with complex characters—loved ones lost on both sides of this bloody conflict. Ali, the man who rapes and subjugates her, also saves her life several times—he is assassinated by his own subordinates. His family embraces Nemat with more affection and acceptance than her own, even fighting for her release after his death. Nemat returns home to feel a stranger: "They were terrified of the pain and horror of my past," she writes. She buries her memories for years, eventually escaping to Canada to begin a new life with Andre. Nemat offers her arresting, heartbreaking story of forgiveness, hope and enduring love—a voice for the untold scores silenced by Iran's revolution. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

\*Starred Review\* In Tehran in the early 1980s, after she leads a strike in high school to get her math teacher to teach calculus not politics, Marina, 16, a practicing Catholic, is locked up for two years and tortured with her school friends in the Ayatollah Khomeini's notorious Evin political prison. She is saved from execution by an interrogator, Ali, who wants to marry her and threatens to hurt her family and Catholic boyfriend, Andre, if she refuses. Forced to convert to Islam, she becomes Ali's wife; then he is assassinated by political rivals, and she rejoins her family and marries Andre. They immigrate to Canada in 1991. For more than 20 years, secure in her middle-class life, she keeps silent, until she writes this unforgettable memoir. Haunted by her lost friends and by her betrayal of them, Nemat tells her story without messages and with no sense of heroism. The quiet, direct narrative moves back and forth from Toronto to Nemat's childhood under the shah's brutal

regime and, later, during the terror under Khomeini. Despite the rabid politics and terrifying drama, the most memorable aspect of the story is the portrait of Ali, Nemat's savior, in love with her, so kind to her--Does he kill people when he goes off to work in the prison each day? Her comment that she wishes "the world were a simple place where people were either good or evil" is as haunting as her guilt and love. When she asks Andre to forgive her long silence, he asks her to forgive his not asking. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a vivid description of how a normal teenager's life was overturned by the Islamic revolution in Iran. The descriptions are vivid and make it easy to picture how, before the revolution, Marina's concerns were her grades, her social life, swimming, clothes, minor conflicts with her parents...a life similar to that of the average American teenager. Like many American teens, she went to church and had an active prayer life. Not super holy, but a pretty good kid. The title gives away that she went from that life to prison, misery and choices no teenager should have to face. I followed the revolution in Iran in the news back when it was happening, but never could imagine how horrible things got for the average person there. I have an Iranian friend who fled Iran with nothing more than her husband, her daughter, and a couple of suitcases, leaving house and bank accounts behind. They are Zoroastrian, and they felt that they had no future in Iran. Although they had to start over in the United States with nothing, they are now doing much better than they would have been had they stayed. Although most Iranians were better off under the Shah, Marina doesn't gloss over the abuses carried out under his dictatorship. She doesn't paint Muslims as all bad. There were Iranian Muslims who were tolerant of the Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews, and atheists living in their country. Unfortunately, these moderates were not the people who ended up in power. Marina's book illustrates clearly the suffering that can result from a government based on a religion. I am grateful for the First Amendment and hope this book will inspire everyone who reads it to be diligent in guarding against encroachments against religious freedom.

Marina Nemat is a Blessed Soul of Light. The Karma of those that hurt her and the other's who were tortured and murdered will come upon them. God is not mocked. Cosmic justice will always prevail. Especially when the victim forgives the perpetrator's. And she forgave them. I hope the media exposes how Iran is torturing, murdering and jailing the poets. I hope that our newly elected President Trump will take steps to help restore freedom in Iran when dealing with them. Some were sentenced to prison and 99 lashes. There is a video on YouTube of a man in Saudi Arabia who was

sentenced to 20 lashes for drinking beer. Look at what happened by 20 lashes. This is vicious barbaric torture.

I cannot understand how horrific being prisoned here must have been. A total miracle this woman survived and still had sanity. I have trouble understanding the Islamic religion and ways. Such cruel ways of treating women. I did not enjoy reading this, but tried to gain some perspective.

The world is full of examples of phoenixes rising from the ashes, but we rarely know of these hidden heroes who have faced hardship beyond imagining and survived. It is in the hearing of such stories that we begin to understand the common tendency of human beings, bent on a "heroic", subtle revenge that is easily portrayed as "fixing the system", to perpetrate violence, condone personal vendettas, and continue the cycle of unforgiveness. Nemat's story is just one of many--women who have learned throughout time the destructive mentalities of political systems used to control people--control driven by fear clothed in religious fervor. What makes this story all the more surprising is the age of these political prisoners...mere children! This generation--from abortion to Africa's childrens armies to Nemat's schoolmates--paints a devastating portrait of what we have created in the minds of our people. The vulnerable are now our manipulated, our murdered, our punching bags for the frustrations of our lives. No matter how progressed we think we have become, indeed we have only become worse. Worse because we deny, worse because we have learned to call bad good and good bad, worse because indeed we no longer know what good is at all.

Our first world problems can never compare to what these young women had to endure. I stand in awe at their perseverance and courage. Excellent read.

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