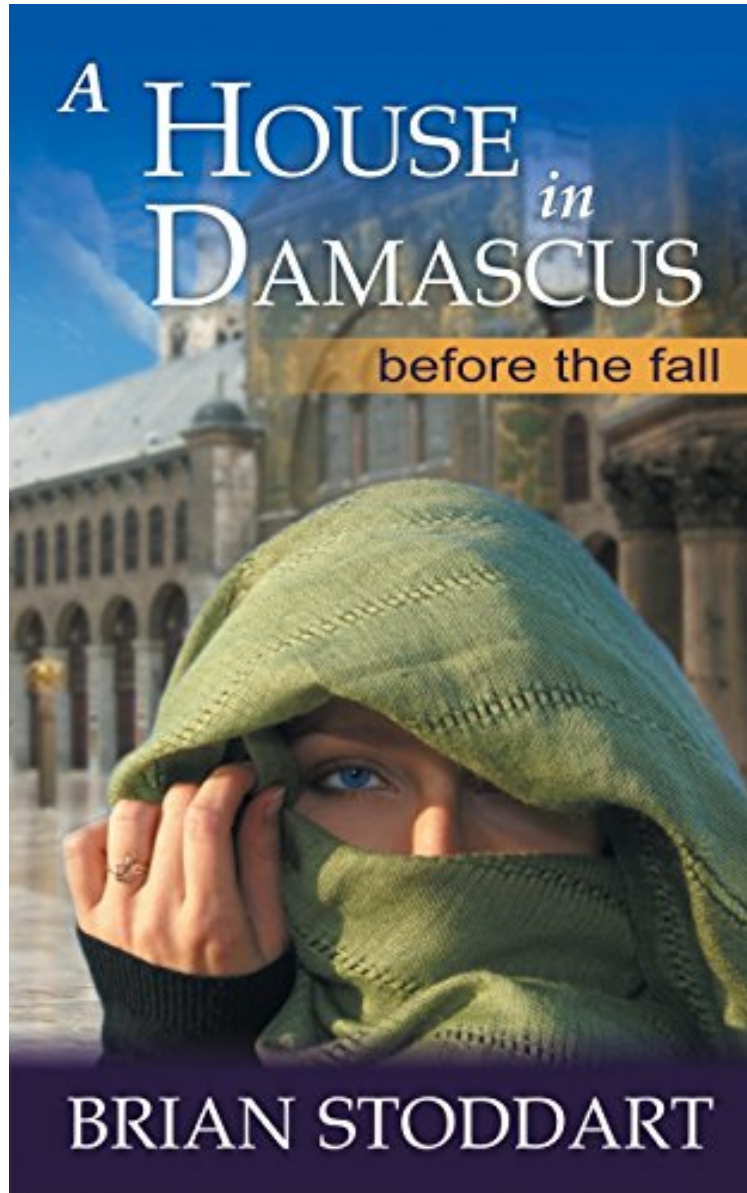


(Pdf free) A House in Damascus

A House in Damascus

Brian Stoddart

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Brian Stoddart : A House in Damascus before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A House in Damascus:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The roads through Damascus - an enlightening readBy Max WalshI must confess to being blissfully ignorant of Syria and especially Damascus. I had heard before (and probably even

used myself), the "road to Damascus experience" as an experience where I suddenly understood everything. I cannot claim that Brian Stoddart's splendid e-book helped me understand everything about Syria but I am now much more critical when I read news reports of the 2011-12 "happenings", and I am prepared to seek a more balanced view when I read proposed ways to "solve" the current crisis. The central elements in this book are both the author's personal experiences and his interactions with the inhabitants of this extremely old city. As another reviewer noted, one can smell the bread and coffee in the souks, and I found myself living vicariously through Professor Stoddart's daily peregrinations in the neighbourhood adjacent to "The House" and even in areas beyond. I have long wished to visit the Levant, but I only ever got as close as Libya in 2002, and as I read this book I found myself comparing my walks through Tripoli to those made by Brian Stoddart as he traversed his beloved city by foot or by taxi. I fear my wish will now instead be replaced by reading such close-up and personal interpretations as given in this rather excellent set of essays. The book makes many contemporary references to the crisis at the time of writing (mid-2012) and one feels a 2nd edition will be needed rather soon to both update the unfolding events and, more importantly, to try to determine the fate of the characters and friends that are central to this initial book. I share the author's anguish at not knowing what has happened to many of his colleagues and friends that we encounter within his narrative, and the saddest part of all is that we may never know the answers unless a political solution is found somewhat "soon". Of course, given the extraordinary age of the city, "soon" represents just a mere blip in historical time and one hopes that the city can continue to survive as it has done for so long already. This is a very important book and I am so glad I was able to read it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book - made me want to go to Syria. By Nataliej This book is very well written, descriptive and above all a personal and insightful account of Brian Stoddart's life in Damascus. I have never been interested in Syria but his mixing of history with the stories of the people he met makes me sad that I won't get to visit his Syria. His personal accounts of the people he meets draws you in and I wonder what has happened to the sweet man and the bakers that were part of his daily life. Hopefully after the conflict has ended Syria will return to the wonderful crossroads of history and geography that Brian describes and I will have a chance to walk through its streets myself. I am surprised that the book is free as it is way above the average free book and I thoroughly recommend it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Descriptions of Damascus are excellent, political whitewash of the regime unfortunate. By Edward S. Warchaizer While the first half of the book was an enjoyable description of the city, I was very disappointed in the author trying to whitewash the iron-fisted rule of the government. It is obvious that the author is a very left-wing liberal, who blames the west for branding Syria as a terrorist country incorrectly. He ignores the support that Syria provided over the years to Hamas and Hezbollah. He even tries to make the reader believe Assad was trying to liberalize the country.

As Syria confronts an uncertain future, *A House in Damascus* seeks to balance the Western view with the lives and views of the everyday people living in the world's oldest continuing capital city. Drawn from the author's experiences occurring immediately before the 2011-2012 social and political upheaval, each story traces the Old City of Damascus and its people's present through the past, capturing the universal human element often missing from the strategic and political accounts. ABOUT THE AUTHOR Brian Stoddart is an Emeritus Professor of La Trobe University in Melbourne. Trained as a social historian, he now works as an international higher education reform consultant in countries such as Lao PDR, Cambodia, Jordan and Syria. www.professorbrianstoddart.com