



In Honor of Fadime: Murder and Shame

Unni Wikan

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In 2002 young Fadime Sahindal was brutally murdered by her own father. She belonged to a family of Kurdish immigrants who had lived in Sweden for almost two decades. But Fadime's relationship with a man outside of their community had deeply dishonored her family, and only her death could remove the stain. This abhorrent crime shocked the world, and her name soon became a rallying cry in the struggle to combat so-called honor killings.

Unni Wikan narrates Fadime's heartbreaking story through her own eloquent words, along with the testimonies of her father, mother, and two sisters. What unfolds is a tale of courage and betrayal, loyalty and love, power and humiliation, and a nearly unfathomable clash of cultures. Despite enduring years of threats over her emancipated life, Fadime advocated compassion for her killers to the end, believing them to be trapped by an unyielding code of honor. Wikan puts this shocking event in context by analyzing similar honor killings, which are increasing throughout Europe and have now been reported in Canada and the United States. She also examines the concept of honor in historical and cross-cultural depth, concluding that Islam itself is not to blame—indeed, honor killings occur across religious and ethnic traditions—but rather the way that many cultures have resolutely linked honor with violence.

In Honor of Fadime holds profound and timely insights into Islamic culture, but ultimately the heart of this powerful book is Fadime's courageous and tragic story—and Wikan's telling of it is riveting.

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