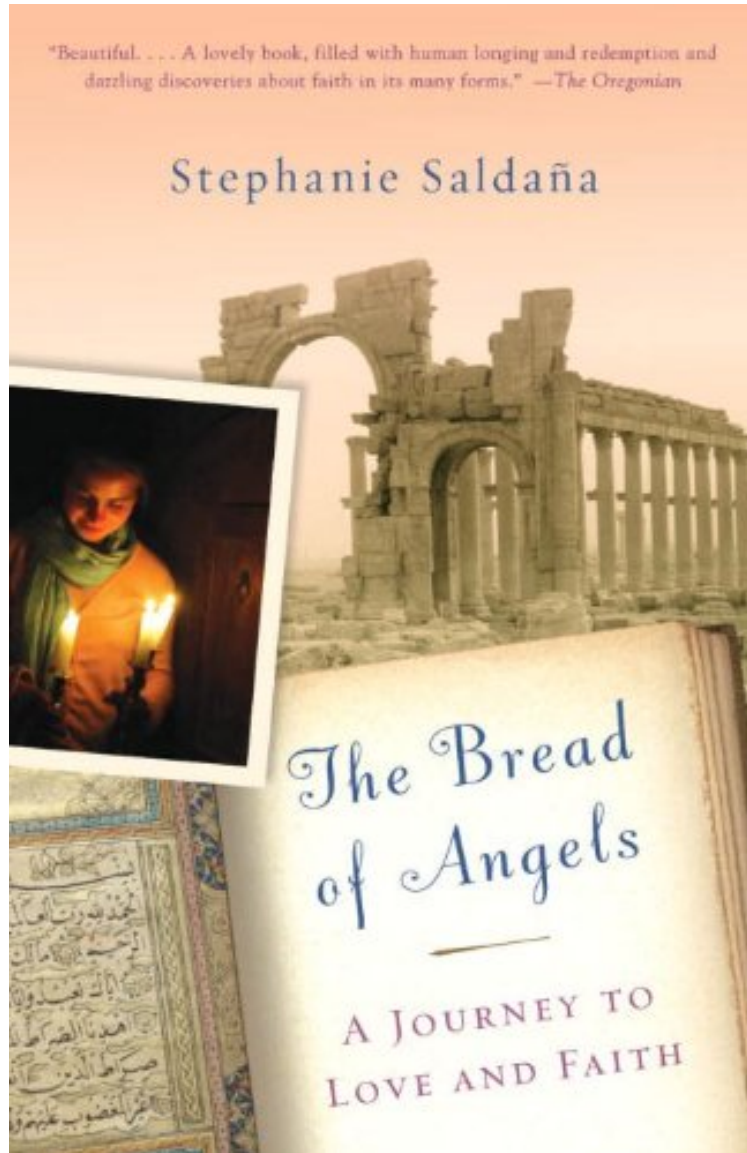


(Ebook free) The Bread of Angels: A Journey to Love and Faith

## The Bread of Angels: A Journey to Love and Faith

*Stephanie Saldana*

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**Stephanie Saldana : The Bread of Angels: A Journey to Love and Faith** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bread of Angels: A Journey to Love and Faith:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... a gifted writer who takes us along on an amazing adventure in By Carolyn Goodart Stephanie Saldana is a gifted writer who takes us along on an amazing adventure in, of all places, Syria! As a young woman working on a college degree she is awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study Arabic in Syria. With an open heart she travels to that exotic country (before the civil war descends) and finds acceptance and

self-awareness. It was such a pleasure to see that country through her eyes before disaster struck there. I loved learning about the charming culture and surprising connection of Christianity and Islam. Stephanie is one of those people (kind of like Shirley MacLaine) who needs to go on a spiritual quest, which leads her out in the desert and to an amazing monastery atop a hill. And, I must add a spoiler here, Stephanie even finds romance in a very unexpected place! This book is a treasure that reminds us to reach out to life!<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great cultural comparisons, tedious repetition about author's struggles

By Evi Blueth I enjoyed the aspects of the book when the author described her experiences in Syria, compared cultures and used humour. However her constant boring theological references were repetitive, boring and did not flow with the rest of the content. Her struggle was repeated over and over again with no new insights and this was also tedious. The best aspect of the story were her encounters with real people of a different culture who cherished her and while teaching her about language and tradition, the reader also learned many things. This could have been an excellent book. Where was her editor?

Evi Blueth 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Spiritually rich writing

By Customer Beautifully written account of Saldana's search for God, herself. Spirituality, and life. Atmosphere and setting, along with the author's honest searching voice drew me in and held me to the last page. I felt like I journeyed with her. This novel has stayed with me, has touched my soul. I loved it, I love Stephanie Saldana.

A riveting memoir about one woman's journey into Syria under the Baathist regime and an unexpected love story between two strangers searching for meaning. When Stephanie Saldana arrives in Damascus, she is running away from a broken heart and a haunted family history that she has crossed the world to escape. Yet as she moves into a tumbling Ottoman house in the heart of the Old City, she is unprepared for the complex world that awaits her: an ancient capital where Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians, Alawites, Kurds, and Palestinian and Iraqi refugees share a fragile co-existence. Soon she is stumbling through the Arabic language, fielding interviews from the secret police, and struggling to make the city her own. But as the political climate darkens and the war in neighboring Iraq threatens to spill over, she flees to an ancient Christian monastery carved into the desert cliffs, where she is forced to confront the life she left behind. Soon she will meet a series of improbable teachers: an iconoclastic Italian priest, a famous female Muslim sheikh, a wounded Iraqi refugee, and Frdric, a young French novice monk who becomes her best friend. What follows is a tender story of a woman falling in love: with God, with her own life, with a country on the brink of chaos, and with a man she knows she can never have. Wise, funny, and heartbreaking, *The Bread of Angels* celebrates the hope that appears even in war, the surprising places we can call home, and the possibility of true love.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . With a family history of untimely death and madness, Saldana easily took to a career of danger journalism, reporting from risky locales. In a deliberate attempt to stop courting danger, Saldana attempted a normal life at Harvard Divinity School. When the love affair that had provided her a sense of normalcy ended, she opted to take the Fulbright scholarship she had won to study the Muslim Jesus in Damascus, arriving in Syria in 2004 amid the post-9/11 war in Iraq. The tension of American foreign policy and Saldana's own vivid memories of death and destruction witnessed during her reporting life earlier in the Middle East haunted her, particularly when she embarked upon the Catholic rite of spiritual exercises at the Syrian desert monastery of Mar Musa. In lovely prose and with elements of foreshadowing, Saldana shares her struggles to become religious again and overcome feelings that God has abandoned her. Touches of melodrama weigh down an otherwise gorgeous and enlightening read, as Saldana's scholarly knowledge of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism subtly infuse her story. An *Eat, Pray, Love* for the intellectual set, Saldana's beautiful memoir should not be missed. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist In 2004 Saldana went to Damascus to study Islam on a Fulbright fellowship. Knowing no one there and lacking living quarters, she went door-to-door, asking for help. Finally, she knocked on a door incongruously labeled 10 Downing Street. In this as in many other incidents, her writing is most evocative as she carefully describes, for instance, the perfumed streets of Damascus Old City, prayer beads dangling from store windows and glimmering in the sun. She freely admits going to Syria to escape her travails and relieve a broken heart. She discusses being an American in Syria during the Iraq war (unsettling), clumsily learning Arabic, her fickle faith, her tendency to leave things unfinished, her habitual falling in and out of love, and her relationship with a young French novice monk. This lovely work is magical and poetic about a part of the world and a time the Middle East in the post-9/11 era in which many have become keenly interested. --June Sawyers

Beautiful. . . . A lovely book, filled with human longing and redemption and dazzling discoveries about faith in its many forms. The Oregonian [A] poignant memoir about hitting rock bottom in love and faith. . . . Inspired and powerful. . . . This is a fresh, courageous book that gives new meaning to the word memoir. Dallas Morning News A Middle Eastern *Eat, Pray, Love*. The Washington Post Book World Tragic, hopeful, bittersweet, tender and insightful. Austin American-Statesman Beautifully written. . . . The *Bread of Angels* is simultaneously a window into an alien culture, a spiritual journey, and a love story. The Free Lance-Star (Fredericksburg, VA) Brace yourself for an intense inner and outer journey. The *Bread of Angels* is a many-layered personal story, ricocheting from Damascus to Texas to the desert fathers to scruffy Cambridge. A passionate young scholar confronts war, love, the mysteries of language,

and God. Stephanie Saldaa is up to the task. A brilliant debut. Frances Mayes, author of *Under the Tuscan Sun* A fascinating, back-alley travelogue of contemporary Damascus, as well as journey to the core of the Quran. Most of all, [The Bread of Angels] is an inspiring document of battle-tested faith. San Antonio Express-News What sets Saldaas book apart from so many others is the very convincing way in which she writes about prayer and the difficulty of praying. Newsweek A remarkable, wise, and lovely book from a truly gifted new writer, *The Bread of Angels* brims with originality and insight. There is poetry here the language and the depth of attention recall the young Annie Dillard. But this is, above all, a love story, and a compelling one. Not many people can write transcendent, mystical prose and also create a page-turner that keeps you up nights. Stephanie Saldaas achievement is extraordinary. Geraldine Brooks, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *March* Saldaa vividly evokes life in [Damascus], where Arab and Armenian Christians have lived for centuries. . . . Her perceptive comments on life in Syria, her account of teaching in a Muslim school and her friendship with a female Islamic scholar who taught her about the Koran and the Muslim Jesus further enrich an already superior work. . . . Luminously rendered. Richmond Times-Dispatch In the tradition of Elizabeth Gilberts *Eat, Pray, Love*, Stephanie Saldaas *The Bread of Angels* is a stunning memoir that is both a contemporary spiritual quest and a sweet, surprising love story. Julia Alvarez, author of *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* *The Bread of Angels* is an elegant and brave memoir about the spiritual journey that transformed Stephanie Saldanas life. The unlikely setting . . . infuses her story with delightful characters and anecdotes, and powerful historical and religious associations. . . . Immensely readable and moving. Haaretz Stephanie Saldaa has created something of beauty out of her transformation from a life of chaos and her search for peace. [The Bread of Angels is] an elegant, dazzling memoir of a life lost and found in the ancient city of Damascus. Shelf Awareness A fragrant, elegantly observed journey that captures the dilapidated glory of Damascus and the resilient wit of its people. Saldaas tale of spiritual dislocation and self-discovery is remarkable for its poignancy and keen intelligence. Azadeh Moaveni, author of *Lipstick Jihad* and *Honeymoon in Tehran* Many readers will value the book for its cultural importance, for the sharp observations Saldaa makes about Americans in the Middle East, based on her knowledge of the region and her ability to demolish certain stereotypes about Christian-Islamic relations. . . . This is the type of memoir, recounting a journey to the depths of the soul, that makes the personal universal. America magazine *The Bread of Angels* is dazzling, delicious, wise, brilliantly funny, endearing in every way. It is a love letter to the Middle East and to ones own entire life, replete with doubt and fear, faith and deep connection. A masterpiece. Naomi Shihab Nye, author of *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*