



# My Accidental Jihad

By Krista Bremer

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Fifteen years ago, Krista Bremer would not have been able to imagine her life today: married to a Libyan-born Muslim, raising two children with Arabic names in the American South. Nor could she have imagined the prejudice she would encounter or the profound ways her marriage would change her perception of the world.

But on a running trail in North Carolina, she met Ismail. He was passionate and sincere—and he loved adventure as much as she did. From acquaintances to lovers to a couple facing an unexpected pregnancy, this is the story of two people—a middle-class American raised in California and a Muslim raised by illiterate parents in an impoverished Libyan fishing village—who made a commitment to each other without forsaking their own identities.

It is the story of a bicultural marriage—and aren't all marriages bicultural? In any marriage, we might discover that our mate is foreign to us, with very different language, memories, and assumptions about home and family. How we respond to difference shapes our world.

Profoundly moving and often funny, this meditation on tolerance explores what it means to open our hearts to another culture and to embrace our own. It is Krista Bremer's unexpected struggle to reach beyond herself, her accidental Jihad.

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## My Accidental Jihad By Krista Bremer Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

After quitting her So-Cal beach-bum lifestyle to attend graduate school, Bremer found herself pregnant and impulsively married Ismail, an older Libyan man. Basing this book on her Pushcart Prize-winning essay, "My Accidental Jihad," Bremer details her youthful Barbie-doll dreams of marriage and wealth and the sweetness of their newborn daughter and then bolts to the comparative ickiness of Ramadan. Ismail's breath smells bad, for one thing, and his fasting makes him too tired to help around the house. Further, he doesn't quite comprehend American celebrations, such as Easter and Christmas. "It was difficult for him to understand holidays untethered from meaning and drifting in an ocean of desire and delight." A trip to Libya to meet Ismail's family is nearly all dismal, with Bremer grouching about how uncomfortable she is. There's no coffee, nowhere to go running, and so on. The book's title refers not to her falling in love with a Muslim but her "own accidental jihad, forcing me to wrestle with my intolerance and self-absorption." Readers with similar mind-sets will want to follow Bremer's "love story." --Eloise Kinney

From Kirkus Reviews

A moving, lyrical memoir about how an American essayist fell in love with a Libyan-born Muslim man and learned to embrace the life she made with him. Sun associate publisher Bremer was a wayward former California surfer girl just starting to build her life in North Carolina when she met Ismail. He was 15 years older than she and different from her in almost every possible way. Yet his gentle simplicity made her feel as though she could "finally exhale...and [open] up to [herself]" in ways she had not been able to with anyone else. When she unexpectedly became pregnant not long after they met, she faced a difficult choice: terminate the pregnancy and continue her pursuit of a promising career in journalism or keep the baby and accept Ismail's heartfelt offer of marriage. Unable to resist the mysterious allure of the future she "never intended—or even knew how much [she] wanted," Bremer chose to "stitch [their] mismatched lives together to make a family." Among the many challenges she encountered was coming to terms with Ismail's loving but traditionalist family in Tripoli. To them, she was a woman "weighed down by so much individualism, impatience, and desire." Yet through her visits with them, she also learned to temper the Western individualism she came to realize had been the source of the "creeping despair that comes from doggedly chasing the elusive dream that women can be everything at once." As she gradually came to accept a different way of living—and eventually, worshipping—in middle-class America, Bremer grew to appreciate Ismail, her extended family and the struggle they brought into her life more than she even imagined possible. A sweet and rewarding journey of a book.

Review

*"My Accidental Jihad is a bold piece of writing (and thinking) by an incredibly brave woman."* --**Elizabeth Gilbert, author of Eat, Pray, Love**

*"My Accidental Jihad is one of the most captivating and moving memoirs I've read in years. The story Krista Bremer tells—one of radical foreignness between a married couple—could be a metaphor for all committed relationships."* --**Haven Kimmel, author of A Girl Named Zippy**

"Told with rare honesty, *My Accidental Jihad* is the story of Krista Bremer's lifelong quest for insight and understanding, a search that leads her out of the Pacific surf to journalism school in North Carolina and through the complex challenges and unexpected joys of a cross-cultural marriage and family. This book is a powerfully personal account of the courage and hard work necessary to open one's heart and keep it that

way.” --**Maggie Shipstead, author of *Seating Arrangements***

“Lucid, heartfelt and profoundly humane, *My Accidental Jihad* navigates the boundaries of religion and politics to arrive at the universal experience of love.” --**G. Willow Wilson, author of *Alif the Unseen***

*(Review quotes)*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Todd Crain:**

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or read a book called My Accidental Jihad? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have various other opinion?

#### **Paul Flynn:**

The guide with title My Accidental Jihad includes a lot of information that you can study it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. That book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this e-book represented the condition of the world right now. That is important to yo7u to understand how the improvement of the world. This book will bring you in new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book on your own smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

#### **Kimberly Rubio:**

My Accidental Jihad can be one of your nice books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to place every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing My Accidental Jihad however doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource data that maybe you can be among it. This great information could drawn you into fresh stage of crucial thinking.

#### **Clarissa Holland:**

Beside this My Accidental Jihad in your phone, it can give you a way to get nearer to the new knowledge or data. The information and the knowledge you can got here is fresh from oven so don't be worry if you feel like an outdated people live in narrow community. It is good thing to have My Accidental Jihad because this book offers for your requirements readable information. Do you sometimes have book but you rarely get what it's about. Oh come on, that would not happen if you have this in your hand. The Enjoyable agreement here cannot be questionable, such as treasuring beautiful island. Techniques you still want to miss the item? Find this book along with read it from currently!

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