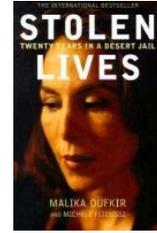


Stolen Lives, by Malika Oufkir and Michele Fitoussi



About the Book...

Malika Oufkir and her family spent more than twenty years in prison at the hands of the Moroccan government. In 1972, her father, the King of Morocco's highest aide, was arrested and executed for his alleged part in a plot to assassinate the King. Malika, who spent many years living at the Palace as a companion to Princess Amina, suddenly found herself betrayed by the person she had come to regard as a father figure. She and her family were caught in the midst of a violent political turmoil beyond their control. In **Stolen Lives**, Malika recounts the long years that she, her five siblings, and her mother spent trying to survive in the worst of conditions. Filled with honesty, emotion, and humor, **Stolen Lives** is a gripping and heartrending account of one family's unbreakable bond and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.



About the Author...

Malika Oufkir



Michele Fitoussi

The eldest daughter of General Oufkir, the King of Morocco's closest aide, Malika Oufkir was adopted by the king at age of five as a companion for his daughter. She spent most of her childhood and adolescence within the gilded walls of the palace, living an extraordinarily privileged yet secluded life. Her world was shattered on August 16, 1972, when her father was executed for his part in an attempt to assassinate the King. Along with her mother and five siblings, Malika, then nineteen, was imprisoned in a penal colony. The Oufkir family spent the next fifteen years in prison, the last ten in solitary confinement, until they managed to dig a tunnel and escape. Their freedom ended five days later, however, when they were captured and returned to prison. In 1996, after twenty-four years of incarceration, the Oufkir family was finally granted permission to leave Morocco.

MALIKA OUFKIR, born in 1953, divides her time between Miami and Marrakesh where she lives with her husband and children.

MICHELE FITOUSSI is of Tunisian descent, and is the author of two novels and a collection of short stories as well as being the literary editor of French Elle.

Discussion Questions:

1. Malika, whose name means "Queen," considered herself a princess, although she wasn't one by birth. The world view she has in the beginning of the book obviously changes drastically as the story progresses. At what moment does her romantic vision of her life begin to break down?
2. Adopted at the age of five by the King of Morocco, Malika came to regard him as a father figure. How does she reconcile the fact that this man who had taken her into his home is eventually responsible for the death of her father and the imprisonment of her family? What are her feelings towards her father? Does she blame him for her family's ordeal?
3. The Oufkir family is forced to suffer many indignities and hardships in prison. Did these details give you a specific sense of what it is like to be in prison or did you, as the reader, still feel separated from their experiences?
4. Malika and her family strive to keep some normalcy in their lives by celebrating birthdays and other special holidays while imprisoned. It is as though they were opting to create the best possible world for themselves instead of just opting for survival. What do we learn about them from these actions? What heroine from world literature does Malika most remind you of?
5. Malika created *The Story* to entertain her family and to occupy their minds, fabricating the tale of a Russian prince to which she added new chapters each night for ten years. What did *The Story* come to mean to the family? Why was it so important to them?
6. Malika wanted to grow up to be a film actress. What elements of her story seem the most cinematic, the ones that would translate the best to the big screen? Do you think that her desire to be an actress actually helped her through this ordeal?
7. What part of the Oufkir family's story did you find the most harrowing? The most uplifting?
8. Do you consider this book to be a memoir, an autobiography or a political story? Discuss what you learned about Morocco and the politics of the country.
9. How does the relationship between Malika and her family change as their years in prison progress? How do they manage to help one another even when, for more than a decade, they are confined to solitary cells?
10. What thoughts and feelings did you come away with after reading this book?