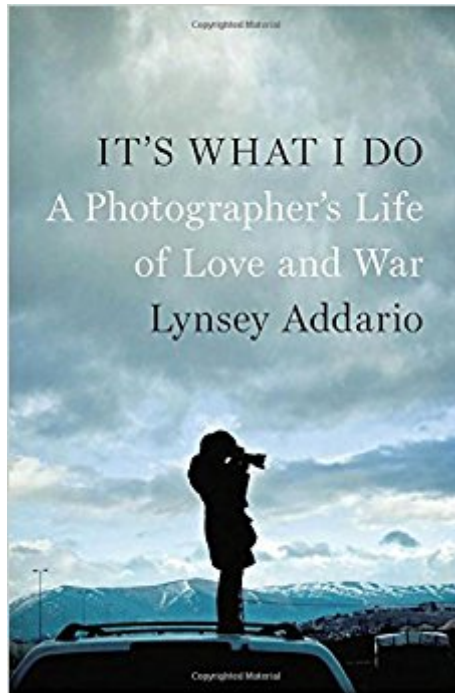


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# It's What I Do: A Photographer's Life Of Love And War



## Synopsis

"A brutally real and unrelentingly raw memoir."--Kirkus (starred review) War photographer Lynsey Addario's memoir *What I Do* is the story of how the relentless pursuit of truth, in virtually every major theater of war in the twenty-first century, has shaped her life. What she does, with clarity, beauty, and candor, is to document, often in their most extreme moments, the complex lives of others. It's her work, but it's much more than that: it's her singular calling. Lynsey Addario was just finding her way as a young photographer when September 11 changed the world. One of the few photojournalists with experience in Afghanistan, she gets the call to return and cover the American invasion. She makes a decision she would often find herself making: "not to stay home, not to lead a quiet or predictable life, but to set out across the world, face the chaos of crisis, and make a name for herself. Addario finds a way to travel with a purpose. She photographs the Afghan people before and after the Taliban reign, the civilian casualties and misunderstood insurgents of the Iraq War, as well as the burned villages and countless dead in Darfur. She exposes a culture of violence against women in the Congo and tells the riveting story of her headline-making kidnapping by pro-Qaddafi forces in the Libyan civil war. Addario takes bravery for granted but she is not fearless. She uses her fear and it creates empathy; it is that feeling, that empathy, that is essential to her work. We see this clearly on display as she interviews rape victims in the Congo, or photographs a fallen soldier with whom she had been embedded in Iraq, or documents the tragic lives of starving Somali children. Lynsey takes us there and we begin to understand how getting to the hard truth trumps fear. As a woman photojournalist determined to be taken as seriously as her male peers, Addario fights her way into a boys' club of a profession. Rather than choose between her personal life and her career, Addario learns to strike a necessary balance. In the man who will become her husband, she finds at last a real love to complement her work, not take away from it, and as a new mother, she gains an all the more intensely personal understanding of the fragility of life. Watching uprisings unfold and people fight to the death for their freedom, Addario understands she is documenting not only news but also the fate of society. It's *What I Do* is more than just a snapshot of life on the front lines; it is witness to the human cost of war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month for February 2015: "Why do you do this?" is the central question Lynsey Addario answers in her new memoir *What I Do* and she asks it not just for the reader, but it seems for herself. Addario is a MacArthur "Genius" grant recipient and was part of the team that won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting (covering the Taliban in Afghanistan with Dexter Filkins) but her story often underscores her insecurities in her profession and personal life. Even with her numerous accolades, she worries about being forgotten, missing the breaking story and not being taken seriously as a woman. It's a frank, and refreshingly, candid look into a successful professional photojournalist at the top of her game but it never romanticizes the risks that are necessary to bring us her images. Her story is inspiring, heartbreaking and an eye opening look at what it takes to reveal events from the other side of the world. —Amy Huff

Boston Globe: "Beautifully written and vividly illustrated with her images" which are stunningly cinematic, often strange, always evocative "the book helps us understand not only what would lead a young woman to pursue such a dangerous and difficult profession, but why she is so good at it. Lens to her eye, Addario is an artist of empathy, a witness not to grand ideas about human sacrifice and suffering, but to human beings, simply being." —Entertainment Weekly: "The opening scene of Lynsey Addario's memoir sucker punches you like a cold hard fist. She illuminates the daily frustrations of working within the confines of what the host culture expects from a member of her sex and her constant fight for respect from her male journalist peers and American soldiers. Always she leads with her chin, whether she's on the ground in hostile territory or discussing politics." —Los Angeles Times: "[A] richly illustrated

memoir.Â [Addario] conveys well her unstated mission to stir the emotions of people like herself, born into relative security and prosperity, nudging them out of their comfort zones with visual evidence of horrors they might do something about. It is a diary of an empathetic young woman who makes understanding the wider world around her a professional calling.â •Â San Francisco Chronicle:Â Â â œAddarioâ ™s narrative about growing up as one of four daughters born to hairdressers in Los Angeles and working her way up to being one of the worldâ ™s most accomplished photojournalists, male or female, is riveting. [She] thoughtfully shows how exhilarating and demanding it is to cover the most difficult assignments in the world.Â Addario is a shining example of someone who has been able to â œhave it all,â • but she has worked hard and absolutely suffered to get where she is. My hope is that she continues to live the life less traveled with her family, as I will be waiting for her next book with great anticipation.â •Â Washington Post:Â â œ[An] unflinching memoir. [Addarioâ ™s] book, woven through with images from her travels, offers insight into international events and the challenges faced by the journalists who capture them.â •Â Associated Press:Â â œ[Addarioâ ™s] ability to captureâ | vulnerability in her subjects, often in extreme circumstances, has propelled Addario to the top of her competitive field.â •Â Dallas Morning News:Â â œA rare gift: an intimate look into the personal and professional life of a war correspondentâ | a powerful readâ | This memoir packs a punch because of Addarioâ ™s personal risks. But some of the power in this book comes from the humanity she holds on to despite the horrors she witnesses. [Itâ ™s What I Do] should be read, processed and mulled over in its entiretyâ |.in [Addarioâ ™s] words and photos, readers will see that war isnâ ™t simply a matter of black and white, of whoâ ™s right and whoâ ™s wrong. There are as many shades of gray as there are sides to every story.â •Â Kirkus (starred review):Â â œA remarkable journalistic achievement from a Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Fellowship winner that crystalizes the last 10 years of global war and strife while candidly portraying the intimate life of a female photojournalist. Told with unflinching candor, the award-winning photographer brings an incredible sense of humanity to all the battlefields of her life. Especially affecting is the way in which Addario conveys the role of gender and how being a woman has impacted every aspect of her personal and professional lives. Whether dealing with ultrareligious zealots or overly demanding editors, being a woman with a camera has never been an easy task. A brutally real and unrelentingly raw memoir that is as inspiring as it is horrific.â • Publishers Weekly: â œA highly readable and thoroughly engaging memoirâ |. Addarioâ ™s memoir brilliantly succeeds not only as a personal and professional narrative but also as an illuminating homage to photojournalismâ ™s role in documenting suffering and injustice, and its potential to influence public opinion and official

policy.â

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Booklist: âAddario has written a page-turner of a memoir describing her war coverage and why and how she fell intoâ and stayed inâ such a dangerous job. This âextraordinary professionâ though exhilarating and frightening, it âfeels more like a commitment, a responsibility, a callingâ is what she does, and the many photographs scattered throughout this riveting book prove that she does it magnificently.â

•Tim Weiner, author of *Legacy of Ashes and Enemies*:â What I Do is as brilliant as Addarioâ picturesâ and sheâ the greatest photographer of our war-torn time. Sheâ been kidnapped, nearly killed, while capturing truth and beauty in the worldâ worst places. Sheâ a miracle. So is this book.â

•Dexter Filkins, author of *The Forever War*:â Lynsey Addarioâ book is like her life: big, beautiful, and utterly singular. With the whole world as her backdrop, Addario embarks on an extraordinary adventure whose overriding effect is to remind of us what unites us all.â

•Jon Lee Anderson, staff writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *The Fall of Baghdad*:â A gifted chronicler of her life and times, Lynsey Addario stands at the forefront of her generation of photojournalists, young men and women who have come of age during the brutal years of endless war since 9/11. A uniquely driven and courageous woman, Addario is also possessed of great quantities of humor and humanity. Itâ What I Do is the riveting, unforgettable account of an extraordinary life lived at the very edge.â

•John Prendergast, founding director of the Enough Project:â A life as a war photographer has few parallels in terms of risk and reward, fear and courage, pain and promise. Lynsey Addario has seen, experienced, and photographed things that most of us cannot imagine. The brain and heart behind her extraordinary photographic eye pulls us inexorably closer to the center of each story she pursues, no matter what the cost or danger.â

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Addario's perspective is an interesting and valuable one. However, there is something disengaged about her style that left me wanting to feel more connected to her story, and at times it was a challenge to stay motivated to read. The desire she has for the reader to see her work and the work of her fellow journalists as significant (which it is!) and their sacrifice as powerful (which it is!) had a tone of the desperate martyr to it at times. The right blend of understatement and force is no doubt a most challenging one for all writers, but a bit more showing with a bit less telling may have made for a more engaging read here. That being said, however, this story is a valuable one, and definitely worth checking out.

The images captured by expert photojournalists make as much (or more) impact as the words that accompany them. This book forms an emotional bond and a sense of understanding like a great

series of photographs. Whether creating a heightened awareness of social injustice or greater appreciation for the sacrifices made by our soldiers, Addario's images are magnified by the stories of what she went through to make them. Addario speaks in remarkable detail, providing a clear view of the courage, tenacity and commitment that it takes to work at the height of her craft. I spent the better part of my early adulthood dreaming about a career in documentary photography. I know there is no way I could have done this, and the fact that she did is worthy of awe and great respect. Thank you, Lynsey Addario.

We all grasp the notion that "a picture is worth a thousand words." How often have we read the work of an excellent journalist only to be shocked by a photograph from the scene that utterly improves our understanding of what we've read? Somebody had to go there with a camera to capture that picture -- to show our eyes what they were seeing with their eyes -- to grant us the vital context a conflict-photographer can provide. Lynsey Addario is one of those people. Her book is not just about going into great danger without a gun, although she'll take you there -- boy, will she. It's also about who she is -- and it's the combination of who she is and what she does that makes this book magnetic. Who she is, outside being an international/conflict photojournalist, provides the essential human context to the often dire business of international reporting. It's refreshingly well written. I was surprised to discover a friend had just read it. He mostly reads to put himself to sleep. For him, Addario's book was a curse that denied him sleep. A possibly odd comment: The quality of the paper in this book is exquisite. My suspicion is that such paper was an uncommon sacrifice for the publisher. I'd like to think it's a recognition of who Lynsey Addario is, and what all of the men and women who report internationally, and/or from conflicts, should mean to all of us.

A very interesting memoir, by a driven photographer, of her life and work. I read the book in almost one sitting. Lynsey's photographs are haunting and beautiful.

Lynsey Addario certainly put herself in a position to photograph many of the world's most tragic events - and their impact on the people who live in the regions around which conflict and chaos occur. Her photographic focus is not so much conflict; but its impact on the residents of the countries who are displaced by its turmoil. Beautiful images throughout the book. On a personal level, I was a bit taken aback by the author's commitment to photograph events - no matter the risk - even to herself and her unborn child. I found her a bit self-indulgent; but each of us is here on earth with our own journey and mission. This is obviously hers. It's what she does. And she does it

beautifully.

Easily one of the best nonfiction books I've ever read! Lynsey's story immediately intrigued me, and I had a very hard time putting this book down. That doesn't happen a lot for me when it comes to the nonfiction genre, so I was very impressed with how well written this was and how interesting her life has been. Being a war photographer has absolutely no appeal to me personally. And Addario's book made me want to have that job even less! But reading about it was a whole different story. I have nothing but a crazy amount of sincere respect for people who do this every day, because it sure takes a hell of a lot of guts and dedication. I'd never heard of Addario before picking up this book from the library, but her story was able to completely captivate me regardless of how interested in her I was before starting *It's What I Do*. I always love it when nonfiction books are able to successfully bring me to love them when I know little to nothing about the topic or the person beforehand. I do have a little bit of an interest in photography, so that was one of the reasons it initially caught my eye. And, wow, are the photographs in this book gorgeous. I love how they were included all throughout the book and how many were in there. I actually would've been fine with more, because I'm now a huge fan of her work, but that's not to say that there wasn't enough. I also really enjoyed being able to see how much Addario improved from the very first pictures she took to the incredible ones that were taken more recently. She spends a little bit of time talking about the difference between being a "breaking news" photographer and one who documents events more slowly for features and things like that. It's easy to see how that translates in her work...from the rushed, blurry, real photographs of war to the more beautiful and artistic documentation of events that are equally but differently able to inspire people to care about international issues. But although this book is, on the surface, about her job, at its heart Addario's story is much more about her life experiences rather than the technical aspects of simply photography. There is so much honesty here, and I really felt like I was able to immerse myself in her story and how hard it was to be constantly traveling and never having enough time for romantic relationships or family. Luckily, Addario's story has a happy ending. It was encouraging to be told that it apparently is possible to do this type of job and also have somewhat of a "normal life" as well. It has clearly never been easy for her, but I think that it sends a really important message for women that you do not always have to sacrifice your family for your career or vice versa. There are very many feminist messages like that throughout this book, as Addario manages to keep up with men and soldiers even as the going got tough. And we're talking tough. Wow. I was amazed by Addario's constant strength. I never would've been able to do what she's done...although it was very inspiring to think that it might be

possible for other women who aren't me. I think that this would be a really great book to read as a high school senior. Although there are many themes throughout this book, one of the biggest ones is how, through hard work and determination, Addario was able to, with virtually no experience or money, ultimately become one of the best and most well-known war photographers in the world. She traveled the world throughout her 20s and 30s, had many whirlwind love affairs, gained maturity and knowledge...all with basically just a camera and a few power bars to keep her going. It's What I Do is a fantastic and empowering book that I very much enjoyed reading. I highly recommend it to anyone and everyone!

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