



FROM ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

GLOBAL PUBLICATION FOR AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF YUSRA MARDINI, REFUGEE OLYMPIC ATHLETE & UNHCR GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

(New York, NY – August 7, 2017) St. Martin's Press will publish the autobiography of 19-year old Yusra Mardini, the Olympic Syrian refugee who famously fled her country and became a member of the first-ever Refugee Olympic Athletes Team that competed under the Olympic flag at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

World rights to the as-yet-untitled memoir were acquired together by St. Martin's Press in the U.S. along with Droemer Knaur in Germany and Bluebird in the U.K. Literary agency Michael Meller brokered the deal. Mardini's autobiography will be published in all three countries in Spring 2018.

Talented swimmers, Yusra Mardini and her older sister Sarah fled their native Syria after a bomb ripped off the roof of the Damascus pool where they trained, killing a number of their fellow athletes. Together, they made the journey to Turkey and were eventually crammed with 18 others onto an overcrowded inflatable dinghy to make the journey across to Lesbos, Greece. But when the boat began to sink, the sisters, together with two others leapt into the sea, and swam for three and a half hours, pulling the boat and their fellow passengers ashore to safety. Mardini and her sister eventually resettled in Berlin, Germany, where she lives and trains.

At 19 years old, Mardini is now a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador. She was named one of People magazine's 25 Women Changing the World, and as one of Time magazine's 30 Most Influential Teens of 2016. She competed in the FINA World Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary in July 2017 and is training for the Olympic Games 2020 in Tokyo.

Mardini said: "I am eager to continue spreading the message that refugees are just normal people living through traumatic and devastating circumstances, who are capable of extraordinary things if only given a chance. I am proud to use my voice to support UNHCR."

According to Mardini's manager, Marc Heinkelein of StageField Management, the aim was to "find a strong partner in the book sector who could not only guarantee high quality, but also worldwide publication of Yusra's extraordinary story. We are delighted to have found such a partner with St. Martins."

Sally Richardson, President and Publisher of St. Martin's Press called the book: "An important story of human bravery and selflessness – we are looking forward to bringing Yusra's story to the world."

Yusra Mardini's life story is being made into a film by the British production company Working Title Films, directed by Stephen Daldry (Billy Elliot, The Hours, The Reader). The film is due to appear in theaters at the end of 2018.

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