

## The Journey Of Ibn Fattouma

The Nobel laureate's masterful study of a disturbed man's struggle with the realities of everyday life

Thwarted in marriage, Ibn Fattouma sets out with a caravan to explore the world, and along the way he marries, sires children, loses his family, is imprisoned for twenty years, and is involved in two civil wars.

A vibrant novel of memorable characters who search for happiness and true love, cope with the bitterness that results from love's betrayal, and embrace new beginnings. Set in Cairo in the aftermath of the Six-Day War of 1967, *Love in the Rain* introduces us to an assortment of characters who, each in his or her own way, experience the effects of this calamitous event. The war and its casualties, as well as people's foibles and the tragedies they create for themselves, raise existential questions that cannot easily be answered. In a frank, sensitive treatment of everything from patriotism to prostitution, homosexuality and lesbianism, *Love in the Rain* presents a struggle between "old" and "new" in the realm of moral values that leaves the future in doubt. Through the dilemmas and heartbreaks faced by his protagonists, Mahfouz exposes the hypocrisy of those who condemn any breach of sexual morality while turning a blind eye to violence, corruption, and oppression, double standards as applied to men's and women's sexuality, and the folly of an exclusive focus on sexual morals without reference to other aspects of human character.

In Naguib Mahfouz's suspenseful novel a bitter and ambitious nihilist, a beautiful and impoverished student, and a corrupt official engage in a doomed ménage à trois. Cairo of the 1930s is a place of vast social and economic inequities. It is also a time of change, when the universities have just opened to women and heady new philosophies imported from Europe are stirring up debates among the young. Mahgub is a fiercely proud student who is determined to keep both his poverty and his lack of principles secret from his idealistic friends. When he finds that there are no jobs for those without connections, out of desperation he agrees to participate in an elaborate deception. But what begins as a mere strategy for survival soon becomes much more for both Mahgub and his partner in crime, an equally desperate young woman named Ihsan. As they make their way through Cairo's lavish high society their precarious charade begins to unravel and the terrible price of Mahgub's Faustian bargain becomes clear. Translated by William M. Hutchins

A classic Mahfouz story exploring themes of marriage across class lines, spirituality, and the harsh realities of a precarious life. Jaafar Ibrahim Sayyed al-Rawi, the main character in this most recently translated Mahfouz novel, is guided by his motto, "let life be filled with holy madness to the last breath." He narrates his life story to a friend during one long night in a café in old Cairo. Through a series of bad decisions, he has lost everything: his family, his position in society, and his fortune. A man driven by his passions, he married a beautiful Bedouin nomad for love, and as a consequence pays a punishingly high price. From a life of comfort with a promising future guaranteed by his wealthy grandfather, he descends to the spartan life of a pauper, after being disinherited. Jaafar faces his tribulations with surprising stoicism and hope, sustained by his strong convictions, his spirituality, his sense of mission, and his deep desire to bring social justice to his people.

Naguib Mahfouz, the first and only writer of Arabic to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, wrote prolifically from the 1930s until shortly before his death in 2006, in a variety of genres: novels, short stories, plays, screenplays, a regular weekly newspaper column, and in later life his intensely brief and evocative *Dreams*. His *Cairo Trilogy* achieved the status of a world classic, and the Swedish Academy of Letters in awarding him the 1988 Nobel Prize for Literature noted that Mahfouz "through works rich in nuance--now clear-sightedly realistic, now evocatively ambiguous--has formed an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind". Here Denys Johnson-Davies, described by Edward Said as "the leading Arabic-English translator of our time," makes an essential selection of short stories and extracts from novels and other writings, to present a cross-section through time of the very best of the work of Egypt's Nobel literature laureate. --Book Jacket.

Master storyteller Naguib Mahfouz crowns his best-selling *Cairo Trilogy* with this final chronicle of the Abdal-Jawad clan, climaxing the story begun in *Palace Walk* and continued in *Palace Of Desire*.

A novel of loss and memory from the Egyptian Nobel laureate. On a school playground in the stylish Cairo suburb of Abbasiya, five young boys become friends for life, making a nearby café, Qushtumur, their favorite gathering spot forever. One is the narrator, who, looking back in his old age on their seven decades together, makes the other four the heroes of his tale, a Proustian (and classically Mahfouzian) quest in search of lost time and the memory of a much-changed place. In a seamless stream of personal triumphs and tragedies, their lives play out against the backdrop of two world wars, the 1952 Free Officers coup, the defeat of 1967 and the redemption of 1973, the assassination of a president, and the simmering uncertainties of the transitional 1980s. But as their nation grows and their neighborhood turns from the green, villa-studded paradise of their youth to a dense urban desert of looming towers, they still find refuge in the one enduring landmark in their ever-fading world: the humble coffeehouse called Qushtumur.

Widely acclaimed as Naguib Mahfouz's best novel, *Midaq Alley* brings to life one of the hustling, teeming back alleys of Cairo in the 1940s. From Zaita the cripple-maker to Kirsha the hedonistic cafe owner, from Abbas the barber who mistakes greed for love to Hamida who sells her soul to escape the alley, from waiters and widows to politicians, pimps, and poets, the inhabitants of Midaq Alley vividly evoke Egypt's largest city as it teeters on the brink of change. Never has Nobel Prize-winner Mahfouz's talent for rich and luxurious storytelling been more evident than here, in his portrait of one small street as a microcosm of the world on the threshold of modernity.

"Here, finally, is some writing with a genuine purchase on things of worth. The collection of pithy short stories, filled with a sad wonder, tells of contemporary Egyptians . . . timorously rebelling against the conformism of life along the Nile." —Observer ". . . Bakr emerges as a fine observer of her country's times, with a vision which remains, for all its engagement, quirky and distinctively personal." —Times Literary Supplement Set among the poor of contemporary Cairo, these thirteen stories and one short novella tell of women struggling to provide themselves with the basic necessities of life. They explore the limits of self-awareness, the pressures to conform, and some of the strange paths to escape that women resort to in a conservative society shot through with social and sexual prejudice and preconceptions.

In one of his regular columns in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Naguib Mahfouz at the age of 89 wrote of his feeling of having reached the penultimate station of his life, and noted how it reminded him of his annual journey from Cairo to Alexandria: at Sidi Gaber Station he begins to prepare his luggage, ready to get off the train, because the next station is the final one. This celebratory volume, published on the occasion of the

Nobel laureate's 90th birthday, brings together a selection of the more personal, reflective pieces that have appeared over the past seven years. They reveal a writer concerned as always with the human condition, with his own thought processes, and with the craft of writing, offering rare insights into the way a great writer thinks and works. The range and quality of writing is even more remarkable when one remembers that since a nearly fatal knife attack in 1994, the injuries Mahfouz sustained, combined with his failing eyesight, have made it almost impossible for him to write. But as a man who has devoted his life to the written word, Mahfouz now prepares his weekly articles through conversations with his friend Mohamed Salmawy, who has selected and gathered the pieces in this collection. Mahfouz fans and anyone interested in learning more about the life, times, and thoughts of one of the major figures of modern Arabic literature will find this volume an essential addition to their bookshelf.

One of the Nobel laureate's most intriguing novels, translated for the first time into English

In this provocative and dreamy parable, a young man disillusioned by the corruption of his homeland sets out on a quest to find Gebel, the land of perfection, from which no one has ever returned. On his way, Ibn Fattouma passes through a series of very different lands--realms where the moon is worshipped, where marriage does not exist, where kings are treated like gods, and where freedom, toleration, and justice are alternately held as the highest goods. All of these places, however, are inevitably marred by the specter of war, and Ibn Fattouma finds himself continually driven onward, ever seeking. Like the protagonists of *A Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels*, Naguib Mahfouz's hero travels not through any recognizable historical landscape, but through timeless aspects of human possibility.

Firozsha Baag is an apartment building in Bombay. Its ceilings need plastering and some of the toilets leak appallingly, but its residents are far from desperate, though sometimes contentious and unforgiving. In these witty, poignant stories, Mistry charts the intersecting lives of Firozsha Baag, yielding a delightful collective portrait of a middle-class Indian community poised between the old ways and the new. "A fine collection...the volume is informed by a tone of gentle compassion for seemingly insignificant lives."--Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times*

Spell-binding evocation of Bedouin life in the 1930s when oil is discovered by Americans in an unnamed Persian Gulf kingdom. This book offers unique insights into Islamic law, considering its theoretical perspectives alongside its practical application in daily Muslim life.

A powerful story of lust, greed and murder. Unflinching, tough, and dramatic, *The Search* was most certainly intended to be a harsh criticism of Post-Revolution morality, but, on its most elemental level, it is a lurid and compelling tale.

A complex tale of alienation and despair. Unable to achieve psychological renewal in the aftermath of Nasser's revolution, a man sacrifices his work and family to a series of illicit love affairs that intensify his feelings of estrangement. A passionate outcry against irrelevance.

The acclaimed author of *The Last Founding Father* explores the lasting effects of the Boston Tea Party.

Against the background of the high politics of Sixth Dynasty Egypt, a powerful love grows between Rhadopis, a courtesan whose ravishing beauty is unmatched in time or place, and youthful, headstrong Pharaoh Merenra II, worshiped by his people as a divine presence on earth. Despite the attention of an endless stream of suitors, entertained by Rhadopis's dancing, singing, and stimulating intellectual conversation in her white palace on an island in the Nile, her heart remains cold and loveless - until events conspire in the strangest of ways to bring her to the attention of Pharaoh himself. From there the two of them embark on a journey of intense passion that is totally absorbing and ultimately tragic. As their obsession for one another burns wildly, they become caught up in the violent turbulence of the politics of the day - Merenra through his desire to sequester the properties of the priesthood and Rhadopis by her efforts to control the march of destiny and avoid their untimely but inevitable fate. But for Rhadopis, who has played with men's minds and danced on the scattered shards of their broken hearts, and Pharaoh, who has sought to flaunt ancient tradition for his own ends, can the power of love ultimately offer protection?

An 'Arabian Nights' in reverse, enclosing a moral about international misconceptions and delusions. This is the story of a student who returns to his village after his obsession with the West had led him to London and the beds of women with similar obsessions about the mysterious East.

In the vein of *Year of the Dog* and *The Higher Power of Lucky*, this Middle Eastern coming-of-age story is told with warmth, spirit, and a mischievous sense of humor. Spunky eleven-year-old Wadjda lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with her parents. She desperately wants a bicycle so that she can race her friend Abdullah, even though it is considered improper for girls to ride bikes. Wadjda earns money for her dream bike by selling homemade bracelets and mixtapes of banned music to her classmates. But after she's caught, she's forced to turn over a new leaf (sort of), or risk expulsion from school. Still, Wadjda keeps scheming, and with the bicycle so closely in her sights, she will stop at nothing to get what she wants. Set against the shifting social attitudes of the Middle East, *The Green Bicycle* explores gender roles, conformity, and the importance of family, all with wit and irresistible heart.

Set against the backdrop of the theater, this novel is a taut psychological drama on and off the stage. First published in 1981, this brilliant novel focuses on how time transforms people and their emotions.

From the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature and author of the *Cairo Trilogy*, comes *Akhenaten*, a fascinating work of fiction about the most infamous pharaoh of ancient Egypt. In this beguiling novel, originally published in Arabic in 1985, Mahfouz tells with extraordinary insight the story of the "heretic pharaoh," or "sun king,"--the first known monotheistic ruler--whose iconoclastic and controversial reign during the 18th Dynasty (1540-1307 B.C.) has uncanny resonance with modern sensibilities. Narrating the novel is a young man with a passion for the truth, who questions the pharaoh's contemporaries after his horrible death--including Akhenaten's closest friends, his most bitter enemies, and finally his enigmatic wife, Nefertiti--in an effort to discover what really happened in those strange, dark days at Akhenaten's court. As our narrator and each of the subjects he interviews contribute their version of Akhenaten, "the truth" becomes increasingly evanescent.

Akhenaten encompasses all of the contradictions his subjects see in him: at once cruel and empathic, feminine and barbaric, mad and divinely inspired, his character, as Mahfouz imagines him, is eerily modern, and fascinatingly ethereal. An ambitious and exceptionally lucid and accessible book, *Akhenaten* is a work only Mahfouz could render so elegantly, so irresistibly.

Selected and translated by the distinguished scholar Denys Johnson-Daivies, these stories have all the celebrated and distinctive characters and qualities found in Mahfouz's novels: The denizens of the dark, narrow alleyways of Cairo, who struggle to survive the poverty; melancholy ruminations on death; experiments with the supernatural; and witty excursions into Cairene middle-class life.

The Nobel Prize-winning Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz refashions the classic tales of Scheherazade into a novel written in his own imaginative, spellbinding style. Here are genies and flying carpets, Aladdin and Sinbad, Ali Baba, and many other familiar stories from the tradition of *The One Thousand and One Nights*, made new by the magical pen of the acknowledged dean of Arabic letters, who plumbs their depths for timeless truths.

This highly charged fable set in Alexandria, Egypt, in the late 1960s, centers on the guests of the Pension Miramar as they compete for the attention of the young servant Zohra. Zohra is a beautiful peasant girl who fled her family to escape an arranged marriage. She becomes the focus of jealousies and conflicts among the Miramar's residents, who include an assortment of radicals and aristocrats floundering in the wake of the Egyptian revolution. It becomes clear that the uneducated but strong-willed Zohra is the only one among them who knows what

she wants. As the situation spirals toward violence and tragedy, the same sequence of events is retold from the perspective of four different residents, in the manner of Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, weaving a nuanced portrait of the intricacies of post-revolutionary Egyptian life. *Autumn Quail* is a tale of moral responsibility, alienation, and political downfall featuring a corrupt young bureaucrat, Isa ad-Dabbagh, who is one of the early victims of the purge after the 1952 Revolution in Egypt. The conflict between his emotional instincts and his gradual intellectual acceptance of the Revolution forms the framework for a remarkable portrait of the clash between past and present, a portrait that is ultimately an optimistic one in which the two will peacefully coexist.

With a writing career spanning some seventy years, Naguib Mahfouz is one of the most recognized writers in the world. His study of philosophy at what is now Cairo University greatly influenced his works, as did his wide readings and his work in the government and in the Cinema Organization. *Life's Wisdom* is a unique collection of quotations selected from the great author's works, offering philosophical insights on themes such as childhood, youth, love, marriage, war, freedom, death, the supernatural, the afterlife, the soul, immortality, and many other subjects that take us through life's journey. Naguib Mahfouz's works abound with words of wisdom. As Nadine Gordimer states in her foreword to his *Echoes of an Autobiography*: "The essence of a writer's being is in the work, not the personality, though the world values things otherwise, and would rather see what the writer looks like on television than read where he or she really is to be found: in the writings." In keeping with Gordimer's comment, Mahfouz's true nature can be found in his writing. The quotations included here offer a broad, yet profound, insight into the writer's philosophy gained through a life's journey of experience and writing.

First published in 1966, Naguib Mahfouz's *Adrift on the Nile* is an atmospheric novel that dramatizes the rootlessness of Egypt's cosmopolitan middle class. Anis Zani is a bored and drug-addicted civil servant who is barely holding on to his job. Every evening he hosts a gathering on a houseboat on the Nile, where he and a motley group of cynical and aimless friends share a water pipe full of kif, a mixture of tobacco and marijuana. When a young female journalist—an "alarmingly serious person"—joins them and begins secretly documenting their activities, the group's harmony starts disintegrating, culminating in a midnight joyride that ends in tragedy.

Naguib Mahfouz's magnificent epic trilogy of colonial Egypt appears here in one volume for the first time. The Nobel Prize-winning writer's masterwork is the engrossing story of a Muslim family in Cairo during Britain's occupation of Egypt in the early decades of the twentieth century. The novels of *The Cairo Trilogy* trace three generations of the family of tyrannical patriarch Al-Sayyid Ahmad Abd al-Jawad, who rules his household with a strict hand while living a secret life of self-indulgence. *Palace Walk* introduces us to his gentle, oppressed wife, Amina, his cloistered daughters, Aisha and Khadija, and his three sons—the tragic and idealistic Fahmy, the dissolute hedonist Yasin, and the soul-searching intellectual Kamal. Al-Sayyid Ahmad's rebellious children struggle to move beyond his domination in *Palace of Desire*, as the world around them opens to the currents of modernity and political and domestic turmoil brought by the 1920s. *Sugar Street* brings Mahfouz's vivid tapestry of an evolving Egypt to a dramatic climax as the aging patriarch sees one grandson become a Communist, one a Muslim fundamentalist, and one the lover of a powerful politician. Throughout the trilogy, the family's trials mirror those of their turbulent country during the years spanning the two World Wars, as change comes to a society that has resisted it for centuries. Filled with compelling drama, earthy humor, and remarkable insight, *The Cairo Trilogy* is the achievement of a master storyteller.

First written in the 12th century, *Conference of the Birds* is an allegory of extreme measures for extreme times -- the story of birds seeking a king is the story of all of us seeking God. Like the birds, we may be excited for the journey, until we realize that we must give up our fears and hollow desires, that our journey will be long and hard. Like the duck, we may not wish to leave the water. Like the nightingale, we may want to stay close to our roses. Direct and to the point, Masani's translation, made in the early part of the 19th century, is particularly apropos for our early 21st century times -- both are periods of intense spiritual seeking.

From the Nobel Prize laureate and author of the acclaimed *Cairo Trilogy*, a beguiling and artfully compact novel set in Sadat's Egypt. The time is 1981, Anwar al-Sadat is president, and Egypt is lurching into the modern world. Set against this backdrop, *The Day the Leader Was Killed* relates the tale of a middle-class Cairene family. Rich with irony and infused with political undertones, the story is narrated alternately by the pious and mischievous family patriarch Muhtashimi Zayed, his hapless grandson Elwan, and Elwan's headstrong and beautiful fiancée Randa. The novel reaches its climax with the assassination of Sadat on October 6, 1981, an event around which the fictional plot is skillfully woven. *The Day the Leader Was Killed* brings us the essence of Mahfouz's genius and is further proof that he has, in the words of the Nobel citation, "formed an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind."

The tumultuous alley of this rich and intricate novel (first published in Arabic in 1959) is inhabited by a delightful Egyptian family, but is also the setting for a second, hidden, and more daring narrative: the spiritual history of humankind. The men and women of a modern Cairo neighborhood unwittingly reenact the lives of their holy ancestors: from the feudal lord who disowns one son for diabolical pride and puts another to the test, to the savior of a succeeding generation who frees his people from bondage. This powerful novel confirms again the richness and variety of Mahfouz's storytelling and his status as "the single most important writer in modern Arabic literature" (*Newsweek*).

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