



No One Sleeps In Alexandria

Ibrahim Abdel Meguid

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This sweeping novel depicts the intertwined lives of an assortment of Egyptians -- Muslims and Copts, northerners and southerners, men and women -- as they begin to settle in Egypt's great second city, and explores how the Second World War, starting is supposedly faraway Europe, comes crashing down on them, affecting their lives in fateful ways. Central to the novel is the story of a striking friendship between Sheikh Magd al-Din, a devote Muslim with peasant roots in Northern Egypt, and Dimyaan, a Copt with roots in Southern Egypt, in their journey of survival and self-discovery. Woven around this narraitve are the stories of other characters, in the city, in the villages, or in the faraway desert, closer to the fields of combat. And then there is the story of Alexandria itself, as written by history, as experienced by its denizens, and as touched by war.

Throughout, the author captures the cadences of everyday life in the Alexandria of the early 1940s, and boldy explores the often delicate question of religious differences in depth and on more than one level. This novel adds an authentically Egyptian vision of Alexandria to the many literary -- but mainly Western -- Alexandrias we already know: it may be the same space in which Cavafy, Forster, and Durrell move but it is certainly not the same world.



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