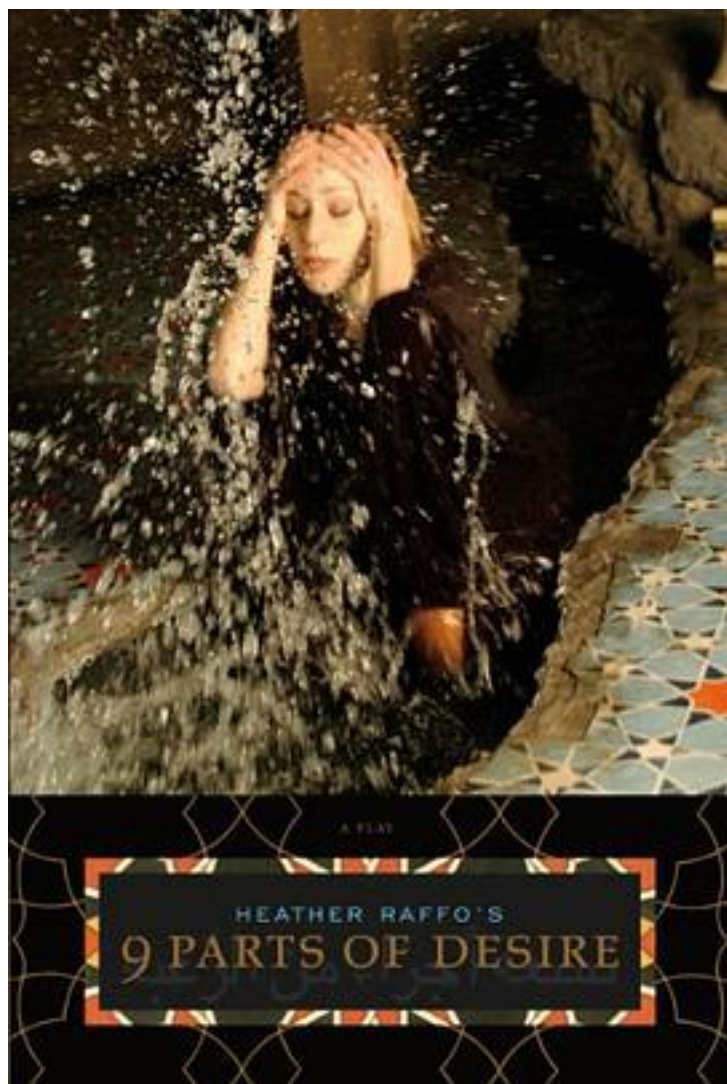


Heather Raffo's 9 Parts of Desire



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As topical as today's newspaper headlines, these rich monologues bring to life nine distinct Iraqi women whose very different stories convey the complex and harrowing reality of being female in modern-day Iraq. Their monologues quickly become a series of overlapping conversations leading to a breakdown in communication as the chaos of Iraq intensifies. Layal is a sexy and impulsive painter favored by Saddam's regime, breezily bohemian one minute and defensive the next; another woman mourns the death of her family in a 1991 bunker, and another--a blond American of Iraqi descent--painfully recalls a telephone conversation with Baghdad relatives on the eve of the U. S. invasion. Other characters decry the savagery of Saddam Hussein in terrifying detail and express an ambivalent relief at the American presence; still others--like a Bedouin woman searching for love--transcend politics. The title comes from the teachings of the seventh-century imam Ali ibn Abu Talib: "God created sexual desire in ten parts; then he gave nine parts to women and one part to men." Heather Raffo's monologues weave these nine parts into a finely textured, brilliantly colorful tapestry of feminine longing in dire times. This compassionate and heart-breaking work will forever change your view of Iraqi women and the people of the Middle East.

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