

The Hakawati



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著者:Rabih Alameddine

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“Here is absolute beauty. One of the finest novels I’ve read in years.” —Junot Diaz

An astonishingly inventive, wonderfully exuberant novel that takes us from the shimmering dunes of ancient Egypt to the war-torn streets of twenty-first-century Lebanon.

In 2003, Osama al-Kharrat returns to Beirut after many years in America to stand vigil at his father's deathbed. The city is a shell of the Beirut Osama remembers, but he and his friends and family take solace in the things that have always sustained them: gossip, laughter, and, above all, stories.

Osama's grandfather was a hakawati, or storyteller, and his bewitching stories—of his arrival in Lebanon, an orphan of the Turkish wars, and of how he earned the name al-Kharrat, the fibster—are interwoven with classic tales of the Middle East, stunningly reimagined. Here are Abraham and Isaac; Ishmael, father of the Arab tribes; the ancient, fabled Fatima; and Baybars, the slave prince who vanquished the Crusaders. Here, too, are contemporary Lebanese whose stories tell a larger, heartbreaking tale of seemingly endless war—and of survival.

Like a true hakawati, Rabih Alameddine has given us an Arabian Nights for this century—a funny, captivating novel that enchants and dazzles from its very first lines: “Listen. Let me take you on a journey beyond imagining. Let me tell you a story.”

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