

The Hedgehog



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"My mother went to visit our neighbor, Umm Bahaa, but refused to take me with her, on the pretext that women visit women and men visit men. So she left me alone, promising not to be gone more than a few minutes. I told my cat I was going to strangle her, but she paid no attention and continued grooming herself with her tongue." Thus we meet the five-year-old narrator of The Hedgehog, who introduces us to his world: his house (with the djinn girl who lives in his bedroom), his garden (where he wishes to be a tree), and his best friend the black stone wall. This tightly told novella confirms that Zakaria Tamer remains at the height of his powers. The short stories that follow were first published in the collection *Tigers on the Tenth Day*. Economical and controlled, they deal with man's inhumanity to man (and to woman) and showcase the author's typical sharply satirical style.

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