



Blue Aubergine

Miral al-Tahawy

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This novel tells the story of a young Egyptian woman, born in 1967, growing up in the wake of Egypt's defeat of that year, and maturing into womanhood against the social and political upheavals Egypt experienced during the final decades of the 20th century. Physically and emotionally scarred by her parents and the events of her childhood, and incapable of relating to men, Nada, "Blue Aubergine", fumbles through a series of dark and unsettling adventures, resorting first to full Islamic dress with "niqab" and gloves, and then throwing it all off for the flowing hair and tight clothes of the emancipated young graduate student, in an ever more desperate and ultimately failed search for tenderness and affection.

A frank assessment of the damage society wreaks by foisting unwise claustrophobic values on its children, this text shifts unpredictably through time and space. A mixed crowd of aunts and teachers, classmates and fellow students, Marxists and Islamicists are there to people Blue Aubergine's bewildering journey to the knowledge that the maintenance of chastity and innocence and her determination to cling to the threads of silk and lace that bind her to her past bring only misery and isolation.

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