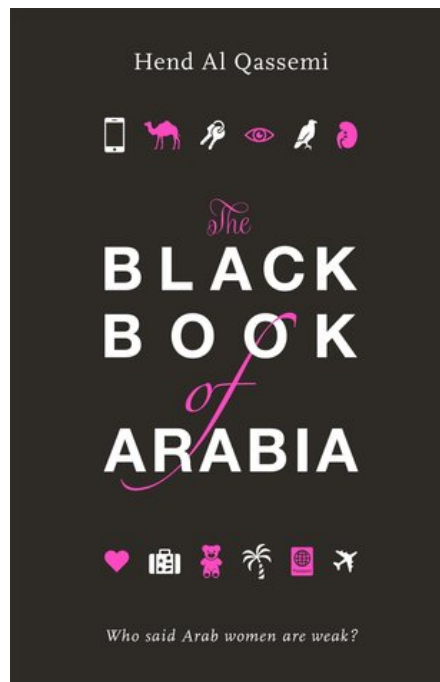




The Black Book of Arabia

Hend Al Qassemi

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The Black Book of Arabia Hend Al Qassemi

A modern day Scheherazade, Sheikha Hend Al Qassemi spins fantastic tales of love, betrayal, and heroism from around the Arabian Gulf. These stories offer a surprising look into the personal lives of a whole range of men and women--everyone from princesses to paupers and from sultans to sorcerers.

You'll meet a princess whose best friend literally tries to steal her wedding, right down to her bridal shoes; a bride who mysteriously goes blind on her wedding day; a woman whose romantic Parisian honeymoon proves too good to be true; and a jealous wife who lures her husband into falling in love with another woman.

These candid stories - sometimes moving, sometimes funny, and always entertaining and surprising - will resonate with readers round the world.

The Black Book of Arabia Details

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Author : Hend Al Qassemi

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From Reader Review The Black Book of Arabia for online ebook

Kai Veispak says

This book is actually fantastic! Maybe not so much for people with Arab background, but for an outside reader it is a wonderful antropological digest of modern Arab living. I recommend it to everyone interested in women's lives all over the world. I would make that book a compulsory easy reading for introductory university courses in women's studies and in Middle Eastern civilizations.

Sana says

The Good: Engaging writing style with 2-3 memorable stories and instances + one message which lay within the subtext and wasn't highlighted at all - you're never too old to turn your life around.

The Bad: Everything else.

With a tag line reading "Who said Arab women are weak?" we are taken through a collection of short stories showing just that, albeit in a backwards way.

In practically every story, there is a woman who is happy, who has aspirations. She is then faulted and falls apart - usually at the hands of a spiteful Arab woman (here lies the irony) - and then rises above, thus depicting her strength.

It's a good plot line, were it not repeated in almost every story, rendering it stale.

And each story almost always consists of an Arab man doing some wrong, even if he was "pure" in the beginning.

Not very fair if you ask me because now you're attaching a negative connotation to Arab men; don't pull someone up by pulling someone else down.

There is one particular story which caught my eye, titled "Raped for a Living" which really set my teeth on edge because I know that human trafficking is a harsh truth in life and not one which should be ignored. According to that tale, it took place in Dubai.

Makes me wonder how many times I've driven or walked by a place without knowing that something so horrendous could be taking place inside. And for that reason, this is a tale that I will remember.

So one or two of the stories had great potential to become something inspiring, because it briefly dived into the struggles that are present within the Middle Eastern region but those bits were glossed over and replaced with marriage and petty issues, which supposedly makes for better reading.

All in all, the collection of 'true' stories were well written but lack the depth and character to make them memorable.

Lamya says

Disappointing, but nonetheless entertaining.

Reem.m says

I came across this book by pure coincidence, the graphic designer who designed the cover contacted me to use one of my photos as a cover, then she changed her mind, but the name of the book was stuck with me. nearly a year later I came across the book in a store and decided to get it.

right from the start the writer addressed few topics that middle eastern women are obsessed with, Black magic, Moroccan husband thieves, Evil eye and more. As an Arab Muslim woman I was familiar with 90% of the stories, I even heard some of them before so it wasn't a surprise to read at the very last page that the stories are true and the women in the stories contacted the writer for the book.

my thoughts on this book is it's filled with stereotypes and the writer didn't take this chance to change them but she decided to feed them, Moroccan women were shown as evil house thieves and witches, Emarati women were shown as rich, educated, sophisticated and almost "too good to be true". this book is nice if you have a lot of time in your hands and want to read something light and quick.

I gave it three stars because I believe that it's good, sure the stereotypes bothered me but still they are a part of the culture and every Arab woman can not deny that!

for more book reviews check my blog <http://reemwrites.blogspot.com/>

Alhanoof Al-Barjas says

There are "too much" to believe in this novel and also there are many nonsense endings in the stories. But I will give it a 3 stars because some stories are good and lovely.

In "the princes and the pauper" the author didn't know how to end the story so she make-up a nonsense ending.

In "sleeping with the nanny" it's really "too much" to believe that the mother know about her son in the age of 12 and she didn't kick the nanny away from the country

In "raped for a living" it's great story but it's not an Arab woman story !

Khalid Alqassimi says

Wonderful collection of true stories of women in the Arab world, really gets you thinking. Easy to read, easy to love.

Dana Al-Basha ????? ?????? says

When I bought the book I had no idea who the author was, and my ignorance remained the same until I opened it yesterday only to discover that the author is actually a royal princess! I mean, how interesting!

This book consists of 12 short stories:

1- Yours Truly ★★★★★?

This one was a surprise, it was deep, weird and quite frankly so sad. It's the story of a woman who creates a fake identity online to see if her husband is cheating, only for him to fall out of love with her and fall in love with the girl she created!

2- The Princess and the Pauper

3- I Will Never Leave You

4- The Apple of My Eye

5- The Grass on the Other Side

6- I Sold My Kidney for Love

7- Voodoo in New York

8- Raped for a Living

9- Sleeping with the Nanny

10- Crazy for You

11- From Riches to Rags

12- Bleeding Freedom

Alya AlShaibani says

3 pages in and I realized this either wasn't edited or was by a spider monkey. The author's writing style is actually pretty good, and has potential, but unfortunately the whole book was petty. There's no point to this book, really. It's just another horrible jab at the cliché Arab stereotype. This, along with Desperate in Dubai and Girls of Riyadh, should've stayed online rather than plague bookstores.

Gillianne Y says

The Black Book of Arabia is a an easy read. It is a compilation of short stories that convey the lives of the people in the Middle East. It is very interesting to read because some stories might seem unusual to some people. Also, I love how the author was able to present each stories in a manner that will make the reader crave for more because of the mystery and truthfulness of each story. It will tickle your curiosity and would not stop until you are done reading the book. I recommend this book to readers who don't usually read these kinds of books, it's a great experience. I truly enjoyed reading this book.

Bradley Steffens says

Captivating from start to finish, this little book is a roller-coaster ride through the private lives of women and men in the GCC, replete with unexpected turns, sudden drops, and riveting climbs out of the depths of despair.

Hano-Chan says

Well, I bought this book because I liked the cover, naturally. But the stories included made it impossible to finish reading because they are so annoying! Don't know if they're real or close to real stories of people.

From the parts I read, I understood that it talks about stupid, naive, selfish women capable of great harm, hence "The Black Book"! Nothing to be proud of. It's Feminism at its worst.

While some might find it interesting, I do not recommend it to anybody.

Alyazia says

Oh my god this novel just changed my perspective over stories in the Middle East about their lives and how they lived. It's a novel with many short stories that I got hooked on the first page when I read it love the way the author wrote! I came across it in a local bookstore in the best seller shelf and picked it up!! It's tempting with every short stories you want to read the next one!!

Talks about marriage, betrayal and also romance it's also moving and funny!! As it's said Who said Arab women are weak very true!! It shows that that we should learn from our mistakes we ever we go so i would say I truly recommend it for anyone!!

Chuck Knudsen says

I only finished about half of the stories but I'm counting this as read.

It's frustrating. The stories she tells are fairly interesting, but they are told in a very matter-of-fact manner that is simplistic and mediocre. It reads a bit like it was lazily translated from another language.

This is somewhat complicated by the afterward, which thanks women for sharing the true stories that it is based on. If they are true stories, the style would make some sense. However, they are classified as fiction, so there is no reason not to make them more readable.

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"The Princess and the Pauper". ??? ????????? - "?????????????" ? "?????????". ?????? ?????????? ??????????????????????????
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"I Sold My Kidney for Love". ??????????????, ? ?????????? ??? ??????????. ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ??????????. ?
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"Voodoo in New York". ??????? ?????????????? ? ???-????? ?????? ? ?????? - ?? ??? ??????. ?? ??? ?????????? ?
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"Crazy for You". ?????????? ??????, ??? ?? ???, ? ?????????? ??? ?????????? ?????? ??? ? ??????????? ??????, ??????????????
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"From Riches to Rags". ?????? ?????????????????????? ???????????????, ?????????? ? ???-?????, ??????????????. ??? ??????????
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"Bleeding Freedom". ?????????? ?????????????? ? ?????????? ?? ?????????????????? ?????????? ? ?????? ?????????? ?? ??? ? ??????. ?
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Tasbih Alsaeed says

A pleasant surprise. The book very much reflects the Arabic culture with its beauty and flaws, and weaves magical and shocking tales of women who have shown extraordinary strength and even foolishness to get what they want. It's worth pointing out that the stories are all based on true events.