



Desperate in Dubai, #1

Ameera Al Hakawati

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Oozing with men, money, and Maseratis, Dubai is the ultimate playground for the woman who knows her Louboutins from her Louis Vuittons. But for some, there's a lot more at stake than a Hermes Birkin. Leila has been in search of a wealthy husband for over a decade. Nadia moves to Dubai to support her husband's career, only to have her sacrifices thrown in her face. Sugar escapes the UK in an attempt to escape her past. Lady Luxe, the rebellious Emirati heiress, scoffs at everything her culture holds sacred. Until the day her double life starts unravelling at the seams. Set against a backdrop of luxury hotels and manmade islands, Desperate in Dubai tells the tale of four desperate women as they struggle to find truth, love, and themselves.

Desperate in Dubai, #1 Details

Date : Published 2011 by Random House

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Author : Ameera Al Hakawati

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From Reader Review Desperate in Dubai, #1 for online ebook

Adeeb says

Somewhere between 3 and 3.5.

The book portrayed an extremely exaggerated view of Dubai. The characters were extremely shallow and most of them annoying. Sugar's character arc was extremely interesting and enjoyable though. Her story was rich, her attitude fascinating.

This book wasn't bad, it was way too popular. The hype around it is enormous and I don't understand why. In terms of writing, this book was okay. At many glances I found an abrupt change in the writing style, which was a bit distracting.

Despite all that, I admit, I was intrigued to know how the story will resolve. My hate towards the characters was a driving force for me to continue reading. I was sort of pleased with the way the book ended.

Overall, the book was enjoyable and entertaining, but had me rolling my eyes and cringing in lots of places.

Ani says

I read this book just because the setting is in Dubai. I've read so many similar books it's not that they're not good...it's that I don't connect with the characters and after I finish reading I don't feel different. And for me for a book to be really good...it has to make me feel something, be it happy or sad or pity...simply feel. This book fails to do that.

Mansi says

Nope. Badly written, completely skipped the editor and made it straight to the printing.

thelastword says

Desperate in Dubai Deconstructed:

It's important to note that this book is reproduced from a blog; therefore the book is over long, needs extensive editing and feels repetitive at times. It also loses itself within its omniscient point of view - for example: the character Daniel (Nadia's husband) is given his own voice and then is randomly dropped. Furthermore, the characters behave erratically – almost to the point of schizophrenia.

Characters:

Lady Luxe - A rich repressed Emirati girl (and by repressed, I don't understand what she's so morose about not having except perhaps class, character and morals) – she has everything and is a self-proclaimed businesswoman whom her father loves, backs unconditionally, spoils and approves of over her bigger

brother. Regardless, she feels very oppressed and rebels because she is not allowed to be as trashy as her bigger brother (albeit only in Dubai).

Her form of rebellion is not fighting the inequalities of her society but by doing exactly what her bigger brother does under the guise of a blonde wig and fake name – “Jessica”. Her alter-ego behaves,

Quote: ‘like a Russian prostitute’

and is downright skanky

Sugar – I don’t understand why the writer couldn’t just give her a fake Indian name but went with a porn-star sounding name. Nevertheless, Sugar is the Indian girl who came to Dubai to escape her self-made hell instead of sorting it out. She is easily the most offensive character because she continuously uses her ‘Religion’ and so-called ‘Spiritual awakening’ to justify her heartless, inhumane behaviour in order to achieve her selfish lust – and I quote: SPOILER

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

Quote: ‘...Instead of going to the Mosque I log into facebook and check out GoldenBoy’s facebook...’

GoldenBoy, who posts pictures of his various jaunts with chicks at the club on his facebook, (view spoiler)

Leila - The Lebanese bimbo who somehow thinks that she is a nun because she slept with "less" men than Lady Luxe. A weak character that can’t stand up for herself despite claiming to be independent and better than the Emirati men that she co-uses. She plays the poor, weak female martyr so well that she actually believes it herself – yet a honest ‘*I am cheap, you have money, buy me*’ would really help her in realizing that the men she wants for their money want her for her body and that makes them both sick.

Quote: ‘Leila knows exactly what to say and how to say it to ensure that Mr Maybe calls her the next day ... she tempts, seduces, solicits, flirts, snubs, implies and entices to within an inch of her life. And finally, numerous flowers, chocolates and occasionally jewellery and shopping expeditions later, she gives in shyly and accepts an invitation back to his home. In white lacy underwear, she trembles with an innocence so convincing that even the head sister at her old convent school would have believed that she had held onto her chastity as tightly as she help onto her purse strings.’

Nadia – I can’t think of the point of her in the story other than being the switch. And **perhaps** an excuse to vent some Moroccan hate. Like all the other females in this book she is very reliant on men. She chooses to cry on the shoulder of her long-lost first love, then on the shoulders of a complete 'male' stranger whose lap she fell into on the tube - all this instead of the **offered** shoulder of her sister – who seems to be just about the only character in this book who actually cares for someone other than herself.

Ameerah writes in contradictions:

When Lady Luxe arrives in Dubai, she complains that she will not be able to be the town whore she was in London in her small, everybody-knows-me, gossip-spreads-like-thrush homeland; minutes later she has donned her blonde wig and is banging around town (no pun intended) in her very traceable car, in areas frequented by relatives.

Leila claims to be victim of a terrible relationship and is chaste and wronged; minutes later she brags about her ability to play the blushing virgin bride to all her conquests and services one of them in an alleyway. (view spoiler)

She also conveniently dissolves her marriage to her husband, along with any right to know about his daughter (except when she uses it to attack him) - all the while using her new-found connection with Goldenboy God to justify her actions. (hide spoiler)]

The only running consistency in this book is the lengths these needy women will go for some male attention

Quote: He...strokes the top of her head with a tenderness, which she absorbs as thirstily as a sponge in water.

vomits This is all regardless of their individual religious and monetary backgrounds, from every single one of the characters.

The actions of the side, male characters are vile and unexplained; Daniel's infidelity, Lady Luxe's bigger brother's aggression and smaller brother's complacency are all there but left unexplained in the air. Almost all of them are a bunch of sparkles riding the twilight zone, shooting their very own Arabian Nights with the Expats in Dubai. I may never look at Emirati men the same way again or any person who lives in Dubai for that matter. Thank You for that Sugar.

In conclusion, I have never come across a book where so much immorality and betrayal has been committed by so many people for so little.

Irada Rabah says

Trashtabulous! I found this modern masterpiece highly offensive to Russians, Moroccans, Indians, Lebanese, but most of all to Emiraty community. Characters are two dimensional and writing tabloid - ish. Not worth the paper it's printed on. Should have stayed in blog format.

Duaa says

dubai is the city we run to when life gets too hectic , thats what i always do and this book made me realize I'm not the only one, as arab/muslim girls the western world sees us as deprived or locked up, but we know that's not true because at the end of the day we will do what we want as lady luxe proves.

no book has ever touched me the way desperate in dubai has I'm not sure if its because i related with the stories i have been thru the same issues, or because it also opened up a new world to me that i only saw from the eyes of a tourist. no matter what it is this is the only book i have ever read twice and i wish to forget just to read again for the first time. i honestly feel no words i can say will give this book justice for it deserves much more then my praise. simply i think everyone should read it because if your arab you'll relate and if your not you'll understand us arab girls much more. we choose the life we lead even if we have to run away

thousands of miles from our families

Danderma says

The reputation of this book has made it all the way to Kuwait. The book's name has always been in the back of my mind for some reason, only when news of it being banned earlier this year did I really cement its title in my brain and I started to pay attention. A book, written about and banned in the UAE? Then re-banned? And sold out b3d? Say a book is banned and I have to read it. I just have to see for myself if my mind is able to take it or not.

Finally, I got my hands on the book this past weekend while in Dubai. The book is indeed in every corner you look, in every chart and shelf. It's in fact the first thing I did when I went into Dubai: Check into the hotel, head down to Virgin mega store, and buy the book. I spent my weekend in Dubai reading it and there is no better way to read it than being in Dubai for you can totally relate to your surroundings.

On the cover, Time Out Dubai states that the book is 'UAE's answer to Desperate Housewives.' but I beg to differ. It's more like UAE's answer to SATC! The writing is very good indeed masha2 Allah but I was surprised at the content: it is quite naughty! Not suitable for sensitive readers who would be for sure extra sensitive towards its content if they are Arabs or Khaleejis given that we all live in the bubble of 3aib and refuse to believe that there is anything happening outside that bubble.

I liked the story line, I liked the twists, I liked the quite unlikely coincidences, yet I literally couldn't put it down and finished it at 3 AM this morning. It's like sitting in a room with a girlfriend and listening to her describing scandalous affairs of the society. You want to know if Leila bags the man catch, if Lady Luxe adventures are uncovered, if Nadia can patch it up with her cheating husband, and what the hell is Sugar's secret? Writing the naughty details in this book and sounding out the frank perspective of society towards its different inhabitants must have taken a lot of guts indeed.

The best thing about the book? It originated from a series of posts on a blog, Desperate in Dubai! I love blogs that turn into books and very successful ones indeed! I have a soft spot in my heart for every book that originates from blog posts, I cannot help it being a blogger myself. Those kinds of books almost always are successes with a fan base of people already willing to re-read its content all over again. Way to go, Ameera :)

The things I didn't like about the book? There were no footnotes for the Arabic and Indian dialog and that annoyed me. There weren't many of them though and thank god I speak Arabic. I want to know what the Indian ones meant though. Another thing, I hated the name Sugar. Really hated the name Sugar. It grated on my ears every time I read it especially when she was in the religious mood. Her name only makes me think of a stripper out of the club. I couldn't relate to her.

Writing that book was very brave, and again it is not suitable for sensitive readers. I don't expect to see it landing in Kuwait's libraries anytime soon though, it's too explicit for our censorship. Plus, I can understand why many think of it as offensive given that the characters voice out their thoughts generally. In addition, for some reason in the gulf we always think that the stories written in books are an exact word to word re-tale of something that actually happened that is often scandalous, and nothing can be imagined at all. If you approach the book from that angle and expect that you are reading a 100% true tale, you may not like its content at all and be quite outraged.

However, it is definitely staying on my shelf and I'm looking forward to more books by the writer with the nom de plume, Ameera Al Hakawati. I wonder how fellow Emarati readers feel about it though?

P.S. Its nothing Like Banat Al-Riyadh.

Bianca Basak Dik Turk says

I read (gobbled up) this book in one day and loved it! I don't know if it is because I grew up here and every story is a same-same-but-different variation of the stories I have heard growing up, every character is like someone I have met somewhere along the way, the places, the recurring themes are so much a part of this place I call home or if it was just a pretty good page-turner. I just *got* everything that was implied, said and lived through and loved the familiarity of it all. I kinda feel the author had to intertwine the Islamic theme throughout the novel so as to heighten the chances of permission to publish here in the UAE (I heard it was first refused and then granted when the author 'promised' it was all fiction). Would be interesting to know what an outsider would think of it. Great summer/airplane reading especially before your first trip to Dubai :)

Sireen Al says

I just finished reading “Desperate in Dubai” by Ameera Al Hakawati

Let me tell you, if you're into Desperate Housewives, chick flick dramas or even if you're just looking out to read a good book this is your choice of the moment.

It was a hectic week but I managed to finish the book. As soon as I started, I was eager to know what happens next and once you read it trust me you will not be able to put the book down. It is actually pretty interesting to say the least.

Not to be a spoiler I will tell you minimal details of the book: It focuses about four ladies living in Dubai, in my opinion it is like “Sex and the City” where they talk about four ladies and the hidden fifth character is the city of New York, but in this case it is Dubai.

I don't want to compare but I just want to give an honest amateur review from a reader's point of view.

Moving on... The ladies Characters are very interesting and if you are living in Dubai or in my case from Dubai you will truly relate with them in a certain level.

Lady Luxe is a half Emirati half British decent that studied fashion design in London and moved back to Dubai to stereotypically start her Abaya business. She comes from a well known and strong family but her secret is that; she has been living a double life, one as Lady Luxe the innocent Emiratiya that her father is fond of and the other is when she wears her blonde wig and turns into this party girl named “Jennifer” Sort of like Hanna Montana gone Middle Eastern. She is my favorite character from them all!

Leila is a Christian Lebanese that moved to Dubai a decade ago and trying to find “The One”, she works in the real estate industry and has tons of plastic surgeries, enough to go around and distribute her silicones to all in need. She is blonde, reckless, loves to party and she loves rich men. She is in fact Lady Luxe's best friend when she's disguised as “Jennifer”.

Nadia is a Moroccan decent that lived her whole life in England, she therefore moved to Dubai to support her husband's career and with the huge transition she realizes that her husband is being shady, she is the only character in the book that is wearing the head scarf AKA mothajbah. She is the vicious character that plots revenge and recognition.

Sugar is Indian that lived her whole life in England as well, she is known for her copper shiny hair and her

sweet attitude, she moves to Dubai to escape her past. I don't want to burn her story but Sugar from all of the characters is the shocker, her unraveling story slowly gets more and more interesting and I grew to love her character.

The fifth Character is the city of Dubai as the book specifies hang out locations and describes them adequately that triggers and interest for people that might never been to those cities.

Overall the book is scandalous, honest and real. The characters were somehow I could make out in real life, what that indicates is that I might know someone with the likes of Lady Luxe, Leila, Nadia or Sugar and they all intertwine in the middle of the book.

Nevertheless it is a very interesting book with a real ending, I highly recommend anyone to read it.

Sarah AlObaid says

(NO SPOILERS!)

Damn that was such a good book! The ultimate contemporary, if you ask me. I'd be lying if i said i didn't love it. It was so BEAUTIFULLY written. And i must say, i admired the writer's boldness and her style was just CAPTIVATING! So descriptive.. So honest. God, i freaking loved this story. Loved how all independent stories intertwined into one, i loved how the author magically created a tangled mess of it and then PERFECTED the ending. Admittedly, stereotyping was vivid in this book, but most of it was either the sad truth, or the CHARACTER'S genuine opinion. Because i hardly think the author believed any of this nonsense, and she even contradicted most of the stereotyping when writing from a different character's view. I also loved how it's set in Dubai and even though it doesn't send a very flattering message about Arabs, i enjoyed reading about places i recognized and relating to some things for a change!

Badriya Bintuwaih says

I've been reading this book for almost two months I know I aged a lot from reading this
I was busy with things I hadn't had time for some self time

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Book : Desperate In Dubai

Author : Ameera Al Hakawati

Rate : 10/10

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It is about four young women who lived their life time in Dubai .

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Lady Luxe (Jennifer)

Lila

Nadia

Sugar

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Lady Luxe is a Emirati woman Well-known businesses woman in Abaya designing
She is living two different lives
One she is innocent in front of her father and the other where she plays with her tail .
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Lila is in her 30's Lebanese woman where she spend most of her money in plastic surgery for beauty. So
mostly everything is fake in her.
She thinks about marrying a rich guy and have a good home plus she is a gold digger .
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Nadia who fell in love with Danille and end up marrying him in 6 months from knowing him.
She is half Moroccan and half Nigerian.
Till she finds out her husband is a cheater and she will just get her revenge in her own way
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Sugar is an Indian woman who fell in love with a black guy from London and end up getting married
secretly and him converting to Islam
However, this end up tragically
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The writer is born to write believe me when I say that. She is fantastically amazing and the story is. Freaking
cool .
.
.
#read #reading #novel #desperate #Dubai #book #books #????_?????
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Privy Trifles says

The first thing that interested me in this book was that it was written by a blogger turned author and it was really inspiring. I am sure every blogger dreams of something like this. Moreover given the backdrop of a city like Dubai it became an instant hit too. No wonder I was more than happy to receive this book for review as it had been on my to-be-read list for too long! And I was not at all disappointed.

For a first timer the author has done an exemplary job in this book giving you a light read promising loads of laughs and tears at the same time. Though the book is not very high on the emotional side, there are few places where I could actually feel tears stinging my eyes. Over all a fun read to be devoured at leisure.

For full review please read:

<http://wingstomywords.blogspot.in/201...>

Raya says

Being a Muslim is not hard, but being an Arab is. The concept of this book is to show how the society works in UAE/Dubai. For example, it is ok for a guy to date a foreigner because she is not a "excuse my laguage" Bi***, but if dating an emirate girl, well to guys she's a disgrace to society. Guys don't know how to compromise, it's either they have everything or they'll get it in anyways possible. For instance they want to have fun before they reach appropriate marital age and expect to marry a decent lady. They don't know what they really want, but what they should know is that they can't have it all. They say girls are complicated. Why are we complicated when we know what we exactly want, but guys don't. What I love about this book is that it speaks the mind of local and non local girls living in a very open minded yet hypocritical city, society wise. However, sadly nothing can change the fact that men will always be dominant over woman. That's why there's a reason why God gave us the feminine gender a much higher tolerance of pain and patience than men, because no matter what in the end we still manage to survive, move on and start over.

Sangeeta Kulkarni says

Such a terribly written book! The author is so confused! Both 1st and 3rd person are plain abused! Terrible language, so repetitive... Not even fun trashy reading..! The editor should seriously consider a new job!

Fatema Al Fardan says

I finally finished reading! Turns out I'm more busy in summer than in school days, especially if you're in America.

This book is different than most books I read, especially to an emarati technically living in Dubai. It was weird in a nice way though. Since not everything in there is true about a normal emarati.

I have an urge to meet the author. Wanting to know more about herself, her family, her childhood, but mostly her crazy ideas.

Desperate In Dubai has really been entertaining. I didn't like the ending though. I don't like fairy tale endings that keep my mind working overtime. I hate the phrase 'and they lived happily ever after.' The ending of DID was a fairy tale ending in different words. I have questions that i want answered like: what happened to Ahmed? Did he try to help her? How did Lady Luxe meet Mr Delicious? Did Mohamed find out about Liela & Lady Luxe being friends?.. Etc

I hate Nadia so much. If it wasn't for her revenge plans all of this would've happened. Simultaneously, if it didn't happen it would've been a complete different story. She took revenge way too far. God, she has anger management issues. Hello Nadia? Have you heard of karma? I guess not.

The name Sugar annoyed me. Sugar wla ml7 :p In my head a guy at a bar would call the bartender Sugar. I survived through, didn't i? As I read further through the book my annoyance about her name decreased, which was good.

Despite all that, the book is scandalous. Makes you want to continue reading. It is very well written. I liked it! :D
