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## ????????? Details

Date : Published 1999 by ?????? ??????? ?????? ?????? (first published January 1st 1984)

ISBN : 9770164127

Author : ??? ??? ???

Format : Paperback 169 pages

Genre : Novels, Fiction

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## From Reader Review ??????? for online ebook

## **Mohammed-Makram says**

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**Waleed Al-dawood says**

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At the beginning of the book is an introduction, containing a preface, historical background and literary background. They do contain spoilers to the story, so it might be better to read them afterwards. They are very useful in aiding understanding the context of the story, in particular why a story set in the late 1940's feels as though it is set at least a century earlier. Yemen was not (is not?) a modern country.

The story itself is interesting; the context is fascinating.

The narrator is young and naive, which allows the author to show a gradual realisation of the dichotomy between the appearance and the underlying rot in the social structure. It is not an uncommon technique, but it is done quite well here. The ruling elite are decadent, capricious, immoral and irreligious, yet claim their right to rule by descent from the Prophet.

I found it very poignant and relevant that we never know the name of the narrators intelligent, charismatic friend, he is always referred to by his job title. (The job description has 'duties' which are somewhat unusual!)

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## Emma Deplores Goodreads Censorship says

I read this book as part of my quest to read a book set in every country in the world, choosing *The Hostage* because it was the only Yemeni novel available. While it's not awful, I wouldn't recommend it unless you're working on a similar challenge or have a strong interest in Yemen.

The Hostage is a novella weighing in at a little under 130 pages. The translation comes with two introductory essays, both of which are useful, perhaps essential, in understanding the text: the first discusses the historical background, and the second the author's life and the lack of Yemeni literature upon which to build. While I can't say much for the story itself, I really appreciate these editorial features: the publishers clearly put in the effort to present the book well, from providing us with background information to the inclusion of minimal but quite helpful footnotes.

As for the story itself, it's narrated by an unnamed boy, who is taken hostage to ensure his family's loyalty, a practice that in the 1940s was still common in the isolated and traditional Yemen, although outdated in most of the world. The adolescent boys in this position were treated as high-ranking servants, but were also much in demand from the palace women, who were isolated from adult men. The novel basically follows its narrator as he deals with the various people he encounters.

The Hostage lives up to most of the stereotypes English-speakers have about novels in translation: it's a fairly odd story without much momentum; the characters are a bit distant, despite the first-person narration; the pacing feels off, although there is a lot of dialogue; it's sometimes difficult to understand characters' reactions to events and the limitations of the setting (the narrator gets away with much more than one would expect, given his position). Scene-setting and exposition are minimal.

Whether this is a good book in the original language, I can't say, but in translation I found little to appreciate or enjoy. Only about two weeks after finishing, I'm having a hard time remembering much about it. Fortunately, it's short, and the historical background is interesting. Those with more of an academic or historical interest in Yemen or Arabic literature will likely appreciate it more.

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**Rua'a says**

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**mai ahmd says**

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## **Mohammed Yusuf says**

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**Eman says**

## Ahmed Elkholy says

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Ahmed says

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