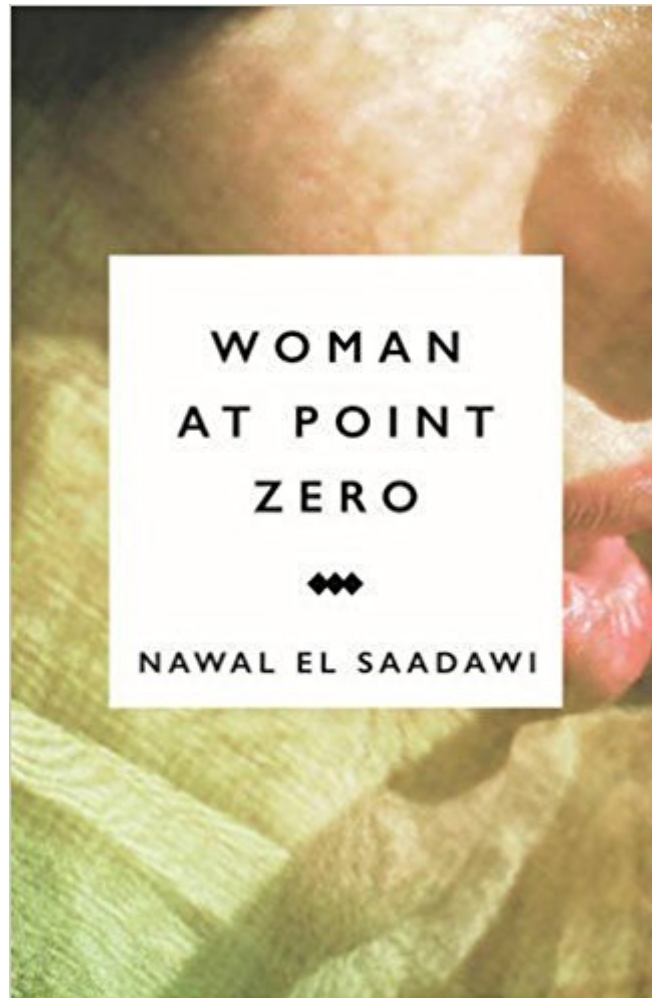


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Woman At Point Zero



Synopsis

Nawal El Saadawi's highly acclaimed feminist novel, *Woman at Point Zero*, follows the life of Firdaus, an Egyptian peasant girl, from her childhood of incomprehensible cruelty and neglect to her end in a grimy Cairo prison cell. From her earliest memories, Firdaus suffered at the hands of men—first her abusive father, then her violent, much older husband, to finally her deceitful boyfriend-turned-pimp. After a lifetime of abuse, she at last takes drastic action against the males ruling her life. Still as beautiful and cutting as it was when it was first published, this new edition will continue to resonate powerfully with readers for years to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had to read this book for a Non-Western Literature college course, and initially I was suffering through it so I wouldn't look like a fool when called on in class. However, when I actually sat down and thought about the true meaning behind this book, I was blown away by the empowerment and strength it offered. It takes a little while to realize what the author is really trying to get through the reader's head, but once he or she catches it, it will open eyes.

Ms. El Saadawi has captured the horror of sexual abuse and the price women must pay for daring to be free. The main character gives all of us an opportunity to ask what we would do in her situation. The marvel is that she survived at all.

It's been a long time since I've read a book that is just so captivating. With a page count of less than 150 pages it's easy to read the book in less than a day, but in reality it only took a few

hours by how mesmerized I was by Saadawi's poetic circular writing. She captures the importance of Firdaus, the book's unconventional heroine, in few well-chosen words. As I read Firdaus's story I found myself feeling sorry for her, obviously, but there was a moment in which I felt anger. She made me so angry because she couldn't just sit and count her blessings, especially when she was with Bayoumi. Then, suddenly, I realized that I felt that way because of the constant sexist influence in my life. We still in a life, yes in modern-day America, in which women are still second-class citizens and we should feel grateful for a man to take us in and take care of us and protect us. Saadawi opened my eyes and made me realize that NO, women should not feel grateful. Firdaus wanted more in her life, she wanted to have a life all her own. She wanted to achieve something great, something outside of what is expected of a woman - she wanted to be a human being. Saadawi made me realize that I still live in the gender-roles conventions that constrict me and prevent me from wanting to do more. *Woman at Point Zero* is not just about the hardships of Egypt or other antiquated countries, it's about the way women are perceived and the way we women perceive ourselves all around the world.

I read this book as part of my women's literature class. El Saadawi is an amazing writer and it shows in this novel. I had the kindle edition so it was a 3 hour read that I read in one day because I was that enthralled by the story. I recommend this to any adult reader especially women.

This is an important work by an Egyptian feminist - a voice for so many women in the Muslim world who have been robbed of their voices. And it is important on many different levels. First, as a psychological portrait of woman who has undergone female circumcision (removal of the clitoris), practiced by many natives of various parts of Africa (by no means all Muslim), as well as by immigrants to Europe and North America. More generally it describes the hell into which a woman can descend in a world dominated so absolutely by males (in one particularly telling passage, the narrator, having been beaten by her very religious husband, complains to her uncle and his wife, and the latter tells her that "it was precisely men well versed in their religion who beat their wives. The precepts of religion permitted such punishment. A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience"). Moreover, the early parts of the book constitute one of the best descriptions I have read of what it is like to grow up in poverty. Although the book is a bit repetitive at times (for example, in describing what it feels like to no longer have a clitoris but remember its presence), if one imagines the book as the transcription of the oral narrative of a prisoner about to be executed, this repetitiveness seemed plausible.

Otherwise the literary style is elegant, and the book is (esthetically) a pleasure to read.

I recommend this book. I couldn't take my eyes off it since the first page, this is the most touching book i've ever read.

It's an amazingly well written book that everyone should read. The audio version is especially enthralling.

The book was highly insightful, yet easy to read.

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