



# Palace Walk: The Cairo Trilogy, Volume 1

By Naguib Mahfouz

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## Palace Walk: The Cairo Trilogy, Volume 1 By Naguib Mahfouz

*Palace Walk* is the first novel in Nobel Prize-winner Naguib Mahfouz's magnificent Cairo Trilogy, an epic family saga of colonial Egypt that is considered his masterwork.

The novels of the Cairo Trilogy trace three generations of the family of tyrannical patriarch al-Sayyid Ahmad Abd al-Jawad, who rules his household with a strict hand while living a secret life of self-indulgence. *Palace Walk* introduces us to his gentle, oppressed wife, Amina, his cloistered daughters, Aisha and Khadija, and his three sons—the tragic and idealistic Fahmy, the dissolute hedonist Yasin, and the soul-searching intellectual Kamal. The family's trials mirror those of their turbulent country during the years spanning the two world wars, as change comes to a society that has resisted it for centuries.

Translated by William Maynard Hutchins and Olive E. Kenny

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Set in Cairo around the end of World War I, as Egypt, a British protectorate, clamors for independence, 1988 Nobel Prize-winner Mahfouz's epic family drama explores deep fissures in the patriarchal structure of one household. Prosperous merchant Ahmad Abd al-Jawad, a tyrant at home, roams Cairo's tawdry entertainment district by night seeking illicit pleasures. His submissive wife Amina is chained to the house; he throws her out on the street after she commits the sin of going outdoors for a walk. His two daughters constantly bicker, and his three sons are beyond his control: Yasin commits sexual assaults on servants; Fahmy becomes an activist in the nationalist movement, while Kamal befriends British soldiers. The first volume in Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy (1956-57), this dense novel charts an Egypt lurching into the modern age. Mahfouz is a master at building up dramatic scenes and at portraying complex characters in depth.

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#### From Library Journal

This extraordinary novel provides a close look into Cairo society at the end of World War I. Mahfouz's vehicle for this examination is the family of al-Sayyid Ahmad, a middle-class merchant who runs his family strictly according to the Qur'an and directs his own behavior according to his desires. Consequently, while his wife and two daughters remain cloistered at home, and his three sons live in fear of his harsh will, al-Sayyid Ahmad nightly explores the pleasures of Cairo. Written by the first Arabic writer to win the Nobel Prize, Palace Walk begins Mahfouz's highly acclaimed "Cairo Trilogy," which follows Egypt's development from 1917 to nationalism and Nasser in the 1950s. This novel's enchanting style and sweeping social tapestry ensure a large audience, one that will eagerly await the English translation of the entire trilogy. A significant addition to any collection. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 9/15/89.

- Paul E. Hutchison, *Fishermans Paradise, Bellefonte, Pa.*

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#### Review

"The alleys, the houses, the palaces and mosques and the people who live among them are evoked as vividly in Mahfouz's work as the streets of London were conjured up by Dickens." —*Newsweek*

"Rich in psychological insight and cultural observation. . . . A majestic and capacious accomplishment."

—*The Boston Globe*

"A tale told with great affection, humor, and sensitivity, in a style that in this translation is always accessible and elegant." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Palace Walk is a feast indeed." —*Chicago Tribune*

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### **Marjorie Cook:**

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