



A Land Like You

Tobie Nathan

Joyce Zonana, Translator

Seagull Books (Dec 15, 2020)

Hardcover \$27.95 (350pp)

978-0-85742-788-5

Tobie Nathan's historical novel *A Land Like You* is a feast for the corporeal and spiritual senses.

In twentieth-century Cairo, a newborn Jewish boy and an infant Muslim girl, along with their families, are thrust into an unusual and unbreakable bond when the Jewish mother is unable to suckle her child and so seeks out a wet nurse from the surrounding Muslim community. The two children become milk twins. They are further tied together by a powerful, mysterious protective amulet devised by the local rabbi. Coming of age during tumultuous WWII, they see their world transformed.

Each page of this rich novel drips with scintillating descriptions of every food prepared and tasted by its characters, as well as every scent that wafts through the dank Cairo alleys and the nearby countryside. From the dingy hovels of the city's poorest residents to the glittering palaces of the wealthy international aristocracy, *A Land Like You* exists in visual and auditory splendor. Enlivening sensual details leave no doubt about how it feels to experience each moment. And the spirit world, which is as real and present to the book's Jewish and Muslim Egyptians as the city itself, plays a potent role in the conception, rearing, and repeated reunification of the peculiar boy, Zohar, with his first and most enduring love, Masreya.

As they grow, fate and history bring Zohar and Masreya together again and again. They rub shoulders with royalty and brush elbows with political power. Their particular talents—business for Zohar and singing for Masreya—are sought by those caught up in the thrill and peril of war. They lose themselves and find themselves in a city that exists between the ancient pulse of Africa, the throbbing influence of the modern European continent, and the winds of the East.

SARAH RICHARDS (November / December 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.