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Autobiography & Memoir

Nadia Captive of Hope: Memoir of an Arab Woman
Fay Afaf Kanafani
M.E. Sharpe
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In her courageous autobiography Afaf recounts the events of her life in Lebanon and Palestine from 1918 to 1984, and her attempt to redefine the traditional roles that would otherwise silence her.

Born in Lebanon at the close of World War I, Afaf's life spans a highly volatile and tumultuous time in Middle Eastern history. From the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of French and English mandates in the Middle East to the establishment of the nation of Israel and the ten-year civil war in Lebanon, Afaf's memoirs reveal not only the life of an oppressed woman but the reality of life as refugee.

From the midst of this turbulent history comes the story of a woman who was raised by a sexually abusive father, and suffered the loss of two husbands, her home and her belongings all within a society that calculated her worth in proportion to her ability to bare male children. Afaf's book speaks for the millions of Arab women who cannot speak for themselves. Her personal experiences provide her with an internal understanding of the powers at work to maintain the status quo. She does not, however, wave a pointed finger, but rather, allows the reader to view for themselves the faces that hide, pray, co-create and lie imprisoned beneath the undisturbed silence.

It is with a frank and graceful voice that Afaf reveals her life. A life that steps beyond the many masks of oppression, and in so doing encourages others to do the same. Nadia, Captive of Hope is recommended to readers with an interest in the Middle East, women's rights and the struggle for autonomy. (April)
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