



The Televangelist

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Sheik Hatem el-Shenawi is accustomed to both the magic and madness of life in the limelight. As an Islamic televangelist with a large following, he's right up there with film stars and soccer players in the eyes of the viewing public. But his glamorous job and the upper-crust lifestyle it provides have a dark side. He finds himself being drawn into the dangerous web of Egyptian politics, religious rivalries, and the complex strategies and power-plays that the elite must employ if they are to survive in a society where even a hint of disagreement with the powers-that-be can bring on disaster.

A prisoner of his self-created image, and vulnerable to the battle for TV ratings, Sheik Hatem is dismayed by the gap between what he must say and what he really wants to say, even to those closest to him. In a state in which "politics has been permeated by religion, and religion has been politicized," everyone is afraid of tipping the balance by saying something "incorrect." Lonely and friendless, he has become pawn in a corrupt system that values obedience above freedom, and tradition above reason.

The tension grows as Sheik Hatem's livelihood and life are put in jeopardy when he is given a commission he cannot refuse, and for which failure is not an option.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Summer 2016)

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