



Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women

By Geraldine Brooks

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As a prizewinning foreign correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, Geraldine Brooks spent six years covering the Middle East through wars, insurrections, and the volcanic upheaval of resurgent fundamentalism. Yet for her, headline events were only the backdrop to a less obvious but more enduring drama: the daily life of Muslim women. **Nine Parts of Desire** is the story of Brooks' intrepid journey toward an understanding of the women behind the veils, and of the often contradictory political, religious, and cultural forces that shape their lives. Defying our stereotypes about the Muslim world, Brooks' acute analysis of the world's fastest growing religion deftly illustrates how Islam's holiest texts have been misused to justify repression of women, and how male pride and power have warped the original message of a once liberating faith.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Geraldine Brooks spent two years as a Middle East news correspondent, covering the death of Khomeini and the like. She also learned a lot about what it's like for Islamic women today. Brooks' book is exceedingly well-done--she knows her Islamic lore and traces the origins of today's practices back to Mohammed's time. Personable and very readable, Brooks takes us through the women's back door entrance of the Middle East for an unusual and provocative view.

From Publishers Weekly

Having spent six years covering the Middle East for the *Wall Street Journal*, Brooks presents an exploration of the daily life of Muslim women and the often contradictory forces that shape their lives.

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From Booklist

During her six years covering the Middle East for the *Wall Street Journal*, Brooks sought to find out how Muslim women feel about their societies' attitudes toward women. What she discovered is sometimes astonishing, sometimes shocking, but always fascinating. Taking on the *hijab* (the Muslim woman's black veil) herself, Brooks talked with women throughout the Islamic world, reexamined the Koran, spent time with fundamentalist and feminist alike, and emerged with a deeper understanding of the religion as one that once empowered but now cripples women. She found, for instance, that Iran is one of the better Islamic countries for women, Saudi Arabia the worst; that the *hijab* can be strangely liberating; that enjoyment of their sexuality is an inherent right for Muslim women; and that to be a feminist under Islam calls for a daily form of courage almost incomprehensible to the Western mind. Brooks is a wonderful writer and thinker; the observations she makes and the conclusions she reaches open both our eyes and our minds to understanding Muslim women anew. *Mary Ellen Sullivan*

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