



Sugar Street: The Cairo Trilogy, Volume 3

By Naguib Mahfouz

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Sugar Street is the final 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. *Sugar Street* brings Mahfouz's vivid tapestry of an evolving Egypt to a dramatic climax as the aging patriarch sees one grandson become a Communist, one a Muslim fundamentalist, and one the lover of a powerful politician. Filled with compelling drama, earthy humor, and remarkable insight, Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy is the achievement of a master storyteller.

Translated by William Maynard Hutchins and Angele Botros Samaan

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Nobel laureate Mahfouz's third volume of his Cairo Trilogy, a stunning portrait of a family in dissolution, mirrors its setting--an Egypt that is adjusting to the modern world.

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From Kirkus Reviews

The final volume in Nobel laureate Mahfouz's magisterial Cairo trilogy takes the Abd al-Jawad family from a rising tide of nationalist sentiment in 1935 through the darkness and confusion of WW II, as Britain defends an Egypt officially neutral. Yet national politics, for all its importance as background accompaniment here (as in *Palace Walk* and *Palace of Desire*), is usually kept just offstage--"They say that Hitler has attacked," old family servant Umm Hanafi announces halfway through, and matriarch Amina's final illness coincides with a bombing raid--as Mahfouz continues to dramatize the emergence of modern Egypt through ailing family head Ahmad Abd al-Jawad's family--his sons, sensualistic Yasin and scholarly Kamal; his daughters, prematurely aged widow Aisha and settled wife and mother Khadija; and his five grandchildren. As perennial bachelor Kamal methodically visits his father's favorite brothel and frets about whether to marry, the focus of the trilogy shifts from *Palace Walk* to Khadija's home with Ibrahim Shawkat on Sugar Street, where the couple's sons--Abd al-Muni'm, turning toward fundamentalist Islam, and increasingly committed Communist Ahmad--argue about their duty to the country and the nature of Egyptian society, but both end meeting the same fate. Meanwhile, Yasin's son Ridwan rises rapidly through the ranks of the civil service with the aid of magnetic, homosexual Pasha Isa, and their sister Karima, like Aisha's daughter Na'ima, prepares to receive the inevitable wedding proposal--though both times from a surprising source. Individual episodes--Ahmad Abd al-Jawad's hazy awareness that his friends are all dying; Kamal's abortive romance with Budur Shaddad, sister of his far-distant first love Aida; and his final tormented guilt over his moral paralysis--show Naguib's Tolstoyan economy at its most dramatic, though the third generation of his family makes a more muted impression than the first two. Mahfouz writes in the great tradition of the 19th-century novel from Balzac to *Buddenbrooks*. His trilogy shows just how rich and vital that tradition remains in the hands of a master. -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"A masterful kaleidoscope of emotions, ideas, and perspective. Mahfouz has captured a family and its homeland at one gloriously varied moment in a cycle." —*Newsday*

"Mahfouz's characters blaze with intensity, his Egypt pulsates with unresolved tension." —*The Atlanta Constitution*

"A resonant tour de force, a superbly written novel. One of the most enjoyable books of recent memory." —*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

"Mahfouz presents us with a different concept of the world and makes it real. His genius is not just that he shows us Egyptian colonial society in all its complexity; it is that he makes us look through the vision of his vivid characters and see people and ideas that no longer seem so alien." —*Philadelphia Inquirer*

Users Review

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