

*Stories from the Middle East*

# hoopoe

Fiction | 2016





Founded in 1960, the American University in Cairo Press has been the leading publisher of Arabic fiction in English translation for many years.

Our authors are world renowned and include **Naguib Mahfouz**, the only writer of Arabic to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Mahfouz was followed to the Press by uniquely talented writers who received wide critical acclaim in English translation—**Ibrahim al-Koni, Sahar Khalifeh, Alaa Al Aswany, Betool Khedairi, Bahaa Taher, Hala El Badry, Gamal al-Ghitani, Miral al-Tahawy, Ibrahim Nasrallah, and Yusuf Idris** among them.

**The AUC Press proudly launched Hoopoe in Spring 2016.**



AN IMPRINT OF AUC PRESS

### *Stories from the Middle East*

For Hoopoe's first year, we are proud to present remarkable writing from Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Syria, and Morocco. From crime fiction to historical epics, and from political thrillers to family sagas, there is something here for everyone.

This Fall we publish the heart-breaking story of a Syrian family struggling to survive the Assad regime; a dystopian novel set in a grisly future Cairo; the dramatic tale of a freed Sudanese slave seeking vengeance in the name of love; and a story of modern Morocco about love, loss, and everything in between.

We recommend this diverse and engaging selection of books to you wholeheartedly, and invite you to join our conversation at [www.hoopefiction.com](http://www.hoopefiction.com).

# The Longing of the Dervish

Hammour Ziada

At the close of the nineteenth century, freed slave Bakhit is let out of prison with the overthrow of the Mahdist state in Sudan. On the brink of death, the memory of his beloved Theodora is all that has sustained him through seven years of grim incarceration—that and his vow to avenge her killing.

Set against a backdrop of war, religious fervor, and the monumental social and political upheavals of the time, *The Longing of the Dervish* is a love story in the most unlikely of circumstances.

Lyrical and evocative, Hammour Ziada's masterfully crafted novel is about sorrow, hope, and the cruelty of fate.

**Winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature 2014**

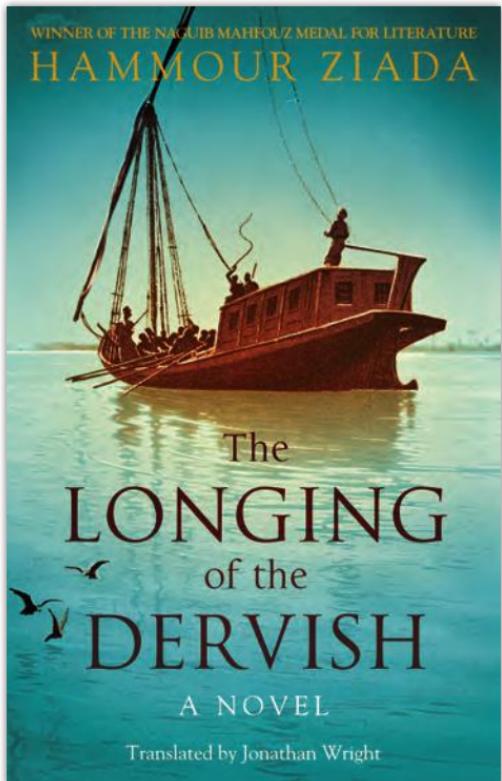
**Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction**



**Hammour Ziada** was born in Umm Durman, Sudan, in 1977. He has worked as a civil society and human rights researcher, and is currently a journalist based in Cairo. He is the author of two novels and two collections of short stories. He lives in Cairo, Egypt.

Translator of the winning novel in the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and winner of the Saif Ghobash–Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation, **Jonathan Wright** was formerly the Reuters bureau chief in Cairo. He has translated Alaa Al-Aswany, Youssef Ziedan, and Hassan Blassim. He lives in London, UK.

*An epic of love and revenge in a time of war and slavery*



\$18.95 • £9.99

288pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 788 1

September 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Romance / Historical; Fiction / Historical; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Modern and contemporary fiction; Fiction in Translation; Historical romance

**Sales points:**

- Bestseller in Arabic and winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal
- Set in a key period in Middle Eastern/ British colonial history
- Addresses issues that will resonate today: race, slavery, religious extremism

**Rights:** World ex. Arabic



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**Praise for *The Longing of the Dervish*:**

“Neither starry-eyed nor cynical, Ziada constructs, in exquisitely lyrical language, the story of Bakhit’s love for the white woman who finds solace in his company but cannot imagine marrying a slave. A rich and sensitive novel, *The Longing of the Dervish* reflects on tolerance, prejudice and freedom in ways that transcend its historic setting.”—*Financial Times*

“Explores a seminal moment in the region’s history.”—*The Guardian*

## Excerpt from *The Longing of the Dervish*

As soon as the shackles were off his legs, Bakhit Mandil jumped to his feet.

The prisoners who were still around him congratulated each other. One clapped his hand on Bakhit's shoulder and shouted, "At last! Freedom, Bakhit!"

Freedom had come to them with the warships and cavalry of the invaders. It was September 1898 and the Egyptian army had entered the country. The Mahdist state was defeated.

But Bakhit didn't feel he was free. Bad blood and revenge stood between him and freedom.

He pushed his way through the crowd to get out of the prison. He felt weak. He hadn't eaten for eight days. He hadn't drunk anything for three. But he couldn't stay a moment longer.

The city had fallen two days earlier. In prison they had heard the news that the Khalifa and his commanders had fled. The Egyptians had entered Omdurman. A group of Christians and Egyptians had come to the prison and released some important people that they knew, but left the others.

Two days with no guards and with no one asking after them. It looked like those outside had forgotten them completely. They could hear the sporadic sound of shelling. They were in their shackles on the floor, where the warders had left them before running away. Some were in the little cells, some in the prison courtyard in the sun. Bakhit was in one of the cells. There were about seventy people in a room that shouldn't have held five. The air was thick and heavy. They were breathing in the air that the others breathed out. Some of them wept for joy; others wept for fear of dying forgotten in the cell because the warders had run off and the new rulers were ignoring them. But Bakhit knew he wouldn't die there. He had put up with prison for seven years waiting for this moment.

He wouldn't die till he had herded his enemies to their deaths like sacrificial lambs. He would go to Hawa with them in his power.

He stumbled out into the street.

Fire and smoke everywhere.

The city had been open to pillage and the Sudanese soldiers were still looting the houses.

He heard women screaming, and sergeants were walking around shouting that the time for pillage was over.

He slipped warily into the violence and the madness, looking for Merisila's house. Soldiers stopped him and searched him several times. Some soldiers attacked him to rob him but then realized he was poorer than a mangy dog. They beat him up and let him go. He walked through the streets of a city he didn't recognize, asking the way from passersby. Omdurman was greatly changed. He had seen it two weeks earlier when he was last taken out on work duty. Now it seemed that years had passed between that time and the mad scene into which he had stumbled. There were dead bodies in the streets, swollen and surrounded by swarms of black flies. The putrid stench made the stunned city retch. The doors of the houses had been forced open. The roads were dirty and full of potholes. The smell of gunpowder was everywhere. To add insult, the dome of the Mahdi's tomb had been badly damaged.

He asked a passerby if he knew the house he was looking for. He received a surprised look and a curt explanation.

He walked past the arsenal, alongside the market, under the empty gallows. Then he turned west. He walked like a child who has just passed the crawling stage. He could feel where the iron shackles had cut into his legs. He was reeling, but his determination held him upright. If he had succumbed to weakness, he would have died years ago, but a man with a debt to love never dies.

# No Knives in the Kitchens of This City

Khaled Khalifa

In the once beautiful city of Aleppo, one Syrian family descends into tragedy and ruin.

Irrepressible Sawsan flirts with militias, the ruling party, and finally religion, seeking but never finding salvation. She and her siblings and mother are slowly choked in violence and decay, as their lives are plundered by a brutal regime.

Set between the 1960s and 2000s, *No Knives in the Kitchens of This City* unravels the systems of fear and control under Assad. With eloquence and startling honesty, it speaks of the persecution of a whole society.

**Winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature 2013**

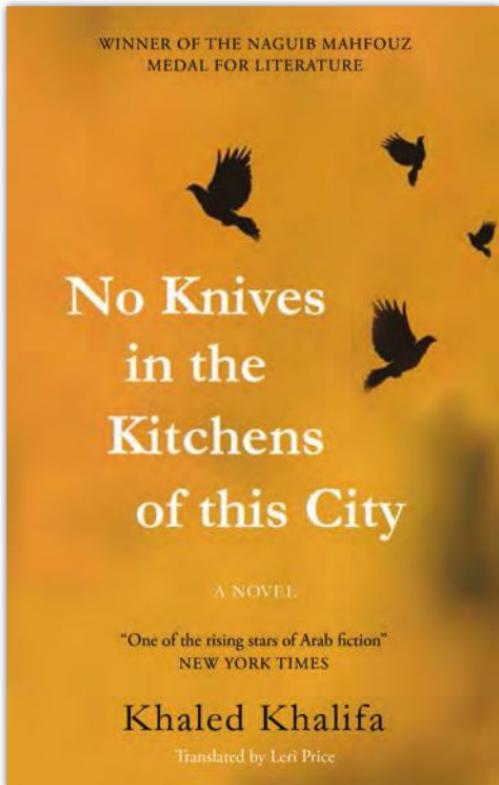
**Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction**



**Khaled Khalifa** was born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1964. A founding editor of the literary magazine *Alif*, he is the author of four novels, including *In Praise of Hatred*. He has also written numerous scripts for TV dramas and films, a number of which have won awards, and screenplays for several feature films. He lives in Damascus, Syria.

**Leri Price** is a translator of contemporary Arabic literature. Her translation of Khaled Khalifa's *In Praise of Hatred* was longlisted for the 2013 Independent Prize for Foreign Fiction. She lives in the UK.

*A profound portrayal of life under tyranny by an acclaimed Syrian writer*



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256pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 781 2

October 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Political; Fiction / Historical; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary, Fiction in Translation, Political / legal thriller

**Sales points:**

- Acclaimed author
- Winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal
- Very topical: about Syria and life under Assad

**Rights:** World English



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*Praise for No Knives in the Kitchens of This City*

"One of the rising stars of Arab fiction ... a rare public voice." — *New York Times*

"Critically acclaimed ... [No Knives] traces the degrading and destructive impact of Syria's dictatorship on the lives of a family from Aleppo."

— *Financial Times*

## Excerpt from *No Knives in the Kitchens of This City*

She left her scribbled notes on the table for days, and we paid them no more attention than we had to the others. Dust piled up on the lines written in the special Chinese ink she had brought for twenty years from Uncle Abdel-Monem's bookshop at the entrance to Bab Al Nasr. She would visit him and ask for lined paper which smelled of cinnamon; accustomed to her question, he no longer exchanged memories with her of the Streetcar Era, as they termed their barb-ridden childhood and complicated relationship. In silence, he would hand her a sheaf of white pages and return her money, and he didn't hear her when she implored him to be stoic. He would go back to sit in his shadowy corner where he gazed steadily at a faded photograph of his family. In its center stood his son, Yehya, smiling, his hair gleaming with oil. The arms of his brothers Hassan and Hussain encircled him, confidently expressing their ambitions in perpetual harmony with one another.

Of this photograph, Uncle Abdel-Monem saw nothing but Yehya, whom he had seen for the last time as a corpse laid out in the autopsy room of the university hospital. His face was charred and he had no fingers; his body bore the marks of electric cables and suppurating knife wounds. One glance was enough to identify him, after which the forensic doctor, as if carrying out a routine task, closed the iron box and wouldn't listen the other man's wild pleas to be allowed to touch his son's face. Instead, the doctor coolly asked him to take receipt of the body, and to bury it without mourning rites and under guard from six of the paratroopers who patrolled, armed and in full riot gear, through the corridors of the morgue.

Before the dawn prayer, Abdel-Monem had arrived at the hospital with Hassan, Hussain, and a friend, and grimly they

took him out. They carried the body to an ancient Volkswagen doing duty as a hearse, lifted it inside, and squeezed themselves in around the coffin. They stared at each other and wept in silence.

Death was spreading through the desolate streets of Aleppo, physically oppressive to a degree that was unbearable. They arrived at the family tomb and the soldiers asked them to carry the coffin inside so that the sheikh waiting there could pray over it. Abdel-Monem just nodded like he was demented and muttered something incomprehensible. The sheikh prayed hastily as my cousins lined up behind him. They didn't raise their eyes from the coffin, out of which the soldiers lifted a fleshy lump wrapped in a filthy shroud. They weren't allowed to look into the extinguished eyes, nor to embrace him as you should when burying a loved one. Their tears petrified in their eyes and they made do with looking at their father who was still crying silently, muttering words no one cared to decipher.

My mother woke from her long coma and sat at the broken-down dinner table beside Nizar, who hummed tranquilly like a deaf fly. She read him a line of the letter to the man she described as a dear friend: "Everything is finished, I no longer hold you to your promise to dance the tango with me on board an ocean liner." She left behind the encrypted tone of previous letters as she stated plainly that it was impossible to trust men who smelled of rats. Unaframed that her letter would fall into the censor's hand, she announced in a final moment of courage that it was all the same to her, and joy no longer concerned her. She didn't for a moment consider herself to have committed any sin; rather, she felt that to face death head-on befitted the grand dreams which had died before she had, and from whose defeat she now had nothing to fear.

# Otared

Mohammad Rabie

2025: fourteen years after the failed revolution, Egypt is invaded once more. As traumatized Egyptians eke out a feral existence in Cairo's dusty downtown, former cop Ahmed Otared joins a group of fellow officers seeking Egypt's liberation through the barrel of a gun.

As Cairo becomes a foul cauldron of drugs, sex, and senseless violence, Otared finally understands his country's fate.

In this unflinching and grisly novel, Mohammad Rabie envisages a grim future for Egypt, where death is the only certainty.

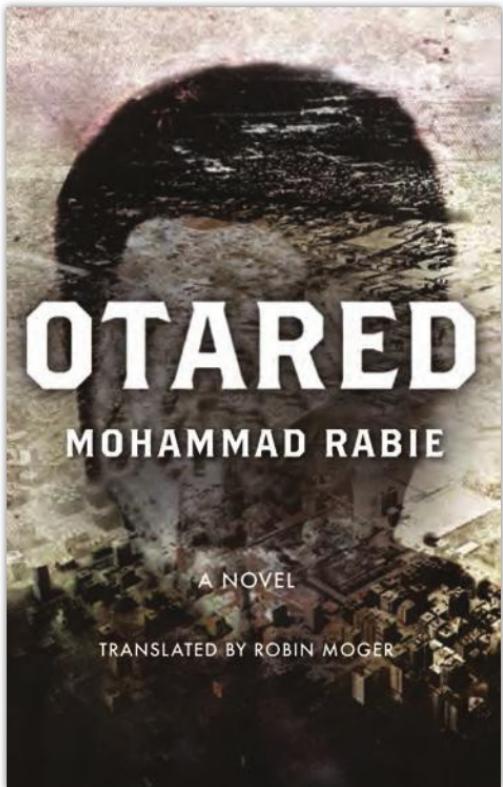
**Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction**



Born in 1978, **Mohammad Rabie** is the author of three acclaimed novels. His first novel, *Amber's Planet*, won first prize in the Emerging Writers category of the Sawiris Cultural Award in 2012. He lives in Cairo, Egypt.

**Robin Moger** is the translator of *Women of Karantina* by Nael Eltoukhy, among other books, and his translation for *Writing Revolution* won the 2013 English PEN Award for outstanding writing in translation. He lives in Cape Town, South Africa.

*A horror-filled obituary on Egypt's failed revolution*



\$18.95 • £9.99

344pp • Paperback Original

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September 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Suspense ; Fiction / Mystery and Detective;

Fiction / Horror

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary, Fiction in Translation, Crime & Mystery, Thriller / Suspense, Science Fiction

**Sales points:**

- Shortlisted for the "Arabic Booker"
- Sleek, accessible writing
- Contemporary dystopian theme with wide commercial appeal

**Rights:** World ex. Arabic, French, Finnish



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*Praise for Otared*

"Part early Ian McEwan, part Philip K. Dick, Mohammad Rabie's apocalyptic take on the Arab Spring in Egypt is an expressionist coup—urgent, disturbing, and eminently readable."—Youssef Rakha, author of *The Crocodiles* and *The Book of the Sultan's Seal*

## Excerpt from *Otared*

I was approached by a young man smelling of soap—he seemed to me to have just had a bath and shaved—and gripping a long-barreled shotgun of local manufacture in his two clean hands. His nails were carefully clipped and filed. I looked like a beggar by comparison: I reeked of sweat, my clothes were filthy, and my hands were smeared with the soil I'd dug up not long before.

For those like me with no papers, the inside of the bridge was the only way to move between Cairo's two halves, despite the risks. You could lose your money and your possessions. You could lose your life. But crossing over the bridge was impossible. For me, the checkpoints were traps. And the toll down here wasn't high: just a single pack of cigarettes. Cheap to them and cheap to me. I was going to cross as a regular citizen. They had no idea I was with the resistance, and I couldn't tell if they were too or just thugs protecting their source of income. I was carrying nothing of any value and the journey was a very short one, just a kilometer or so through the bridge.

Calmly, the young man said:

"Price of entry is one unopened packet of cigarettes. No weapons here. If you're carrying a weapon, chuck it down that hole, now. No talking to the pedestrians and no looking at their faces. If you're carrying a mask, then put it on; otherwise cover your face with a scarf or a sheet of newspaper. If you don't have one of those, then here's a paper bag you can put over your head. This is for your own protection. Don't reveal your name or identity to any of the pedestrians or vendors, asleep or awake. The inner bridge isn't just a passage like it used to be—it's a place where lots of things are bought and sold. I won't forbid you to buy anything from the vendors, but all purchases are made at your own risk. Don't come to me complaining that you've been robbed or cheated. Now, on your way."

I placed the cigarettes in his hand. I took the mask from my bag, put it on my face, and fastened it to my head with the leather strap. Now I was ready to cross.

The darkness pressed in on every side. Nothing could be seen ahead. To my rear was the youth and the fading scent of his soap, his comrades clustered around him, watching me. With their clubs and short swords, they looked like real guards. What little pale light came from the hole fell across the lower halves of their bodies. I took a few paces forward and distant sounds reached me from the depths of the tunnel. There were scattered gleams of colored light, the rattle of blades and chains.

The first thing I saw was a woman. She looked to be about sixty years old, her features obscured by a piece of cloth wrapped round her face, like a turban covering her entire head. She wore nothing else, and the sagging flesh of her breasts and shoulders gave away her age. Her appearance was overwhelming. The sudden nakedness and the covered face threw me completely off balance. I'd never before seen a naked woman in a public place. Without thinking, I lifted my hand to my own face, checking that the mask was fixed in place. I felt properly secure now. She was stroking her thigh with her palm, and then she squeezed her right tit and in a hoarse, unruffled voice asked: "Five for five?"

I walked on, expecting the worst.

I wouldn't have guessed that the bridge had been built with a tunnel like this inside it: two walls, a floor, and a ceiling, all cement. Vast cables and pipes stretched the length of the tunnel along the ground, clearly visible to the passerby through gaps in the long wooden planks that covered them. There were a number of shacks on both sides of the passageway, a meter across and two meters high, and over the entrance to each one hung a blackout curtain, blocking what little illumination was given off by the lights that dangled from the tunnel's ceiling. Some of the curtains were lowered, and some were raised to show what lay inside. Curiosity got the better of me.

# A Beautiful White Cat Walks with Me

## Youssef Fadel

Hassan makes a living in his native Marrakesh as a comic writer and performer, through his satirical sketches critical of Morocco's rulers. Yet when he is suddenly conscripted into a losing war in the Sahara, and drafted to a far-flung desert outpost, it seems that all is lost.

Could his estranged father, close to power as the king's private jester, have something to do with his sudden removal from the city? And will he ever see his beloved wife Zinab again?

With flowing prose and black humor, Youssef Fadel subtly tells the story of 1980s Morocco.

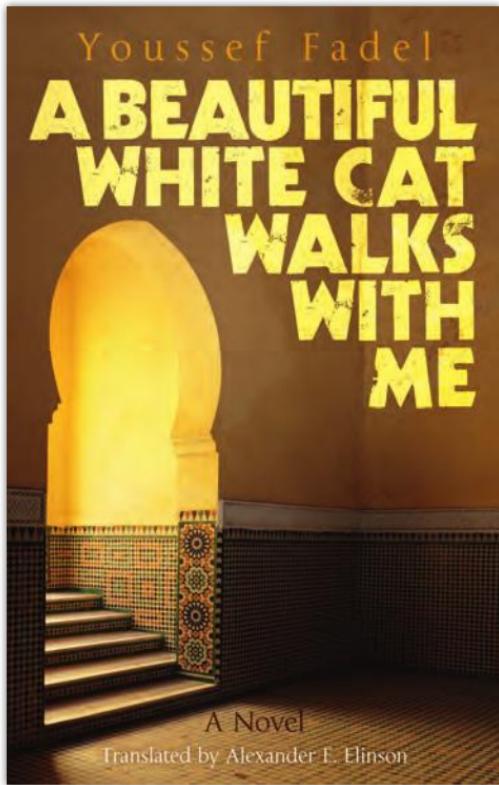
**From the author of *A Rare Blue Bird Flies with Me***



Award-winning Moroccan novelist and screenwriter **Youssef Fadel** was born in Casablanca in 1949. During Morocco's Years of Lead he was imprisoned in the notorious Derb Moulay Chérif prison (1974–75). He lives in Casablanca, Morocco.

**Alexander Elinson** is an associate professor of Arabic at Hunter College of the City University of New York.

*A modern Moroccan tale of power, love, and loss*



\$18.95 • £9.99

272pp • Paperback Original

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October 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Political; Fiction / Historical; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary, Fiction in Translation, Political / legal thriller

**Sales points:**

- First part of author's modern Morocco series
- Concerns a pivotal period in Moroccan history
- Well-respected, prize-winning author

**Rights:** World English, ex Arabic, French



**Praise for *A Beautiful White Cat Walks with Me***

“An astonishing novel.”—*Le Monde Diplomatique*

“[Fadel is] a valued asset of modern Moroccan literature.”

—*Aujourd’hui Le Maroc*

## Excerpt from *A Beautiful White Cat Walks with Me*

Today I began to execute my plan.

Man's condition seems truly strange to me. Sometimes life smiles upon him and fate shines on his face as if he were in the springtime of his life. Other times his skies are obscured by thick black clouds to the point that bad luck has taken ahold of him and won't let him go. When that happens, his only hope is a far away exile or a flash of lightning.

On one of those hot summer days in Marrakech, Zeroual the hunchback and I were sitting in the Café les Négociants when I heard him ask me, just like that, without any preamble, he asked me whether I had a son named Hassan. I was surprised by the question.

"Uh, yes. Hassan. I haven't seen him for ages, so long that I'd forgotten all about him. Why?"

He seemed uninterested in my response. He added another question to his first one, as if he were constructing another floor from which to throw me.

"And does he still perform sketches insulting the government of His Majesty the King?"

It was as if he had lit a fire inside my head. I felt it burn the roots of my hair. This hunchback didn't waste any time. He had dug away at my life story in order to find the stake that he would drive into my heart. And with a stake of this size, you are sure to feel the pain when it's pounded into your bones.

"I have no idea how Hassan is doing, or what has become of his family. I don't know where they are or what they're doing. I don't even know if they're still alive, or whether they still live in the same place. I had forgotten them. Only now do you remind me of them, Zeroual, my friend."

I think about Hassan from time to time, but even when I do, I don't see him as grown up. I always picture him as a child, yet here he appears in another form, as a young man writing slanderous things about people he doesn't know. Why would Hassan insult this or that government? I left him when

he was young, forgot about him and his tribe, and here he is, sent back to me in the form of a threat that the hunchback sitting next to me in the Café les Négociants fires at me with a nonchalance that hides his true intentions. His seeming indifference makes his threat that much more potent.

What concerned me most of all was: where did he meet Hassan? Did they meet in a public place or did he visit him at home? Are there others who know the story of the son who insults the government? I wouldn't ask Zeroual, sitting there waiting for me to do so. I wouldn't ask him because I didn't want to give him the impression that I was afraid of him. Then he would grab hold of my neck even tighter than he had it already. What needed to be done next was for me to observe him more closely.

I invited him to my house, welcoming him warmly, and presented him with a wall clock that pleased him. I'm not talking about the house I share with my wife, Aziza. No. For a while now I have borrowed a garçonnière where I find refuge from time to time. I hadn't opened it for any man before, but now I hand the key to the hunchback with peace of mind. Completely contrary to what I had pictured, I discovered that he is an insatiable philanderer, but as long as women rejected him and were stricken by true fear at the mere sight of his form, he found in my friendship a means of catching his prey, and in my house the nest where he could attend to his vices without any hindrance. From the moment I brought him into my house, he didn't mention the story of Hassan or his sketches to me, which worried me to no end, my fear increasing rather than dissipating.

I don't like him, especially now as I open the door to my house so he can entertain his prostitutes there. I have always considered him an enemy, my number-one enemy. I started to invite him to my house so that I could see what his intentions were. Before then, I didn't know how far he had gone with his plan.

# The Final Bet

Abdelilah Hamdouchi

Young, handsome Othman found his ticket out of a life of desperate poverty in the slums of Casablanca when he married Sophia. Sophisticated, French, rich, and forty years his senior.

But when she is brutally murdered in their bedroom one night, the police quickly zero in on Othman as the prime suspect.

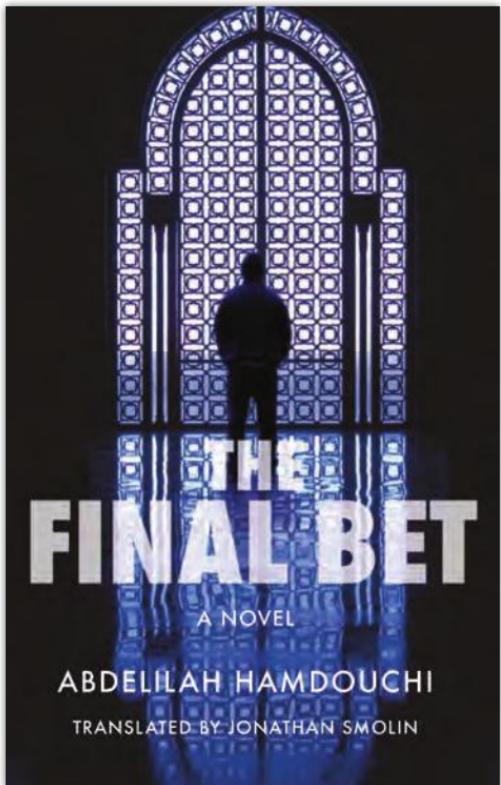
With his mistress, the love of his life, waiting in the wings he certainly has motive. But is he guilty? Or is he an innocent man, framed by circumstance and an overzealous corrupt police force?



Born in Meknès, Morocco in 1958, **Abdelilah Hamdouchi** is one of the first writers of police fiction in Arabic and a prolific, award-winning screenwriter of police thrillers. He is the author of *Whitefly* (2016) and lives in Rabat, Morocco.

Translator **Jonathan Smolin** is the author of *Moroccan Noir: Police, Crime, and Politics in Popular Culture* (2013), and translator of Abdelilah Hamdouchi's *Whitefly* (2016). He lives in Hanover, NH.

*The first Arabic detective novel to be translated into English*



\$14.95 • £8.99

136pp • Paperback Original

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September 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Mystery & Detective;  
Fiction / Thriller; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary,  
Fiction in Translation, Thriller /  
Suspense, Crime & mystery

**Sales points:**

- The first Arabic detective novel to be translated into English
- Accessibly written, broad commercial appeal
- Popular, salable crime genre

**Rights:** World ex. Arabic



9 789774 167799

**Praise for *The Final Bet*:**

"Abdelilah Hamdouchi seems to have found the formula for the emergence of the Moroccan detective novel."—*Libération Kaleidoscope*

## Excerpt from *The Final Bet*

Alwaar stopped his Fiat Uno directly in front of the police car opposite the villa gate. He looked at his watch before heading in. It was quarter after one in the morning. He stopped to breathe in the clean air of this high-class neighborhood and then walked toward the gate where a uniformed cop was standing. The cop greeted the detective with an official salute but Alwaar didn't even look at him.

The first thing that struck Alwaar was the vast size of the villa's garden, which was illuminated with powerful lights that made it look like the middle of the day. The grass was bright green and perfectly trimmed like the artificial turf on a sports field. The edges were lined with multicolored flowers and in the distance there was a deep blue swimming pool, just like one in a luxury hotel. The non-stop barking put Alwaar on edge, so he rushed toward the house. Once inside, he felt like he was in a castle. A magnificent crystal chandelier adorned with traditional designs hung from the ceiling. There was a marble fountain in the middle of the entryway, and the ground shone with polished marble that made you feel sorry for walking on it, no matter how expensive your shoes were. All the furniture was refined and revealed a foreign taste with Moroccan touches.

Inspector Boukrisha hurried over to him with his round belly sticking out. He appeared older than his age, though he was twenty years younger than Alwaar. He had a brown face and curly hair, but it was difficult to pin down the exact color of his eyes. He constantly exaggerated his gestures to reinforce his naturally hoarse voice.

“The crime took place in the bedroom,” he said excitedly.

The detective started walking toward the stairs, but was stopped in his tracks by the sight of a man hunched over on a leather couch with his face between his hands and his chest trembling.

“Who’s that guy?” said Alwaar, winking at Boukrisha. The inspector cracked a smile that confused the detective.

“The victim’s husband.”

Down the second floor was a wide hallway with a number of doors, all of which were well lit. On each side of them were tables with antiques and vases, together with more decorative chairs than quite fit the space. The bedroom was at the end of the hallway. It was a wide room with two wardrobes and a vanity. There was another door inside leading to the ensuite bathroom. As for Sofia’s body, it was lying on the bed drenched in blood. Her nightgown was open at the waist. Her right arm was extended as if she wanted to grab something. The left hung down to the ground. She was lying on the edge of the bed and looked like she was about to fall off, but death had frozen her in this position. Alwaar stared at her pale, aged face and understood the meaning of the inspector’s ambiguous smile. He looked for Boukrisha among the other cops in the room.

“The young guy downstairs, that’s her husband?”

Boukrisha nodded his head with a stunned look on his face.

“He’s the one who called in the crime?” asked Alwaar.

“Yeah, he’s the one,” said Boukrisha, trying to clear his voice.

The detective’s eyes widened and he moved his head slowly. He asked one of the cops—an enthusiastic young man who’d joined the force only two years ago—to stop taking photos. Alwaar moved back and examined the body from the different corners of the bedroom.

His first step was to verify that the crime scene hadn’t been tampered with. He especially wanted to make sure the murder weapon, a knife covered in blood next to the corpse, was in the same position they found it in. The detective had the forensics officer take a close-up of the knife. Alwaar then scanned the bedroom floor, which was covered with a beautiful Moroccan carpet. He saw a framed picture near the bedside table. He bent over and examined the photo without touching it.

# The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets

## Khairy Shalaby

Ibn Shalaby, like many Egyptians, is looking for a job. Yet, unlike most of his fellow citizens, he is prone to sudden dislocations in time. Armed with his trusty briefcase and his Islamic-calendar wristwatch, he bounces uncontrollably through Egypt's rich and varied past, with occasional return visits to the 1990s.

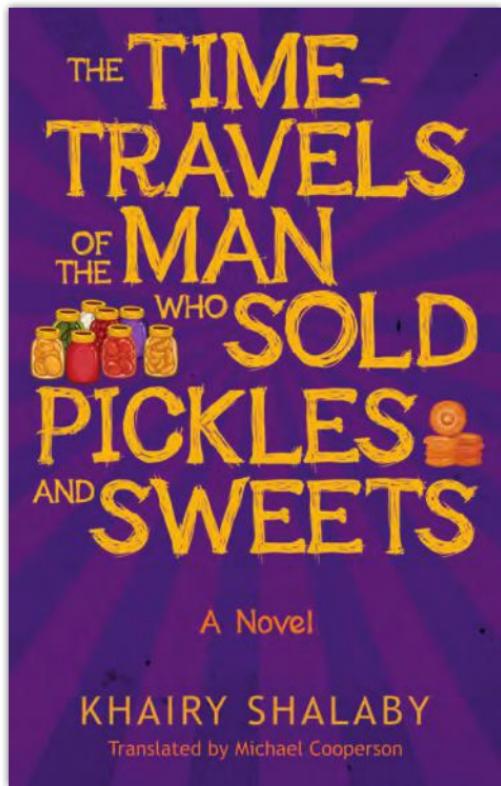
Through his wild and whimsical adventures, he meets, befriends, and falls out with sultans, poets, and an assortment of celebrities—from Naguib Mahfouz to the founder of the city of Cairo. Khairy Shalaby's nimble storytelling brings this witty odyssey to life.



**Khairy Shalaby** (1938–2011) was born in Kafr al-Shaykh in Egypt's Nile Delta. He wrote seventy books, including novels, short stories, historical tales, and critical studies. His novel *The Lodging House* was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 2003.

**Michael Cooperson** is professor of Arabic at University of California, Los Angeles and a fellow of the Library of Arabic Literature at NYU Abu Dhabi.

*The misadventures of a modern time traveler through Egypt's recent and medieval past*



\$17.95 • £8.99

288pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 792 8

October 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Historical; Fiction / Science Fiction; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary, Fiction in Translation, Historical fiction, Science fiction

**Sales points:**

- Acclaimed, prize-winning Egyptian author
- Quirky, yet accessible
- Unconventional look at modern and historic Egypt

**Rights:** World English



9 789774 167928

Praise for *The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets*:

“Fantastical and surreal”—*Cairo 360*

## Excerpt from *The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets*

I had ended up in the wrong time. I walked away, wondering how to get back to where I had come from. But the crowd pulled me along, this time to a festive tent full of watermelons and a throng as big as any in late-twentieth-century Egypt. Sitting nearby was Maqrizi. I thought he might be waiting for a watermelon to take home to his family, but he turned out to be questioning a boy who looked like a vagrant. I asked what he wanted from him.

“He and one of his friends work in the stables,” said Maqrizi. “On this blessed Ramadan night, they stole some twenty watermelons and approximately thirty wedges of cheese.”

“Do the melons and cheese belong to you?”

“No, I’m only asking him how he did the deed, so I can write it down.”

“You,” I said, “are a truly great man.”

He looked at me suspiciously. “Didn’t I see you being arrested by Gohar’s troops?”

I admitted this was the case.

“So what do you want, exactly?”

“I have an invitation to break the fast with Mu‘izz, the Fatimid caliph.”

“On the occasion of what?”

“The first Ramadan to be celebrated in Cairo.”

“Go back the way you came,” he said. “At the moment, you’re walking along a line between the two palaces. The Fatimid caliphate has fallen to the Ayyubids, and the square’s been thrown open to the public, as you can see.”

He must have realized that I was a person of some importance, especially after I balanced my Samsonite briefcase on my knee and opened it with an impressive click. I brandished the gold-engraved invitation card from Mu‘izz, thinking that even if the visit didn’t work and I found myself busted flat I could sell the gilt to a goldsmith. That’s

why I kept it at arm's length and why my hand trembled when Maqrizi reached for it, hoping to read it: the card itself was so splendid that I should be able to pawn it for cash if I had to.

Maqrizi smiled. "Where were you before you came here?"

"I was coming from the Mosque of Husayn, going through the gate on the other side past the souvenir shops toward Mu'izz Street. The next thing I knew, I was here."

"Good enough," he said. "See that big gate?"

"Yes."

"That's the Daylam Gate. It overlooks the courtyard called Bashtak Palace Square. If you walk through the courtyard, away from the Storehouse of Banners, you'll end up at Husayn. It's actually right behind you, but there are a good many years in between. From the Daylam Gate you can go through to the Saffron Cemetery Gate, which is the burial ground for the caliphs and their families. By the way, the Saffron Cemetery is going to be the site of the Caravanserai of al-Khalili. Have you heard of it?"

"I've never seen the caravanserai, but in my time Khan al-Khalili is world-famous."

He nodded and then said as if it were only a day between, "All that's left is the name. One more for Egypt to remember!" He continued, "Anyway, between the Daylam Gate and the Saffron Cemetery Gate are the seven passages the Caliph uses on the bonfire nights to reach the observation tower on al-Azhar Mosque, where he and his family sit and watch the fires and the crowds. You can go through the Saffron Cemetery Gate to Reeky Gate."

"Where's that?" I exclaimed.

He pointed to a grand old gate and said, "That's it."

"The gateway's still there in my time, too! I'll stand in front of it and hold on—maybe it'll pull me from the bottom of time up to the surface. From there I can come back down the well the right way."

# The Televangelist

Ibrahim Essa

Meet Egypt's top TV preacher Hatem el-Shenawi: a national celebrity revered by housewives and politicians alike for delivering Islam to the masses. Charismatic and quick-witted, he has friends in high places.

But when he is entrusted with a secret that threatens to wreak havoc across the country, he is drawn into a web of political intrigue at the very heart of government.

Can Hatem's fame and fortune save him from this unspeakable scandal?

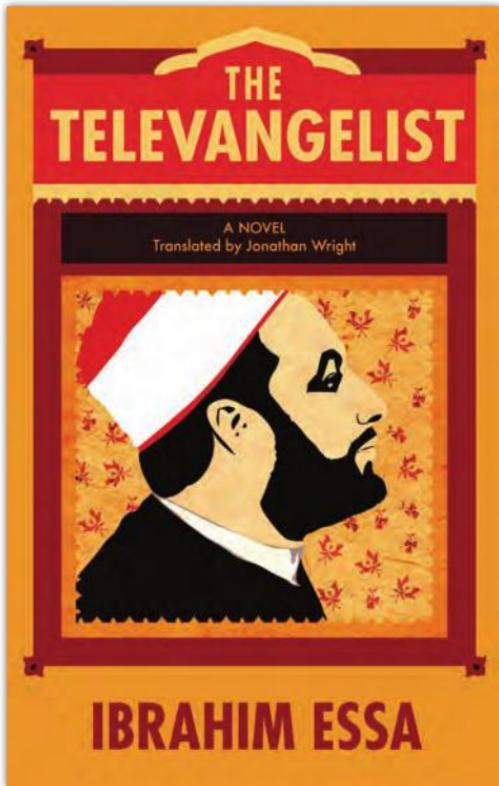
**Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction**



Bestselling Egyptian author **Ibrahim Essa** is a renowned journalist, TV personality, and political commentator. He lives in Cairo, Egypt.

Translator of the winning novel in the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and winner of the Saif Ghobash-Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation, **Jonathan Wright** was formerly the Reuters bureau chief in Cairo. He has translated Alaa Al-Aswany, Youssef Ziedan, and Hassan Blassim. He lives in London, UK.

*The bestselling political thriller from one  
of Egypt's most outspoken journalists*



\$16.95 • £10.99

488pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 718 8

March 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Thrillers / Political; Fiction / Literary

**BIC:** Fiction in Translation, Thriller / Suspense

**Sales points:**

- Bestseller in Arabic
- Shortlisted for the "Arabic Booker"
- Critiques organised religion

**Rights:** World English



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**Praise for *The Televangelist*:**

"A master of the Arabic language ... [Essa] delivers a double dose of wit, humor, and political satire, combined with painstaking knowledge of religion and the media world ... Fascinating."—*Egypt Independent*

"We're in the presence of masterful storytelling ... [Essa] tells the story of Egypt, its society and state, culture and superstition, virtues and sins, love and intolerance ... with skilful plotting, surgical social and psychological analysis."—Saad El Din Ibrahim, *El Watan*

"The novel of the season ... a compelling testimony about this era."

—*The Egyptian Daily*

# Whitefly

Abdelilah Hamdouchi

When a fourth corpse in three days washes up in Tangier with a bullet in the chest, Detective Laafrit knows this isn't just another illegal immigrant who didn't make it to the Spanish coast.

The traffickers. The drug dealers. The smugglers. They know what it takes to get a gun into Morocco, and so does Laafrit. As his team hunts for the gun, Laafrit follows a hunch and reveals an international conspiracy to unlock the case.

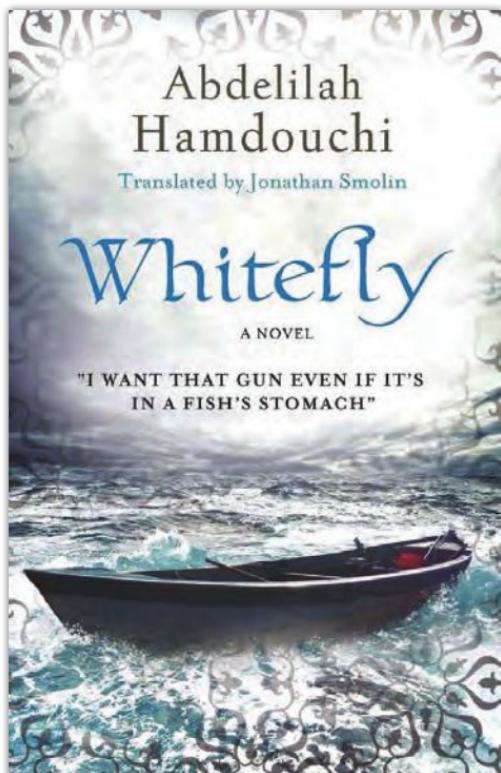
*Whitefly* is a fast-paced crime thriller from the Arab west.



Born in Meknès, Morocco in 1958, **Abdelilah Hamdouchi** is one of the first writers of police fiction in Arabic and a prolific, award-winning screenwriter of police thrillers. Many of his novels, including the acclaimed *The Final Bet*, address democracy and human rights issues. He lives in Rabat, Morocco.

Translator **Jonathan Smolin** is the author of *Moroccan Noir: Police, Crime, and Politics in Popular Culture* (2013). He lives in Hanover, NH.

*"I want that gun, even if it's in a fish's stomach."*



\$14.95 • £7.99

144pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 751 5

March 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Crime; Fiction / Mystery & Detective / Police Procedural; Fiction /Thrillers / Political

**BIC:** Crime & Mystery, Fiction in Translation

**Sales points:**

- The first Arabic detective author translated into English
- Accessible style with broad commercial appeal
- Contemporary, topical backdrop of illegal immigration to Europe

**Rights:** World ex. Arabic, French



9 789774 167515 >

Praise for *Whitefly*:

"The plotting is tight and watching the story's resolution unfold is a delight.. . As a guilty-pleasure read, it is a winner!"—*The National*

"Abdelilah Hamdouchi seems to have found the formula for the emergence of the Moroccan detective novel."—*Libération Kaleidoscope*

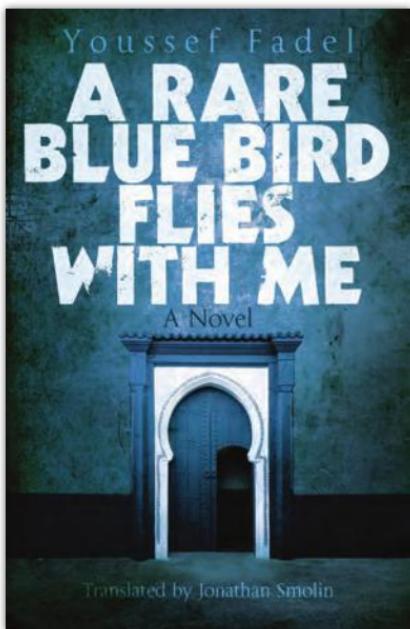
# A Rare Blue Bird Flies with Me

Youssef Fadel

Spring, 1990. After years of searching in vain, a stranger passes a scrap of paper to Zina. It's from Aziz: the man who vanished the day after their wedding almost two decades ago. It propels Zina on a final quest for a secret desert jail in southern Morocco, where her husband crouches in despair, dreaming of his former life.

Youssef Fadel pays powerful testament to a terrible period in Morocco's history, known as 'the Years of Cinders and Lead,' and masterfully evokes the suffering inflicted on those who supported the failed coup against King Hassan II in 1972.

**Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction**



\$16.95 • £8.99 • 248pp • Paperback Original  
978 977 416 754 6 • April 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Literary; Fiction / Political;  
Fiction / Romance / Historical / C20th

**BIC:** Fiction Modern & Contemporary,  
Fiction in Translation

**Sales points:**

- Shortlisted for the "Arab Booker"
- Concerns a pivotal period in Morocco's recent history
- Well respected, prize-winning author actively engaged in promotion

**Rights:** World ex. Arabic, French



9 789774 167546 >

Award-winning novelist and screenwriter **Youssef Fadel** was born in Casablanca in 1949. *A Rare Blue Bird Flies with Me* is his ninth novel.

Translated by **Jonathan Smolin**

# Time of White Horses

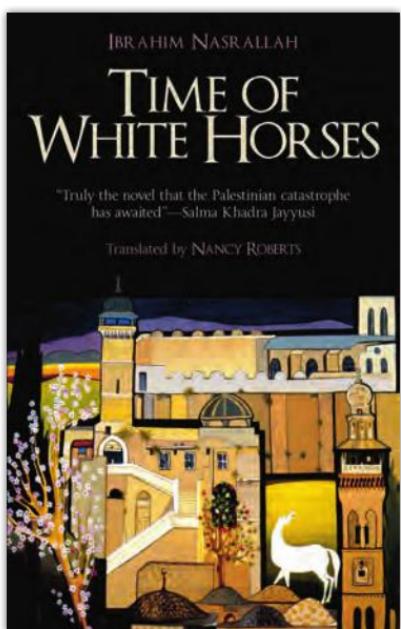
Ibrahim Nasrallah

Spanning the collapse of Ottoman rule and the British Mandate in Palestine, *Time of White Horses* is the story of three generations of a defiant family from the Palestinian village of Hadiya before 1948.

Through the lives of Hajj Mahmud, elder of Hadiya, his son Khaled, and Khaled's grandson Naji, we enter the life of a tribe whose fate is decided by one colonizer after another. Khaled's remarkable white mare, Hamama, and her descendants feel and share the family's struggles and as a siege grips Hadiya, it falls to Khaled to save his people from a descending tyranny.

*"Truly the novel that the Palestinian catastrophe has awaited"*

—Salma Khadra Jayyusi



\$18.95 • £10.99

664pp • Paperback Original

978 977 416 757 7

April 2016

**BISAC:** Fiction / Literary; Fiction / Sagas

**BIC:** Fiction in Translation, Sagas

#### Sales points:

- Shortlisted for the "Arab Booker"
- A work of noted political importance for the Israeli Occupation of Palestine
- World-renowned author and critically acclaimed novel

**Rights:** World English



**Ibrahim Nasrallah** is considered one of the most influential voices of his generation. He was raised in a Palestinian refugee camp and has written fourteen novels.

Translated by **Nancy Roberts**

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### Spring 2016

*The Televangelist*, Ibrahim Essa

*A Rare Blue Bird Flies with Me*, Youssef Fadel

*Whitefly*, Abdelilah Hamdouchi

*Time of White Horses*, Ibrahim Nasrallah

### Fall 2016

*The Longing of the Dervish*, Hammour Ziada

*No Knives in the Kitchens of This City*, Khaled Khalifa

*Otared*, Mohamed Rabie

*A Beautiful White Cat Walks with Me*, Youssef Fadel

*The Final Bet*, Abdelilah Hamdouchi

*The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets*,

Khairy Shalaby

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