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Woman at point zero pdf

1975 novel by Nawal el Saadawi Woman in Point Zero First Edition (English)AuthorNawal The SaadawiOriginal titleEmra'a enda noktat el sifrTranslatorSherif HetataCountryEgyptLanguageArabicGenReCreative nonfictionPublisherZed Books Ltd.Publication date1975Published in English 1983 Media TypePrint (hard and softcover)Pages114ISBN978-1-84277-872-2 Woman at ground zero (Arabic: امرأة نقطة الصفر, Emra'a enda noktat el sifr) is a novel by Nawal El Saadawi published in Arabic in 1975. The novel is based on Saadawi's encounter with an inmate in Qanatir Prison and is the first-person account of Firdaus, a murderer who has agreed to tell her life story before her execution. The novel explores the themes of women and their place within a patriarchal society. Background In late 1972 Saadawi was removed from her position as Director of Health Education and Editor-in-Chief Health magazine after the publication of Women and Sex. She began researching neurosis in Egyptian women, during which she met a doctor in Qanatir prison who told her about inmates, including an inmate who had killed a man and been sentenced to hang. Saadawi was interested in meeting the woman and visiting the prison, and her colleague organized her to conduct her investigation at Qanatir Prison in the fall of 1974. Saadawi visited many women in the cell block and mental clinic and was able to conduct twenty-one case studies in depth for her 1976 publication, Women and Neurosis in Egypt, but Firdaus remained a separate woman. [1] Firdaus was executed in 1974, but left a lasting impact on Saadawi, who said she could not rest until she wrote about Firdaus' story and finished the novel in a week. [2] Saadawi describes Firdaus as a martyr and says he admires her because Little people are ready to face death on the principle. [3] Later, when Saadawi was imprisoned in Qanatir in 1981 for political crimes, she reflected that she would find he hes he or she would find hes he or she was searching for Firdaus among the prison population, unable to believe that the woman who had inspired her so much was actually dead. [4] History of the publication Initially, Egyptian publishers rejected the book and the first edition was published in Lebanon in 1975. [5] Woman at Point Zero has subsequently been published in twenty-two languages. [6] The English translation was originally published in 1983 by Zed Books Ltd. in London and Room 400 in New York. Summary of the plot Every man I met filled me with one wish: raise my hand and bring it by smashing her face. – Firdaus The novel opens with a psychiatrist who is investigating inmates in a women's prison. The prison doctor talks about a woman, Firdaus, who is different from any of the killers in the rarely eats or sleeps, never speaks, never accepts visitors. She feels confident that she is unable to murder, but she has refused to sign any appeal on her behalf. The psychiatrist makes several attempts to talk to her, but Firdaus declines. Rejections cause the psychiatrist to have a crisis of self-confidence. She is consumed with the idea that Firdaus is better than herself, and possibly better than even the president, whom she has refused to send a call to. When the psychiatrist leaves, the guardian approaches her with an urgent message: Firdaus wants to talk to her. Upon meeting, Firdaus quickly tells him to close the window, sit down and listen. She explains that she will be executed that night and wants to tell the story of her life. Firdaus describes a poor childhood in an agricultural community. She recalls that she was confused by the disparity between her father's actions, such as beating her mother, and her dedication to the Islamic faith. Those days were relatively happy days, as she was sent to the fields to work and care for the goats. She enjoys the friendship of a boy named Mohammadain, with whom she plays girlfriend and groom, and describes her early encounters with clitoral stimulation. One day Firdaus' mother sends a woman with a knife, who mutilates her genitals. From that point on, Firdaus is assigned work at home. Firdaus's uncle begins to take a sexual interest in her and she describes her new lack of sensitivity to the clitoris, noting: He was doing to me what Mohammadain had done to me before. In fact, he was doing even more, but I no longer felt the strong sense of pleasure radiating from an unknown and familiar part of my body. It was as if I could no longer remember the exact place from which it used to arise, or as if a part of me, of my being, had gone away and never returned. After her parents' death, Firdaus is taken by her uncle, who sends her to elementary school, which she loves. She maintains a close relationship with her uncle, who continues to take an interest in her sexually. After Firdaus receives his certificate from elementary school, a distance grows between uncle and niece, and his uncle marries and withdraws all affection and attention. Tensions between Firdaus and his aunt-in-law are built until Firdaus is placed in boarding school, where Firdaus falls in love with a teacher named Miss Iqbal, with whom he feels a mutual connection, but Iqbal keeps her along an arm and never lets him get close. Upon graduation, Firdaus' aunt convinces her uncle to arrange her marriage to Sheikh Mahmoud, a virtuous man who needs an obedient wife. Firdaus considers fleeing, but eventually undergoes marriage. Mahmoud rejects her: she is forty years older and has a sore on her chin that oozes pus. He stays home all day, micro-gegging every action of Firdaus, and begins to physically abuse it. Firdaus and wanders the streets aimlessly stops to rest in a café. The owner, Bayoumi, offers tea and a place to stay until she finds a job, which she accepts. After several months, Firdaus tells him that he wants to find a job and his own place to live. Bayoumi immediately turns violent and beats her savagely. She begins to lock her up during the day and allows her friends to abuse, insult and rape her. Finally, Firdaus is able to ask for the help of a neighbor, who calls a carpenter to open the door, allowing him to escape. As she runs, Firdaus meets Madame Sharifa Salah the Dine, who takes her to her brothel as an upper-class prostitute. She tells Firdaus that all men are equal and that it must be harder than life if she wants to live. In exchange for working in Sharifa brothel, Firdaus receives beautiful clothes and delicious food, but has no pleasure in life. One night he hears an argument between Sharifa and his pimp, Fawzy, who wants to take Firdaus as his own. They argue, and Fawzy dominates Sharifa and rapes her. Firdaus realizes that not even Sharifa has real power and flees. He knew that [prostitution] had been invented by men, and that men were in control of our worlds, that of the earth, and that which was in heaven. Let men force women to sell their bodies at a price, and make the body worse paid for a wife's. All women are prostitutes of one kind or another. – Firdaus Wandering in the rainy night, Firdaus is picked up by a stranger who takes her back home. He sleeps with her, but he's not as disgusting as the other men he's dealt with in his profession, and after they're done he gives her a 10-pound note. This is a time to wake up for Firdaus, and remember that he solved the riddle in a fast and overwhelming moment, ripped off the undario that covered up a truth I had experienced when I was still a child, when for the first time my father gave me a coin to hold in my hand, and be mine. Firdaus realizes that he can exercise his power over men by rejecting them, and can force men to yield to their will by naming their own price; she gains self-confidence and soon becomes a rich and highly sought after prostitute. Employ a cook and assistant, work the hours you want, and cultivate powerful friendships. One day, her friend Di'aa tells her she's not respectable. This insult has a disturbing and immediate impact on Firdaus, who realizes that she can no longer work as a prostitute. Firdaus takes a job at a local office and refuses to offer his body to senior officials for promotions or increases. Although she believes her new job will bring respect, she makes much less money than when she works as a prostitute, and lives in pre-state conditions. In addition, his office work a co-worker and revolutionary president, with whom he develops a deep emotional connection. But when Ibrahim announces his engagement to the president's daughter, who has clearly been designed to help his career, Firdaus realizes that it doesn't correspond to his feelings and only uses it for sex. Crushed and disillusioned, Firdaus returns to prostitution, and once again accumulates great riches and becomes highly influential. Its success attracts the attention of pimp Marzouk, who has many political connections and threatens police action. He repeatedly hits Firdaus and forces her to give him higher percentages of his winnings. Firdaus decides to leave and take another job, but Marzouk crashes and tells him

he can never leave. When he pulls out a knife, Firdaus takes it and stabs it to death. High with the feeling of her new freedom, Firdaus walks the streets until she is picked up by a high-profile Arab prince, whom she rejects until he accepts her price of 3,000 pounds. As soon as the transaction is over, she tells him that she killed a man. He doesn't believe him, but she scares him to the point where he's convinced. The prince arrested her and Firdaus is sentenced to death. Firdaus says she has been sentenced to death because they were afraid to let her live, because My life means her death. My death means his life. They want to live. As her story ends, armed police come for her, and the psychiatrist sits, dazed, as Firdaus is led to execution, and realizes that Firdaus has more courage than she does. Literary importance and reception Critics have praised Saadawi for exposing the subjugation of women in Middle Eastern societies, but Wen-Chin Ouyang notes that Saadawi's work and popularity in Western countries is regarded with suspicion by Arab critics, who argue that Saadawi perpetuates negative Western stereotypes of Arab-Islamic male violence and domination and that his work has been neglected because of his literary shortcomings. [7] References by Saadawi, Author's Preface, Woman at Ground Zero, September 1983, Saadawi, Nawal El and Angela Johnson. Speaking at ground zero: [from our backs] Talk to Nawal El Saadawi. Off Our Backs 22.3 (March 1992): 1. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 196. Detroit: Gale, 2005. Literary Resource Center. Web. July 17, 2011. Saadawi, Nawal El and George Lerner. Nawal El Saadawi: 'For us, the liberation of women is the revelation of the mind.' Progressive 56.4 (April 1992): 32–35. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 196. Detroit: Gale, 2005. Literary Resource Center. Web. July 17, 2011. Saadawi, Author's Preface, Woman at point zero, Saadawi, Nawal El and Jennifer Cohen. 'But have some art with you': An interview with Nawal El Saadawi. Literature and Medicine 14.1 14.1 60–71. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 284. Detroit: Gale, 2010. Literary Resource Center. Web. July 17, 2011. Saadawi, Nawal El, Peter Hitchcock and Sherif Hetata. Live the fight: Nawal El Saadawi talks about writing and resistance with Sherif Hetata and Peter Hitchcock. Transition 61 (1993): 170–179. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 284. Detroit: Gale, 2010. Literary Resource Center. Web. July 17, 2011. Saadawi, Contemporary literary criticism. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 284. Detroit: Gale, 2010. Literary Resource Center. Web. July 17, 2011. SparkNotes editors. (2006). SparkNote in Woman at Point Zero. Retrieved 30 April 2014, from Nawal El Saadawi's External Links Podcast discussing Woman at Ground Zero at the BBC World Book Club Woman at Point Zero Literary Dialogues at www.wmich.edu Retrieved de

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