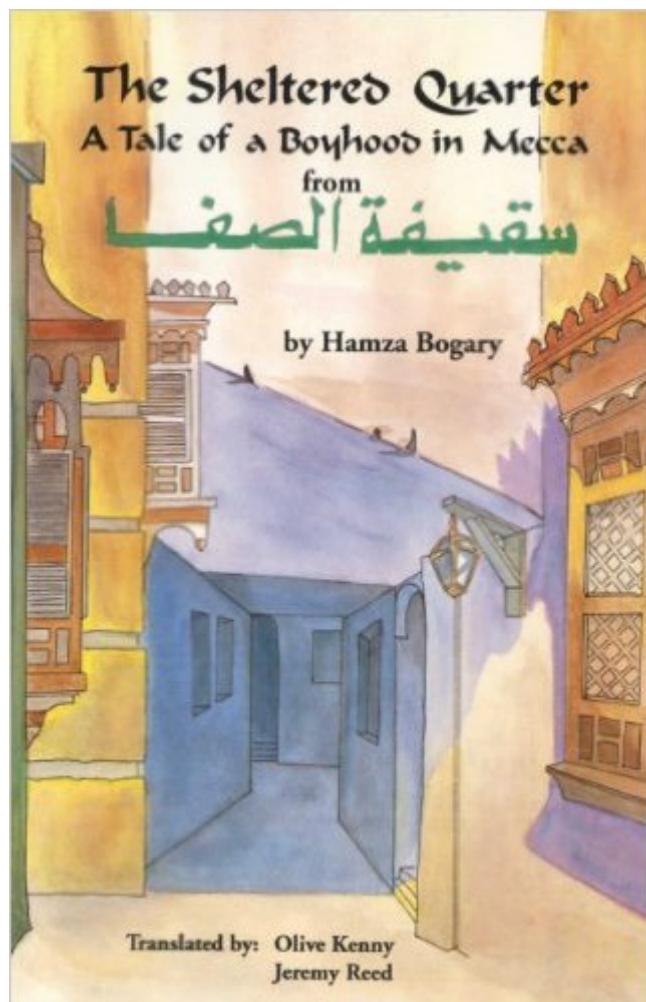


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The Sheltered Quarter: A Tale Of A Boyhood In Mecca (Modern Middle East Literature In Translation)



Synopsis

Hamza Bogary describes a bygone way of life that has now irreversibly disappeared. He speaks of life in Mecca before the advent of oil. Only partly autobiographical, the memoir is nevertheless rich in remembered detail based on Bogary's early observations of life in Mecca. He has transformed his knowledge into art through his sense of humor, empathy, and remarkable understanding of human nature. This work not only entertains; it also informs its readers about the Arabia of the first half of the twentieth century in a graphic and fascinating way. The narrator, young Muhsin, deals with various aspects of Arabian culture, including education, pilgrimages, styles of clothing, slavery, public executions, the status of women, and religion. Muhsin is frank in his language and vivid in his humor. The reader quickly comes to love the charming and mischievous boy in this universal tale.

Book Information

Series: Modern Middle East Literature in Translation

Paperback: 141 pages

Publisher: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Texas at Austin (January 1, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0292727526

ISBN-13: 978-0292727526

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,121,482 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Mecca #352 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Middle Eastern #16745 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature

Customer Reviews

Hamza Bogary's The Sheltered Quarter is a wonderful novel about the days before oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia. It details the life of Muhsin AL-Bali, a boy growing up raised only by his mother due to his father's death before he was born. The book tells of his trials in school with bullies and the like and that he does very well there and becomes an avid reader, so much so that he reads by a streetlight by night because his house doesn't have a proper light. You learn about Auntie Asma, a friend of his mother's who gives her advice on things concerning Muhsin. She is also a strange woman who believes in many superstitions and practices odd rituals. Other

characters encountered are Amm Ustad, a freemason, and Muhaisin's link to the changing world outside Mecca. Overall The Sheltered Quarter is a fun and interesting read that can be enjoyed by anyone looking for a book with good descriptive language and a fascinating story to tell. I know I sure enjoyed reading this wonderful tale, plus it enlightened me to some of things about the Saudi culture I didn't know.

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