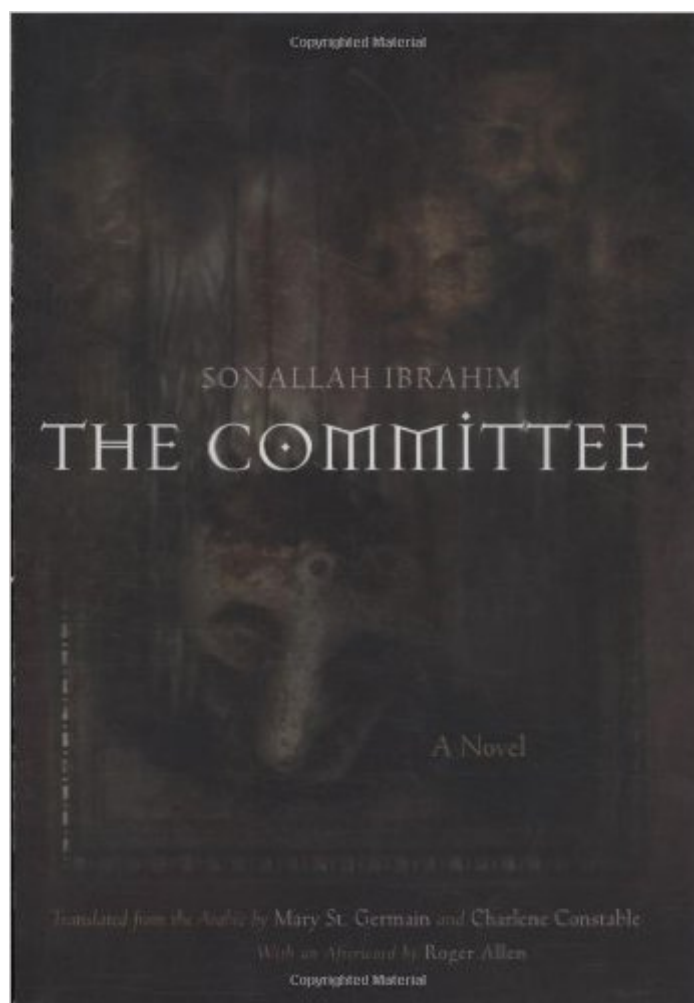


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The Committee: A Novel (Middle East Literature In Translation)



Synopsis

Writing in a symbolic and minimalist style, author Sonallah Ibrahim has been called the Egyptian Kafka. This wry take on Kafka's *The Trial* revolves around its narrator's attempts to petition successfully the elusive ruling body of his country, known simply as the committee.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Committee", by Sun Allah Ibrahim joins the work of writers including Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, and Fyodor Dostoevsky. The comparison that is most easily drawn is to Kafka's, "The Trial". While this may be the easiest parallel to draw it suggests this is just a variation on a theme and that would be a disservice to this book and the author. The unnamed narrator first petitions a committee. This group is made of members we are told virtually nothing about. Our narrator only makes vague references to what a positive decision from this committee would mean to him. Whatever his goal, it must be of great value for during his first audience he is not only queried on his knowledge, his is degraded, pointlessly degraded. The similarities to other writings remain in regard to arbitrary and absolute authority; together with the perversions of thought and justice they produce. Unlike, "The Trial", there is no evidence he stands accused of anything on his initial hearing. The committee after a long delay sets for him yet another task, and when they learn of how he proceeds despite the blockades put before him, the group visits him, with a single member remaining. This shadow is the same individual who so crudely humiliated him before. The treatment again begins with the total invasion of everything that is held private for the individual, with the result

that our narrator commits a crime, comes once again before the committee, and receives a surreal sentence. Throughout this fairly brief work the narrator in his appearances before the group, and in his private thoughts often expounds on his theories with seemingly bizarre examples.

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