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City of Love and Ashes

Yusuf Idris

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Yusuf Idris

City of Love and Ashes Yusuf Idris
Cairo, January 1952. Egypt is at a critical point in its modern history, struggling to throw off the yoke of the seventy-year British occupation and its corrupt royalist allies. Hamza is a committed young radical, his goal to build a secret armed brigade to fight for freedom, independence, and national self-esteem. Fawziya is a woman with a mission too, keen to support the cause. Among the ashes of the city love may grow, but at a time of national struggle what place do personal feelings have beside the greater love for a shackled homeland? In this finely crafted novel, Yusuf Idris, best known as the master of the Arabic short story, brings to life not only some of the most human characters in modern Arabic fiction but the soul of Cairo itself and the soul of a national consciousness focused on liberation. "Like the Russian aristocrats of Chekhov, the provincial bourgeoisie of Flaubert, or the Ibo villagers of Achebe, Idris raises his authentic characters into convincing types within their context: he makes us live their agonies and hopes." Ferial Ghazoul

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