



Remembering Childhood in the Middle East: Memoirs from a Century of Change

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Growing up is a universal experience, but the particularities of homeland, culture, ethnicity, religion, family, and so on make every childhood unique. To give Western readers insight into what growing up in the Middle East was like in the twentieth century, this book gathers thirty-six original memoirs written by Middle Eastern men and women about their own childhoods.

Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, a well-known writer of books and documentary films about women and the family in the Middle East, has collected stories of childhoods spent in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. The accounts span the entire twentieth century, a full range of ethnicities and religions, and the social spectrum from aristocracy to peasantry. They are grouped by eras, for which Fernea provides a concise historical sketch, and include a brief biography of each contributor. The introduction by anthropologist Robert A. Fernea sets the memoirs in the larger context of Middle Eastern life and culture.

As a collection, the memoirs offer an unprecedented opportunity to look at the same period in history in the same region of the world from a variety of very different remembered experiences. At times dramatic, humorous, or tragic, and always deeply felt, the memoirs document the diversity and richness of people's lives in the modern Middle East.

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