



The Qadi and the Fortune Teller (Interlink World Fiction)

Nabil A. Saleh

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A leather-bound manuscript is found hidden in a wall of a house in the rubble of Beirut in the late 1970s. It is the diary of a Muslim judge in Ottoman Beirut during 1843—a critical time for the Ottoman Empire and the European powers. The judge is Sheikh 'Abdallah bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Jabburi to the world, but simply Abu Khalid—father of Khalid—to his family and friends. In a sequence of stories and vignettes the diary tells of his work as a judge, the cases he has to deal with amid the political conspiracies and diplomatic intrigues of the times and the impact they have on his relations with others.

Merchants, officials, family, friends and enemies are threaded in and out of a rich tapestry of events and reflections. A dragoman of the British Consulate seeks his help; Abu Kasim, his lifelong friend, asks for the hand of his unwilling daughter 'Aisha; and a young gypsy girl reads his palm. Subsequent family and political misfortunes change the judge's quiet life and shatter his dream of a pair of red slippers, in a dramatic crescendo with consequences he is unable to control.

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