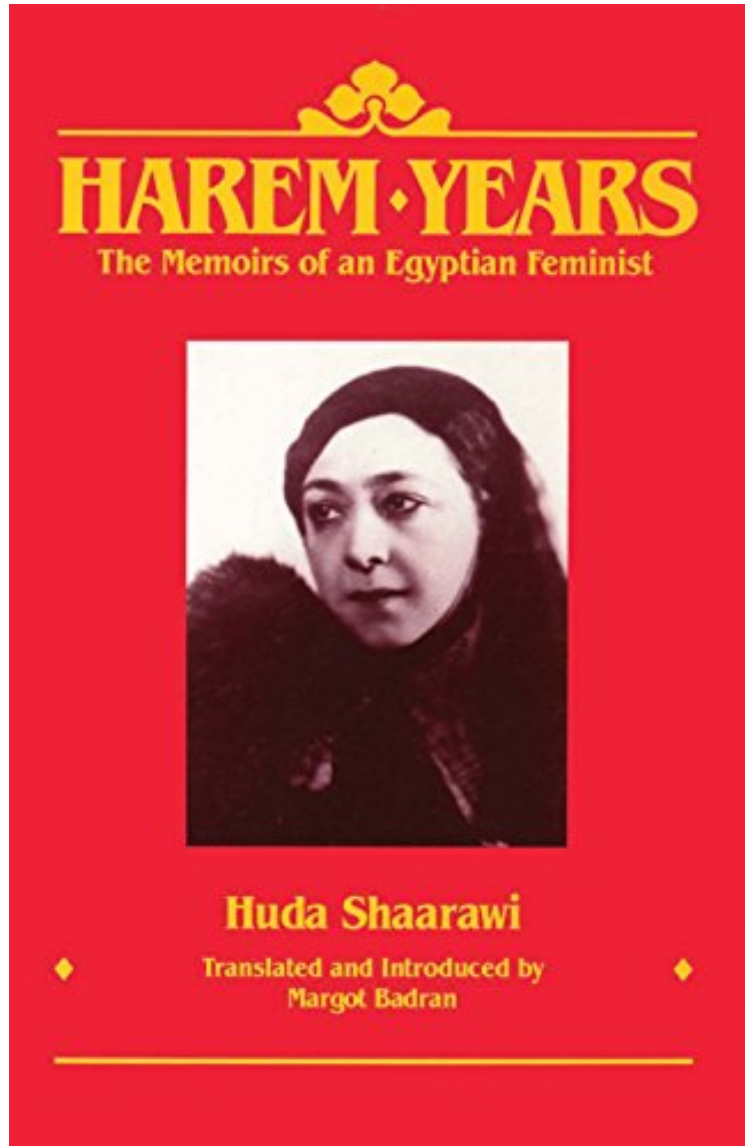


(Mobile library) Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924

Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924

Huda Shaarawi

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Huda Shaarawi : Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924:

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helpful. Must Read for those interested in Egypt or Mid-East Feminism By S. T. Sullivan Huda Shaarawi lead a pretty amazing life. She started out life in the harem of her father, and ended it being a feminist and a nationalist hero. This isn't a particularly well written book, but when you lead a life that was intertwined with so many world events, your memoir doesn't have to be well written to be engaging. I could recount the narrative here for you, how she got an education in the harem from other women, how the harem wasn't only a place of repression but was also a place of empowerment, how she was interested in European culture from an early age but really you should just read it for yourself.

In this firsthand account of the private world of a harem in colonial Cairo, Shaarawi recalls her childhood and early adult life in the seclusion of an upper-class Egyptian household, including her marriage at age thirteen. Her subsequent separation from her husband gave her time for an extended formal education, as well as an unexpected taste of independence. Shaarawi's feminist activism grew, along with her involvement in Egypt's nationalist struggle, culminating in 1923 when she publicly removed her veil in a Cairo railroad station, a daring act of defiance.

From Publishers Weekly Shaarawi, an early leader of Egypt's feminist movement, was the daughter of an upper-class Egyptian and a Turkish Circassian woman. Raised in a harem that area of homes where the women and children in wealthier families were secluded Shaarawi observed bitterly that her younger brother was treated better and taught more than she. At age 13 she was married, against her wishes, to an older cousin who already had a family by a "slave-concubine," with whom he continued to live at intervals during his marriage. In addition to noting such injustices, Shaarawi also offers a touching account of growing up in the Middle East at the turn of the century and of the people particularly European women living in Egypt and Egyptian women educated in Europe who helped her to develop a vision of a more just society. Badran's epilogue, quoting extensively from Shaarawi's narrative, covers the stirring struggle for independence from Britain and the beginnings of a women's movement in Egypt following World War I. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. Language Notes Text: English, Arabic (translation) About the Author Huda Shaarawi (1879-1947) was among the last generation of Egyptian women to live in the segregated world of the harem. Her feminist activism grew out of her involvement in Egypt's nationalist struggle, and led to her founding of the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923.