Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood

Fatima Mernissi

Description

Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood takes place in Fez, Morocco, in the 1940s and early 1950s. The harem of this memoir’s title is a large house with its own courtyard, shared by several generations of an extended family. Fatima Mernissi recounts her experiences and observations as a precocious young girl living in the harem, acutely aware of the many sacred frontiers she is forbidden to cross—the barriers between men and women and between Muslims and Christians, the threshold separating one room from another or the interior of the house from the street outside. She learns that all the women around her chafe at the limitations of harem life in one way or another, but she also comes to realize that she can transcend these limitations covertly—through imagination, creativity, learning, and even mischief.

ISBN
9780201489378

Publication Date
1995

Publisher
Perseus Books

City
Cambridge, MA

Document Type
Book

Keywords
Muslim Journeys, Morocco, Harem, Gender divisions, Imagination, Creativity, Learning, Mischief

Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | Religion

Recommended Citation

My harem frontiers -- Scheherazade, the king, and the words -- The French Harem -- Yasmina's first co-wife -- Chama and the Caliph -- Tamou's horse -- The harem within -- Aquatic dishwashing -- Moonlit nights of laughter -- The men's salon -- World War II: view from the courtyard -- Asmahan, the singing princess -- The Harem goes to the movies -- Egyptian feminists visit the terrace -- Princess Budur's fate --. The forbidden terrace -- Mina, the rootless -- American cigarettes -- Mustaches and breasts -- The silent dream of wings and flights --. Skin politics: eggs, dates,

Dreams of Trespass by Fatima Mernissi is an enchanting memoir that gives us an insightful look at a growing up in a Moroccan harem. Dreams of Trespass gracefully flows between childhood memories, Middle Eastern folk tales, and her family's stories from the past. Fatima was a founder of Islamic feminism and here she recounts the roles of the women in her life. I sought out this book because I have an upcoming solo trip to Morocco. I like to interweave my adventures with books that will enlighten me on the history and culture of the area. Learning about domestic harem life through the eyes of a curious girl was delightful. Topics for Discussion. Order our Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood...
Fatima is born just an hour after her cousin, Samir, and her mother immediately defies tradition by insisting that there be a joyous celebration over the births of both children, not just the boy child. This is typical of Fatima's mother and she teaches Fatima that she must stand up for herself if she wants things in life.