



My Thousand and One Nights: A Novel of Mecca (Middle East Literature In Translation)

Raja Alem

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My Thousand and One Nights: A Novel of Mecca (Middle East Literature In Translation) Raja Alem
The distinguished Middle Eastern author Raja Alem grew up in Mecca at a time when the holy city was on the cusp of changing from medieval to modern. In this vanished Mecca, vividly brought to life again in *My Thousand and One Nights*, women hold center stage - especially Jummo, the wildly passionate daughter of the Water Carriers' Sheik. This faraway time and setting become compellingly real as we follow the intimate drama of Jummo's life, the tragic arc of her affair with her childhood sweetheart and her lifelong love for the mysterious Sidi Wadhana, a more-than-human emissary from the Netherworld. Jummo's world, veiled and invisible to outsiders until this telling of her story, has the feel of the true center of an Arabia that has come to us in many exotic and threatening disguises. Jummo's Mecca is a different world, with different narrative strategies, but the dramatic problems are universal: how lethal is love, how dangerous are woman? And how sensual is the yearning for immortality?

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