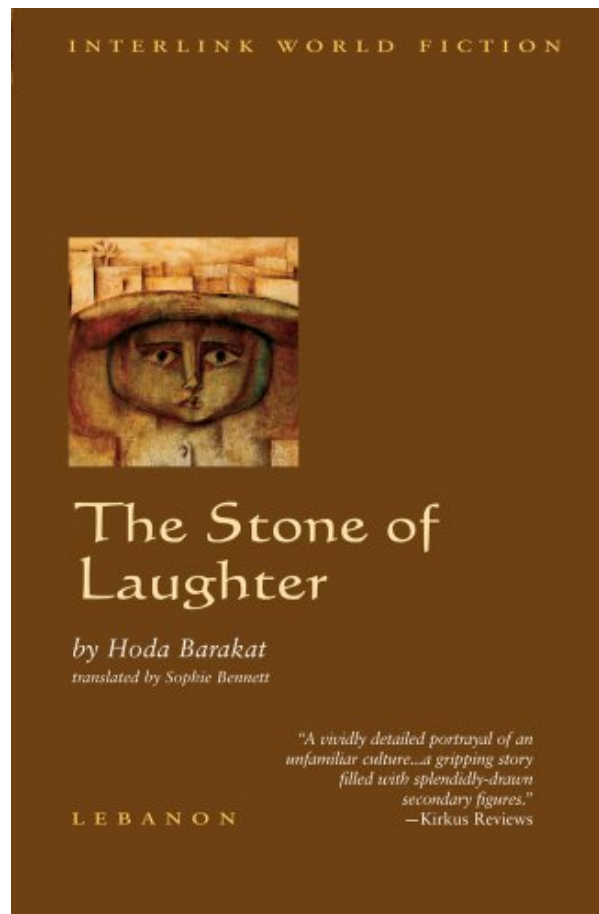


THE STONE OF LAUGHTER (INTERLINK WORLD FICTION) BY HODA BARAKAT



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INTERLINK WORLD FICTION



The Stone of Laughter

by Hoda Barakat

translated by Sophie Bennett

"A vividly detailed portrayal of an unfamiliar culture...a gripping story filled with splendidly-drawn secondary figures."

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From Publishers Weekly

This is the story of a person. It is also a story of a population, and of a war. It reads as grotesque fantasy, where traditional assumptions can be fatal, consequences no longer make sense and the most commonplace social act may conceal lethal betrayal. In 14 years of civil war, which left Beirut's glories ravished and its cosmopolitan society devastated, the grotesque becomes mundane. Disoriented amid the chaos, Khalil questions his every thought and impulse as he grasps for an identity, sexuality and teleology-his internal dialogue is the warp of this narrative. Retreating into desperate isolation when the two men he covertly loves are killed, Khalil is paralyzed by guilt and fear. His despair brings illness and a minor epiphany in the hospital, where he awakens, in the book's most impressionistic and fluidly crafted sequence, to the value and beauty of life. Barakat allows Khalil this illumination, a lambent moment of hope, so that she may quickly shatter it. Khalil's dizzying descent to an inhumanity as perverse and cruel as it is mad, seems incomprehensible. Khalil's tormented mind, his betrayal of newly discovered selfhood reflects the unendurable stress provoked by such war. The frightening results, and the fragility of civilization, is the kernel of this cautionary tale, told too late for young men like Khalil.

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Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Arabic

About the Author

Born In Beirut, Hoda Barakat earned her B.A. in French language and literature from Beirut University in 1975, and in 1976 left for Paris to continue her education. She then worked in higher education, journalism, and research. She is the author of a collection of short stories and two other novels, one of which, The Stones of Laughter, was published in an English translation in 1994. She now lives in Paris.

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I'm thrilled to see the 'emerging voices' series on Amazon. Wonderful!.

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Hoda Barakat delves into those issues - and does so courageously and poetically. She also presents them through the eyes of a homosexual man. Quite powerful!.

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