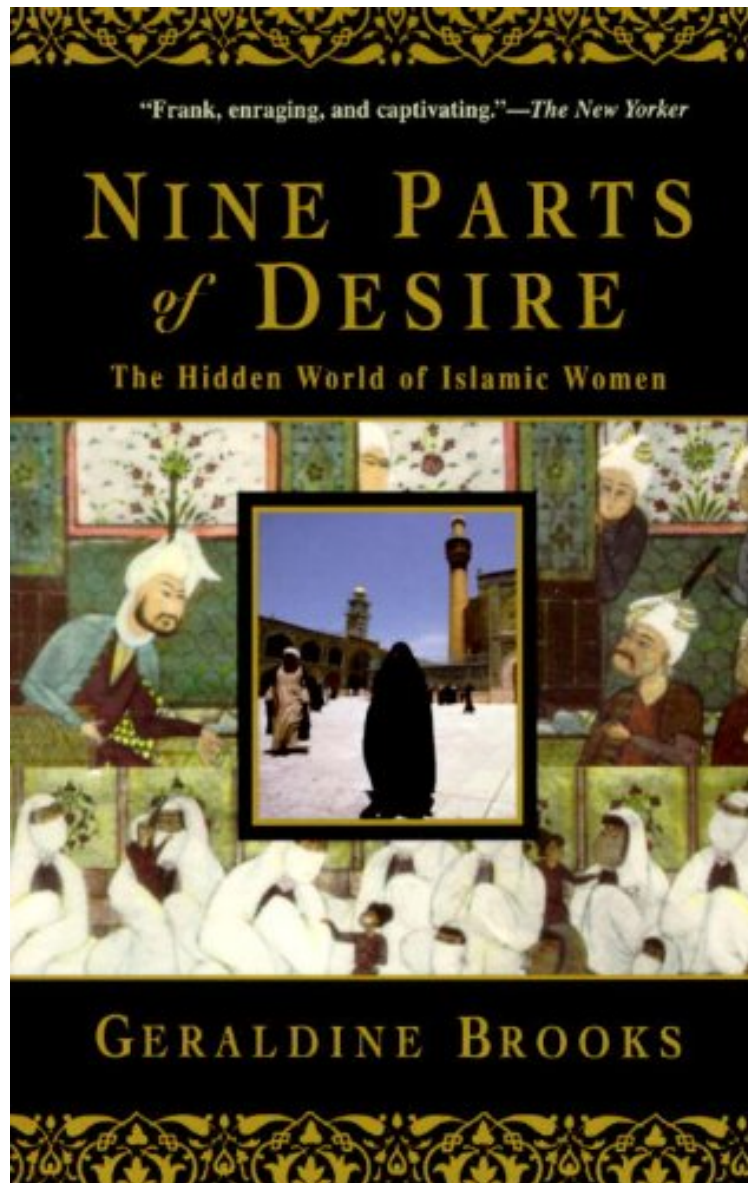


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Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women

Geraldine Brooks

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Geraldine Brooks : Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women:

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A must read for an understanding of the world for Muslim

womenBy DandelionThis book was published over 10 years ago so I assume that it is a bit outdated. I am afraid that the conditions for Islamic women have mostly gotten worse than described. I am also going to assume the ratings for this book varied widely. Some were probably so vile that they had to be blocked and other ratings may have been overly idealistic and condemning of the religion vs. traditions of the Islamic countries, some of which are still very much backwards (to those of us in the west).I found the book packed with vital, interesting, balanced information regarding religious practices in various Islamic countries. The author manages to cover the differences of attitudes and the attempts to make progress. She does a good job of explaining why some women, in the spirit of religious fever and anti-Western sentiment chose to start wearing a veil and even covering themselves from head to foot. It is hard for us in the west to accept this. There is an good understandable discussion of the Koran and it is interpreted to require more seclusion and abuse that the prophet Mohammed required. Though I must state, the book is written by a woman who converted to Judaism. I assume that makes her statements unacceptable to many people who might read this.This is a scholarly book with readable history of the Islamic countries and the various rulers of those countries. It also gave a good political analysis of how Western actions have helped increase fundamental fever rather than stop it (our misguided attempts have backfired). I also back came a conclusion that I had before I read the book. The only way Islamic women are going to gain some freedom from abuse is for them to find ways to lead their own people. Islamic men need to help and slowly they might make strides. I also had to resist injecting my own values into the reading of this - it was next to impossible but I did try.The book does a fairly good job of describing the main branches of Islamic traditions and why they came about. I knew that there were two but did not know about the many sub branches and related traditions. Finally there is a wonderful section about women athletics and the competition of Islamic women from Russian dominated countries (fairly liberal) to those from traditionally conservative Islamic areas (little training available.)I have a few minor negative comments. 1) the dictionary of terms is not go far enough. For instance there is a reference to a woman who is a Druse but nowhere was there an explanation of what a Druse is. 2) I would have liked a better understand what the term jihad really means to Islam. Many people believe all Muslims want to kill us. I think this is hardly true. But I would have like a deeper discussion of that point and similar attitudes to the west.3) I would have liked to see a timeline on the progress of Islam and the major conflicts with Christianity as well as persecution from Judaism and other religions.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great book for a book club discussionBy ARCOur women's book club had a very interesting discussion about this book, which taught us many new things about the Moslem world. I think we all came away with a better understanding of the lives of women and their families in the Near East. The only problem is that the book was written in the mid 1990's and so much has happened in the world since then that we all wished there was an updated version!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well researched and well written look at the lives of Muslim womenBy BillThe journalist spent years with dozens of Muslim women in multiple countries. The descriptions of rich, poor and middle class women's lives show a variability far beyond what I would have guessed. Historical paragraphs show how Profit Muhammad's revelations and activities have affected the lives of women 14 centuries later. The author explains how the differing religious opinions provide a myriad of rules that vary from place to place.I know more now than I did when I started, but understand less.

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER - Pulitzer Prize winning author presents the stories of a wide range of Muslim women in the Middle East. As an Australian American and an experienced foreign correspondent, Brooks' thoughtful analysis attempts to understand the precarious status of women in the wake of Islamic fundamentalism."Frank, enraging, and captivating." - The New York TimesNine Parts of Desire is the story of Brooks' intrepid journey toward an understanding of the women behind the veils, and of the often contradictory political, religious, and cultural forces that shape their lives. Defying our stereotypes about the Muslim world, Brooks' acute analysis of the world's fastest growing religion deftly illustrates how Islam's holiest texts have been misused to justify repression of women, and how male pride and power have warped the original message of a once liberating faith.As a prizewinning foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, Geraldine Brooks spent six years covering the Middle East through wars, insurrections, and the volcanic upheaval of resurgent fundamentalism. Yet for her, headline events were only the backdrop to a less obvious but more enduring drama: the daily life of Muslim women.

.com Geraldine Brooks spent two years as a Middle East news correspondent, covering the death of Khomeini and the like. She also learned a lot about what it's like for Islamic women today. Brooks' book is exceedingly well-done--she knows her Islamic lore and traces the origins of today's practices back to Mohammed's time. Personable and very readable, Brooks takes us through the women's back door entrance of the Middle East for an unusual and provocative view.From Publishers WeeklyHaving spent six years covering the Middle East for the Wall Street Journal, Brooks presents an exploration of the daily life of Muslim women and the often contradictory forces that shape their lives. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistDuring her six years covering the Middle East for the Wall Street Journal, Brooks sought to find out how Muslim women feel about their societies' attitudes toward women. What she discovered is sometimes astonishing, sometimes shocking, but always fascinating. Taking on the hijab (the

Muslim woman's black veil) herself, Brooks talked with women throughout the Islamic world, reexamined the Koran, spent time with fundamentalist and feminist alike, and emerged with a deeper understanding of the religion as one that once empowered but now cripples women. She found, for instance, that Iran is one of the better Islamic countries for women, Saudi Arabia the worst; that the hijab can be strangely liberating; that enjoyment of their sexuality is an inherent right for Muslim women; and that to be a feminist under Islam calls for a daily form of courage almost incomprehensible to the Western mind. Brooks is a wonderful writer and thinker; the observations she makes and the conclusions she reaches open both our eyes and our minds to understanding Muslim women anew. Mary Ellen Sullivan