



Headscarves and Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution

Mona Eltahawy

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A passionate manifesto decrying misogyny in the Arab world, by an Egyptian American journalist and activist

When the Egyptian journalist Mona Eltahawy published an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2012 titled "Why Do They Hate Us?" it provoked a firestorm of controversy. The response it generated, with more than four thousand posts on the website, broke all records for the magazine, prompted dozens of follow-up interviews on radio and television, and made it clear that misogyny in the Arab world is an explosive issue, one that engages and often enrages the public.

In *Headscarves and Hymens*, Eltahawy takes her argument further. Drawing on her years as a campaigner and commentator on women's issues in the Middle East, she explains that since the Arab Spring began, women in the Arab world have had two revolutions to undertake: one fought with men against oppressive regimes, and another fought against an entire political and economic system that treats women in countries from Yemen and Saudi Arabia to Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya as second-class citizens.

Eltahawy has traveled across the Middle East and North Africa, meeting with women and listening to their stories. Her book is a plea for outrage and action on their behalf, confronting the "toxic mix of culture and religion that few seem willing or able to disentangle lest they blaspheme or offend." A manifesto motivated by hope and fury in equal measure, *Headscarves and Hymens* is as illuminating as it is incendiary.

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