



Exiles

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From the war-torn Jordan Valley to our nation's capital, *Exiles* reaches into the life of one man and one woman to explore one of the longest-lasting and most painful situations in our time: the displacement of the Palestinians and the unceasing turmoil in the Middle East. This is a story about the search and battle for identity of a people who have paid the price of no peace in the land of the Bible, who are expected to pay a debt to the dead and disinherited, and who are fated to act out decisions made by others long ago.

When Harry Mann arrives in Amman for a tour of diplomatic duty in 1969, he finds a nation heading for upheaval and he sets about to put it right. His Chicana wife, Mercedes, fresh out of an alcoholic treatment center, is discontent to play the empty and unfulfilling role of a Foreign Service Officer's wife. She is, in many ways, as displaced a person as are the Palestinian refugees who now live in Jordan.

Nabil Dajani is one of those Palestinians who now serves as Minister of Public Works in King Hussein's cabinet. Like Mercedes, he is a man in great conflict: torn by the inner struggle between his liberal, internationalist outlook and the confines of traditional and provincial Islamic fundamentalism. Alienated from his wife, it is only a matter of time before he and Mercedes seek, in one another, some solace for their discontents.

In its careful evocation, *Exiles* transports us to a land that resonates with ancient majesty and today's heartaches and joys. One reads not only to discover the fate of its characters, but also to gain a growing understanding of the complex changes occurring in the Islamic world.

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