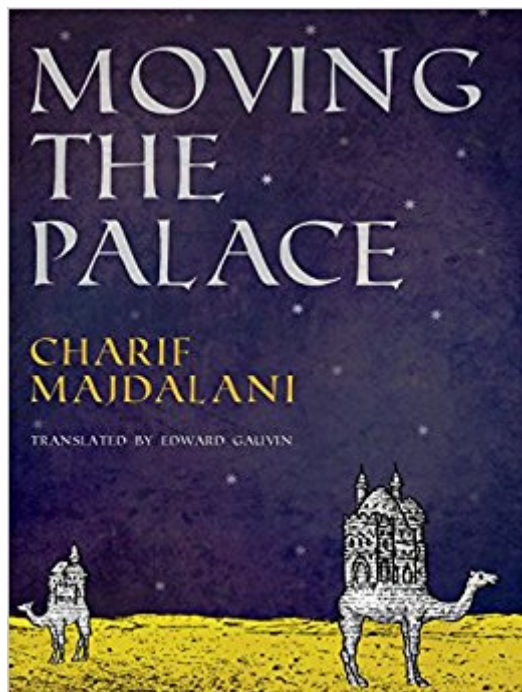


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# Moving The Palace



## Synopsis

At the dawn of the 20th century, a young Lebanese explorer leaves the Levant for the wilds of Africa, encountering an eccentric English colonel in Sudan and enlisting in his service. In this lush chronicle of far-flung adventure, the military recruit crosses paths with a compatriot who has dismantled a sumptuous palace in Tripoli and is transporting it across the continent on a camel caravan. The protagonist soon takes charge of this hoard of architectural fragments, ferrying the dismantled landmark through Sudan, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, attempting to return to his native Beirut with this moveable real estate. Along the way, he encounters skeptic sheikhs, suspicious tribal leaders, bountiful feasts, pilgrims bound for Mecca and T.E. Lawrence in a tent. This is a captivating modern-day Odyssey in the tradition of Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux. Charif Majdalani, born in Lebanon in 1960, is often likened to a Lebanese Proust. He teaches French literature at the Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut. *Moving the Palace* is the winner of the prestigious François Mauriac Prize from the Académie Française as well as the Prix Tropiques.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A Middle Eastern heart-of-darkness tale that flows like a dream, occasionally turning nightmarish, but is always rendered with a hypnotic quality beautifully captured in Edward Gauvin's elegant translation ... Majdalani's novels are much praised in the Francophone world, and with good reason. His seductive prose twists and turns, deftly matching hallucinatory content with form." •The New York Times Sunday Book Review "Renders the complex social landscape

of the Middle East and North Africa with subtlety and finesse ... Yet one doesn't need to care about the region's history, or its present-day contexts, to enjoy 'Moving the Palace' ... brio and Mr. Majdalani's richly textured prose are reason enough." •The Wall Street Journal "Charming and gently humorous | Majdalani's writing sparkles | Those looking for an enjoyable and brisk literary adventure will be very satisfied." •Publishers Weekly "It is one of the novel's pleasures that its story takes place against pivotal moments of the half-mythic history of northern Africa and the Middle East | Another reliable source of delight is Majdalani's writing, constantly alive and entrancing in Edward Gauvin's translation." •World Literature Today "This utterly charming and, yes, moving novel takes us on a journey | and the result is a victory of human ingenuity and a joyous picaresque. VERDICT Beautiful fun that also gives a deeper sense of Middle East history." •Library Journal "Charif Majdalani has a ripping yarn to tell and tells it with a raconteur's bravura. Transporting, wholly engaging, deeply moving. This book is why I travel and why I read." •Andrew McCarthy, award-winning director, actor, and author of *Just Fly Away* and *The Longest Way Home* "This wildly entertaining novel ... leave[s] us with a renewed sense of wonder." •NC State University Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies "Moving the Palace is an eloquent, captivating excursion through a Middle East history that is more relevant today than ever. Majdalani is a major storyteller and a novelist with conscience who writes the past with transnational awareness." •Rawi Hage, author of *De Niro's Game* and *Cockroach* "On one side the desert, infinite, immensely varied, splendid. On the other, the courage, obstinacy, folly, violence, and dreams of men. Through this fascinating adventure, Charif Majdalani constructs one of the most beautiful epics I've ever read." •Antoine Volodine, author of *Minor Angels* and *Naming the Jungle* "This novel provides entr e into the extraordinary fictional work of Charif Majdalani; with each book he lays out magnificent, terrible and true history through family genealogy, hopes and dramas. And each time Majdalani renews our vision." •Patrick Deville, author of *Plague* and *Cholera* "In language of extreme classicism | he is often compared to a Lebanese Proust | Majdalani imposes his rhythm, slow and mesmerizing, to bring us in step with his story | Throughout this epic tale he intimately weaves together the grand history of his country and his family, mixing fiction and reality in language of infinite sensuality." •L'Express "An odyssey in the manner of *The Thousand and One Nights*." •Le Figaro litt raire "An extraordinary book somewhere between adventure story, picaresque novel, fairytale and chronicle of a bygone

era. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* "Recounts the immense folly and excess of an explosive colonial episode forgotten, deadly, torturous and involving weapons traffic and hidden treasures. Something that would have excited the adventurer Rimbaud had he survived his injuries. Flaubert would have loved this imaginary depiction of a real historical event. *Le Point* "The reader remains captivated long after having completed this epic and comic novel that allows one to perceive in the ineffable silence of the desert the attachment of a man to his homeland. *Le Monde* "Full of stirring epic images, trenchant anecdotes celebrating the virtues of movement Majdalani has a way of merging time and place that makes his writing convey the concerns of men, their illusions, the sounds of the desert and the rhythm of marches and halts. *Le Matricule des Anges*

Charif Majdalani, born in Lebanon in 1960, is often compared to a Lebanese Proust. Majdalani lived in France from 1980 to 1993 and now teaches French literature at the Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut. The original French version of his novel *Moving the Palace* won the 2008 François Mauriac Prize from the Académie Française as well as the Prix Tropiques. Edward Gauvin has received prizes and fellowships including those awarded by PEN America, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Fulbright program. His work has won the John Dryden Translation Prize and the Science Fiction & Fantasy Translation Award. He has translated over 200 graphic novels.

What a great story and even a better story teller. It shows how human we all are and that dreams and action make a life. I really enjoyed this book and hope that I can find other books by Mr. Majdalani.

Rather unbelievable plot. Too much time developing too many characters that I had difficulty tracking.

I found the book charming at first, and the history of Lebanese and Syrians in Egypt was fascinating, but the ending was unsatisfying.

A delightful fable. A brilliant story teller.

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