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The Open Door

Latifa Al-Zayyat

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The Open Door Latifa Al-Zayyat
The Open Door is a landmark of women's writing in Arabic. Published in 1960, it was very bold for its time in exploring a middle-class Egyptian girl's coming of sexual and political age, in the context of the Egyptian nationalist movement preceding the 1952 revolution. The novel traces the pressures on young women and young men of that time and class as they seek to free themselves of family control and social expectations. Young Layla and her brother become involved in the student activism of the 1940s and early 1950s and in the popular resistance to continued imperialist rule; the story culminates in the 1956 Suez Crisis, when Gamal Abd al-Nasser's nationalization of the Canal led to a British, French, and Israeli invasion. Not only daring in her themes, Latifa al-Zayyat was also bold in her use of colloquial Arabic, and the novel contains some of the liveliest dialogue in modern Arabic literature.

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