



## The Tiller of Waters

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By Hoda Barakat

Women Unlimited, New Delhi, 2012. Soft cover. Book Condition: New. This spellbinding novel narrates the many layered recollections of a hallucinating man in devastated Beirut. The desolate, almost surreal, urban landscape is enriched by the unfolding of the family sagas of Niqula Mitri and his beloved Shamsa, the Kurdish maid. Mitri reminisces about his Egyptian mother and his father who came back to settle in Beirut after a long stay in Egypt. Mitri and his father, both textile merchants, see the world through the cloth, from the intimacy of linen, velvet, and silk to the most impersonal synthetics. Shamsa in turn relates her story, the myriad adventures of her parents and grandparents who moved from Iraqi Kurdistan to Beirut. Haunting scenes of pastoral Kurds are juxtaposed against the sedentary decadence of metropolitan residents. Barakat weaves into her sophisticated narrative shreds of scientific discourse about herbal plants and textile crafts, customs and manners of Arabs, Armenians, and Kurds, mythological figures from ancient Greece, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Arabia, the theosophy of the African Dogons and the medieval Byzantines, and historical accounts of the Crusades in the Holy Land and the silk route to China.



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### Reviews

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