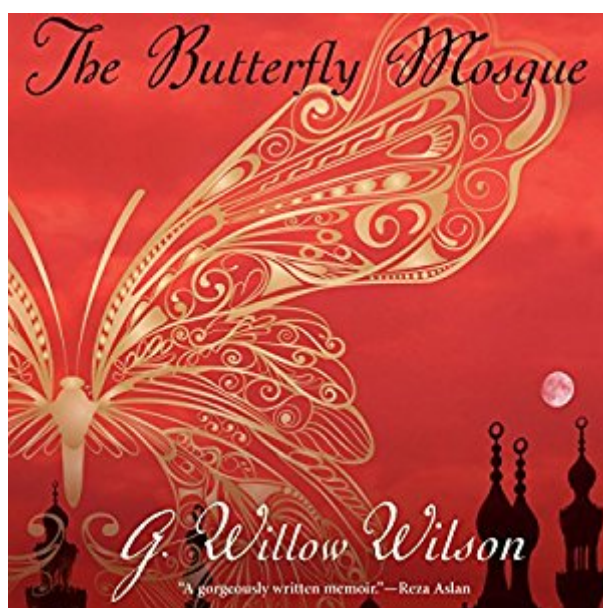


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The Butterfly Mosque: A Young American Woman's Journey To Love And Islam



Synopsis

The extraordinary story of an all-American girl's conversion to Islam and her ensuing romance with a young Egyptian man, *The Butterfly Mosque* is a stunning articulation of a Westerner embracing the Muslim world. When G. Willow Wilson - already an accomplished writer on modern religion and the Middle East at just 27 - leaves her atheist parents in Denver to study at Boston University, she enrolls in an Islamic Studies course that leads to her shocking conversion to Islam and sends her on a fated journey across continents and into an uncertain future. She settles in Cairo, where she teaches English and submerges herself in a culture based on her adopted religion. And then she meets Omar, a passionate young man with a mild resentment of the Western influences in his homeland. They fall in love, entering into a daring relationship that calls into question the very nature of family, belief, and tradition. Torn between the secular West and Muslim East, Willow records her intensely personal struggle to forge a "third culture" that might accommodate her own values without compromising the friends and family on both sides of the divide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Butterfly Mosque is the memoir of an American woman raised in a secular family who discovers the value of religion during her travel to Egypt. She is there to work and stay a year in Cairo. The book follows her encounter with Egyptian society and with her own spirituality as she converts to Islam. While in Egypt, she falls in love with Omar and they get married. There is so much that I enjoyed about her memoir but it was the little details and stories of her everyday life which made this book really work for me. The story about learning to shop in the souk, and the merchant who

sells Wilson a turkey to see if she can tell the difference. Wilson captures the strengths and flaws of America and also Egypt with a compelling voice. The book explores larger issues in both American and Egyptian Muslim society, and challenges the reader with observations about the way Americans and Muslims interact. I found it very interesting and informative. A 4.5 read for me.

This little gem of a book is readable and enjoyable as either a personal memoir or a novel, although the author was obviously writing from her own specific experience. The work is more powerful than simply a personal memoir however; it has the universality of well written fiction. With it comes the ability of well written fiction to convey feelings and thoughts that are applicable to multiple situations and locations and apply to more of us humans than not. A memoir is often more equivalent to a historical documentary with a few revelations of universal interest thrown in here and there as the author grows to learn them. This book quivers with great wisdom and insight that everyone needs today, but that few are in a position either geographically - or in terms of writing ability - to give us. Everyone - EVERYONE - should read this book. Get it right now. Yet - it is easy and fun to read; difficult to put down. This book addresses not only some distinct differences between two specific cultures but also the sensation of being caught between those two cultures. It is not negative; it is positive. The protagonist is torn between the positive things she found in the two cultures. There are so many cultures on this living earth. It is possible for many fortunate individuals to experience stepping into another from his or her own temporarily and experiencing the surprise and wonder of the good things in the "other" culture. This often results in a closer evaluation of ones original or "home" culture, which is a good thing. As I stated earlier, this book is a comparison of POSITIVES along with related experiences. It is done in a non-judgmental, engaging, and thought provoking way that is a fun read. You will be surprised at the self you are when you finish the last page.

This book is awesome! It is so beautifully written. I was born Catholic and then became agnostic, then spiritual with no religion...now I am in love with a Muslim man and I was looking for a perspective that was not jaded and one-sided. This book is so helpful at looking at the topic of religion with levity. We can love God and people of all religion and remember that we are humans above all with the same capacities for love, connection, emotion, etc. Well done G. Willow Wilson! I feel like we could be friends.

Wilson is a world-class writer...this book was a joy to read, really. I read it for an Intercultural Studies class and it was the highlight of the semester. So many eloquent, poetic, and deeply insightful

passages. Romantic yet realistic rather than schmaltzy or sentimental. An endlessly fascinating look at modern Egypt contrasted with current-day America, and the author's journey from one to the other and back again. It's so well written that I could reread it many times!

This was the first book I had read concerning Islam. I wanted to learn more about the religion. I was raised Christian but am no longer religious. What drew me to the book was the fact that she and her parents were atheist and she chose Islam. I thought that atheism would be a very liberating philosophy (no religious rules, etc) so I was curious what drew Ms. Wilson to Islam having no religious background. Ms. Wilson describes Islam in such a beautiful way and in essence demystifies it for the reader who may have no previous background in this religion. Islam is beautiful but it is trapped like a butterfly in a jar between the religious fanatics and the West's terrible interpretation of it. She sees a beautiful religion and holds to the true essence of it. The book is not only about Islam but also about a cross cultural marriage. Her husband had never lived in the West and as she describes there were times early in their relationship where there was literally no ground to stand on due to the cultural divide. The book is beautifully written and I highly recommend it.

This book appeals so much to me as a person caught between 2 opposing worlds. Sister Willow puts in words so many of the things that I see, feel, love and hate about being a foreigner in a sometimes unwelcoming land. It's such a comfort to feel like someone, somewhere understands you even when you don't say a thing. Though I know no two lives are the same, I hope to learn from her experiences and use her observations to navigate this increasingly complex world. I do wish there was more to this wonderful book. 

In an effort to learn more about Islam, I did many general searches for women's perspectives. I found this novel entirely by accident and it was such a blessing. Not only is Wilson a great storyteller, she is easy to connect with and she truly understands what it is to be human in search of herself, and of God. Her memoir takes you with her out of a comfort zone and into a new country, where she finds sisters and brothers, love, and strength. It gives you new eyes and an appreciation of life as a journey. Never mind beginnings or endings, there are gifts everyday. Highly recommend this enjoyable read, especially if you're curious about Islam, Egypt, and the human connection to the world.

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