The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family’s Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World

Lucette Lagnado

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Description

This memoir of an Egyptian Jewish family’s gradual ruin is told without melodrama by its youngest survivor, now a reporter at the Wall Street Journal. Lagnado’s story hinges on her father, “the Captain,” who cut a dashing figure in mid-century Cairo, conspiring with British officers and Egyptian royalty at French cafés while his family, neglected, stayed home. At first refusing to join the tide of Jews fleeing Egypt under the Nasser regime, the Captain finally yields, in 1963, when the family escapes to Paris and then Brooklyn. Deprived of wealth, status, and any means of coping, Lagnado’s father fades, but he never loses his air of chivalry, manifested in a regular outflow of tiny checks to charitable causes—orphans, vocational schools, and dowry funds for poor girls—overseas. “As if the Captain were capable of rescuing anyone,” his daughter writes.

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