



We are All Equally Far from Love

Adania Shibli, ????? ????, Paul Starkey (Translator)

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A young woman is instructed by her boss to write a letter to an older man. His reply begins an enigmatic but passionate love affair conducted entirely in letters. Until, that is, his letters stop coming.

But did the letters ever reach their intended recipient? Only the teenage Afaf, who works at the local post office, would know. Her duty is to open the mail and inform her collaborator father of the contents—until she finds a mysterious set of love letters, for which she selects another destiny.

Afaf has lived in shame ever since her mother left her father for another man. And in this novel, her story is followed in turn by another: the story of a woman who leaves her husband for someone else, to whom she declares her love in a letter...

The chain of stories that make up this singular novel form a wrenching examination of relationships and their limits—relationships tenuous, oblique, and momentous. In prose at once fierce and subtle, *We Are All Equally Far from Love* is a haunting portrait of alienation and desire.

We are All Equally Far from Love Details

Date : Published January 2012 by Clockroot Books (first published 2004)

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Author : Adania Shibli , ?????? ????, Paul Starkey (Translator)

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From Reader Review We are All Equally Far from Love for online ebook

BranDee says

I definitely don't think this book is up my alley. I don't know if it's a translation thing, or a cultural thing, but I actually kinda hated this book now that I think more about it. There are "chapters" that describe one miserable persons' experience after another, almost like short stories that are masquerading as one story, but with nothing (but misery) to tie them all together. Characters are nameless, faceless, miserable folk who I don't empathize with at all. Their pain and relationships with others seem very foreign to me, the interaction of how the family hates one another, but still coexists in an abhorrently codependent way. It's a miracle I finished this one.

Ahmed reads says

I can't say anything about it honestly it's a holy for me

Mona says

4.5 stars.

Veronica says

Moving and sad. So many parts resonated with me. Took a star off because I don't think the publisher and translator did this work justice.

Ayala Levinger says

I wasn't sure if it's a collection of short stories or one novel written from different pov's. Also, I wish I could read it in Arabic because it is so poetic and I have the feeling English translation simplify it. and the author asked to omit the 6 letters from the translation and I am curious why. The stories are gradually becoming more and more depressing in this book and toward the end I was worried the writer herself is depressed and suicidal.

razan says

Read this in Arabic and the accumulative structure in which it's organised is genius

Michelle says

I adore this haunting writing style. The marketing blurb insists that this is a novel, which led me to believe that these stories were interconnected. However, that was not the case. In my opinion this is a short story collection, and I would have enjoyed this a lot more had I known that going in.

anna says

it took some time for me to get used to the strange, oblique tone of the multiple narrators. don't be deceive by the seemingly short chapter and length it was a tough read but one that was so rewarding. also that cover! and i love the Arabic title so much. soft poetry + incisive meaning.

melancholic meditation on alienation and love - in all kind of forms.

Timothy Faust says

it's a short story collection more than a novel. the translator's notes indicate that maybe some text has been removed, at the author's request; perhaps it's what would tie these stories together. instead, we have six brutally sad and very beautiful separate-but-not-distant stories about loneliness. wish i had kept up with my arabic.

Leif says

Startling and immediate in its execution, *We are All Equally Far from Love* twists and turns in its plot, prising its characters free from telos and carrying home its message of solitude, desperation, misconnection, and, against it all, the possibility of commitment. A fluid and welcoming book, hospitable until you get to know it, Shibli thankfully does not however give us a book that is easy to read.

Angie says

I think whoever wrote the summary for this book only read about a third of the way in. This is not the story of a woman and her letters. This is the story of loneliness.

Anyway, I really wonder what the motivation was for not translating the text of the letters. I feel certain that something was lost in translation here, and that the letters may have related to the narrative

They seemed like a key narrative element. The back cover mentions that the letters have "a new destiny" when the postal worker sees them but essentially, in the English version, they disappear right then, and the narrative changes to a selection of love stories that lack a strong narrative thread. Either there is a narrative

disconnect or the content of those letters provides a frame for the following stories.

Karim Anani says

I wish this was as good as *Touch*, but it isn't; it's too loosely defined, with nothing especially memorable about it. And yet I remember liking it.

Not much to say about this one. I can recommend it to those wanting a quick read.

Tori says

Beautiful. Sad. But mostly beautiful.

After reading the translator's end notes, in which he discusses particular parts Shibli requested he change / leave out, I'd love to read the original Arabic. Gotta study a little harder first.

Joanne says

Nicely written and thoughtful, but little happiness...
