

SYNOPSIS

Erected in downtown Cairo in 1934, the Yacoubian apartment building was one of the largest, most luxurious edifices of its day. Over the years, however, the building fell into disrepair, and the rooftop dwellings that had been used as servants' quarters were rented out to the destitute and downtrodden. Torn between attempts to modernize and entrenched Islamic tradition, Egypt saw soaring poverty.

The Yacoubian's residents include Zaki Pasha, an over-the-hill playboy evicted from the family apartment by his overbearing sister; Hatem Rasheed, a gay newspaper editor who seduces a handsome young soldier; Haj Azzam, a sexually frustrated, outwardly religious millionaire who takes a young widow as a second wife but exposes his selfishness and hypocrisy when he forces her to have an abortion; Taha, a roof-dwelling youth who turns to religious extremism. Taha appears firstly as an obedient son, hard worked and religious man. After got humiliation and abuse from National security officers, he changed to be extremist believer. Finally he died in doing extremism actions. Bridging the tales, the lovely, desperately poor Busayna, leaves her first love, Taha, when he becomes obsessed with Islam and finds a job working for Zaki, who, newly chastened, is the first man to treat Busayna with respect.