

## **A Girls' Only Night**

by **Aliaa Dawoud**

The doorbell rang while Nadia was still getting dressed. Her friends had arrived for a girls' only night at her place.

“Did you watch the drama serial last night?” Sahar said as soon as they had all settled in her living room.

“Yeah, it was so boring and unrealistic as well,” Nadia said.

“The same old story: a middle aged woman who is married to a filthy rich businessman and spends her time shopping or feeling bored, while her husband ends up taking his secretary – who is some 20 years younger than him – as a second wife,” Mona said.

“Yeah, and their teenage son does drugs as usual, and their teenage daughter is fooled into *urfi*<sup>i</sup> marriage by one of her classmates, again as usual,” Nadia added.

“Oh and the maid, was wearing full make up as usual and her hair was coloured and perfectly done, just like my maid,” Sahar said and laughed.

“Just like all Egyptian maids” Nadia added.

They all laughed.

“I just don't see why they can't be more creative and come up with more interesting plots,” Mona said.

“I would love to watch a drama serial about a woman who actually resembles us. You know, in her mid thirties, has two little kids who are driving her crazy, is married to a very demanding man and is struggling to juggle all of that with her career,” Sahar said.

“That would be very interesting indeed, and I am sure that it would be such a big hit,” Nadia said.

“Of course. Or how about something like a woman who plays a significant role in her extended family, you know, the kind of person who people tend to turn to when they are in trouble, someone who is trusted, respected and admired ...” Mona suggested.

“Or even better,” Nadia interrupted, “a drama serial about a woman who is elected to the board of the club and ends up heading one of its committees, such as the cultural one.”

“Yeah, that would be quite inspiring actually,” Mona noted.

“Speaking of which, I have a brilliant idea. A drama serial about a female President,” Sahar announced very excitedly.

“What?!” Mona was quite alarmed. “A female President? Here in Egypt? You must be joking!”

“Why not?!” Sahar asked.

“When she exists in real life, we can have a drama serial about her,” Mona said.

“I thought you wanted to watch an inspiring drama serial?!” Nadia asked.

“Are you suggesting that this drama serial would inspire a few Egyptian women to run for the presidency?” Nadia laughed.

“Not necessarily,” Sahar said. “All I’m saying is that it will expose viewers to a strong and powerful female character, it might get some of them thinking, it might help lead to a different perception of women and their capabilities,” she added.

“There is no doubt in my mind that women are up to it, but I don’t think Egyptian society would find having a female President acceptable,” Mona said.

“Even Hillary didn’t make it, for God’s sake, in America where women and men are said to be equal,” Nadia added.

“Well, guess what. At two different points in history, we actually had two female rulers. Nefertiti ruled Egypt for a brief period of time during the Pharonic era and Shagaret El Dor ruled Egypt for 80 days in 1250,” Sahar explained.

“I know, how about a drama serial about one of them? At least it would be more realistic and less weird,” Mona said.

“Yeah, and it could still get people thinking, to some extent,” Nadia said. “At least its better than all of these drama serials about those pathetic women who spend their time shopping or feeling bored. That’s not to mention the teenage girls who are fooled into *urfi* marriage,” she added.

“Fair enough,” Sahar said.

Before they knew it, it was time for Sahar and Mona to leave.

“It’s my turn. I’ll see you two at my place in a few weeks time. I’ll call you to agree on a date,” Mona said on her way out.

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<sup>i</sup> secret and undocumented marriage