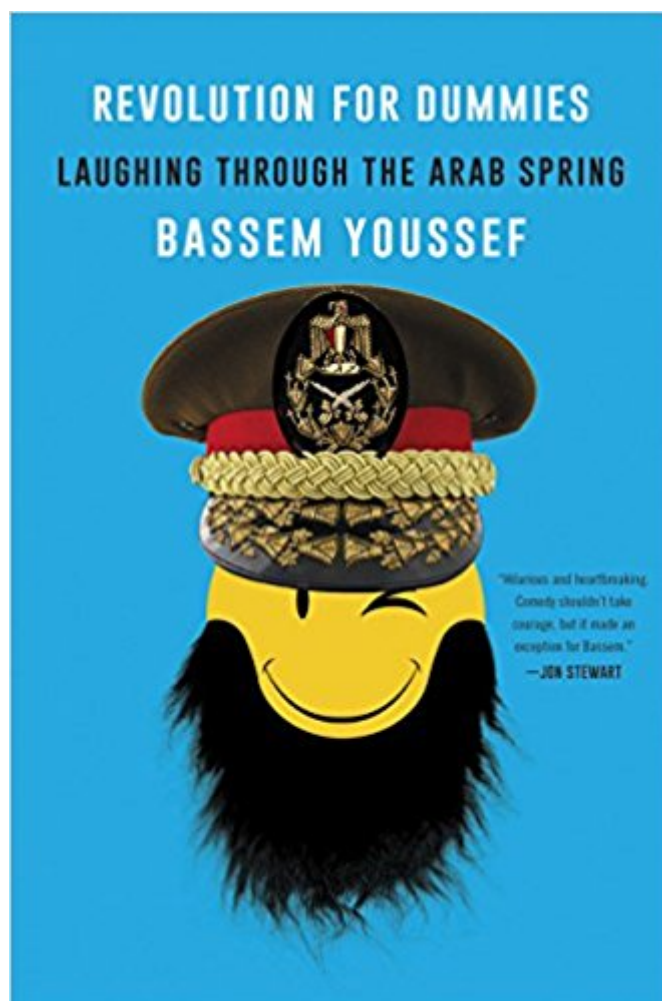


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Revolution For Dummies: Laughing Through The Arab Spring



Synopsis

“Hilarious and Heartbreaking. Comedy shouldn’t take courage, but it made an exception for Bassem.” --Jon Stewart

The Jon Stewart of the Arabic World

the creator of The Program, the most popular television show in Egypt’s history chronicles his transformation from heart surgeon to political satirist, and offers crucial insight into the Arab Spring, the Egyptian Revolution, and the turmoil roiling the modern Middle East, all of which inspired the documentary about his life, *Tickling Giants*. Bassem Youssef’s incendiary satirical news program, *Al-Bernameg* (The Program), chronicled the events of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, the fall of President Hosni Mubarak, and the rise of Mubarak’s successor, Mohamed Morsi. Youssef not only captured his nation’s dissent but stamped it with his own brand of humorous political criticism, in which the Egyptian government became the prime laughing stock. So potent were Youssef’s skits, jokes, and commentary, the authoritarian government accused him of insulting the Egyptian presidency and Islam. After a six-hour long police interrogation, Youssef was released. While his case was eventually dismissed, his television show was terminated, and Youssef, fearful for his safety, fled his homeland. In *Revolution for Dummies*, Youssef recounts his life and offers hysterical riffs on the hypocrisy, instability, and corruption that has long animated Egyptian politics. From the attempted cover-up of the violent clashes in Tahrir Square to the government’s announcement that it had created the world’s first “AIDS cure” machine, to the conviction of officials that Youssef was a CIA operative recruited by Jon Stewart to bring down the country through sarcasm. There’s much more—and it’s all insanely true. Interweaving the dramatic and inspiring stories of the development of his popular television show and his rise as the most contentious funny-man in Egypt, Youssef’s humorous, fast-paced takes on dictatorship, revolution, and the unforeseeable destiny of democracy in the Modern Middle East offers much needed hope and more than a few healing laughs. A documentary about his life, *Tickling Giants*, debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2016, and is now scheduled for major release.

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Customer Reviews

“Hilarious and Heartbreaking. Comedy shouldn’t take courage, but it made an exception for Bassem.” (Jon Stewart)
“A smart, refreshing and hilariously funny account.” (Salon.com)
“An entertaining and eminently readable book about a Middle Eastern country written for Americans. If you have been bluffing your way through political conversations pretending to know the differences between Islamists and secular Muslims, Youssef’s book is an easy, painless way to rectify that error.” (The Ringer)
If you want to understand the Arab Spring-even though it was really the African Spring, set off by a small puny motherfucking country called Tunisia-then this odd book is just the guide. (Kirkus Reviews)

How does one start a revolution? With a microphone, a joke, and persistence, of course! Bassem Youssef, a satirist who rose to fame in the middle of the Egyptian Revolution with his incendiary brand of comedy and his knack for unabashedly mocking dictators, has been called the “Jon Stewart of Egypt.” Once a heart surgeon who filmed YouTube skits in the laundry room of his home, he eventually grew to become one of the most recognizable television hosts in Egyptian history, and his show became the most popular TV program in Egypt, much to the ire of the TV anchors, government officials, and military personnel who tried desperately to shut it down. So potent were Youssef’s skits, jokes, and commentary that he was accused of insulting the Egyptian presidency, and even Islam itself, leading to a warrant in 2013 for his arrest. Despite turning himself in, Youssef was interrogated for six hours before being released on bail, which prompted his idol Mr. Jon Stewart himself to issue a statement on his behalf in an episode of The Daily Show. Though Youssef’s case was eventually dismissed, his TV show was terminated, and he found himself fleeing Egypt in fear for his life. In *Revolution for Dummies*, Youssef proudly and hysterically riffs on the hypocrisy, instability, and corruption that

manifested in Egyptian politics: everything from how the government tried to cover up the violent clashes in Tahrir Square to how the military announced they had created the world's first AIDS machine that could cure anyone of the disease to how officials were convinced Youssef was a CIA operative recruited by Jon Stewart, on a secret mission to bring down the country through sarcasm. (Yes, it gets that insane.) This is the version of the Arab Spring you've never heard, the one that doesn't get glossed over by the media's attempt to optimistically show promise of progress after revolution. This is the real story of guts and glory, and of how jokes are often mightier than the sword.

> "If you ask questions you are either a traitor, an infidel, or both. Fact checking authorities is looked upon as a form of mutiny against the country or against God. If you challenge those claims, you don't like the country or you are misinformed by "mainstream media", which is not telling you the "truth." Quick sanity check - do you think that the quote above references the current Egyptian dictatorship under Sissi or the current US government under Trump's administration? The correct answer is actually Egypt, but isn't it weird that you have to think about it? Bassem Youssef's book chronicling his adventures and experiences through not one BUT TWO revolutions in Egypt is a fantastic read. His insights into the kind of populism that led to a religious dictatorship, followed by the current military dictatorship under Sissi are extremely intelligent and thought provoking. He had to literally leave his country because he was going to get arrested and probably jailed forever (maybe executed?) for hosting an Arab version of the Daily Show that didn't always show the Egyptian government in great light. It was literally the most popular show in Egypt at one point. After spending the first half of the book chronicling the Egyptian revolutions, he shares some good insights into the parallels between what he experienced there and what he saw during Trump's campaign.> "But as I was inside the Republican convention it was deja vu for me. I would sometimes translate parts of their speeches in my head and they would sound exactly the same as the ones I heard back home. The fear, the xenophobia, the hate, they all came in different shapes and forms; only, they were wearing more expensive suits and had much paler skin." This was a really good read, and I'm glad that Youssef didn't "disappear" back in Egypt, which looks like it could have been a distinct possibility *several* times. I'll definitely keep an eye out in the future for books like this that help give me more of a global perspective of the world.> "Just when I thought I'd left the madness behind me, I came to America to find the Orange Menace taking over your country. Is it me? Am I bringing bad luck everywhere I go? Am I a dictator magnet?"

This book will grab and keep your attention right from the beginning! This book reads as if you were watching Bassem on The Daily Show with each part having multiple segments. I have already bought multiple copies as gifts!

This was a fantastic book, fun and scary at the same time. It explains (for dummies) the mess Egypt is in now, the Arab Spring, its players and how here in the US we are seeing some of the same forces at play. I can't praise it enough or recommend it enough. I hope he gets his own show and I will subscribe to whatever channel carries it!

Fantastic book, so funny, powerful and insightful, I love this guy, he's so genuine. I highly recommend that everyone also watch the documentary.

This is the most awesome book I've ever read and that is no exaggeration. This is real. A guy put his life on the line to show people how utterly ridiculous the leaders of his country are. I can't imagine the bravery of such a person who would take on the fear and hatred like he did. He's a Jedi Knight but instead of a light saber he wields words that are even stronger.

Helped me to understand the Arab Spring revolution in Egypt from the perspective of the author's comedy show. Timely, in light of the 2016 US election, and aftermath.

Not as informative about the conflict as had hoped. More about the writer than expected.

Man. This is the best thing that would have explained it all from 2011-now. I've watched his TV show and was literally transformed in how I think, but this book tops it all. Having a mind and energy like his makes you feel empowered by association. This book is worth your money. Bassem, thank you.

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