



# Monique Samuel

## *Mosaic of the revolution*

Original title: *Mozaïek van de revolutie*

NOVEL

Young, refreshing, ambitious and very knowledgeable.



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## About the author

Monique Samuel (1989) has an Egyptian father and a Dutch mother. She is a political scientist, columnist and author, writing regularly in various national newspapers. She blogs actively and writes columns on several websites. Monique Samuel has written two novels and put together an anthology. In spring 2011 she suddenly became the focus of attention as a Middle East expert for newspapers and television and radio programmes in the Netherlands. Her critical analyses, fresh outlook, and original thoughts have endeared her to a large audience. She combined writing *Mosaic of the Revolution* with writing columns and opinion pieces for two large Dutch newspapers. De Geus will be publishing a new novel by Monique Samuel in the summer of 2012.



## About the book

During the summer of 2011, Monique Samuel travelled for more than two months through countries in the Middle East where major upheavals were taking place. Her base of operations was her grandmother's small apartment in Cairo. Samuel wanted to know what was happening to the ordinary people, and she spoke to them about the causes of the revolution, the influence it was having on society and what their future was likely to be. She did not want to be swayed by the issues of the moment or misled by filtered information; she wanted to rely on her own experiences. This author/journalist has combined the results of her encounters with her reflections on the social and political consequences.

Monique Samuel, *Mozaïek van de revolutie*  
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## Excerpt from the book

Lying on the hard bed in the small apartment where my *teta* (grandmother) lived, I am woken by braying donkeys, the shouts of street vendors, hooting cars and the banging of hammers on butane gas bottles.

What a racket, moans a voice in my head. It is my first morning in Egypt and, as always, I have to get used to the smells, colours and noises of the busy streets in the working-class area of Ezbet al-Nachle (which literally means *palm tree farm*). This quarter is hemmed in between the railway crossing in the average area, Ain Shams, and the desperately poor area, Al-Marg, with its hundreds of labourers, armed with spades and pickaxes, sitting and waiting in long rows in the burning sun until pickup trucks take them back to where they have just migrated from – rural areas to the north or south of Cairo. Or they will be taken to the desert to work on a new motorway. It is a hard and uncertain existence, with an extremely meagre daily wage. For every one of these labourers, there are ten more waiting in vain for work of any kind.

I get up, stretch, and open the shutters of the window. I look out on a block of flats directly opposite, that have been under construction for ten years. Until recently, it consisted of no more than three storeys, with the iron rods of the reinforced concrete jabbing high into the air. On the half-finished third floor, with its red-brick and clay facing, skins were stretched and left to dry in the sun. Now, however, the block consists of seven floors and a roof and it has taken on the colour of grey concrete. I had never expected the block to be finished. It isn't yet. The building is still surrounded by wooden scaffolding, but the progress, although slow, is unmistakable.