



Ten Again and Other Stories

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Ibrahim al-Mazini was one of the great humorists and stylists of twentieth-century Arabic prose literature. Like an Egyptian James Thurber, he captured the foibles and triumphs of Cairo's middle classes of the 1930s and 1940s in exceptionally stylish prose. This collection gathers in one volume some of al-Mazini's best short fiction, including two novellas: *Midu and His Accomplices* and *Ten Again*. Midu is an engaging, well-liked army officer who assisted by almost every other character in the story arranges a faux heist from his uncle's library in order to allow young love to run its course. In *Ten Again*, a man awakes to find that he has returned to childhood, on the day of his tenth birthday: his wife, who is being wooed by a most obnoxious suitor, is now his mother, and his two sons torment him mercilessly at his birthday party. In al-Mazini's skillful hands, the short stories included here illuminate a lively fictional world: from a drunken encounter with a parrot to an undertaker's attempt to provide a cadaver with a believer's contented smile. An unmarried woman dreams of her unborn daughter, who is impatient to be born; and a reclusive author who has chosen to disappear from Cairo's literary scene is tracked down to his obvious disgust by an intrepid researcher. Rich in insight, imagination, and humor, these stories are a splendid introduction to a major figure in the early generation of Egyptian writers.

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