



# Egyptian Earth

*Abdel Rahman Al-Sharqawi*

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**Egyptian Earth** Abdel Rahman Al-Sharqawi

A 12-year-old boy returns from his school in Cairo to find his village torn by feud and fear. A corrupt official has ordered the peasants to irrigate their fields in five days, instead of the customary ten a demand which threatens to disrupt the whole life of the village.

A schoolmaster, Sheikh Hassouna, urges the villagers to rebel. But it takes many attempts, some disastrous, others comical and touching, before they join forces and stand against their oppressors.

Set in the 1930s, Sharqawi's novel was first published as al-Ard [The Earth] in 1954 two years after the Egyptian revolution and appeared in Desmond Stewart's excellent translation in 1962. It has also been translated into French, Russian and other languages, and was turned into a popular film by the well-known Egyptian director Youssef Chahine.

*Egyptian Earth* is an epic drama of great power, and an unchallenged masterpiece of modern Arabic literature.

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