



Dubai: Gilded Cage

Syed Ali

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In less than two decades, Dubai has transformed itself from an obscure Gulf emirate into a global center for business, tourism, and luxury living. It is a fascinating case study in light-speed urban development, hyperconsumerism, massive immigration, and vertiginous inequality. Its rulers have succeeded in making Dubai into a worldwide brand, publicizing its astonishing hotels and leisure opportunities while at the same time successfully downplaying its complex policies towards guest workers and suppression of dissent.

In this enormously readable book, Syed Ali delves beneath the dazzling surface to analyze how—and at what cost—Dubai has achieved such success. Ali brings alive a society rigidly divided between expatriate Westerners living self-indulgent lifestyles on short-term work visas, native Emiratis who are largely passive observers and beneficiaries of what Dubai has become, and workers from the developing world who provide the manual labor and domestic service needed to keep the emirate running, often at great personal cost.

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