



## So Vast the Prison

*By Assia Djebar*

Download now

Read Online ➔

### So Vast the Prison By Assia Djebar

So Vast the Prison is the double-threaded story of a modern, educated Algerian woman existing in a man's society, and, not surprisingly, living a life of contradictions. Djebar, too, tackles cross-cultural issues just by writing in French of an Arab society (the actual act of writing contrasting with the strong oral traditions of the indigenous culture), as a woman who has seen revolution in a now post-colonial country, and as an Algerian living in exile.

In this new novel, Djebar brilliantly plays these contradictions against the bloody history of Carthage, a great civilization the Berbers were once compared to, and makes it both a tribute to the loss of Berber culture and a meeting-point of culture and language. As the story of one woman's experience in Algeria, it is a private tale, but one embedded in a vast history.

A radically singular voice in the world of literature, Assia Djebar's work ultimately reaches beyond the particulars of Algeria to embrace, in stark yet sensuous language, the universal themes of violence, intimacy, ostracism, victimization, and exile.

↓ [Download So Vast the Prison ...pdf](#)

📖 [Read Online So Vast the Prison ...pdf](#)

# So Vast the Prison

*By Assia Djébar*

## So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar

So Vast the Prison is the double-threaded story of a modern, educated Algerian woman existing in a man's society, and, not surprisingly, living a life of contradictions. Djébar, too, tackles cross-cultural issues just by writing in French of an Arab society (the actual act of writing contrasting with the strong oral traditions of the indigenous culture), as a woman who has seen revolution in a now post-colonial country, and as an Algerian living in exile.

In this new novel, Djébar brilliantly plays these contradictions against the bloody history of Carthage, a great civilization the Berbers were once compared to, and makes it both a tribute to the loss of Berber culture and a meeting-point of culture and language. As the story of one woman's experience in Algeria, it is a private tale, but one embedded in a vast history.

A radically singular voice in the world of literature, Assia Djébar's work ultimately reaches beyond the particulars of Algeria to embrace, in stark yet sensuous language, the universal themes of violence, intimacy, ostracism, victimization, and exile.

## So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar Bibliography

- Rank: #3022031 in Books
- Published on: 1999-11
- Released on: 1999-10-05
- Original language: French
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.30" h x 1.20" w x 6.35" l, 1.43 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 368 pages

 [Download So Vast the Prison ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online So Vast the Prison ...pdf](#)

## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

In *So Vast the Prison*, Assia Djébar takes full advantage of the novel as a flexible art form, moving majestically between narrative and history, bending the book's shape to reflect its concerns. In rich, poetic prose, she describes the women of Algeria and their inner lives of faith, longing, and grief. Aside from their aesthetic value, Djébar's innovative narrative strategies create an additional poignancy, as the artistic freedom she enjoys rubs against the restrictions placed on the women whom she portrays.

The novella-sized first section begins in the capital city of Algiers, in the world of a post-colonial middle class that straddles French and Algerian cultures. The narrator, an educated married woman, is consumed by love for a younger man who works in her office building. This secret, platonic love could happen almost anywhere: her actions are restricted less by the Islamic society than by her emotional commitment to her marriage and "the watchmen of bourgeois respectability." But when the narrator confides her hidden feelings to her husband, his response makes clear Algeria's very different history and culture.

He struck and I slipped to the floor.... then I heard him, as if echoing from within a prison cell in which he found himself, in which he wrestled, in which he was trying to keep me. From inside this nightmare space, inside this bodily fear, my eyes closed, and hidden under my arms, under my lifted elbows, under my already bloody hands, I heard and I would almost have answered with a laugh, not a madwoman's laugh nor one of tearfulness, but the laugh of a woman who was relieved and struggling to free herself. "Adulteress!" he repeated, "Anywhere, except this city of iniquity, you would deserve to be stoned!"

The book's focus then shifts to a historical account of the relationship between Muslim women and the lost languages of North Africa (enigmatic traces of which have survived), as Djébar explores the symbiotic relationship that women have had with words, serving as the culture's literary caretakers, "preserv[ing] the writing while their men wage war in the sun or dance before the fires at night."

Djébar combines themes of narrative and erased histories in the third section, as the narrator seeks to "recapture the deep song strangled in the throat of my people"--that is, to convey (and thus preserve) the lives of the contemporary Algerian women who have been veiled and silenced. The section's short narratives, mingled with the experiences of the narrator while making a film in rural Algeria, are fascinating and inspiring. This Algeria is a world of women-only ritual dances, bride thieves, gossip in the *hammams* (public baths), sorceresses, and an unforgettable 8-year-old shepherdess who gazes at the narrator "without real curiosity but with fond indulgence." In Djébar, these stories have found a courageous, gifted teller--though one who is sadly aware that her voice is a lonely substitute for what should be a chorus. --*John Ponyicsanyi*

### From Publishers Weekly

Writing becomes weapon and refuge for the oppressed in this fiercely intelligent, intricate novel set in a tragic, bewitching Algeria. Expressing the bitterness of being caught between traditional Islamic and modern European cultures, married 36-year-old Isma begins her story the summer she has an affair with a student. A highly educated musicologist, Isma is also governed by Islamic tradition. When her husband, Leo, discovers her dalliance, he beats her, intending to blind her. The affair marks Isma's awakening and the beginning of her quest for true independence, though she stays with her husband for a little while longer. When she finally leaves him, she embarks on a semi-documentary film project, to be called *Arable Women*. Intertwining her experiences in the mountains filming peasant women with memories of her childhood and stories about her

female ancestors and relatives, Isma weaves a complicated tapestry of images and sentiments. The tales she unearths are richly detailed and gracefully told, and the book becomes a moving common history of cultural exile and captivity. Djebbar, winner of the 1996 Neustadt Prize for Contributions to World Literature, has a talent for narrating the stories of those who are "freed and voiceless" without heavy-handed moralizing or judgment. (Nov.)

Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

#### Review

...her often elliptical style effectively transmits the potent feeling of dislocation at the heart of Isma's story. --  
*The New York Times Book Review*, Erik Burns

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

##### **Erich Arnold:**

What do you with regards to book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what you problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They need to answer that question due to the fact just their can do this. It said that about guide. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on pre-school until university need this So Vast the Prison to read.

##### **Melanie Moore:**

This book untitled So Vast the Prison to be one of several books that best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this book in the book store or you can order it through online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this guide from your list.

##### **Valentin Gonzalez:**

The guide untitled So Vast the Prison is the book that recommended to you to learn. You can see the quality of the reserve content that will be shown to you. The language that writer use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of research when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of So Vast the Prison from the publisher to make you far more enjoy free time.

##### **Ann Goddard:**

The actual book So Vast the Prison has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was written by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. That book very easy to read you will get the point easily after scanning this book.

**Download and Read Online So Vast the Prison By Assia Djebar**  
**#XU42J93WQBN**

## **Read So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar for online ebook**

So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar books to read online.

### **Online So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar ebook PDF download**

#### **So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar Doc**

#### **So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar Mobipocket**

#### **So Vast the Prison By Assia Djébar EPub**