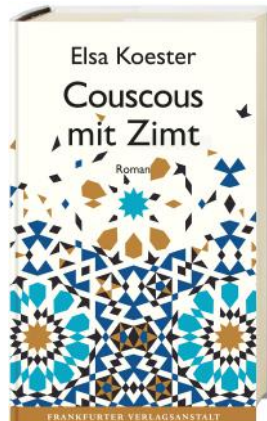


TOP TITLE IN AUTUMN 2020:

COUSCOUS WITH CINNAMON BY ELSA KOESTER



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Couscous mit Zimt
Novel. German.
Release: August 2020
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Three Women. Three Political Upheavals. Three Fates – a stirring family novel full of emotional warmth, empathy and a zest for storytelling

»Lisa was proud to finally take part at one of the famous Pieds-Noirs couscous dinners. She imagined how all the families who had returned from Tunisia or Algeria would be sitting over couscous on Sundays and talking about the old days. I am a Pied-Noir, she said to herself, although she was not at all sure. As the daughter of a German man and a French woman from Tunisia, when do you stop being a Pied-Noir? ›Why is it called Pied-Noir – Blackfoot?,‹ she asked her mother. And her mother said, ›Ma chérie, it's called that because we burned our feet in North Africa.«

Cigarettes, cognac and books – the last few years in her Parisian apartment, centenarian Lucile prefers to spend her time reading in bed. Shortly after Lucile's death, her daughter Marie also dies. What remains is the apartment on the Avenue de Flandre and the memories of two independent women, scarred by life. Lisa, Marie's daughter, who lives in Berlin, wants to make a clean break and sell the apartment. The relationship between her mother and grandmother was explosive – Lucile, a Pied-Noir from Tunisia, had to return to France with her two daughters after independence. She was a strong, but self-absorbed woman – something Lisa knew from her own experience, but above all from her mother. Marie had never recovered from the loss of her homeland. Her painful return to France, her first dramatic love in Paris in May 1968, her flight from Lucille's attacks to Berlin – she told Lisa everything. But, can Lisa really believe her mother's stories? While the protests of the Nuit Debout Movement rage in the streets in 2016, Lisa vacates her Paris apartment and tries to trace the relationship between her mother and grandmother. But the deeper she goes, the greater her doubts that there is *any* truth to her family.

Elsa Koester portrays three women of strong character whose fates are marked by social upheaval and crisis. The incredible lightness with which she interweaves the perspectives of three generations, the individuality of the characters and the author's socially perceptive view make this novel an unforgettable reading experience.

Elsa Koester was born in 1984 in Berlin, the daughter of a French Pied-Noir with Tunisian colonial history and a North German Frisian with US-American emigration history. She studied literature, political science, and sociology. She lives in Berlin as a political journalist. newly reignited debate about identity and homeland inspired her novel debut *Couscous with Cinnamon*, which draws on her experience as a journalist and activist with a diverse cultural background.

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