



EGYPT

CAIRO, LIVING WITH THE DEAD

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Cairo. A dweller of the northern cemetery in her house grave.

Founded in the 7th century A.D, the City of the Dead is the oldest, still functioning cemetery in the world. Today, as a result of the housing crisis and the famines of the past decades, over 500.000 people made their home here among the funerary shrines and in the small rooms built to host pilgrims and the mausoleums guardians. Cemeteries have always been the balancing area between life and death and here this relationship is preserved and becomes unique and peculiar. The City of the Dead has no slums, no crowded houses and plenty of water and electricity everywhere.

Yet, the metropolis of Cairo and the local authorities act ambiguously towards the inhabitants of this area. Living in a graveyard is culturally seen as taboo and the cemetery is regarded as the most degraded border of the city, a dangerous place, the awkward shadow of the city which needs to be hidden and eventually washed away: that's why an "ecological project" would like to replace the cemetery with a huge city park. But behind all that there's just a greedy speculative plan.



Cairo. A plaster cast shop in the southern cemetery also known as the Al Khalifa district.



Cairo. A glimpse of the northern cemetery.



Cairo. The keeper of sultan Khedive Mohammed Tewfic Pasha's grave in the northern cemetery.



Cairo. A garden surrounded by graves in a house in the southern cemetery also known as the Al Khalifa district.



Cairo. A dweller of the northern cemetery in his house grave.



Cairo. The interior of sultan Qaitbey's mausoleum in the northern cemetery.



Cairo. A glimpse on the graves of the northern cemetery.



Cairo. Sunset on the City of the Dead in the northern cemetery.



Cairo. A path along the northern cemetery. In the background the dome of sultans Inal and Amir Qurqumas' mausoleum.



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