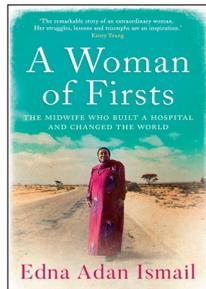


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A Woman of Firsts. The Midwife Who Built A Hospital And Changed The World Edna Adan Ismail

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AN UPLIFTING LIFE

This is a fascinating autobiographical account of Edna Adan Ismail, a midwife from the East African nation of Somaliland. Edna was born in 1937 in Hargeisa, then part of British Somaliland. Daughter of an esteemed doctor, she spent much of her childhood helping her father out on the wards and quickly developed his passion for medicine and improving health care in her country. Her father was a true vocational medic, for whom patients came above all else. Edna reflects that after three failed marriages, her true partner is also the hospital.

Following a harrowing experience of female genital mutilation (FGM) as an 8-year-old, Edna goes on to study nursing and then midwifery in London in the 1950s, with vivid descriptions of her time on the wards and in the capital. She returns to Somaliland at her father's request, and begins work as a midwife, at a time when a

woman working was highly frowned upon.

Her journey runs parallel to that of her homeland, which after gaining independence from Britain in 1960, quickly joins with Italian Somalia. Edna marries Mohamed Egal who becomes prime minister of Somalia, and soon she is attending state visits as the First Lady. A coup ensues, and life in Somaliland becomes very difficult as civil war takes hold.

Edna begins working for the World Health Organization, and spends decades helping to raise awareness of FGM (she even helped coin the term). Her dream to build a hospital in her country remains forever present, despite several setbacks along the way.

The book is an enthralling and inspirational account of how one woman manages to improve patient care in Somaliland, and raise the profile of women's health.

Edna is a feminist, activist, reluctant politician, teacher, and brilliant midwife, whose passion for medicine cannot fail to galvanise readers.

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