

APPENDIX 1

BIOGRAPHY

Author

Samira Sedira, born in Algeria in 1964, is a prominent writer, actress, and playwright, known for her poignant and compelling narratives that delve into themes of identity, immigration, and social justice. Her critically acclaimed novel, *People Like Them* (*Des gens comme eux*), has established her as a significant voice in contemporary literature, resonating with readers and critics alike for its powerful exploration of class, race, and the human condition.

Sedira's early life was marked by the experience of migration. Her family moved to France when she was a child, and she grew up in a working-class suburb of Paris. This early exposure to the challenges faced by immigrants and the working poor deeply influenced her worldview and later, her writing. Sedira's background is evident in her nuanced portrayal of characters who navigate the complexities of cultural displacement and societal marginalization.

Before embarking on her literary career, Sedira pursued acting. She trained at the prestigious Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris and performed in various theatrical productions. Her experience in theater honed her ability to convey intricate human emotions and relationships, skills that she seamlessly translates into her prose. Acting also provided Sedira with a profound understanding of character development, which is a hallmark of her writing.

People Like Them is a testament to Sedira's narrative prowess. The novel is inspired by a real-life crime that occurred in the French Alps, where a family was brutally murdered by their neighbor. Through this harrowing story, Sedira examines the undercurrents of envy, prejudice, and economic disparity that can culminate in violence. Her writing is characterized by its stark realism and emotional depth, shedding light on the often-hidden struggles of ordinary people.

In addition to *People Like Them*, Sedira has authored several other works, including plays and novels, each exploring different facets of the human experience. Her works often feature protagonists who grapple with their sense of belonging and identity, reflecting her own experiences as an immigrant. Sedira's storytelling is marked by its empathy and attention to detail, creating immersive and thought-provoking narratives.

Sedira's contributions to literature have not gone unnoticed. She has received several accolades for her work, and *People Like Them* has been particularly lauded for its social commentary and psychological insight. The novel has been translated into multiple languages, broadening its impact and reaching a global audience. Sedira's ability to address universal themes through the lens of specific, often marginalized, communities has made her an influential figure in contemporary literature.

Samira Sedira continues to write and engage with audiences worldwide. Her work not only entertains but also challenges readers to confront uncomfortable truths about society and themselves. Through her powerful storytelling, Sedira advocates for greater understanding and empathy across cultural and socioeconomic divides. Her unique perspective as an immigrant and her background in theater enrich her narratives, making her a distinctive and important voice in the literary world.

Samira Sedira's life and career reflect a profound commitment to exploring and illuminating the human condition. Her novel *People Like Them* stands as a powerful example of her ability to blend gripping storytelling with incisive social critique. Sedira's work resonates on multiple levels, offering both a compelling reading experience and a thoughtful examination of contemporary issues. As she continues to write, her contributions to literature promise to inspire and provoke thought for years to come.

Translator

Lara Vergnaud is a notable translator known for her work translating French literature into English. She gained recognition for her translation of the novel *People Like Them* by Samira Sedira, which has been praised for its gripping narrative and insightful exploration of social issues.

Vergnaud's translation of *People Like Them* brought the French novel, originally titled *Des Gens comme eux*, to a broader English-speaking audience. Her skillful rendering of the text maintains the original's tone and depth, showcasing her proficiency in capturing the nuances of the French language and culture.

Lara Vergnaud's career as a translator includes a variety of works, often focusing on contemporary French literature. Her translations are well-regarded for their clarity and faithfulness to the source material. She has contributed significantly to making French literary works accessible to a wider audience, enabling cross-cultural literary appreciation.

Vergnaud's work extends beyond just translation; she is also involved in promoting literary dialogue between French and English-speaking communities. Her efforts help to bridge cultural divides and introduce readers to diverse perspectives through literature. Lara Vergnaud is a prominent figure in the field of literary translation, with *People Like Them* being a testament to her expertise and dedication to her craft.

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF *PEOPLE LIKE THEM*

Samira Sedira's novel *People Like Them* (French title: *Des gens comme eux*) is a compelling, tension-filled exploration of class, race, and the dark undercurrents of a seemingly tranquil French village. The story, inspired by a real-life crime, delves into the lives of two families, unraveling the complexities of human nature, societal prejudices, and the catastrophic consequences of envy and resentment. This essay aims to provide a detailed summary of the novel, highlighting key

themes, character developments, and the narrative structure that makes it a gripping psychological thriller.

The novel begins with the discovery of a horrifying crime in the remote village of Carmac. A family of five, the Langlois, is found brutally murdered in their home. The community is in shock, and the novel backtracks to explore the events leading up to this tragedy. The story is narrated from the perspective of Anna Guillot, whose husband, Constant Guillot, becomes the prime suspect in the murders.

The Guillots are an ordinary working-class couple struggling to make ends meet. Constant is a former factory worker, while Anna is a part-time cleaner. They live a modest life, marked by financial hardships and unfulfilled dreams. The arrival of the Langlois family in the village disrupts the status quo. Bakary Langlois, a wealthy black man of Senegalese descent, moves into a luxurious house with his French wife, Sylvia, and their three children.

The Langlois family represents everything the Guillots are not. They are affluent, cosmopolitan, and seemingly perfect. Bakary's success and charm make him a figure of fascination and envy in the village. Sylvia, with her elegance and sophistication, adds to the aura of the Langlois family. Their presence stirs a mixture of admiration, jealousy, and racial tension among the villagers.

The novel employs a dual timeline, juxtaposing the present investigation with flashbacks of past events. This structure allows readers to piece together the mystery gradually, creating a suspenseful and immersive experience. Thematically, "People Like Them" tackles issues of class disparity, racism, and the human capacity for violence.

Class tension is a central theme, as the economic gap between the Guillots and the Langlois exacerbates existing frustrations. Constant's sense of inadequacy and failure is amplified by Bakary's success. The stark contrast in their lifestyles becomes a source of internal conflict for Constant, leading to a deep-seated resentment.

Racism also plays a significant role in the narrative. The Langlois family faces subtle and overt discrimination from the villagers. Bakary's race and success challenge the preconceived notions of the predominantly white community. This underlying prejudice adds another layer of complexity to the already strained social dynamics.

Constant Guillot's character is intricately developed, showcasing the transformation of a seemingly benign individual into a person capable of

committing heinous acts. Initially, Constant appears as a sympathetic figure, burdened by life's disappointments. However, as the story progresses, his darker traits come to the forefront. His envy towards Bakary morphs into an irrational hatred, driven by both economic envy and racial bias.

Anna Guillot serves as a contrasting character. Her narrative voice provides a more grounded perspective, capturing the emotional turmoil and moral ambiguity of their situation. Anna's reflections on their life and Constant's actions offer insight into the complexities of human behavior, emphasizing the thin line between love and complicity.

The climax of the novel is both shocking and inevitable. The buildup of tension and resentment culminates in the brutal murder of the Langlois family. Constant's actions are portrayed as the tragic outcome of his festering insecurities and societal pressures. The resolution, however, is not straightforward. The narrative leaves readers grappling with questions about justice, culpability, and the potential for redemption.

The investigation reveals the depths of Constant's resentment and the irrationality of his actions. Anna's struggle to reconcile her love for her husband with the horror of his crime adds a poignant dimension to the story. The novel concludes on a somber note, reflecting on the irrevocable consequences of unchecked hatred and prejudice.