

# EGYPT REVOLTS

Tahrir Square on January 25, 2012. Gigi Ibrahim from Cairo, Egypt via Wikimedia Commons



In *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, Elliot follows the protesters in Cairo and wants to join them. These protests involved millions of people from across the country. A diverse collation of interests including Islamic, liberal, anti-capitalist, labor, nationalist, and feminist elements demanded the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak who had led the country for three decades. They also insisted on an end to emergency law

and a voice for the people in the government. Their grievances focused on police brutality, state-of-emergency laws, lack of free elections and speech, corruption, poverty, and high food prices.

On January 25, 2011, Egyptians gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square, calling it a "day of rage," protesting against authoritarian rule. In the following days, the crowd grew and a large security force moved in beating and arresting protesters, using rubber bullets and tear gas. Three protesters were killed - among the first of what become nearly 900 dead in clashes during the uprising. Opposition groups

continued to call for a "million man march" and a general labor strike. The demonstrations eventually resulted in the resignation of President Mubarak on February 11 and the protests turned into celebrations.

While the future looks promising for democracy in Egypt at the end of our play, the country has faced ongoing protests and political instability, including a cathedral bombing as this playbill went to print.

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For a more detailed look at the protests and additional background materials, check out [www.CuriousTheatre.org/happiest-song-plays-last/](http://www.CuriousTheatre.org/happiest-song-plays-last/)