



The Arabian Nights: A Companion (Tauris Parke Paperbacks)

By Robert Irwin



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The Arabian Nights: A Companion guides the reader into this celebrated labyrinth of storytelling. It traces the development of the stories from prehistoric India and Pharaonic Egypt to modern times. It explores the history of the translation, and explains the ways in which its contents have been added to, plagiarized and imitated. Above all, the book uses the stories as a guide to the social history and the counterculture of the medieval Near East and the world of the storyteller, the snake charmer, the burglar, the sorcerer, the drug addict, the treasure hunter and the adulterer.

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The Arabian Nights: A Companion (Tauris Parke Paperbacks) By Robert Irwin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #165801 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2004-01-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.87" h x 1.04" w x 5.17" l, .75 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 344 pages



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In this learned and exotic companion to the Arabian Nights, Irwin, a novelist and the author of *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* (Southern Illinois Univ. Pr., 1986), provides a history of its origins, translations, and textual editors; a treatment of the various literary approaches to the text (structuralist, folklorist, etc.); and insight into the work as social history. Irwin has, admittedly, concentrated on the "seedy and bizarre" aspects of the tales, asserting that the Arabic world of criminals, sorcerers, drug-takers, and adulterers is far less known than the edifying world of miracle-working holy men and sages. Though the Arab world long viewed the Nights as folk literature, in the West it has continued to exert enormous influence on diverse writers, giving way, only in the 20th century, to its rival genres, science fiction and fantasy. Irwin's soundly researched and provocative work is highly recommended for academics and interested readers of Arabic social history and literature.

Marie L. Lally, Alabama Sch. of Mathematics & Science, Mobile

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From Kirkus Reviews

Matching *The Arabian Nights'* scope and enchantment with erudition and wit, Irwin (*The Arabian Nightmare*, 1987) explores its elusive kingdom of stories, delving into the vast work's textual genesis, cultural history, and literary legacy. The most influential book in the Western canon that does not actually belong to it, *The Arabian Nights* never enjoyed the same literary status in the East, and its origins have been made only murkier by its reception in Europe. Irwin begins with the translators who popularized the Nights and, along the way, bowdlerized and warped it, or even inserted their own episodes. Most famously, Aladdin, who has no Arabic version predating his appearance in 18th-century France, may well have been the creation of translator Antoine Galland, not of Scheherazade. Irwin wryly glosses these early translations, which distortedly mirror the original Eastern exoticism with the reflections of their age's prejudices and their translators' personal eccentricities (notably the lexical, racial, and sexual obsessions of the Victorian adventurer Sir Richard Burton). The earlier Arabic compilations are no more reliable, however--Irwin devotes a separate chapter to forerunners (conjectural or lost) over several centuries, from India to Persia and Egypt. In a quixotic effort to amass 1,001 actual tales, these medieval compilers would incorporate local legends and real settings, sometimes approaching souk storytellers as sources. Throughout, Irwin's scholarly acumen illuminates these myriad worlds of the Nights, whether the cityscapes of the Mamelukes, the urban rogues' gallery of thieves and bazaar magicians, or the marvels of jinn and clockwork birds. The longest chapter is a selected roster of its literary heirs, from nursery fables and gothic novels through Proust, Joyce, and Borges, to contemporaries like Salman Rushdie and John Barth. An enchanting dragoman and chaperon for sleepless nights with Scheherazade. -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

... an enthralling cascade of the arcane and the exotic.--Peter Kemp, *Sunday Times*

... story after story, wonder upon wonder. This monumental, infinitely faceted gem should be every writer's bedtime sampler.--Michael Moorcock, *New Statesman & Society*

*A generous and erudite book...We're in the company of someone who loves *The Arabian Nights*, and who

has generously shared that love with us through this companion.*--Michele Roberts, *Independent on Sunday*

*Matching *The Arabian Nights'* scope and enchantment with erudition and wit, Irwin explores its elusive kingdom of stories, delving into the vast work's textual genesis, cultural history, and literary legacy.*--*Kirkus*

Reviews on 1994 Edition

Superlative...just the sort of relaxed, informative book that Edmund Wilson might have written had he grown interested in the Middle East and its early literature.--Michael Dirda, *Washington Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Glass:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book could be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the publication untitled *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Tauris Parke Paperbacks) can be great book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Robert Qualls:

Precisely why? Because this *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Tauris Parke Paperbacks) is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will distress you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such awesome way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book have got such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I had been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Latonya Sams:

The book untitled *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Tauris Parke Paperbacks) contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains your ex idea with easy means. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read that. The book was authored by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of time of literary works. You can read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book inside anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice study.

Everette Murray:

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