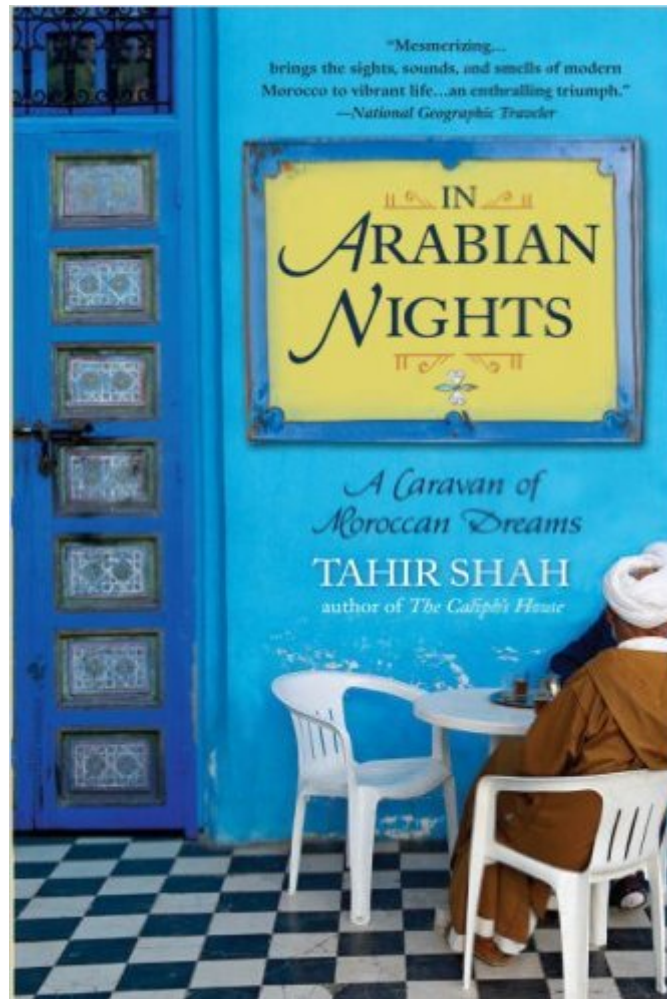


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# In Arabian Nights: A Caravan Of Moroccan Dreams



## Synopsis

Named one of Time magazine's Ten Best Books of the Year, Tahir Shah's *The Caliph's House* was hailed by critics and compared to such travel classics as *A Year in Provence* and *Under the Tuscan Sun*. Now Shah takes us deeper into the real Casablanca to uncover mysteries hidden for centuries from Western eyes. In this entertaining jewel of a book, Tahir Shah sets off across Morocco on a bold new adventure worthy of the mythical Arabian Nights. As he wends his way through the labyrinthine medinas of Fez and Marrakech, traverses the Sahara sands, and samples the hospitality of ordinary Moroccans, Tahir collects a dazzling treasury of traditional wisdom stories, gleaned from the heritage of *A Thousand and One Nights*, which open the doors to layers of culture most visitors hardly realize exist. From master masons who labor only at night to Sufi wise men who write for soap operas, *In Arabian Nights* takes us on an unforgettable, offbeat, and utterly enchanted journey.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Upon finishing the book two nights ago, and closing it with satisfaction, I was not quite sure what happened to me. All I knew is that the very next morning, I opened the book again. I am reading it over, because I want to make sure I did NOT MISS A SINGLE WORD! If such a thing is possible, Tahir Shah has written a book even better than his previous ones (all of which are spectacular). 'In Arabian Nights' bursts with incidents, observations, and stories that will make you weep or laugh out loud. It is an account of his ongoing adventures in Morocco, complete with jinns, cobblers, "number one fans", blind storytellers, and much more, all written from the point of view of a very humble yet

powerfully perceptive observer. The writer's style of writing makes one feel the book is alive, reaching out to you. When I was done with this book, I didn't feel I had read a book at all, but had been connected to something breathing, living, and changing, and drawing me in. This book is more than a book. It is never explicitly stated in so many words, but this book is an invitation. An invitation to what, you ask? That question can be answered only if you read it for yourself.

Tahir Shah has done it again -- only better! Without sacrificing any of his usual madcap humor, he seeks out and illustrates for readers the qualities he finds most valuable in his adopted Moroccan homeland. He draws crucial distinctions between Islam and the counterfeit version fabricated by terrorists. Anyone interested in Morocco, Islam, Sufi teaching stories, or just some good laughs needs to read this riveting book.

K.F. Zuzulo is the author of *A Genie in the House of Saud: Zubis Rises!* I thoroughly enjoyed Tahir Shah's previous book *The Caliph's House* and had anxiously awaited *In Arabian Nights*. I was not disappointed. Shah captures the Middle Eastern psyche and landscape and conveys both in lush and lyrical narrative. The starting point of his own harrowing captivity in a Pakistani torture cell layers another journey of contrasts on experiences that include such mystical figures as the djinn. In this case, who is worse? Shah's jailers or unseen cultural icons? This is a book that succeeds and enraptures on many levels. Captivating and enlightening!

The late Idries Shah, a masterful storyteller and Tahir Shah's father, left us a most impressive corpus of literature on the subject of sufism: dozens of collections of teaching stories, commentaries, expositions of sufism, histories, traditional question and answer passages, Nasrudin tales and travel literature. All of this was carefully designed as a comprehensive introduction to sufism. I greatly enjoyed Tahir Shah's 'the Caliph's House' for its fastinating details and delightfully interwoven storylines, but with 'In Arabian Nights' there is even more. I can really feel that the torch has been passed from father to son - and most successfully at that. 'In Arabian Nights' is one of those books you will want to keep by your bedside...

This book is wonderful. It's a reminder of what can be shared among friends, family, and strangers through the power of story telling. I especially enjoyed sharing in Tahir's journey toward listening to his heart, and what it might really mean to give someone the shirt off your back. There's no cheaply earned laughs in this book-- it inspires one to find stories that are truly worthy of our children. It's an

awesome book.

On the edge of the desert a woman took *In Arabian Nights* from my hands. She smiled, 'Yes, I'm reading it.' She held it to her chest, the pages locked within her grip. 'It was recommended to me; a great read.' She turned away. In retrospect, if I'd known how good it was I might have considered fighting her for it... *In Arabian Nights* is one of the few books I've read where the thought 'I must reread this', ran as constant background noise in my head. This is a story about stories. It is a story about story tellers. And it is a story about the healing and wisdom that stories bring. At its simplest, this is a story about author, Tahir Shah. Shah was born in Afghanistan to Indian/Afghan parents. His father was Idries Shah a world renowned author and storyteller. Tahir grew up in England until moving to Casablanca in 2003, a move that inspired his critically acclaimed book, *The Caliph's House*. In 2005, whilst filming a documentary in Pakistan, he and his film crew were arrested as suspected terrorists. After sixteen days of interrogation they were released. His incarceration is at the heart of this book. It haunts his dreams and drives him to find answers in the cryptic and seemingly simple tales that underpin Moroccan culture. It is also a story about Morocco; about the people who work for and with him, the people who entertain and inspire. It wends its way through their superstitions and their passions, and the lessons that they seek to impart. And it is a collection of the stories that are told and retold in Moroccan coffee houses and offices, in the medinas and workshops. Shah draws from those he meets a collection of stories that have been passed down through generations. For him, storytellers are not merely entertainers, but also custodians of a wisdom and knowledge that stretches through time. This is a beautiful book; one that makes you want to go out and find the story that is living in your own heart.

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