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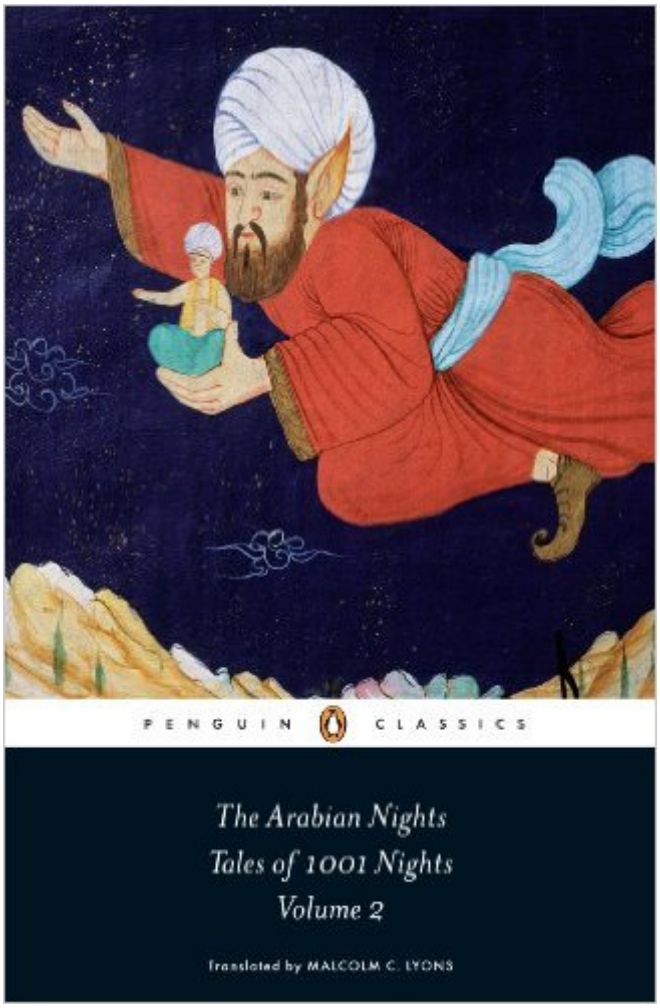
The Arabian Nights: Tales Of 1,001 Nights: Volume 2 (Penguin Classics)



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Synopsis

Every night for three years the vengeful King Shahriyar sleeps with a different virgin, executing her next morning. To end this brutal pattern and to save her own life, the vizier's daughter, Shahrazad, begins to tell the king tales of adventure, love, riches and wonder - tales of mystical lands peopled with princes and hunchbacks, the Angel of Death and magical spirits, tales of the voyages of Sindbad, of Ali Baba's outwitting a band of forty thieves and of jinnis trapped in rings and in lamps. The sequence of stories will last 1,001 nights.For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700Â titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust theÂ series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-dateÂ translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 800 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; 1 edition (May 25, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780140449396

ISBN-13: 978-0140449396

ASIN: 0140449396

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.6 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #106,686 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Middle Eastern #1141 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales #3282 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics

Customer Reviews

I feel that I am having one of the great reading experiences of my life with this new translation of THE ARABIAN NIGHTS. Volume I was mind-blowing with its kaleidoscopic variety and Volume II is even more so. There is more variation in both story structure and subject matter. One of the more interestingly structured stories tells of a king's concubine who tries to seduce the king's son. When he rebuffs her, she goes to his father and accuses him of trying to seduce her and demands that he

be beheaded. The king is set to do it, but then a vizier comes forth and tells a story about the wiles of women and why the king should not believe her. The king decides against executing his son. Then the next day the disappointed concubine returns begging the king to reconsider, and tells a story to illustrate the wiles of men which convinces the king to kill his son. Then a second vizier steps forward and tells a story about the wiles of women and the king changes his mind again. And so it goes through seven viziers until the king is saved at the last minute from making a terrible mistake. Many of the stories in this volume deal with con artists and tricksters. Some of them made me really uncomfortable when it looked as though injustice would prevail. Not all the stories have happy endings. (Dalila the Trickster, who is the vilest con artist in the book, just made me angry!) This volume is even sexier than the first volume and in places gets fairly graphic, with jokes about penis size and egg white used as a substitute for another substance. As in volume I, the women tend to be lusty and the men moon over unattainable beauties. One lusty woman has a secret love affair with a bear! Both lesbianism and male homosexuality are depicted.

This is volume two of an excellent translation by Malcolm Lyons of the full thousand-and-one-night Arabic manuscript, compiled in Egypt and known in the West as the Macnaghten edition or Calcutta II. All three volumes have introductory essays by Robert Irwin, author of _The Arabian Nights - A Companion_ (also a very interesting and accessible must-have for readers of the _Arabian Nights_). Irwin’s volume two essay provides an entertaining and informative overview of the literary history of the _Arabian Nights_, and its succinct ten pages would be useful, for instance, in a high school or college course on this classic frame story. Volume two includes nights 295 to 719. Fans of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s 1974 film version, "Il fiore delle mille e una notte," will find in volume two a text version of his movie’s frame story in the form of "’Ali Shar and Zumurrud" (Pasolini does not use the story of Shahrazad as his frame, and changes the name and character of ’Ali to an unsophisticated boy, Nureddin, whom Zumurrud must "educate.") The first two nested tales of the movie, read to Nureddin by Zumurrud, also can be found in written form in volume two as "Harun al-Rashid and the Lady Zubaida in the pool," and "Abu Nuwas and the three boys." (Scholars of Swahili literature will find several Abu Nuwas stories in volume two, as well the written version of Steere’s 1869 "Hekaya ya Mohammadi Mtepetevu" from _Swahili Tales As Told By Natives of Zanzibar_. In volume two, it is "Abu Muhammad the sluggard," from nights 299 to 305.) The stories of "The slave girl Tawaddud," "Sindbad the sailor" (including an alternate ending), "The City of Brass," and "Dalila the wily" are also in volume two.

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