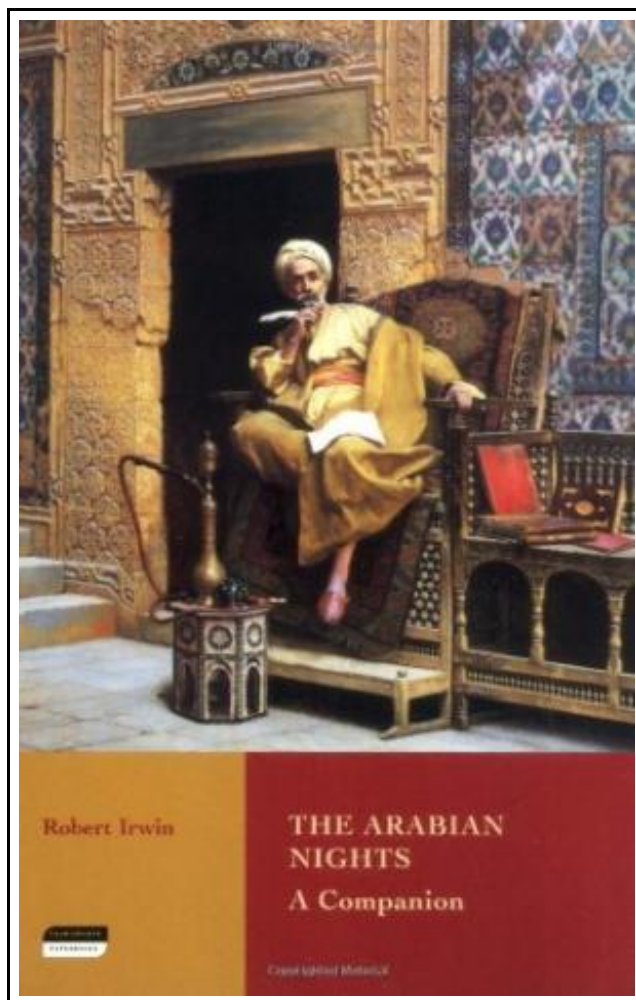


## The Arabian Nights: A Companion



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## THE ARABIAN NIGHTS: A COMPANION



I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Arabian Nights: A Companion, Robert Irwin, "The Arabian Nights" has become a synonym for the fabulous and the exotic. Every child is familiar with the stories of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba. Yet very few people, even specialists in oriental literature, have a clear idea of when the book was written or what exactly it is. Far from being a batch of stories for children, "The Arabian Nights" contains hundreds of narratives of all kinds - fables, epics, erotica, debates, fairy tales, political allegories, mystical anecdotes and comedies. It is a labyrinth of stories within stories. Widely held in contempt in the Middle East for its frivolity and occasional obscenity, the work has nevertheless had a major influence on European and American culture, to the extent that the story collection must be considered as a key work in Western literature. A full understanding of the writings of Voltaire, Dickens, Melville, Proust and Borges, or indeed of the origins of science fiction, is impossible without some familiarity with the stories of the "Nights". This companion aims to guide the reader into this labyrinth of storytelling. It traces the development of the stories from prehistoric India and Pharaonic Egypt to modern times, and explores the history of translation and imitation. Above all, it uses the stories as a guide to the social history and counter-culture 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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