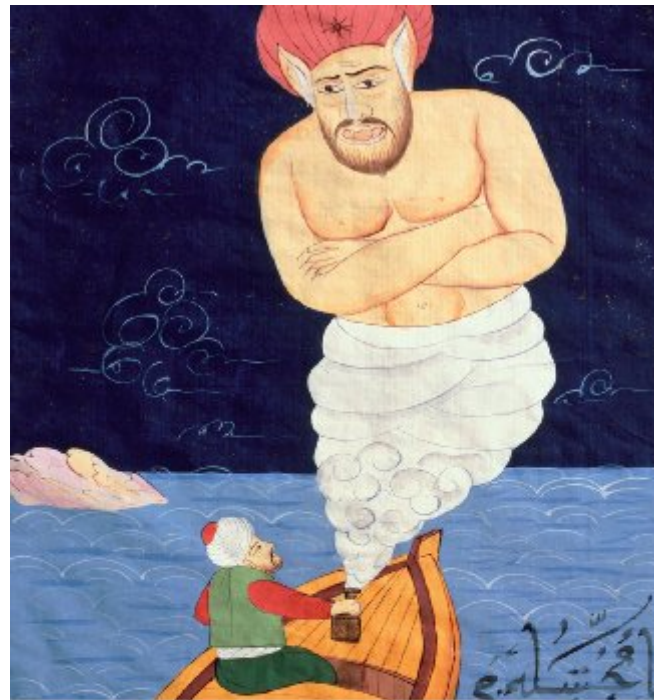


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The Arabian Nights: Tales Of 1,001 Nights: Volume 3 (The Arabian Nights Or Tales From 1001 Nights)



PENGUIN CLASSICS

The Arabian Nights
Tales of 1001 Nights
Volume 3

Translated by MALCOLM C. LYONS



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.

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Customer Reviews

I've been reading this translation off-and-on since late 2010. It has been a magnificent reading experience. Certainly there are formulaic elements in THE ARABIAN NIGHTS. The characters tend toward the stereotypical: there's the handsome naïf ve but perseverant hero, the beautiful princess, the wily vizier, the temperamental sultan, and the wicked magician. Things seem to happen in threes. Certain situations become commonplace: Any net cast is destined to eventually haul in a cache of treasure, a talking fish, or some magical object. If there's a door and someone says, "never open that door," you can bet your life that before the story is over that door is going to

be opened. The supernatural elements are everywhere and we see alien societies of beings with super powers who can thrive underwater, or on high mountains, or in secret caves. Dickensian coincidences abound. And I came to love every bit of it the same way I loved fairy tales as a child. The language is formulaic, too. "Morning now dawned and Sharazad broke off from what she had been allowed to say" begins virtually every story. I loved "to hear is to obey, "and "they lived happily until they were visited by the destroyer of delights."The stories in this final volume seem more "literary" than those of the previous two volumes. The big difference is the abundance of poetry. The great American librettist/lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II said of writing musicals that the characters should only sing when the emotion is so big that speech alone does not suffice. That is the way verse is used this volume. Older translations usually omit these verses, which is too bad because it lifts these stories to a higher plane. The alternative is swooning. The heroes swoon quite often in these stories, sometimes to comic effect.

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