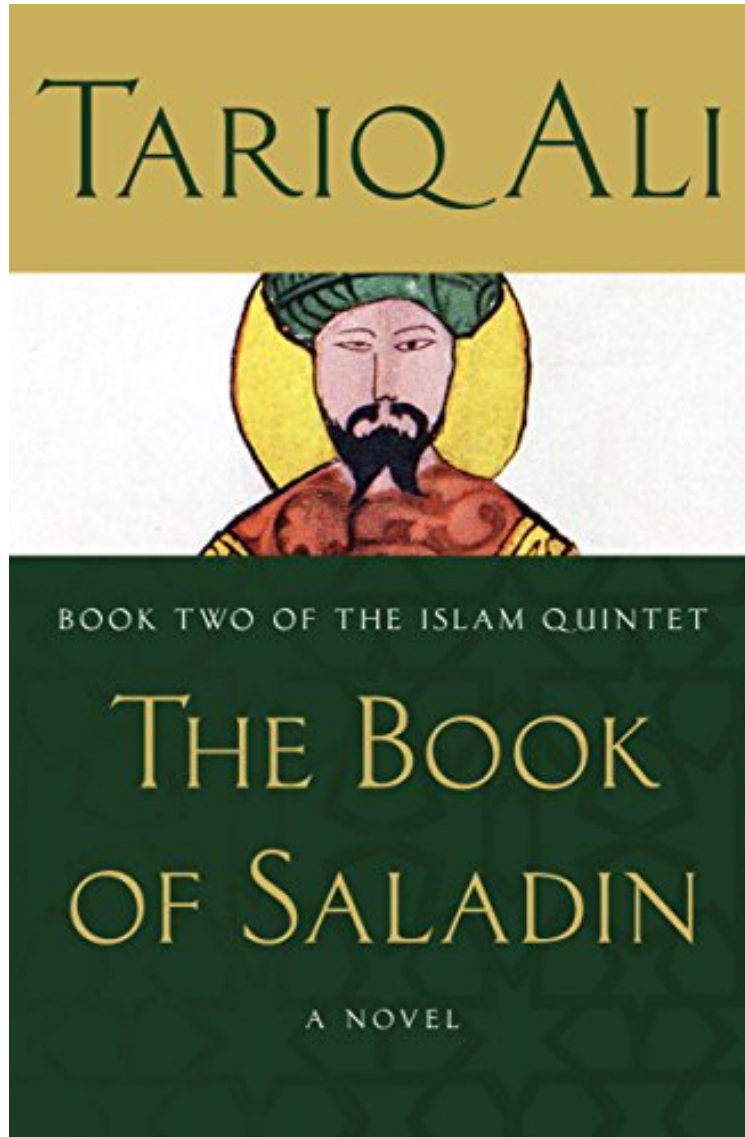


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The Book of Saladin: A Novel (The Islam Quintet)

Von Tariq Ali

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Von Tariq Ali : The Book of Saladin: A Novel (The Islam Quintet) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Book of Saladin: A Novel (The Islam Quintet):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Other Side's View of the CrusadesVon Stuart W. MirskyTaking a leaf from the Middle Eastern story teller's practice of unfolding stories within stories, this one offers a scribe's eye view of the rise to power and the career of one of history's most fascinating leaders, Salah al-din (Saladin to Westerners), the Kurdish leader who rose to be Sultan of the

Arabic world in the wake of the Crusades, becoming one of the Crusaders' most noble and notable opponents. The antagonist and, indeed, the very antithesis of the blunt and often brutal Richard the Lionhearted, that famed English Crusader, Saladin successfully pushed back the European incursions on Palestinian shores and faced down Richard and his royal cronies thereafter, concluding an honorable truce which allowed Richard to go home to England without his tail hanging too obviously between his legs. This is all told through the eyes of a medieval Jewish scribe, recruited by Saladin to write his memoirs. In the process we hear about the sexual dalliances of the harem and Saladin's court and get to see the Kurdish Sultan in his medieval Muslim milieu, besieged by the machinations of the lesser men who surround him. There is an odd abstractness to it all; this tale's not very vivid and is sometimes nearly colorless in its narrative. And there is no plot to speak of, merely the back and forth required to tell us who Saladin was and what happens after our scribe joins him. Time passes almost vaguely and we are absorbed in a series of anecdotal tales and tales within tales, a la the Arabian Nights, so that, in the end, one doesn't have a clear picture of all that may have been happening in this time and place. And yet this is a worthy antidote for those who have been surfeited with the heroism and glory of the European Crusades. The actual record shows these Europeans to have been a brutal and benighted bunch, largely put to shame by the nobility and wisdom of men like Saladin. And this book, despite its flaws, does justice to that view. For a more romanticized (but equally fair) picture of Saladin, told in far more ornate and colorful prose, you may want to check out Sir Walter Scott's *THE TALISMAN*, a tale of Saladin and Richard seen through early nineteenth century literary lenses. A completely made-up story, but nicely told. Still Mr. Ali's version is worth reading for its own sake. And to honor the memory of a great leader who has been given less good press than he deserved here in the West.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Corrective Lenses for Watching the "Peace Process" Von Fulano Mengano I enjoyed this novel greatly, even though the narrative lags at times, characters come in and out of focus, and the tone of description is all too often derivative of unreflective orientalism. So why did I enjoy it? Imagine this: a story about a Muslim-Jewish alliance to defend Jerusalem from European aggression -- an allegory of Palestine that recapitulates the essential imperialist dynamic of the Crusader history but from the point of view of those who have had to suffer under it. The value of this novel lies in the way it inverts the false dichotomies of our times -- like the one that separates Arab Muslim from Arab Jew -- in order to envision how Palestine would appear if its indigenous inhabitants had had a say in its rule. It's a sad comment on our times that Ali had to go back so far in history to find such a time -- but nevertheless, his farsightedness allows us to see beyond the horizon of the present, tragic moment of Palestinian history. Yes, the representation of Saladin is romantic -- but in light of the current capitulation of Jerusalem to the 20th century's version of crusader aggression, one ought to be excused for occasionally dreaming of Salah al-Din.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A historical novel of Saladin, the reconqueror of Jerusalem Von Ein Kunde Saladin, a Kurd by birth, led the Muslim reconquest of Jerusalem from the Crusaders. Tariq Ali tells the story of the reconquest from the Muslim side. His narrator is Ibn Yakub, a Jew and friend of Ibn Maimum (Maimonides). Intertwined with the history is much court intrigue, including sexual intrigue reflecting divers appetites. Interesting history and a good read.

Kurzbeschreibung The fictional memoirs of Saladin, the liberator of Jerusalem