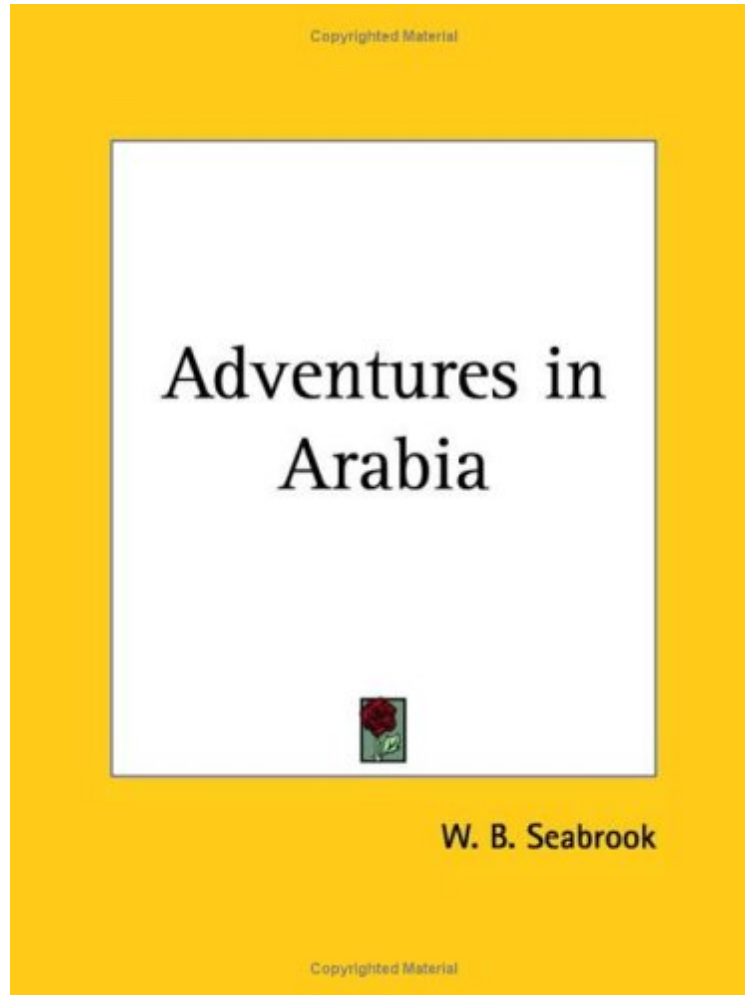


Adventures in Arabia 1927

William B. Seabrook

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William B. Seabrook : Adventures in Arabia 1927 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adventures in Arabia 1927:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Arabia 1930s By William Garrison Jr. (from a seller's review): "Adventures in Arabia" by Seabrook. In several sections: Among the Bedouins, Among the Druses, Among the Dervishes, Among the Yezidees. The Yazidi are members of a Kurdish religion with ancient Indo-Iranian roots. They are primarily a Kurdish-speaking people living in the Mosul region of northern Iraq, with additional communities in Transcaucasia, Armenia, Turkey, and Syria in decline since the 1890s - their members emigrating to Europe, especially to Germany. Their religion, Yazidism, is a branch of Yazdnism, and is seen as a highly syncretic complex of local Kurdish beliefs and Islamic Sufi doctrine introduced to the area by Sheikh Adi ibn Musafir in the 12th century. The Yazidi believe in God as creator of the world, which he placed under the care of seven holy beings or

angels, the chief of whom is Melek Taus, the Peacock Angel. Seabrook was interested in them because of their reputation as devil worshippers. Actually, the reality is a little more complex. In 1915 Seabrook joined the French Army and served in World War I. He was gassed at Verdun in 1916, and was later awarded the Croix de Guerre. The following year he took up the post of reporter for The New York Times, and soon became an itinerant. Besides his books, Seabrook had articles published in popular magazines including *Cosmopolitan*, *Reader's Digest* and *Vanity Fair*.

Cannibalism: Seabrook went on a trip to West Africa, living with a tribe known as the Guere. He asked the chief what human meat tasted like, but the chief couldn't describe it to Seabrook's satisfaction. Later, Seabrook had the opportunity to try it himself, getting a portion of stew with rice as well as a "sizeable rump steak, also a small loin roast to cook or have cooked" however he wanted. The source, Seabrook stated, was a recently killed man, but he was not murdered. He reported that, "It was like good, fully developed veal, not young, but not yet beef. It was very definitely like that, and it was not like any other meat I had ever tasted. It was so nearly like good, fully developed veal that I think no person with a palate of ordinary, normal sensitiveness could distinguish it from veal. It was mild, good meat with no other sharply defined or highly characteristic taste such as for instance, goat, high game, and pork have. The steak was slightly tougher than prime veal, a little stringy, but not too tough or stringy to be agreeably edible. The roast, from which I cut and ate a central slice, was tender, and in color, texture, smell as well as taste, strengthened my certainty that of all the meats we habitually know, veal is the one meat to which this meat is accurately comparable."

Later life: Around 1920, English occultist Aleister Crowley spent a week with Seabrook at Seabrook's farm. Seabrook went on to write a story based on the experience, and to recount the experiment in *Witchcraft: Its Power in the World Today*. In 1924, he travelled to Arabia and sampled the hospitality of various tribes of Bedouin and the Kurdish Yazidi. His account of his travels, *Adventures in Arabia: among the Bedouins, Druses, Whirling Dervishes and Yezidee Devil Worshipers* was published in 1927; it was sufficiently successful to allow him to travel to Haiti, where he developed an interest in voodoo and the *Culte des Morts* which were described at length in his book *The Magic Island*. Although Seabrook had a lifelong fascination with the occult practices of satanism and voodoo, as he saw firsthand both in third-world countries (documented in his books *The Magic Island* (1929), and *Jungle Ways* (1930)) as well as in London, Paris, and New York, he later concluded that he had seen nothing that did not have rational scientific explanation, a theory that he detailed in *Witchcraft: Its Power in the World Today* (1940). In December 1933, Seabrook was committed at his own request and with the help of some of his friends to Bloomingdale, a mental institution in Westchester County, near New York City for treatment for acute alcoholism. He remained a patient of the institution until the following July and in 1935 published an account of his experience, written as if it were no more than another expedition to a foreign locale. The book, *Asylum*, became another best-seller. In the preface, he was careful to state that his books were not "fiction or embroidery." He married Marjorie Muir Worthington in France in 1935, after they had returned from a trip to Africa, in which Seabrook was researching a book. Due to his alcoholism and sadist practices they divorced in 1941. She later wrote a biography: *The Strange World of Willie Seabrook*, which was published in 1966. **Death:** He committed suicide on September 20, 1945 in Rhinebeck, New York, by drug overdose.

1927. Among the Bedouins, Druses, Whirling Dervishes and Yezidee devil worshippers. When a man goes wandering into outlandish places, he usually has a reason. At any rate, reasonable people feel that he should have one. Therefore, Mr. Seabrook found it necessary and proper to explain why he went to Arabia in the preface to the work, while telling the tale of his travels in the chapters that follow. Illustrated.

About the AuthorA born adventurer, W. B. Seabrook did not allow his first few attempts to see Arabia to be his only ones. Later in life, while married, this Westerner entered the family bosoms of Arabian society.