

[PDF] The Orientalist: Solving The Mystery Of A Strange And Dangerous Life

Tom Reiss - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Orientalist: Solving the

Author: Tom Reiss

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Description:

From Reiss persistently peeled away layers of fact and fiction to recount a remarkable life. He was also lucky: his subject's elusiveness made ferreting out truth difficult, but Reiss discovered six of Nussimbaum's notebooks in the possession of his last editor. Critics agree that *The Orientalist* fascinates from both a biographical and cultural perspective—it's rich in exotic settings and characters, from an Austrian baroness to a former Hollywood starlet. Despite its charm, the book has some faults. Reiss seems to have included every piece of information he encountered, from historical anecdotes to ornate set pieces. Some factual errors, the book's brisk pace, and the lack of maps may confuse readers. Still, *The Orientalist* is excellent look into the reinvention of self during one of history's most turbulent times.

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From Lev Nussimbaum fabricated a life that in its brief arc encompassed the whole of the Western and Near Eastern culture of his time. A Jew from the Caucasus, born in the first throes of the Russian Revolution, he styled himself a Muslim prince. As Kurban Said, he wrote a best-selling novel that made him the toast of Nazi Germany. Inventing and reinventing himself, he left a confused and perplexing trail. Reiss pursues two great narratives, one recounting Nussimbaum's life itself, the other following the author's quest to ferret from among myths and outright lies the truth of this man's life. Along the way, readers absorb much about oil-rich Azerbaijan, the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism, and the centuries-old clashes of cultures and religions in the Caucasus and Middle East. Digressions abound because of Nussimbaum's intricate, multicultural encounters. In the hands of a less adept writer, such complex history might grow opaque and tedious, but Reiss' storytelling flair and the utterly compelling character of Lev Nussimbaum turn this biography into a page-turner of epic proportion. *Mark Knoblauch*

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