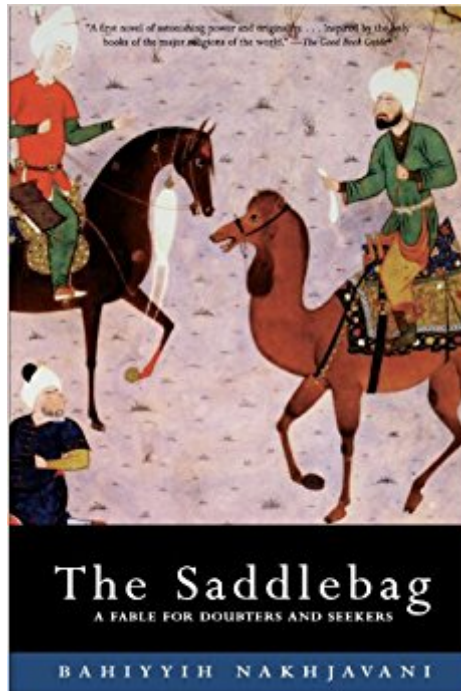


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The Saddlebag: A Fable For Doubters And Seekers (Bluestreak)



Synopsis

A beautifully told, transcendent tale of truth, salvation, and the power of desire.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

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Customer Reviews

Nakhjavani's robust debut is a Chaucerian rondo . . . [with a style] familiar from . . . early Salman Rushdie. â James Urquhart, The London Times

Bahiyih Nakhjavani is a Persian writer who has written for documentary film, and lectures internationally on the arts and the Baha'i faith.

I enjoyed this book immensely! The author did a wonderful job describing the times and mental states of the characters. Coming from a western background, the perspective of the different characters was interesting and enjoyable. I especially enjoyed the Corpse. A different type of read, There are many thought provoking scenes and much to reflect on if you go deeper into the story. I highly recommend the book.

Beautifully written - this is one of my favorite books. The depth of characters, story and meaning grab the reader. I found myself crying feeling for every character written. I will be reading this again - and I don't say that often.

Beautiful, lyrical, a remarkable surprise. The book engages you fully in an amazing adventure! For anyone who enjoys and respects excellent writing - this is it!

The Saddlebag is inspired by a brief episode described in "The Dawn-Breakers," (a much-loved early narrative of the early years of the Baha'i Faith). I love books that cover the theme of "seeking" or "searching for oneself/life's meaning". This book reminds me of 2 other favorite of mine - The Alchemist and Siddhartha

Other websites describe "The Saddlebag - A Fable for Doubters and Seekers" as an "international bestseller." Apparently this book was a hidden bestseller in the U.S (and more is the pity). I spent a mesmerized weekend trying not to read the "The Saddlebag" too quickly, a thing I uniformly fail to do when enthused by a great writer. Author Bahiyyih Nakhjavani has lent a gifted, informed imagination to the question a reader of Babi/Baha'i history might ask: What of the saddlebag?"The Saddlebag," is inspired by a brief episode described in "The Dawn-Breakers," (a much-loved early narrative of the formative years of the Babi/Baha'i Faith), The Saddlebag's story takes place along the Mecca - Medina pilgrim route in the year 1844/1845 (1260 A.H.). A saddlebag is stolen from a young Shirazi Siyyid by a Bedouin thief as The Siyyid engages in prayer beside a well-shrine. The young Siyyid of the story is destined to become known to history as The Bab (Arabic for "The Gate"), Prophet-Herald of the Baha'i Faith. As the stolen Saddlebag passes hand to hand, its contents unleash a profound, seemingly inexplicable effect on the lives of nine persons traveling an ill-fated caravan; a Thief, a Bride, the Chieftain, a Moneychanger, Slave, Pilgrim, a Priest, Dervish and even a Corpse. The characters, portrayed in separate chapters, have strong reactions to the contents of the Saddlebag. Each character is wonderfully nuanced, especially, The Corpse in the last chapter. The story of the Corpse reads like a tour de force as Ms. Nakhjavani's shows us an ascendant soul is seen struggling with sudden transcendence. (Pure genius!) As related in book of The Dawn Breakers, ("Nabil's Narrative"), The Bab, having quietly disclosed His Station as Promised Qaim, left Shiraz for the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) attended by Mubarak, His servant and Quddus, legendary Babi hero. The tale of the Saddlebag is contemplation of a brief incident related in Chapter VII of The Dawn-Breakers: "One day, when The Bab had dismounted close to a well in order to offer His morning prayer, a roving Bedouin suddenly appeared on the horizon, drew near to Him, and, snatching the saddlebag that had been lying on the ground beside Him, and which contained His writings and papers, vanished into the unknown desert. His Ethiopian servant set out

to pursue him, but was prevented by his Master, who, as He was praying, motioned to him with His hand to give up his pursuit."Had I allowed you," the Bab later on affectionately assured him, "you would surely have overtaken and punished him. But this was not to be. The papers and writings which that bag contained are destined to reach, through the instrumentality of this Arab, such places as we could never have succeeded in attaining. Grieve not, therefore, at his action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty."Empty of gold or gems, the Treasure of the Saddlebag is the revelatory Writings of The Bab. After the first two chapters (Thief and Bride), the remaining characters of the book are unaware of the link between their experiences. I highly recommend this masterwork, full of enchantment from a by-gone place and time. Those who revere The Bab cannot fail to be moved by the tantalizing cameos of heroic figures from Baha'i history seen from a distance. I eagerly await new work from Ms. Nakhjavani's pen.

Most have never read a book anything like this one. Not long into it, had to research difference between Persia and Iran, and what the basis of Zoroastrianism is. Beautifully written, not to be speed read, each character introduced gets an in depth analysis. Really enjoyed this book, and will read others by Ms. Nakhjavani.

This is one of my two most loved books. After reading all my life and at my age that means something, at least to me.

While this book has received many great reviews (e.g. London Times), how it has not received more literary acclaim or popular attention is beyond me. I read a lot. A lot of books from a lot of authors from a lot of eras from a lot of traditions in a lot of genres, and this is one of the most beautifully written books I've ever read - perhaps the most beautiful. While more crassly put that I might have stated it, an earlier reviewer has it right, this is a gem in a sea of otherwise unremarkable literature. An heir to the best of Ondaatje, Rushdie, McCarthy. I fear this sounds like unmerited hyperbole - read the book if you think so. This is what great literature should be like. Simply astonishing.

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