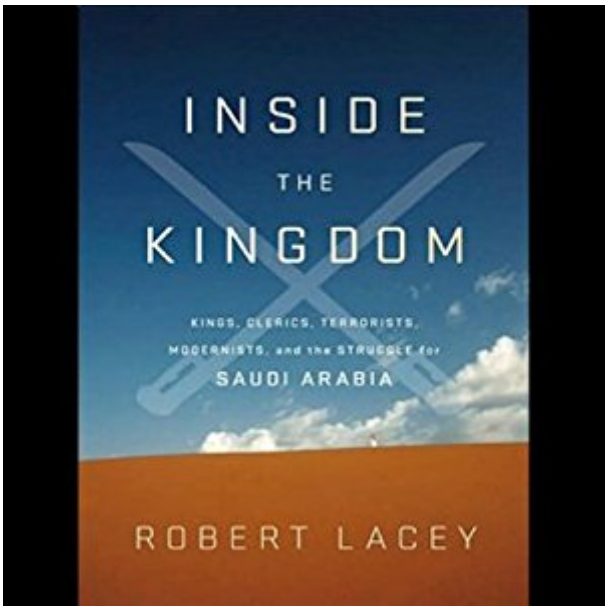
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Inside The Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, And The Struggle For Saudi Arabia



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Synopsis

"It’s all here-Islam, the family tree, a sea of oil and money to match, palace intrigue...This is high drama and an epic tale." -Tom Brokaw Though Saudi Arabia sits on one of the richest oil deposits in the world, it also produced fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers. In this immensely important book, journalist Robert Lacey draws on years of access to every circle of Saudi society giving readers the fullest portrait yet of a land straddling the worlds of medievalism and modernity. Moving from the bloody seizure of Mecca’s Grand Mosque in 1979, through the Persian Gulf War, to the delicate U.S.-Saudi relations in a post 9/11 world, Inside the Kingdom brings recent history to vivid life and offers a powerful story of a country learning how not to be at war with itself. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

My wife and I read The Year 1,000 by this (British I think) author, and loved it, so we looked for more of his works. Lacey writes with a straightforward, clear and entertaining style. This is a right-down-the-middle history of Saudi Arabia, with great details about the rise of Sunni jihad terrorism, Wahhabism, Al Qaeda and Bin Laden. It explores the struggle between Islamic fundamentalists and modernists in Saudi Arabia. This is neither a conservative nor a liberal book; Lacey says both positive and negative things about George Bush when he feels it is called for. He has lived in the Kingdom for many years, and obviously has an affection for the Saudis--but not all of them, and his views are not blinded by that. This is an essential book for understanding both the Middle East and the terrorist threat we are dealing with. I highly recommend it. Inshallah you will

read it.Robert A. HallAuthor: "The Coming Collapse of the American Republic."

Lacey has produced a very interesting history of Saudi Arabia (and by extend the House of Saud) from circa 1979 to 2009. He has managed to balance a chronological history of events in those tumultuous 30 years whilst also exploring themes such as the appeasement of religious in the wake of the 1979 storming of the Grand Mosque, modernisation, interaction with the West and the status of the minority Shia community.Whilst Lacey has included some small amount of social commentary, ie a brief discussion of same sex lesbian relationships, rape, the social repression of Saudi society the book is very much in the Great Man school of history so dont buy this book if your looking for a man on the street view of Saudi society. Otherwise it is excellent.I dont know if Lacey will live long enough to produce a trilogy but it is also worth mentioning that this book will be interesting to pick up in 20 years to see if some of the factors Lacey identifies have come to fruition. For example he talks about King Abdullah taking a strategic decision to seek other allies to the United States in 2004 in the wake of the invasion of Iraq. It will be interesting to see how this develops over the decades ahead and how prescient Lacey has been on this score and others.

Excellent and comprehensive coverage of everything going on in Saudi Arabia politically, socially, and economically. I read it after reading the 2003 version of Complete Idiot’s Guide to Understanding Saudi Arabia. I look forward to reading Lacey’s earlier book.You won’t find a more comprehensive book on Saudi Arabia from the beginning to the present.

Reading Samuel Huntington’s clash of civilization leads one to believe that the world is divided into civilizational blocks that would operate in tandem to achieve its geopolitical objectives with. This book deals with a significant if not the main player from the Islamic block of countries and it does well to shed light on the internal machinations that manifest in the seemingly hard exterior that is projected. Saudi Arabia is an anachronism and a wonder at the same time, though what the reader realizes is that this is largely due to a fragile balance of oil revenues and a marriage between a religious strain and tribal politics.The Saud’s descend from Muhammad bin Saud who in the mid 18th century aligned with Muhammad al-Wahhab to create a religious-warrior nexus which provided the movement considerable impetus in conquering substantial territories beyond its traditional settlement in Riyadh. It wasn’t until the ascendence of Ibn Saud that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was formed. A crucial alignment with the British and the discovery of oil ensured that the Kingdom had a good foundation to operate off.The book itself has two sections largely due to the fact that

much of it seems to be revised, and that seems to be the fundamental flaw in the narrative. The period pre-9/11 is covered beautifully- the siege of Mecca which gave the religious wing an upper hand, the Shia Intifada in the East, the alignments in the Gulf war. Its only 9/11 and post 9/11 that the author does not seem to be able to control what needs to be in the book and the latter quarter of the book reads like a hagiography of King Abdullah.Saudi Arabia is anachronistic in its social and democratic credentials- loads of money, but limited freedom to protest and significant restrictions on women (there are some interesting poignant anecdotes to back these in the book), what the book achieves is shed light on how the canny House of Saud has managed to balance the powers and yet manage the contradictions of modernity and traditional values. This is a must read for anyone seeking to understand the Kingdom

If you're like me, you have a general sense that Saudi Arabia is a significant player in the politics and religion that shape the Middle East and current events. This book gave me a better sense of who these people are, how they think, and how they tend to view the world. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend.

This is a well written and thorough history of the Saudi kingdom and the royal family. The reader gets a full picture of Saudi domestic politics as well as the personalities of the various family members. This book enables the reader to understand why the Saudis act, react or refuse on an international level. The events of 9/11, the Gulf Wars, other Arab states, the Palestinians, and the Saudi relationship with the west, particularly America, are highlighted. King Abdullah is now 89 years old. It is worth reading this book knowing that Saudi Arabia will continue to be a powerful influence in that part of the world.

Very informative! This book deserves more attention than it has received. Well written!

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