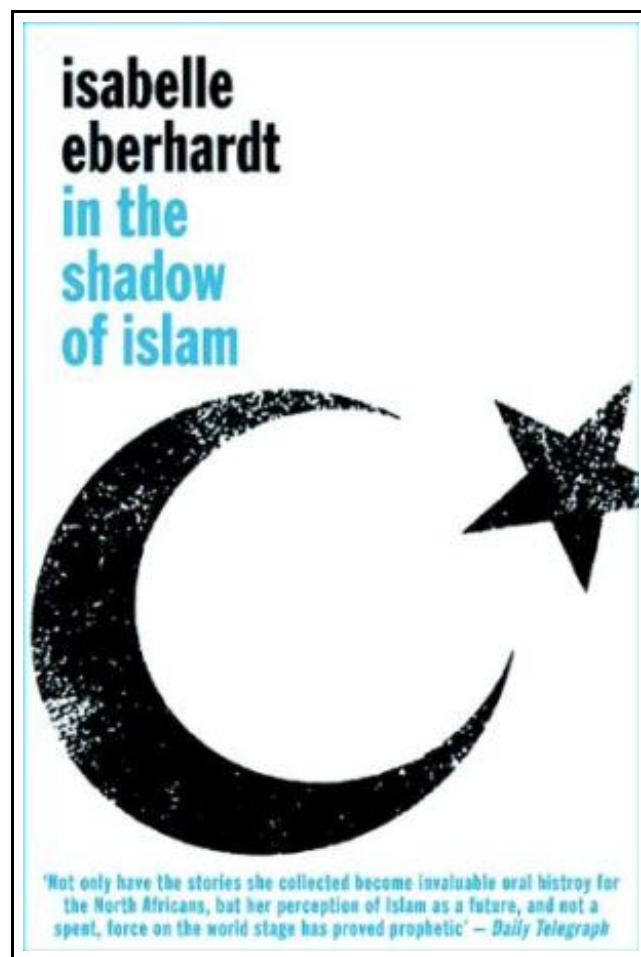


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## IN THE SHADOW OF ISLAM

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Peter Owen. 1 Paperback(s), 2013. soft. Book Condition: New. The daughter of a Russian anarchist and a runaway mother living in Geneva, Isabelle Eberhardt (18771904) read the Quran as a child and became fluent in Arabic. She also began to dress as a boy to enjoy the greater freedom this allowed her, and at the age of 20 left her already unconventional life in Switzerland for the Moroccan frontier, where she converted to Islam and fully adopted a male persona. Her lyrical and evocative memoir, published after her tragic death in a flood at the age of 27, follows her vagabond life through the desert, transcending boundaries of geography and convention to follow her interior pilgrimage: "For me it seems that by advancing into unknown territories I enter into my life." A compelling narrative and an ideal starting point from which to discover more about Isabelle Eberhardt's picaresque life. "Times Literary Supplement" Eberhardt says her male persona (which Arabs respected, even when they saw through it) allows her to travel without attracting notice, but in a low moment she notes that she attracts disapproval. Near the Algeria-Morocco border, she muses with some pleasure that nobody knows precisely where the boundary is, yet soon (in one of the few hints at the region's volatility) she trades her Moroccan attire for Algerian to avoid annoying residents. When individuals and settings attract her eye she describes them vividly and concisely, whether she is passing a madman reciting verses from the Koran or taking tea with male students at a mosque. Her observations on the play of light and color over the desert are made with an artist's eye, and her musings on travel and isolation reveal a pensive side. This slim volume makes a welcome addition to the information available on an extraordinary woman. "Kirkus Reviews 120.

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