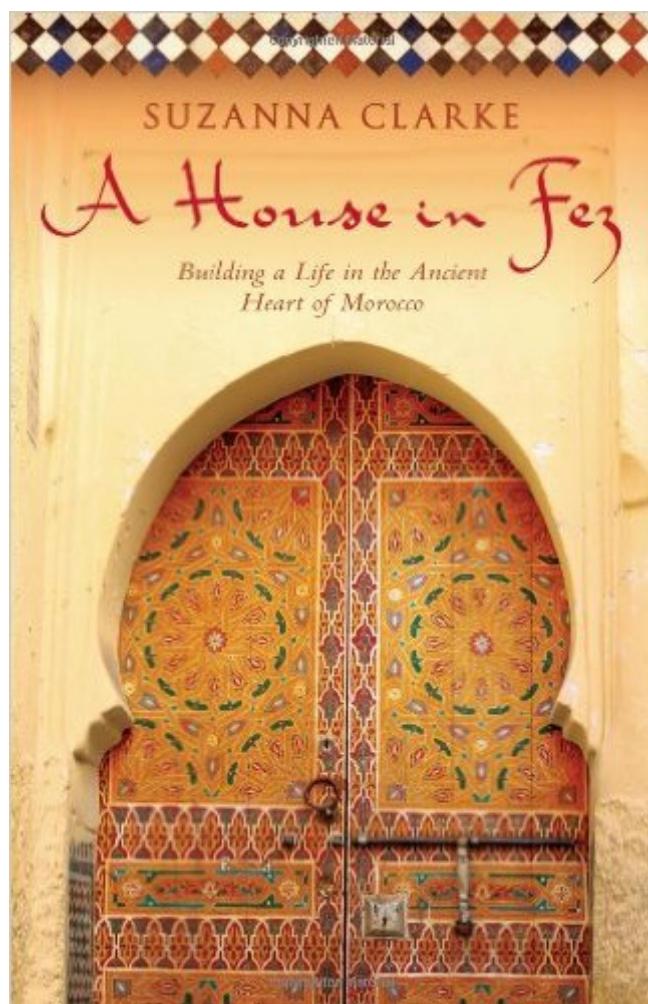


The book was found

A House In Fez: Building A Life In The Ancient Heart Of Morocco



Synopsis

The Medina -- the Old City -- of Fez is the best-preserved, medieval walled city in the world. Inside this vibrant Moroccan community, internet cafes and mobile phones coexist with a maze of donkey-trod alleyways, thousand-year-old sewer systems, and Arab-style houses, gorgeous with intricate, if often shabby, mosaic work. While vacationing in Morocco, Suzanna Clarke and her husband, Sandy, are inspired to buy a dilapidated, centuries-old riad in Fez with the aim of restoring it to its original splendor, using only traditional craftsmen and handmade materials. So begins a remarkable adventure that is bewildering, at times hilarious, and ultimately immensely rewarding. A House in Fez chronicles their meticulous restoration, but it is also a journey into Moroccan customs and lore and a window into the lives of its people as friendships blossom. When the riad is finally returned to its former glory, Suzanna finds she has not just restored an old house, but also her soul.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an enthralling book about a double adventure-- the adventure of an Australian couple (both journalists) in buying and rebuilding a house in the Medina of Fez and, at the same time, the story of their encounter with a radically different culture, their struggles with adversity and dealing with other values and customs, and their growth as human beings who are enriched by the relations they establish in Fez. Evidently, the construction angle of the book is detailed and vast, but that is not only a relevant part that highlights the intricacy and charm of the book, but also the thread that leads to the text's opening horizon on Moroccan culture and people, including the changes in the writer's perception of this ancient North African culture. The way that the author interlaces the story of their

joys and vicissitudes in rebuilding this lovely house in the Medina of Fez, even while attempting to hire and manage builders, carpenters, architects, an engineer to oversee the work, bureaucrats, and a translator, among other personages, while not speaking Arabic but only a bit of French, is fascinating. The author's adept interweaving of these stories with the history of Morocco, and of Moroccan architecture and culture, is masterfully executed. In addition, the collaborators (workers) who reconstructed the house come to life in the book as a "tranche de vie" of contemporary Morocco that makes the reader wish to get to know them better, as well as the culture that the author manages to describe so well. This is not only a voyage from Australia to Fez, Morocco; it's also a voyage in time, to a civilization that functions in a different way, where human beings depend on one another in manners that our Western vision has obliterated.

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