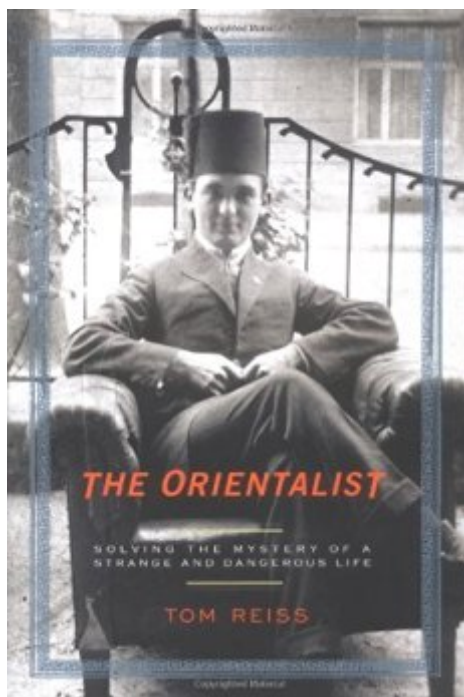


The book was found

# The Orientalist: Solving The Mystery Of A Strange And Dangerous Life



## Synopsis

Part history, part cultural biography, and part literary mystery, *The Orientalist* traces the life of Lev Nussimbaum, a Jew who transformed himself into a Muslim prince and became a best-selling author in Nazi Germany. Born in 1905 to a wealthy family in the oil-boom city of Baku, at the edge of the czarist empire, Lev escaped the Russian Revolution in a camel caravan. He found refuge in Germany, where, writing under the names Essad Bey and Kurban Said, his remarkable books about Islam, desert adventures, and global revolution, became celebrated across fascist Europe. His enduring masterpiece, *Ali and Nino* “a story of love across ethnic and religious boundaries, published on the eve of the Holocaust” is still in print today. But Lev’s life grew wilder than his wildest stories. He married an international heiress who had no idea of his true identity until she divorced him in a tabloid scandal. His closest friend in New York, George Sylvester Viereck “also a friend of both Freud’s and Einstein’s” was arrested as the leading Nazi agent in the United States. Lev was invited to be Mussolini’s official biographer until the Fascists discovered his true identity. Under house arrest in the Amalfi cliff town of Positano, Lev wrote his last book “discovered in a half a dozen notebooks never before read by anyone” helped by a mysterious half-German salon hostess, an Algerian weapons-smuggler, and the poet Ezra Pound. Tom Reiss spent five years tracking down secret police records, love letters, diaries, and the deathbed notebooks. Beginning with a yearlong investigation for *The New Yorker*, he pursued Lev’s story across ten countries and found himself caught up in encounters as dramatic and surreal, and sometimes as heartbreaking, as his subject’s life. Reiss’s quest for the truth buffets him from one weird character to the next: from the last heir of the Ottoman throne to a rock opera-composing baroness in an Austrian castle, to an aging starlet in a Hollywood bungalow full of cats and turtles. As he tracks down the pieces of Lev Nussimbaum’s deliberately obscured life, Reiss discovers a series of shadowy worlds “of European pan-Islamists, nihilist assassins, anti-Nazi book smugglers, Baku oil barons, Jewish Orientalists” that have also been forgotten. The result is a thoroughly unexpected picture of the twentieth century “of the origins of our ideas about race and religious self-definition, and of the roots of modern fanaticism and terrorism. Written with grace and infused with wonder, *The Orientalist* is an astonishing book. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

File Size: 629 KB

Print Length: 464 pages

Publisher: Random House; 1st edition (February 15, 2005)

Publication Date: February 15, 2005

Sold by: Random House LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B000FCJZ5Y

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #164 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #1 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Germany #1 in Books > History > Europe > Germany #1 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Modern (16th-21st Centuries) > 20th Century

## Customer Reviews

Fantastic in both senses of the word, this biography of Kurban Said--or should I say Essad Bey or Lev Nussimbaum?-is impossible to put down. The book's subtitle is "Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life," but fortunately much of the subject's life remains tantalizingly unexplained. Author Tom Riess does a masterly job following Lev's trail, but how nice it is to know that even with the marvels of the internet, the hard work of a very dedicated writer, and the discovery of deathbed papers, so many details of a life lived completely in the 20th century and in the spotlight on several continents can remain a mystery. So who is this book about? As Kurban Said, he was perhaps the author of "Ali and Nino," the story of love between a Muslim boy and a Christian girl set in the central Asian city of Baku just before the Russian Revolution. It has never been out of print since its publication in the 1930s and remains very popular in any number of languages. As Essad Bey he was the author of biographies of Stalin and Nicholas II and a book on the Azerbaijani oil industry. He was invited to be Mussolini's official biographer. His socialite wife claimed not to know who he really was, and their divorce made the tabloids. As Lev Nussimbaum he spent his life fleeing one hideous revolution after another, but still managed to die of natural causes. You couldn't make this stuff up. Riess is a fluid, vivid writer who captures the mystery, excitement, and plain oddness of this subject's life. He places Lev's story (he calls his subject Lev) brilliantly within its historic context, and his depiction of the Russian revolution in central Asia is terrific.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life Madame Butterfly and a Japanese Nightingale: Two Orientalist Texts The Greetings from Somewhere Collection: Mysteries Around the World: The Mystery of the Gold Coin; The Mystery of the Mosaic; The Mystery of the Stolen Painting; The Mystery in the Forbidden City Dangerous Deception (Dangerous Creatures) Robert Young Pelton's The World's Most Dangerous Places: 5th Edition (Robert Young Pelton the World's Most Dangerous Places) Strange Days, Dangerous Nights: Photos from the Speed Graphic Era Clinical Problem Solving in Orthodontics and Paediatric Dentistry, 2e (Clinical Problem Solving in Dentistry) Clinical Problem Solving in Periodontology and Implantology, 1e (Clinical Problem Solving in Dentistry) Why Can't I Get Better?: Solving the Mystery of Lyme and Chronic Disease The 5,000-Year-Old Puzzle: Solving a Mystery of Ancient Egypt The Babylon Code: Solving the Bible's Greatest End-Times Mystery Solving the Mystery of Breast Pain Who Killed Change?: Solving the Mystery of Leading People Through Change 2010 Special Report: China Life & Non-Life - Market Review. China: A Dangerous Wind or An Opportunity? A.M. Best's Perspective Terry the Tramp: The Life and Dangerous Times of a One Percenter The Mystery of the Shemitah: The 3,000-Year-Old Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future, the World's Future, and Your Future! The Mystery of Shemitah: The 3,000-Year-Old Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future, the World's Future, and Your Future The Mystery of the Shemitah With DVD: The 3,000-Year-Old Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future, the World's Future, and Your Future! Purity Principle: God's Safeguards for Life's Dangerous Trails The Purity Principle: God's Safeguards for Life's Dangerous Trails (LifeChange Books)

[Dmca](#)