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The Lost Oases

A. M. Hassanein Bey

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The Lost Oases A. M. Hassanein Bey
Despite their dangerous appeal, there are a few desolate places in the world that call to a man, daring him to return to their deadly beauty again and again. The world's last unexplored desert held such an allure for the remarkable author of this book. At the dawning of the 20th century the vast desert of Libya remained one of last unexplored places on Earth. Because travel was restricted by the distance camels could trek between wells, vast portions of the Libyan interior were still blank spots on the map. Enter Sir Ahmed Mohammed Hassanein, the dashing Egyptian diplomat turned explorer. Having befriended the Muslim leaders of the elusive Senussi Brotherhood who controlled the deserts further on, Hassanein became aware of rumours of a "lost oasis" which lay even deeper in the desert. In 1923 the explorer led a small caravan on a remarkable seven month journey across the centre of Libya. More than two thousand gruelling miles later he emerged with marvellous tales of having not only located the "lost" oasis of Uweinat, but having also discovered a cave which contained ten-thousand-year-old drawings. Attributed to djinns, these Paleolithic images depicted a flourishing, but now extinct, pastoral world inhabited by giraffes, ostriches, gazelles, even cows, but no camels. Yet the most startling image depicted human beings swimming in what had become a forbidding desert. Amply illustrated with photographs taken by the author, this is a timeless account of a hazardous journey across the great sand sea.

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