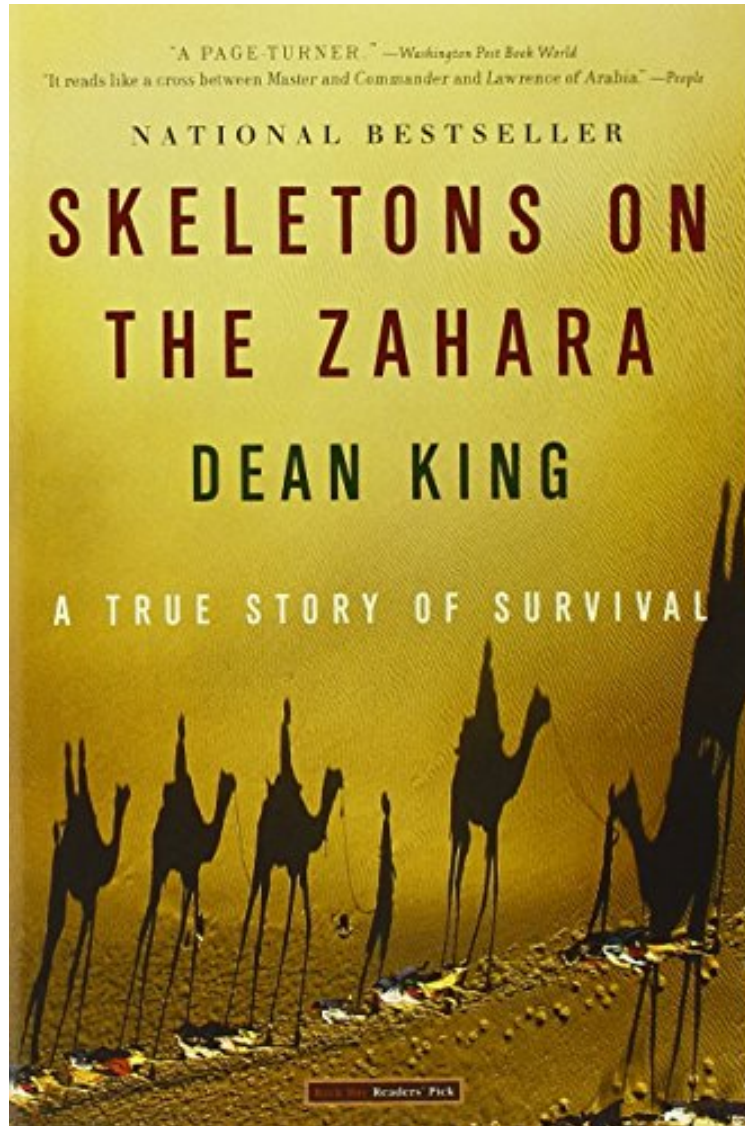


[Free pdf] Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival

Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival

Dean King

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#59312 in Books Dean King 2005-04-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x 1.00 x 5.50l, .75 #File Name: 0316159352384 pages Skeletons on the Zahara A True Story of Survival | File size: 33.Mb

Dean King : Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Intense By B. Smith Fascinating but also depressing. Merchant sailors are shipwrecked off the coast of West Africa and are enslaved by desert bedouins living in the Sahara. The ordeal of the sailors is unimaginable. You can get fascinating insights about the desert, bedouin life, and white slavery, which we don't hear a lot about. But there are no chuckles in this book. It is intense. 1 of 1 people found the following

review helpful. MesmerizingBy SerenaHorrrifying and Amazing! I couldn't stop reading it It's amazing what people can survive and that they can continue to hope despite the impossible odds against them. I like the way the author, Dean King, compares James Riley's story with the memoir written by Archibald Robbins. Yes, I agree with the person who said it is hard to follow the maps on the Kindle. Kindle books still have a lot of improving to do. But, I still found it to be a fantastic book! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Shocking and good bookBy readsalotLife as a near death experience beyond belief but very real. This story has been told and read many times through the generations. Abraham Lincoln mentioned the effect that it had on him.

A masterpiece of historical adventure, *Skeletons on the Zahara* chronicles the true story of twelve American sailors who were shipwrecked off the coast of Africa in 1815, captured by desert nomads, sold into slavery, and subjected to a hellish two-month journey through the perilous heart of the Sahara. The western Sahara is a baking hot and desolate place, home only to nomads and their camels, and to locusts, snails and thorny scrub--and its barren and ever-changing coastline has baffled sailors for centuries. In August 1815, the US brig *Commerce* was dashed against Cape Bojador and lost, although through bravery and quick thinking the ship's captain, James Riley, managed to lead all of his crew to safety. What followed was an extraordinary and desperate battle for survival in the face of human hostility, starvation, dehydration, death and despair. Captured, robbed and enslaved, the sailors were dragged and driven through the desert by their new owners, who neither spoke their language nor cared for their plight. Reduced to drinking urine, flayed by the sun, crippled by walking miles across burning stones and sand and losing over half of their body weights, the sailors struggled to hold onto both their humanity and their sanity. To reach safety, they would have to overcome not only the desert but also the greed and anger of those who would keep them in captivity. From the cold waters of the Atlantic to the searing Saharan sands, from the heart of the desert to the heart of man, *Skeletons on the Zahara* is a spectacular odyssey through the extremes and a gripping account of courage, brotherhood, and survival.

.com Some stories are so enthralling they deserve to be retold generation after generation. The wreck in 1815 of the Connecticut merchant ship, *Commerce*, and the subsequent ordeal of its crew in the Sahara Desert, is one such story. With *Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival*, Dean King refreshes the popular nineteenth-century narrative once read and admired by Henry David Thoreau, James Fenimore Cooper, and Abraham Lincoln. King's version, which actually draws from two separate first person accounts of the *Commerce*'s crew, offers a page-turning blend of science, history, and classic adventure. The book begins with a seeming false start: tracing the lives of two merchants from North Africa, Seid and Sidi Hamet, who lose their fortunes and almost their lives when their massive camel caravan arrives at a desiccated oasis. King then jumps to the voyage of the *Commerce* under Captain Riley and his 11-man crew. After stops in New Orleans and Gibraltar, the ship falls off course en route to the Canary Islands and ultimately wrecks at the infamous Cape Bojador. After the men survive the first predations of the nomads on the shore, they meander along the coast looking for a way inland as their supplies dwindle. They subsist for days by drinking their own urine. Eventually, to their horror, they discover that they have come aground on the edge of the Sahara Desert. They submit themselves, with hopes of getting food and water, as slaves to the Oulad Bou Sbaa. After days of abuse, they are bought by Hamet, who, after his own experiences with his failed caravan (described at the novel's opening), sympathizes with the plight of the crew. Together, they set off on a hellish journey across the desert to collect a bounty for Hamet in Swarah. King embellishes this compelling narrative throughout with scientific and historical material explaining the origins of the camel, the market for English and American slaves, and the stages of dehydration. He also humanizes the Sahrawi with background on the tribes and on the lives of Hamet and Seid. This material, doled out in sufficient amounts to enrich the story without derailing it makes *Skeletons on the Zahara* a perfectly entertaining bit of history that feels like a guilty pleasure. --Patrick O'Kelley From Publishers Weekly When the American cargo ship *Commerce* ran aground on the northwestern shores of Africa in 1815 along with its crew of 12 Connecticut-based sailors, the misfortunes that befell them came fast and hard, from enslavement to reality-bending bouts of dehydration. King's aggressively researched account of the crew's once-famous ordeal reads like historical fiction, with unbelievable stories of the seamen's endurance of heat stroke, starvation and cruelty by their Saharan slavers. King (Patrick O'Brian: *A Life Revealed*), who went to Africa and, on camel and foot, retraced parts of the sailors' journey, succeeds brilliantly at making the now familiar landscape seem as imposing and new as it must have been to the sailors. Every dromedary step thuds out from the pages with its punishing awkwardness, and each drop of brackish found water reprieves and tortures with its perpetual insufficiency. King's leisurely prose style rounds out the drama with well-parceled-out bits of context, such as the haggling barter culture of the Saharan nomadic Arabs and the geological history of Western Africa's coastline. *Zahara* (King's use of older and/or phonetic spellings helps evoke the foreignness of the time and place) impresses with its pacing, thoroughness and empathy for the plight of a dozen sailors heaved smack-hard into an unknown tribalism. By the time the surviving crew members make it back to their side of civilization, reader and protagonist alike are challenged by new ways of understanding culture clash, slavery and the place of Islam in the social fabric of desert-dwelling peoples. Maps, illus. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist This shipwreck-and-survival saga

occurred in 1815 in the wind-tortured territory of the modern Western Sahara and was promptly written down by American brigantine captain James Riley. So popular it appeared in six different editions, Riley's account is revived here with the benefit of author King's journey to retrace, in part, the 800-mile desert trek of Riley and his shipwrecked crew. King provides animated descriptions of the desert environment while covering the events Riley related, which included being sold into slavery. The dramatic incidents are supported with relevant details, such as the way the body reacts to dehydration and sun poisoning. Perhaps the story's most intriguing element is the mutual understanding that developed between Riley and his eventual master, Sidi Hamet. A debt Hamet owed to his father-in-law propels the entire drama, as Hamet spirits his slaves through lands of scimitar-swinging brigands for ransoming to a Western consul. This is both a forcefully visceral and culturally astute account. Gilbert TaylorCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved