



## Classical Arabic Stories: An Anthology

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Short fiction was an immensely popular art in the medieval and premodern Arab world, providing the perfect vehicle for transmitting the tenets of classical Islam. Reading these texts today illuminates the wide spectrum of early Arab life and suggests the influences and innovations that flourished so vibrantly in medieval Arab society.

The only resource of its kind, Salma Khadra Jayyusi's *Classical Arabic Stories* chooses from an impressive corpus, including excerpts from six seminal works: Ibn Tufail's novel, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*; Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalila wa Dimna*; *The Misers of al-Jahiz*; The Brethren of Purity's *The Protest of Animals Against Man*; *Al-Maqamat* (The Assemblies), and the epic romance, *Sayf Bin Dhi Yazan*. Jayyusi organizes her anthology thematically, beginning with a presentation of pre-Islamic tales, the stories of rulers and other notables, and thrilling narratives of danger and warfare. She follows with tales of religion, comedy, the strange and the supernatural, and love. Long assumed to be the lesser achievement in comparison to Arabic literature's most celebrated genre—poetry—classical Arabic fiction, under Jayyusi's careful eye, finally receives its proper debut, demonstrating its unparalleled contribution to the evolution of medieval literature and its sophisticated representation of Arabic culture and life.

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