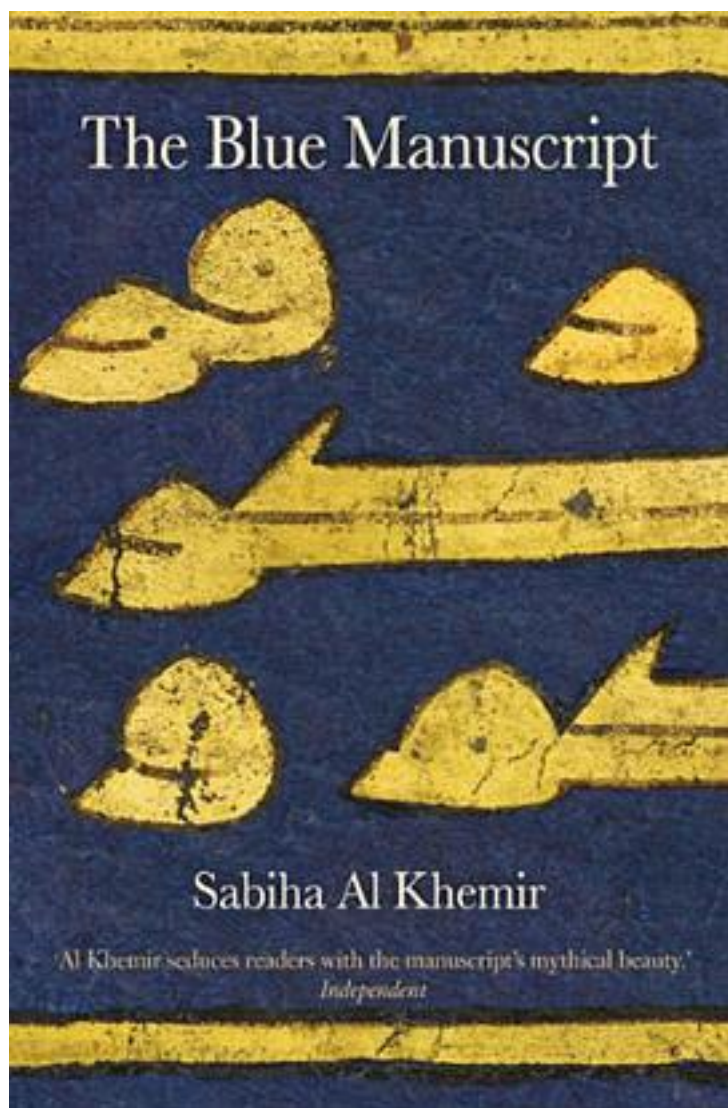


The Blue Manuscript



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出版者:

出版时间:2009-9

装帧:

isbn:9781844674176

The Blue Manuscript is the ultimate prize for any collector of Islamic treasures. But does it still exist, and if so, can it be found? In search of answers to these questions, an assortment of archaeologists heads for a remote area of Egypt, where they work with local villagers to excavate a promising site. But as social and cultural preconceptions amongst both visitors and hosts start to unravel, the mystery seems only to deepen and darken - What do the fables of the village storyteller mean for the westerners, and can their emotional equilibrium and scholarly integrity survive exposure to the realities of the world they have studied from afar? Interspersed with the testimony of the early medieval calligrapher who created the Blue Manuscript, Sabiha Al Khemir's subtle, graceful narrative builds into a rich tapestry of human love, hope, despair, greed, fear and betrayal. Intensified at every turn by the uneasy relationship between Islam past and present, and between Islam and the West, "The Blue Manuscript" is a novel which will resonate long after the astonishing solution to its mystery has finally been revealed.

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