



The Book of Khalid (Neversink)

Ameen Rihani

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This long-awaited re-publication of the first Arab-American novel—inspiration for Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*—deals with Arab/American relations, religious conflict and the American immigrant experience.

Told with great good humor and worldly compassion, and with illustrations by Kahlil Gibran, *The Book of Khalid* recounts the adventures of two young men, Khalid and Shakib, who leave Lebanon for the United States to seek their fortune in turn-of-the-century New York. Together, they face all the difficulties of poor immigrants—the passage by ship, admittance through Ellis Island and the rough immigrant life. Khalid, always the dreamer, tries to participate in the political and cultural life of the teeming city—to often humiliating and comic result.

Tiring of their sojourn, he convinces Shakib they should return to Lebanon. But their heads are now full of New World ideas. And Khalid, trying to improve his brethren, turns his understanding of Western thought into a call for political progress, and religious unity and tolerance in the Arab world. A call that has him, accidentally, almost founding a new religion—and almost becoming its first martyr, when his ideas incite the faithful to riot.

Playing with classical Arabic literary forms, as well as Western literary conventions, Ameen Rihani’s *The Book of Khalid* is a unique contribution to American and World literature.

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