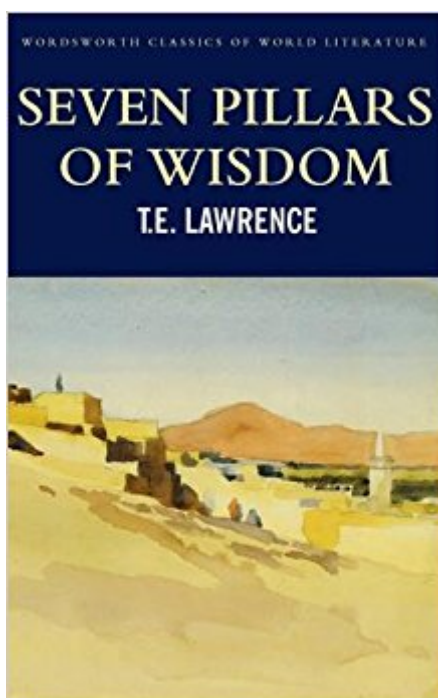


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Seven Pillars Of Wisdom (Wordsworth Classics Of World Literature)



Synopsis

As Angus Calder states in his introduction to this edition, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is one of the major statements about the fighting experience of the First World War'. Lawrence's younger brothers, Frank and Will, had been killed on the Western Front in 1915. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, written between 1919 and 1926, tells of the vastly different campaign against the Turks in the Middle East - one which encompasses gross acts of cruelty and revenge and ends in a welter of stink and corpses in the disgusting 'hospital' in Damascus. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is no 'Boys Own Paper' tale of Imperial triumph, but a complex work of high literary aspiration which stands in the tradition of Melville and Dostoevsky, and alongside the writings of Yeats, Eliot and Joyce.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the exciting and highly literate story of the real Lawrence of Arabia, as written by Lawrence himself, who helped unify Arab factions against the occupying Turkish army, circa World War I. Lawrence has a novelist's eye for detail, a poet's command of the language, an adventurer's heart, a soldier's great story, and his memory and intellect are at least as good as all those. Lawrence describes the famous guerrilla raids, and train bombings you know from the movie, but also tells of the Arab people and politics with great penetration. Moreover, he is witty, always aware of the ethical tightrope that the English walked in the Middle East and always willing to include himself in his own withering insight. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Almost a century after the first Arab spring the 1916-18 revolt against the Ottoman empire, culminating in the triumphant capture of Damascus modern Arabia is still a war zone. More than half the articles in my latest Talking Newspapers Digest are about the Middle East what better reason to listen to a new unabridged version of this monumental account of the author's leading role in that earlier historic desert campaign, which made him one of the great legendary heroes of all time. The version I reviewed five years ago was so savagely abridged, you only really got the facts, and facts weren't TE's strong suit. Seven Pillars has been called a novel travelling under the cover of autobiography. I prefer the 1930s reviewer who said 'Lawrence has a novelist's eye for detail, a poet's command of the language, an adventurer's heart, a soldier's great story and his memory and intellect are at least as good as all those.' 'The heat of Arabia came out like a drawn sword and struck us speechless.' No one captures the beauty, the cruelty and immensity of the desert and its tribes as brilliantly as Lawrence. Thanks to his extensive prewar travels in Syria and Mesopotamia, he understood their manners, their mentality, their language. He was fluent in Arabic, Greek, Turkish and Syriac as well as French, German and Latin. In native dress he could pass as a Circassian shepherd. His recruitment by British intelligence in Cairo was inevitable, likewise his subsequent mission to unite the numerous warring Arab factions against the Turks and their German allies. In 1916 he had a price of £15,000 (£1m in today's money) on his head. But when, having led the Arab camel cavalry across the Negev desert to victory at Aqaba, Lawrence on a recce in Turkish-held Deraa was randomly taken in for questioning, the Bey accepted his Circassian shepherd cover story. He was flogged and gang-raped before being thrown out normal practice. Had he been recognised, death would have been a mercy. It's a long book but there's no way that the abridged version would have inspired David Lean to such cinematic heights. Lawrence was a complex man brave, intelligent, passionate, a reluctant hero deeply troubled by his divided British/Arab loyalties. He was truly the last of the gentleman adventurers. --Sue Arnold, The Guardian

Known to most as Lawrence of Arabia, T.E. Lawrence was a passionate chronicler of Middle East military events during WWI, in which he was embedded. This book is his story. Narrator Roy McMillan conveys Lawrence's sincerity with a calm yet enthusiastic delivery, depicting a man fascinated with the world around him. Through McMillan's compassionate reading we can better understand how Lawrence found sympathy for the Arab cause of an Arab state at a time when the region was mostly tribal. Those seeking a wider understanding of the Middle East will be enlightened by Lawrence's observations of the land and its people during this pivotal development period. --AudioFile Magazine --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

A superlative intelligence shines through this book. It is a historical memoir and a deep personal meditation, by turns harsh, humane, strange and profound. Lawrence comes across as a man highly educated, determined, resourceful, sensitive, and tough; there is no false modesty about him. He also shows us, with remarkable frankness, a born outsider and a man tormented by his complicity in great power machinations in Arabia. What a read! Enough said about the original. This book has been around for nearly 100 years. The text of the Kindle edition is shabby. It appears to have been scanned from a printed text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, and it is full of words that don't belong: the word "life" almost invariably appears as "Me" ("the gift of Me" [chapter 3] looks conceited even for this author); and the name "Ali" frequently appears as "Ah", which complicates the difficulty of tracking the multitude of personal names. There are many other transcription errors to trip the reader. Also, why is the table of contents at the back of the book, where I found it only when I no longer needed it? Come on. You can do better than that!

I own the print edition of this book but there are no maps, so it has been a tough book to follow. However, I received a Kindle for Christmas and I decided to download this edition for the maps. However, to find the maps, you have to guess at the position - there is no Table Of Contents available. The content is also different from the printed edition - I think the intro chapter in each section is missing. Not a big deal for me but others might be disappointed.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom is a great book, and you should read it. BUT; the Wilder Publications version on this page (gray cover, paperback, with a painting of T.E. Lawrence in Arab regalia and with "The Complete 1922 Text" in White on a black background SHOULD BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS!!! Why? This was clearly put together by some sort of scanned image to text program that has a ton of flaws! Punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphs are all messed up - some letters are transcribed into numbers - because of this some sentences are puzzling to decipher, the publisher should be ashamed! This is especially terrible when one considers the amount of time T.E. Lawrence put into obsessing over the details while writing this book (punctuation, how paragraphs began and ended on specific pages, etc...) I'm disappointed this review will probably be lost in the sea of appropriate praise for this book and more people will probably end up disappointed with this piece of crap.

One star - only to draw attention to the OCR errors of the Kindle edition, which occur every few pages, but are often very distracting. It's an irritation among many or most of the older books

converted for the Kindle. Yet the inexpensive paperback edition by Anchor Books is quite the most lyrical and captivating book imaginable. Who's responsible for this poor conversion to Kindle? The editor, or the publisher? We can complain to a low-level, willing-but-incapable Kindle assistant but get nowhere. Has anyone considered enlisting the aid of the concerned reader? Why not use a Wikipedia-like solution: let the readers who care make the corrections under some monitored system that can not be abused.

The prose of TE Lawrence has a style and beauty all of its own, a journey back in time to an era when the Middle East was in a tribal state that had not changed in centuries. Each of the true life characters introduced by the author lives jumping out from the page surrounded by images of sky and desert a journey of adventure with an extraordinary human being one of the rare individuals of his generation. When I get to journey's end I intend to read Seven Pillars a second time as a book like this only comes along once in one's lifetime. I am 82 years of age. Peter Rothwell

If you want to read this historic tome, I urge you to choose a different edition. I'm guessing, but I believe this edition was created by scanning the text from some source and then transferring it to this one, which has caused a great deal of problems including but not limited to missing punctuation, especially missing periods and therefore run-on sentences, missing initial capital letters, missing the starts of new paragraphs, and especially miss-spellings, in particular of Arab names and place names. It was a struggle to get through it all! So, do yourself a favor and choose a different edition.

As is almost always the case, the book sheds a lot of light in a much more detailed way than the "Lawrence of Arabia" movie based on it, on how the modern map, and leaderships, of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant was created during/after WW I. Details, and insights into people, events, geography, ...etc from up-close, albeit one person's view/opinion, that probably only the very knowing of today's "experts" are aware of. One also gets a good glimpse at how a colonial power operated. I thought it was a timely reading, of such an old book, given all that has been happening in that area over the past 2-3 years, where the old designs may end up exploding at the seams. The book may have too much details for someone with a limited interest in the area. I will echo here the frustrations I saw in other reviews, of the poor quality of the kindle edition. There are a lot of typos, which on more than one occasion created some confusion as to what the author really meant to say. I don't think the low price can be an excuse. They should probably never release a book like

this at this low quality

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