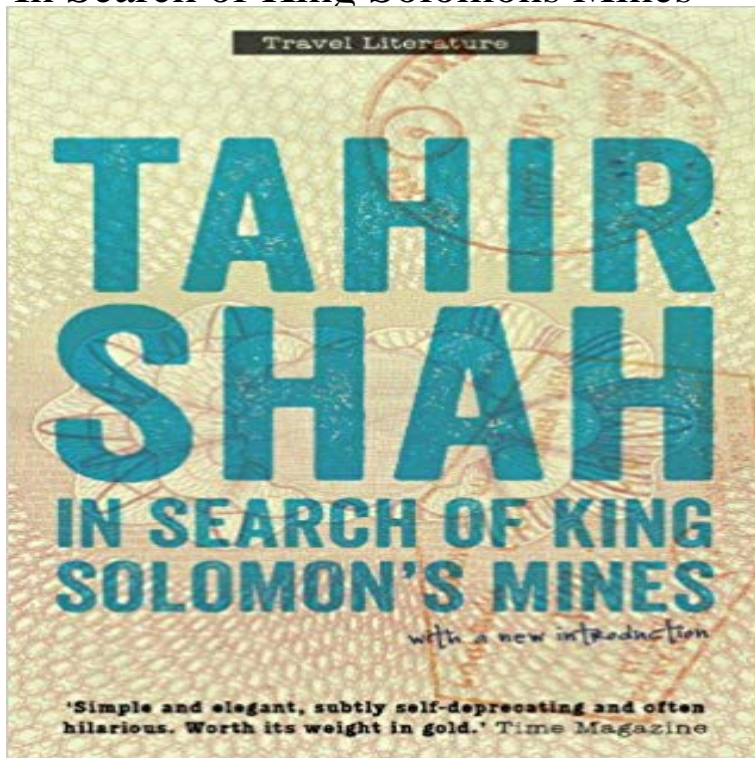


In Search of King Solomons Mines



For more than a century Henry Rider Haggards novel King Solomons Mines has inspired generations of young men to set forth in search of adventure. But long before Rider Haggards classic, explorers, theologians and scientists scoured the known world for the source of King Solomons astonishing wealth. The Bibles wisest king built a temple at Jerusalem that was said to be more fabulous than any other landmark in the ancient world. It was adorned with an abundance of gold, gleaned from a mysterious land known as Ophir. Taking his leads from a mixture of texts including The Septuagint, the earliest known form of the Bible, as well as using geological, geographical and folkloric sources, Tahir Shah sets out in search for Solomons gold mines. For him the obvious place to look is Ethiopia, in the horn of Africa. The ensuing journey takes him to a remote cliff-face monastery where the monks pull visitors up on a leather rope, to the ruined castles of Gondar, and to the rock hewn churches at Lalibela. Then in the south of the country Shah discovers a massive illegal gold mine, itself like something out of the Old Testament, with thousands of men, women and children digging with their hands. But the hardest leg of the journey is to the cursed mountain of Tullu Wallel where legend says there lies an ancient shaft, once the entrance to Solomons mines. About the Author Tahir Shah is the author of fifteen books, many of which chronicle a wide range of outlandish journeys through Africa, Asia and the Americas. For him, theres nothing so important as deciphering the hidden underbelly of the lands through which he travels. Shunning well-trodden tourist paths, he avoids celebrated landmarks, preferring instead to position himself on a busy street corner or in a dusty cafe and observe life go by. Insisting that we can all be explorers, he says theres wonderment to be found wherever we are - its just a matter

of seeing the world with fresh eyes. Shahs forthcoming novel is titled CASABLANCA BLUES. Blaine Williams is a thirty-something New Yorker with a mid-life crisis and an obsession of the movie Casablanca. His world collapsing around him, he flees to the one place he thinks he knows and understands. A fragment of security in his troubled imagination, Casablanca the genuine article reveals itself as a roller coaster ride of danger, intrigue, and true love a realm where nothing is what it seems. He recently published a collection of his entitled TRAVELS WITH MYSELF, a body of work as varied and as any, with reportage pieces as diverse as the women on Americas Death Row, to the trials and tribulations of his encounter in a Pakistani torture jail. Another recent work, IN ARABIAN NIGHTS, looks at how stories are used in cultures such as Morocco, as a matrix by which information, values and ideas are passed on from one generation to the next. That book follows on the heels of the celebrated CALIPHS HOUSE: A Year in Casablanca, lauded as one of Time Magazines Top 10 Books of the year. His other works include an epic quest through Perus cloud forest for the greatest lost city of the Incas (HOUSE OF THE TIGER KING), as well as a journey through Ethiopia in search of the source of King Solomons gold (IN SEARCH OF KING SOLOMONS MINES). Previous to that, Shah published an account of a journey through the Amazon on the trail of the Birdmen of the Amazon (TRAIL OF FEATHERS), as well as a book of his experiences in India, as a godmans pupil (SORCERERS APPRENTICE). Tahir Shahs books have appeared in thirty languages and in more than seventy editions. They are celebrated for their original viewpoint, and for combining hardship with vivid description. Tahir Shah lives at Dar Khalifa, a sprawling mansion set squarely in the middle of a Casablanca shantytown. Hes married to the graphic designer, Rachana Shah, and has two children, Ariane and Timur. His father was

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