



# **The Rock: A Tale of Seventh-Century Jerusalem (Vintage International)**

*Kanan Makiya*

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Whose rock is enshrined inside the golden Dome of Jerusalem? The rock of Moses or of Muhammad? Kanan Makiya gathers together the stories, legends, and beliefs that define the Rock—the place where Adam landed in his fall from Paradise and where Abraham attempted to sacrifice his first-born; where Solomon’s Temple stood and where Jesus preached; the rock from which Muhammad ascended to heaven—and transforms them into a narrative of novelistic depth and drama. This brilliantly imagined, historically based account of the building of the Dome of the Rock reconstructs the paths of the actual individuals whose spiritual journeys revolved around the seventh-century lore of the Rock.

The chief protagonist is Ka’b al-Ahbar, a learned Jew who accepted the prophecy of Muhammad and who accompanied the caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab during his conquest of the Holy City. The story is narrated by Ka’b’s son, Ishaq, who years later is commissioned to design the first monument of Islam, the Dome of the Rock.

As he imagines the construction of the Dome—and the complex reasons behind its creation—Makiya gives us a meditation on the common terrain of the world’s three great monotheistic religions and a remarkable investigation into what the Rock symbolizes—beyond its various stories and names, beyond even the three faiths at whose heart it sits.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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