



The Perfumed Garden

Sheikh Nefzaoui (15th century AD)

Translated by Richard Francis Burton (1820 - 1890)

Read by:	Alia Makki	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	5 hours and 37 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1137
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Genre:	Classics		

The Perfumed Garden by Sheikh Nafzaoui is a fifteenth-century Arabic sex manual and work of erotic literature. The book contains a discussion of qualities men and women should cultivate to be attractive, gives advice on sexual technique, and treats issues of sexual health, complete with remedies for sexual maladies. It lists the many names used for private parts and briefly describes the nature of sex among animals. Also included are a section on the interpretation of dreams and stories intended to give context and amusement. The reputation of the book in the Arab world was similar to that of the *Arabian Nights*.

The Perfumed Garden was introduced to the English speaking world in a 1886 translation from a French manuscript by Sir Richard Francis Burton,

who compared the work to that of Aretin, Rabelais, and the French book *Conjugal Love* by Nicolas Venette. He makes the reader aware that the book is to a degree a compendium of works from other times and places in the Middle East and India. He also comments that what makes *The Perfumed Garden* unique in the genre is “the seriousness with which the most lascivious and obscene matters are presented.”

Sheikh Nefzaoui, also spelled Sheikh Nefzawi, was a member of the Nefzawa Berber tribe in the southern part of what is now Tunisia in the 15th century. His full name was Abu Abdullah Muhammed ben Umar Nafzawi. The manual was compiled at the request of Abd al-Aziz al- Mutawakki, Hafsid ruler of Tunis at the time.

Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton (March 19, 1821 – October 20, 1890) could well be the model for the 19th century British man for all seasons. He was known as a geographer, cartographer, and ethnologist; a translator, writer, linguist, and poet; and as a fencer, soldier, diplomat and spy. He was known for his travels and explorations in Asia, Africa and the Americas, most famously for a journey to Mecca at a time when Europeans were banished upon pain of death and for his journey with John Hanning Speke as the first Europeans to reach the Great Lakes of Africa in search of the source of the Nile. Perhaps chief among his gifts was an extraordinary knowledge of languages and cultures; he reportedly spoke 29 European, Asian and African languages. In addition to the *Perfumed Garden* he is responsible for the first translations of *One Hundred and One Nights* (a.k.a. *Arabian Nights*) and the *Kama Sutra*.