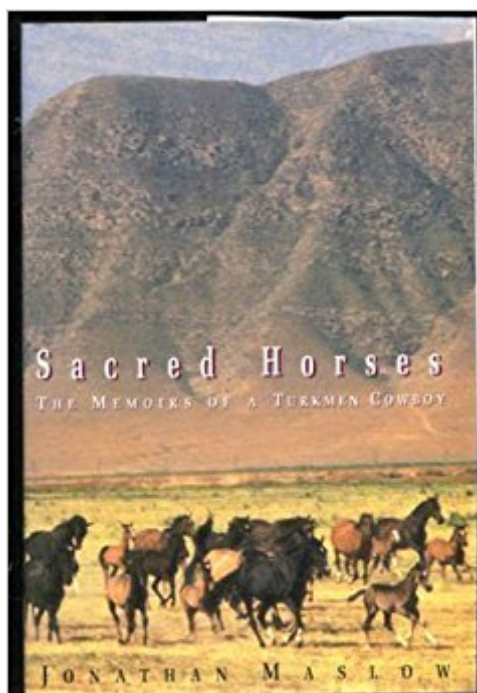


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# Sacred Horses:: Memoirs Of A Turkmen Cowboy



## Synopsis

The author of *The Owl Papers* chronicles his odyssey through Turkmenistan, a Moslem republic in the former Soviet Union, in search of the Akal-Teke horse, a rare equine breed, and the people who breed and raise them. 15,000 first printing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The genteel title doesn't do justice to this entertaining and enchanting account of Maslow's quest to visit isolated Soviet Turkmenistan and to ride its noble breed of horses. In 1988, filled with wanderlust and possessed with this idea, the New Jersey author and naturalist ( *Bird of Life* , *Bird of Death* ) studied Russian and riding, and three years later hooked up with a Sister City delegation from Albuquerque. His misadventures in Turkmenistan include meetings with the Turkmen Friendship Society (aka KGB), bouts of hospitality ending in Soviet/Moslem melancholy, and some unexpected bonding over the Beatles. After Maslow sees the lustrous Akhal-Teke racehorses, "a work of art that can trot and canter," bribery and finagling get him to the countryside, and a return trip, ostensibly to help a horse marketer, leads to fulfillment of his dream--a ride "flying forward like a magic carpet." Maslow's narrative intersperses both local and horse history with warmth and sensitivity for an unusual place still politically constrained and off-limits to most travelers. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Maslow is a naturalist and writer (*Bird of Life*, *Bird of Death*, LJ 3/1/86) with a lifelong passion for horses. Upon learning of a unique breed near extinction in Turkmenistan, then a Soviet Socialist Republic north of Iran and Afghanistan, the author managed to tag along with a friendship group

visiting the desert country. It wasn't long before he was suspected as a spy by the KGB, running afoul of arcane Soviet regulations, and narrowly avoiding incarceration on more than one occasion. In the meantime, however, Maslow managed to travel the countryside, befriend many locals, and, subsequently, film a documentary about the legendary horse. Containing a good bibliography, this work gives a glimpse of everyday life and emerging capitalism in a former Soviet state, interspersed with a thorough history of the region and Akhal-Teke horse. Recommended for public libraries and travel collections generally. Tim Markus, Evergreen State Coll. Lib., Olympia, Wash. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

One of the best "horse books" ever. Exotic, romantic -- I bought this because I gave my "horsy" daughter-in-law my original copy, then realized that I still needed a copy of my own.

Sacred Horses:: Memoirs of a Turkmen Cowboy Originally purchased because of interest in Akhal-Teke horse. Maslow's expertise in many fields made it more than a horse book. I fear for his horse friend Guvanch Roslevich and what happened to him and his wife.

He is a bit of a jerk, but interesting story about other cultures. I like Gill Suttle's books better, especially Black Sands and Celestial Horses.

Maslow travelled to Turkestan (one of the newly independent Russian Central Asian states northeast of Iran) on a search for the fabled Akhal-Teke horse, perhaps the progenitor of all modern horses from the Byerley Turk to Mr. Ed. His adventures in this rather unique locale range from hilarious to incredible. Run-ins with KGB agents who have nothing better to do, fixing the unsanitary sink in his host's home (a doctor, no less!), and taking the night train across the forbidding Kyzyl Kum desert are just some of the fascinating adventures. If you like travel writing, horses, adventure, or just love a good book, this is one you owe it to yourself to check out.

A wonderfully written description of an Indiana Jones-style trip to Turkmenistan by writer, film maker and naturalist Jonathan Maslow. A life-long horse enthusiast, he grew up eventually wanting to ride Akhal-Teke horses in the steppe country north of Iraq and east of the Caspian Sea where they were first domesticated three millennia ago. "Girls seemed to lose their interest in horses about the time they discover boys. I'm not a girl, and I never lost it." His description of learning Russian in a crash course at Johns Hopkins is alone worth the price. The book is a hard-to-find treat that will introduce

you to a breed of horse and the culture that produced it, along with their shared geography, all described with the wit and insight of a sophisticated writer who, despite hardships that would send most of us back home, loves his work and the people it introduces him to.

Very good. Get it.

It would truly be a wonder if any American was granted a visa to Turkmenistan again after this guy's visit. I found this in my library, and was VERY excited, you don't hear too much about Turkmenistan. However; reading some of the passages in the book made me cringe....The author treats his host family like garbage, he acts arrogant and superior to all the Turkmen he meets. This is Turkmenistan! Lighten up! Sure it's difficult, but for the sake of your readers, stop complaining! I kept hoping that somehow, in the pages, the author would reveal he was just kidding, that he hadn't behaved this way abroad, and would reveal the book was actually a parody of the obnoxious American tourist. His description of the Turkmen people..this guy looks like a toad, this guy looks like a fly, this guy looks like a (insert animal). Historic ruins look like UFO landing sites. The whole country is crap, and the USA is WAY better, in case you didn't know, duh. And then he has the nerve to write a book, calling HIMSELF in the title, a "Turkmen Cowboy". Just because you went to Turkmenistan, yelling "yippee ti yi yo" in everyone's face, does NOT make you a Turkmen cowboy.

The book is very good. It covers the history of one of the most fascinating places in the world. The author also introduces us to many fascinating characters (the most unforgettable character I will ever meet). Finally he covers the history and current sadness of the people who are suffering from 80 years of communism

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