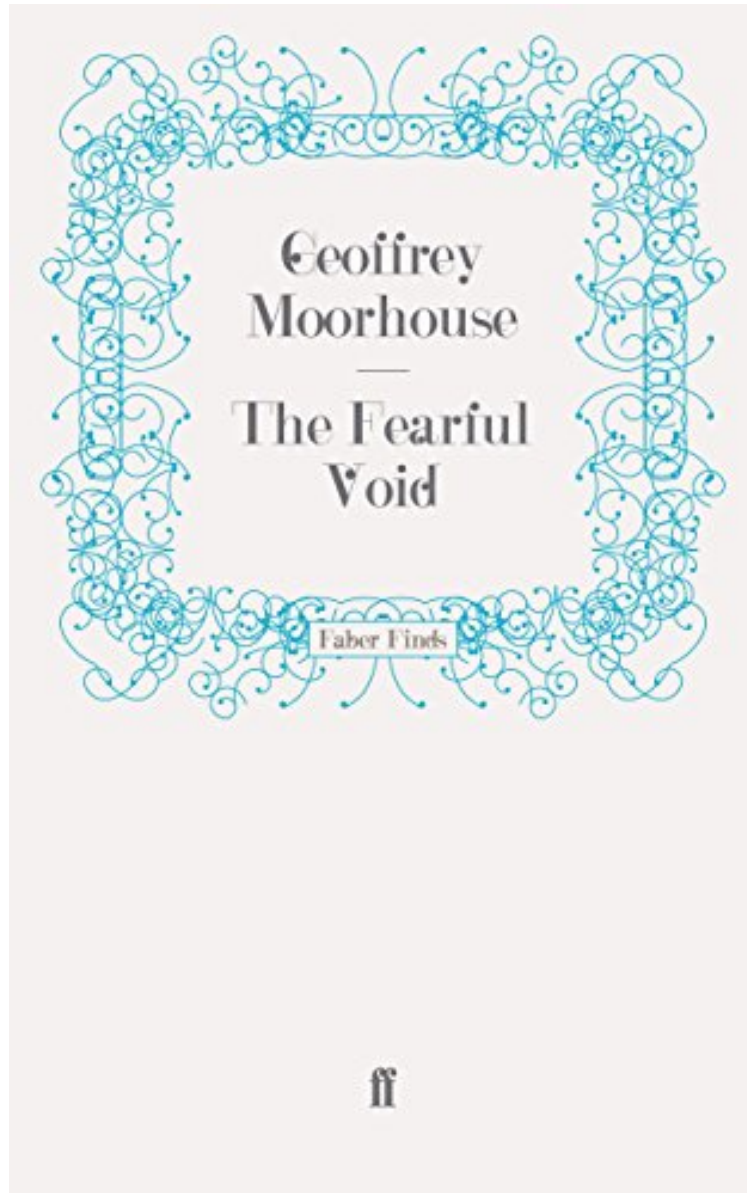


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The Fearful Void

Geoffrey Moorhouse

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#3352501 in Books Moorhouse Geoffrey 2011-05-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .74 x 5.321,
.84 #File Name: 0571243576296 pagesThe Fearful Void | File size: 21.Mb

Geoffrey Moorhouse : The Fearful Void before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fearful Void:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A remarkable journey!By lowercase_tThis has easily become one of my favorite books I have ever read. I have now started making plans to visit Morocco myself!2 of 2 people found the

following review helpful. A trip more than half full...By John P. Jones IIIIn 1972 Geoffrey Moorhouse set out to cross the Sahara desert, from west to east, from the Atlantic to the Nile River, some 3,600 miles. He had never ridden a camel before, yet this was his chosen mode of transportation. No other Westerner was to accompany him, only native guides. Moorhouse's title is a double entendre. There is the immense emptiness of the Sahara Desert, which he calls the "Empty Quarter," usually a term used for a desert area in Saudi Arabia. There is also a void within himself; an unspecified fear that he needs to come to terms with, and "prove himself." Individuals who take long journeys to resolve "personal issues" are often not good travel companions, so it was at least encouraging that he brought no other Westerners along. Although a novice, he decided to listen to the "experts" in desert travel. In England he visited Wilfred Thesiger, famous for his camel trip across the "real" Empty Quarter of the Arabian peninsula, in 1947, which he chronicled in *Arabian Sands* (Penguin Classics). Then he journeyed across the Channel, to see the man whose career involved the exploration of the Sahara, and called Mauritania his "parish," Theodore Monod. Two of his most famous books on desert travel are *L'éméraude des garamantes* and *Mhars*. Thesiger outlined some significant problems; namely Moorhouse would have to travel 20 miles a day in order to cross during the relatively cool winter six months, a pace virtually impossible to consistently maintain. Monod was far more encouraging, of the "where there is a will, there is a way" school. Moorhouse also took Arabic lessons in order to better communicate with his guides. Moorhouse "only" completed half the proposed itinerary, roughly 1800 miles, during the best weather. He started at Atar, in Mauritania, crossed Mali, stopping in Timbuctou, and ended in Tamanrasset, in southern Algeria. He is traveling in an area that was primarily part of French West Africa, only a decade after the countries are independent. Officialdom in these newly independent countries proved to be a bit "touchy" towards such casual wanderings, but as is so often the case, with tact, and persistence, he was able to prevail. The author tends to focus on the mechanics of the journey, dealing with the guides of variable quality, the campsites, and the camels. Rarely does he wax eloquent on the desert's beauty. As he says: "For over three months I had labored across the Sahara, and there had been few moments when I had experienced the magnetism of the desert to which so many men before me had succumbed. But now, in its utmost desolation, I began at least to understand its attraction. It was the awful scale of the thing, the suggestion of virginity, the fusion of pure elements from the heavens and the earth beneath which were untrammelled and untouched by anything contrived by man." One of the most significant "takeaways" for me was his consideration of the Bedouin's ability to navigate in the desert. Were they truly able to find their way in areas they had never been before, or were they only able to navigate based on a familiar topography? His conclusion was not definitive, but he leaned towards the latter, which was also my experience... at least before the GPS really changed things. His abrupt decision to end the journey in Tamanrasset was given only a cursory explanation. Perhaps simple exhaustion with the trip should suffice, but I could have used more. Moorhouse in his later career wrote a number of historical books. He died in 2009. Overall, just the 1800 miles is a remarkable achievement. His account of it rates 4-stars.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Why bother? By arbitrary I won't go into the specifics of the book, because the reviewer before me explained it so well. I liked the way the book started out, with the author deciding to make the perilous journey across the Sahara, up to the source of the Nile. However, as the book progressed, it took on a tone of complaining and whining about everything. He is told (with good intent) that he cannot cross the desert alone and must have a local guide/companion at all times. That's where the problems begin. He dislikes pretty much everyone whom he hires (so why hire them in the first place) and constantly blames his guide for getting lost/running out of water. He fails to understand the complexity of social interactions in ancient cultures, which results in him judging everyone by a very harsh standard. Towards the end of the book, I was possibly more eager than Mr. Moorhouse to end this torturous journey.

It was because I was afraid that I had decided to attempt a crossing of the great Sahara desert, from west to east, by myself and by camel. No one had ever made such a journey before ...' In October 1972 Geoffrey Moorhouse began his odyssey across the Sahara from the Atlantic to the Nile, a distance of 3,600 miles. His reason for undertaking such an immense feat was to examine the roots of his fear, to explore an extremity of human experience. From the outset misfortune was never far away; and as he moved further into that 'awful emptiness' the physical and mental deprivation grew more intense. In March 1973, having walked the last 300 miles, Moorhouse, ill and exhausted, reached Tamanrasset, where he decided to end his journey. *The Fearful Void* is the moving record of his struggle with fear and loneliness and, ultimately, his coming to terms with the spiritual as well as the physical dangers of the desert.

Language Notes
Text: German
About the Author
Geoffrey Moorhouse has been described as "one of the best writers of our time" (Byron Rogers, *The Times*), "a brilliant historian" (Dirk Bogarde, *Daily Telegraph*) and "a writer whose gifts are beyond" category" (Jan Morris, *Independent on Sunday*). His numerous books -- travel narratives, histories, novels and sporting prints -- have won prizes and been translated into several languages: *To the Frontier* won the Thomas Cook Award for the best travel book of its year. In 1982 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and in 2006 he became Hon DLitt of the University of Warwick. He has recently concentrated on Tudor history, notably with *The Pilgrimage of Grace* and, in 2005, *Great Harry's Navy*, which has just been followed by *The Last*

Office: 1539 and the Dissolution of a Monastery. Born in Lancashire, he has lived in a hill village in North Yorkshire for many years.