Paul Bowles - The Spider's House

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An extraordinary novel, which I absolutely loved.

I decided to buy it when I knew I would spend a week in Fes, where the story is set. So I bought it through Amazon and read it whilst I was not only in the city but staying in the very hotel. Built in 1879 and still very much of the time.

That made it an even greater pleasure. But, on top of this, it takes place in the days of revolution when the Moroccans are trying to throw off the yolk of the French Empire, in the middle 50s. Which makes it incredibly topical in this era of Arab Spring.

Bowles' insight to both the Arab character, the Muslim faith and the decadent, careless Westerners dabbling in exotic Morocco is incredible. His observations are beautiful. His painting of the atmosphere (still very accurate) is wonderful.

The last lines are fabulous and may break your heart. They sum up the entire book in a dozen or so words. Magical.