

Shadows in the Shining City by John D. Cressler

“Lessons for Today from Medieval Muslim Spain”



The Golden Age of Moorish Spain was during the 10th century, a time when the benevolent Arab Caliphs ruled Iberia from Córdoba, the site of the iconic Great Mosque and home to the Royal Library, one of the largest collections of ancient books ever assembled. 10th century Córdoba was the richest, most populous, and most cultured city in the western world. Under the tolerant Muslim Caliphs, the pinnacle of *convivencia* was attained, that unique period of Spanish history when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in relative harmony and peace. Multicultural Córdoba was an enlightened city that treasured its books, celebrated art and literature, advanced science and medicine, and its myriad accomplishments were envied by both the west and the east alike.

Shadows in the Shining City is a prequel to *Emeralds of the Alhambra*, and the second book in the *Anthem of al-Andalus Series*. Both books are historical novels designed to break open this fascinating time period for a modern audience. *Shadows* tells the story of the forbidden love between Rayhana Abi Amir, a Muslim princess of the Royal Court, and Zafir Saffar, a freed slave. Young love blossoms in 10th century Madinat al-Zahra, the Shining City, the Caliph’s magnificent Royal Palace located just outside of Córdoba. Their love story is set against the backdrop of the epic rise to power of Rayhana’s ruthless father, a man history will come to both celebrate and revile for the role he plays in the collapse of Moorish Spain.

“An inspiring and deeply moving novel on both the nature of love and the many beautiful possibilities brought to life when religions learn to coexist.” —*Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate*

“A mesmerizing love story ... filled with vivid historical descriptions of treachery and strategies in politics, religion, power, and love during the Golden Age of Moorish Spain.” —*Valerie Jackson, National Public Radio*

“Written in a rich and shimmering style carrying an implicit message on the value of recognizing the achievements of the “other,” and asserting the fact that there is no fixed center for human creativity and progress.” —*Salma Khadra Jayyusi, poet, writer, and literary historian*

“Brilliantly weaves together fact and fiction, passion and intrigue, the throes of love, and the violence of war. Artfully unfolds the drama of a young and forbidden love, exquisitely keeping us rapt in the story, wondering in each moment, what will happen next?” —*Rabbi Rachael M. Bregman, Temple Beth Tefilloh*

John D. Cressler is Schlumberger Chair Professor at Georgia Tech and the author of five non-fiction books (two for general audiences) and the historical novels *Emeralds of the Alhambra* and *Shadows in the Shining City*, love stories set in medieval Muslim Spain. Visit <http://johndcressler.com>.