



# Crossing the Kingdom: Portraits of Saudi Arabia

*Loring M. Danforth*

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## **Crossing the Kingdom: Portraits of Saudi Arabia** Loring M. Danforth

For many people, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia evokes images of deserts, camels, and oil, along with rich sheikh in white robes, oppressed women in black veils, and terrorists. But when Loring Danforth traveled through the country in 2012, he found a world much more complex and inspiring than he could have ever imagined.

With vivid descriptions and moving personal narratives, Danforth takes us across the Kingdom, from the headquarters of Saudi Aramco, the country's national oil company on the Persian Gulf, to the centuries-old city of Jeddah on the Red Sea coast with its population of undocumented immigrants from all over the Muslim world. He presents detailed portraits of a young woman jailed for protesting the ban on women driving, a Sufi scholar encouraging Muslims and Christians to struggle together with love to know God, and an artist citing the Quran and using metal gears and chains to celebrate the diversity of the pilgrims who come to Mecca.

*Crossing the Kingdom* paints a lucid portrait of contemporary Saudi culture and the lives of individuals, who like us all grapple with modernity at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

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