



The Book of Magic: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment (A Penguin Classics Hardcover)

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A rich, wondrous anthology of the Western magical tradition, from the Old Testament to *Doctor Faustus* and *Paradise Lost*, in a beautiful hardcover edition

“. . . as when iron is drawn to a magnet, camphor is sucked into hot air, crystal lights up in the Sun, sulfur and a volatile liquid are kindled by flame, an empty eggshell filled with dew is raised towards the Sun . . .”

The Bible is full of stories featuring forms of magic and possession—from Moses battling with Pharaoh’s wizards to the supernatural actions of Jesus and his disciples. As, over the following centuries, the Christian church attempted to stamp out “deviant” practices, a persistent interest in magic drew strength from this Biblical validation. A strange blend of mumbo-jumbo, fear, fraud, and deeply serious study, magic was at the heart of the European Renaissance, fascinating many of its greatest figures.

This is a book filled with incantations, charms, curses, summonings, cures, and descriptions of extraordinary, shadowy, only half-understood happenings from long ago. It features writers as various as Thomas Aquinas, John Milton, John Dee, Ptolemy, and Paracelsus along with anonymous ancient and medieval works that were, in some cases, viewed as simply too dangerous even to open.

The Book of Magic will be welcomed by everyone from those with the most casual interest in the magical tradition to anyone drawn to the Renaissance and the tangled, arcane roots of the scientific tradition.

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Review

“Impressive and well-edited . . . Reading this rich collection allows each of us to cut our own path through the dense snarls of the history of a body of ideas.” —*The Times Literary Supplement*

About the Author

Brian Copenhaver is a professor of philosophy and history at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is one of the world’s foremost scholars on Renaissance magic and mysticism.

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