



Snakes in Myth, Magic, and History: The Story of a Human Obsession

Diane Morgan

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The snake is one of humankind's most powerful and ambiguous symbols: it has at various times represented immortality and death, male and female, deity and demon, circle and line, killer and healer, the highest wisdom and the deepest subconscious. By virtue of its mysterious movement, potent poison, fearful grip, unblinking gaze and lightning quick strike, the power and image of the snake has wound its way into every culture. Whether snakes are worshipped as gods, feared as devils, or handled in religious ceremonies to test faith, snakes have played a critical role in the human heritage. This book explores the cult of the snake in world history, religion, and folklore.

Fascination with snakes has been around since the dawn of time. Even today, images of snakes attract attention, fear, disgust, or admiration. Morgan examines that obsession with this mysterious creature, covering in vivid details such topics as mythical snakes like the Plumed Serpent, serpent iconography, tall tales, as well as the psychological symbolism that has attached itself to snakes. Cultures as diverse as pre-Columbian America, India, Egypt, China, sub-Saharan Africa, Celtic Europe, and the United States have all accorded the serpent a special place in their culture?apparently regardless of whether or not real snakes play an important part in the life of the people. Here, the mysterious nature of the snake unfolds, enchanting readers with a colorful and lively discussion of its place in our history, stories, religions, and cultures.

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