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The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark

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CARL
SAGAN

THE
DEMON-HAUNTED
WORLD



SCIENCE AS A
CANDLE IN THE DARK

"A glorious book...From the first page to the last, this book is a manifesto for clear thought." —*Los Angeles Times*

"Wonder-saturated." —*The Washington Post*

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today's so-called information age, pseudoscience is burgeoning with stories of alien abduction, channeling past lives, and communal hallucinations commanding growing attention and respect. As Sagan demonstrates with lucid eloquence, the siren song of unreason is not just a cultural wrong turn but a dangerous plunge into darkness that threatens our most basic freedoms."COMPELLING." *USA Today"A clear vision of what good science means and why it makes a difference. . . . A testimonial to the power of science and a warning of the dangers of unrestrained credulity." *The Sciences"PASSIONATE." *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle

Prsentation de l'diteurA prescient warning of a future we now inhabit, where fake news stories and Internet conspiracy theories play to a disaffected American populaceA glorious book . . . A spirited defense of science . . . From the first page to the last, this book is a manifesto for clear thought.Los Angeles Times How can we make intelligent decisions about our increasingly technology-driven lives if we dont understand the difference between the myths of pseudoscience and the testable hypotheses of science? Pulitzer Prize-winning author and distinguished astronomer Carl Sagan argues that scientific thinking is critical not only to the pursuit of truth but to the very well-being of our democratic institutions. Casting a wide net through history and culture, Sagan examines and authoritatively debunks such celebrated fallacies of the past as witchcraft, faith healing, demons, and UFOs. And yet, disturbingly, in today's so-called information age, pseudoscience is burgeoning with stories of alien abduction, channeling past lives, and communal hallucinations commanding growing attention and respect. As Sagan demonstrates with lucid eloquence, the siren song of unreason is not just a cultural wrong turn but a dangerous plunge into darkness that threatens our most basic freedoms. Praise for The Demon-Haunted World Powerful . . . A stirring defense of informed rationality. . . Rich in surprising information and beautiful writing.The Washington Post Book World Compelling.USA Today A clear vision of what good science means and why it makes a difference. . . . A testimonial to the power of science and a warning of the dangers of unrestrained credulity.The Sciences Passionate.San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle.comCarl Sagan muses on the current state of scientific thought, which offers him marvelous opportunities to entertain us with his own childhood experiences, the newspaper morgues, UFO stories, and the assorted flotsam and jetsam of pseudoscience. Along the way he debunks alien abduction, faith-healing, and channeling; refutes the arguments that science destroys spirituality, and provides a "baloney detection kit" for thinking through political, social, religious, and other issues.From Publishers WeeklyEminent Cornell astronomer and bestselling author Sagan debunks the paranormal and the unexplained in a study that will reassure hardcore skeptics but may leave others unsatisfied. To him, purported UFO encounters and alien abductions are products of gullibility, hallucination, misidentification, hoax and therapists' pressure; some alleged encounters, he suggests, may screen memories of sexual abuse. He labels as hoaxes the crop circles, complex pictograms that appear in southern England's wheat and barley fields, and he dismisses as a natural formation the Sphinx-like humanoid face incised on a mesa on Mars, first photographed by a Viking orbiter spacecraft in 1976 and considered by some scientists to be the engineered artifact of an alien civilization. In a passionate plea for scientific literacy, Sagan deftly debunks the myth of Atlantis, Filipino psychic surgeons and mediums such as J.Z. Knight, who claims to be in touch with a 35,000-year-old entity called Ramtha. He also brands as superstition ghosts, angels, fairies, demons, astrology, Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster and religious apparitions. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.