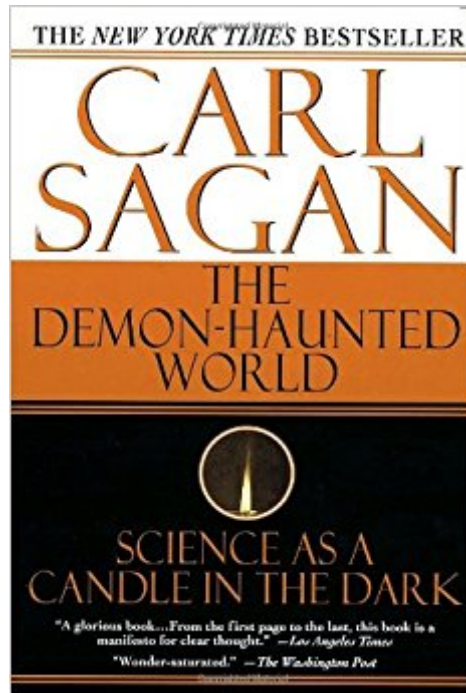


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The Demon-Haunted World: Science As A Candle In The Dark



Synopsis

"A 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"POWERFUL . . . A stirring defense of informed rationality. . . Rich in surprising information and beautiful writing." *The Washington Post Book WorldHow can we make intelligent decisions about our increasingly technology-driven lives if we don't 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."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

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Customer Reviews

Demons, UFO's, the Loch Ness Monster, Big Foot, fairies and the like are all investigated in this incredible non-fiction book by the late Carl Sagan. Pseudoscience, and those who perpetuate it, find

their place in today's society among those who want to believe in the impossible. In fact, Sagan too admits that he would love to find life on other planets, among other things (he was, after all, an advocate of SETI, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). However, science today has not been able to prove that such things exist. As the book states, "the siren song of unreason is not just a cultural wrong but a dangerous plunge into darkness that threatens our most basic freedoms." This book challenges the reader to critically scrutinize information professed by supposed experts, and be more of a skeptic. Sagan states early on in the book that "some 95 percent of Americans are scientifically illiterate." By using the scientific method combined with a little bit of logic and common sense, one should find that it is much more difficult to be mentally taken advantage of by pseudoscience "experts." Intelligent inquiry and analysis of information presented, and those presenting it, proves to be an invaluable tool. Nonetheless, stories regarding crop circles, area 51, and other such nonsense still abound. Sagan runs through various examples and places them under the hypothetical microscope. Once examined more closely, most of these theories and fallacious postulations crumble quite easily. What some people don't realize, and what Sagan points out, is that things just as mysterious and awe-inspiring can be found all around us, and they are indeed factual and are being investigated by those in science fields. We need not look elsewhere to find mysticism and intrigue.

One word: OUTSTANDING. I read this book over two nights, couldn't put it down, and afterwards was eagerly searching for more of the same. Science at its best-accurate, timely, well-argued, emotionally and mentally invigorating, spiritually uplifting; and filled with boundless enthusiasm and hope. Like the author, Carl Sagan himself. This book describes the 'scientific journey'. Alternately curious, cautious, inquiring, uplifting, compassionate, humane, warning, discovering and fulfilling. Topics include UFOs, alien abductions, witches, religion-both good and bad, Roswell, frauds, scientific genuises, skeptical thinking, wishful thinking, deceptive thinking, balanced thinking, belief, superstition, astrology, ESP, myth, and the like; and the role and place of science and scientific inquiry in all of this. For those who think science "destroys" spirituality-does not scientific inquiry with its' abundant curiosity and courageous endeavour accurately describe a spiritual journey to find the truth? Sagan contends, with great clarity and enthusiasm, that it assuredly does. It's just that this scientific journey is not an easy one, neither for the individual, nor humanity, by any means. But when has the attempt to find "truth" and "light" in this complex world of ours, ever been easy? Sagan argues that science and the scientific method is a noble and enlightening endeavour, an unquenchable candle, lit by the human yearning for truth, and able to steer humanity towards truth

and goodwill in a world of mists, shadowy truths, and darkness. For those who wish to open their minds to science and what it has to say about much that goes in this beautiful, yet sometimes dark world of ours, this is the book for you.

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