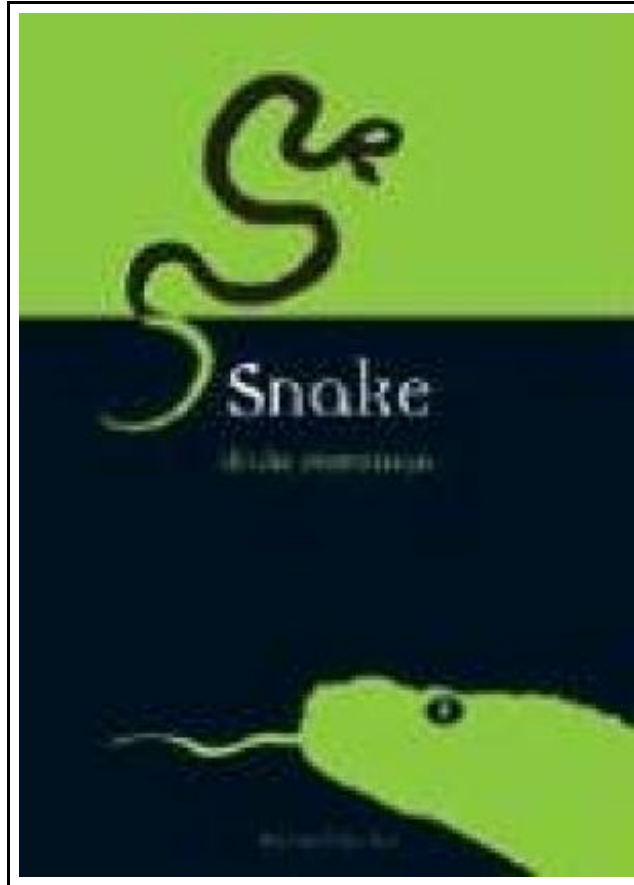


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Reaktion Books, United Kingdom, 2005. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 186 x 134 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. The snake s primordial system, functioning for well over one hundred million years, is a marvel of genetic engineering. The snake smells with its tongue, hears with its flesh, and propels itself by a locomotion of rippling muscles. It sheds its skin, has a detachable tail, and mimics death if afraid. It copulates for days with one snake or fifty at once, and can even clone itself. With all these qualities it is easy to see why no other creature has inspired such contradictory emotions or diverse symbolism. Snakes are celebrated in names, tattoos, emblems, tales, mementos, and for their medical benefits in cultures throughout the world. Yet at the same time they are so universally feared that they endure intense persecution and, unlike other hunted animals, rarely enjoy protected rights. Virtually as long as humans have walked the earth, snakes have been worshipped, reviled, prized, totemized, tortured and collected, and invested with meanings ranging from resurrection, wisdom and divine female omniscience to world destruction, duplicity and male castration. Snake explores the animal s natural history, and the widespread snake symbolism, from Eve s serpent in the Bible, to Kaa in The Jungle Book ; from the Chinese zodiac to Indian snake charmers and the Hollywood film Anaconda . Including many illustrations and a wide range of material, from snake cooking and the use of venom in medicine, to the history of snake symbolism in art, architecture and clothing, this book will interest snake enthusiasts and specialists, as well as all those who love, admire or fear this remarkable and durable animal.

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