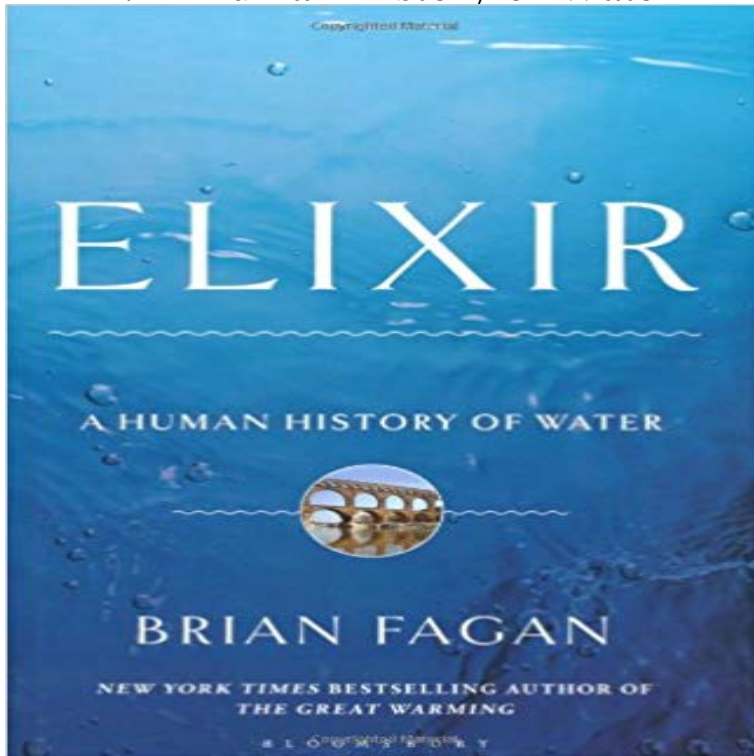


Elixir: A Human History of Water



Elixir: A Human History of Water spans five millennia, from the beginnings of civilisation to the global water shortages of today. Our present-day interaction with this most essential resource has deep roots in the remote past, and every human culture has been shaped by its relationship to water. From the earliest hunter-gatherers, for whom knowing where to find water was a matter of life and death, through the Greek and Romans, whose mighty aqueducts still provide water for modern cities, to China, where emperors marshalled armies of labourers to tame the country's powerful rivers, every human culture has been shaped by its relationship with water. Medieval Europe, and then the Industrial Revolution, brought ingenious new solutions to water management and turned water into a commodity to be bought, sold, and exploited, and we still live at the mercy of the natural world for our most essential resource. Brian Fagan tells the story of 5,000 years of human endeavour. Deeply researched and elegantly written, Elixir illustrates that the past teaches us that technologies for solving one or another water problem are not enough. We still live at the mercy of the natural world and to solve the water crises of the future we may need to adapt the water ethos of our ancestors.

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