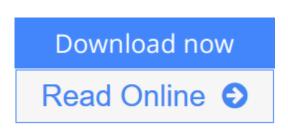


A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs

By T. J. Knab



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Chronicling the author's spiritual immersion in Aztec culture and his transformation into a *curandero* or healer, an account of an adventure into the supernatural underworld of Aztec cosmology-*talocan* reveals the mysterious ""War of the Witches.""

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The soul of a child has been seized by the Lords of the netherworld, and anthropologist Knab, as an apprentice curandero (healer), undertakes to restore it. Tutored by two elderly healers whose trust he had won during 10 years of visits to their Mexican village in the high sierra near Puebla, Knab descends alone into a nearby cave where, with tobacco smoke, incense, prayers and incantations, he contacts the Lords. He must also reach them in dreams, whose startling content provides leads not only to the child's condition but to the history of the community's murderous witches. In this and other cures he undertook (some with the aid of modern medicine and nutrition), he probes the vibrant ancient Aztec cosmology and its healing and hexing powers. Speaking Spanish and Nahuat gave him access to this village's culture that outsiders would lack. More gripping than fiction, Knab's account describes only what he saw, heard and learned, his conclusion being that "I still do not... know what it all means." 30,000 first printing; author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Anthropologist Knab's highly personal and compelling narrative on the magico-religious belief system of contemporary Aztecs has the excitement of a mystery novel yet is interspersed with rich ethnographic detail on Aztec cosmology, magic, and ritual. Through his fieldwork with two Mexican curanderos (healers/witches) Knab uncovers the survival of ancient Aztec religious beliefs and practices thought to have been long wiped out by colonial conquest and Catholicism. Caught between the worlds of academia and Aztec witchcraft, Knab recounts how he found himself subject to his informants' magical devices and began the journey to recover his tonal (soul). Knab's experience challenges traditional assumptions about ethical involvement on the part of the researcher and blurs the boundaries between informant and researcher, science and magic, and healing and murder. This book will appeal not only to anthropologists and students of Aztec religion but to anyone interested in reading a captivating real-life mystery.?Tracy L. Little, Ohio State Univ., Columbus

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From **Booklist**

In this fantastical combination of personal revelation and local history, Knab unravels secrets of an ancient vendetta in a Mexican village. An anthropologist by trade, Knab develops a practicing belief in the supernatural Aztec practices holding sway in San Martin, up in the mountainous fastnesses east of Mexico City. In the course of his initiation into a spiritual world of dreams, spells, and death, he increasingly earns the trust of his teachers, old lady Rubia and old man Inocente. He becomes a healer, and in treating a morose girl, Knab connects her relatives with a man in his dreams named "Cruz." The relatives show Knab a family picture that proves Cruz was real and not a REM hallucination. That fact melts the reticence of the two elderly spiritualists to discuss his death back in the 1930s, which occurred against the background of a land-ownership dispute. The fight was largely carried on by witches armed with curses, and it peaked with a scarcely believable tale of a crucifixion, leaving a legacy of silence that only a believing acolyte could pierce. In our world, modernity and traditionalism seem congenital enemies, but this tale--part murder mystery, part dream interpretation, part multicultural encounter--honestly reveals how they actually coexist in this remote place. Fascinating for readers engaged by exotic paganism--or by a plain, good story well told. *Gilbert Taylor*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Margaret Watkins:

This A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is usually information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. That A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs without we know teach the one who reading through it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't always be worry A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs can bring any time you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even phone. This A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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