



Moon Magic

Dion Fortune , Gareth Knight (Foreword by)

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First published in 1938 and 1956, neither *Sea Priestess* nor *Moon Magic* have been out of print and are enduring favorites among readers of esoteric fiction. New packages will update these classic novels and introduce them to a new generation of readers.

Moon Magic Details

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From Reader Review Moon Magic for online ebook

Nea says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I loved Lilith's courage, power and overall presence. What a perfect character! Strong yet gentle, masterful yet patient with her "student."

I did feel, however, that the book came to a rather abrupt end. When Lilith says in chapter 17, "We have done the first part of that which we set out to do..." I expected a lot more to happen. But the book was over in the very next chapter. That was my only semi-complaint. The writing was great, the characters kept me interested, and the esoteric storyline was phenomenal.

T.D. Whittle says

This book was first published in 1957, eleven years after Fortune's death, so it was completed by friends of hers. This is somewhat obvious, but not tragically so. In *Moon Magic* we pick up the trail of Vivien Le Fay Morgan after her adventures in *The Sea Priestess*. Vivien has travelled to London, following an inner calling, where she has changed her name to Lilith Le Fay and is seeking to establish an Isis cult.

I liked *Moon Magic* better than *The Sea Priestess* and I am not entirely sure why. I think I felt more connected to Vivien/Lilith because this second book is narrated by her, in first person, for all but the final chapter. (*The Sea Priestess* was in third person and we were only able to understand Vivien through Wilfred's view of her, as it was more his story than hers.) Having said that, there is a lot more explanation of the theory and practice of ceremonial magic in this book, too, which amounts to pages and pages of description. Fortune believed that the initiate who read *The Sea Priestess* and *Moon Magic*, along with her nonfiction text *The Mystical Qabalah*, would then hold the "keys to the kingdom" of the hidden cosmic realms and be well set to participate in the rites and rituals of Isis. I am not interested in becoming a priestess myself but found it interesting nevertheless.

The Moon Goddess ~ Early 1900s postcard by Reutlinger

Lilith is a fascinating woman, especially for her time, not only because she lives entirely by her own lights but also because she is an unabashed predator, who willfully emanates a powerful spiritual and sexual magnetism to attract potential acolytes to her, hoping that she may find one to initiate as a priest in her rituals. What the men (Wilfred in the last book, Rupert in this one) expect and what they end up with are very far apart indeed, and one can't help but feel a bit sorry for them, as they inevitably fall in love with her. Their love is useful to Lilith because, as she explains, it makes her stronger as a priestess, thus empowering her magic and, ultimately, benefiting her goddess. To be fair, she does explain to Rupert fully and completely what she can and cannot offer him in their relationship, so that he goes into the depths of it with eyes wide open, which was not quite the case with Wilfred in *The Sea Priestess*.

Because Lilith has no emotional needs of other people, she is able to remain aloof and independent and center herself in her own world. She has her own money and, as a priestess, has set herself part in service to her goddess. All that she requires from people (besides a servant or two) is a particular type of male to complete the spiritual work she wants to carry out, which is meant to serve not only her goddess but,

ultimately, humankind. Given such lofty and noble goals, Lilith makes no excuses for being completely ruthless in reaching them, as she sees the ends as being worth the means. This tends to leave her men feeling used (as they should!) but, in fairness, she does leave them with a renewed sense of purpose and an enlightenment that they did not possess when they met her. Also, in this book, the fellow who is drawn to her, outwardly a tremendously successful endocrinologist and neurologist, is quite miserable and lost in his life. As with Wilfred in the first book, Rupert ends up enriched by his relationship with Lilith, even though his hopes for love are dashed. Both Wilfred and Rupert, having proved themselves and declared their devotion to the goddess, are empowered to act as priests in serving her, either with Vivien/Lilith or another priestess.

Whoever you are, you look fabulous!

Lilith explains her aesthetic and practical choices in some detail in *Moon Magic*, and also explains why she must remain celibate. There is a kind of cosmic sexual engagement that occurs between priest and priestess during the ceremonial rites; so, the sexual energy between the pair is used for the magic and cannot be used in the normal fashion. Apparently, it is understood in certain occult communities that, "When sex comes in the door, magic goes out the window" (i.e. they become magically impotent). In the rituals Fortune describes in her books, the goddess has thankfully stopped demanding literal sacrifice of men's lives and is content to have their energy and vitality drawn off them during the ceremonies, to use to her own ends. The goddess promises to bless them in exchange for their service, but the blessing will come in her own time and her own way. After these rites, both priest and priestess are left vigorous and revitalised (following a brief period of post-ceremonial exhaustion) much as couples feel after good sex. So their energy that is taken up by the goddess is returned to them manifestly amplified (which is not the case with the blood sacrifices of earlier times, where the reward had to be gained in the afterlife, or not at all).

This particular approach to ceremonial magic, from what I have read so far, takes a traditional approach to gender and sexuality. It relies on the "magnetism" between male and female and assumes a "divine feminine" that belongs to all women and is represented, in Nature, by the Moon and the Sea. Likewise, it assumes a "divine masculine" that is represented by the Sun. These elemental forces can be "drawn down" into the priest and priestess during their ceremonies and used for magical ends. I don't believe any of these things to be true, in a literal sense, but I can see how they might be psychologically potent for some people.

What I really like about the book though is that Lilith buys herself a decommissioned church ** to refurbish into her home and temple, and wafts about the place wearing gowns made out of draperies. She paints all her ceremonial shoes gold and silver and wears a headdress, and creates similar garments for Wilfred and Rupert. Whilst reading this, I could not help but think of Carol Burnett's send-up of *Gone With The Wind*, in which Scarlett tears down Tara's green velvet curtains to remake them into a ball gown.

Rhett: *That gown is gorgeous.*

Scarlett: *Thank you. I saw it in the window and I just couldn't resist it.*

I am currently reading Gareth Knight's biography of Dion Fortune, after which, I will be done with my Dion Fortune readings. There are more to read but I'm full up for now. I am not sure who I would recommend these books to, to be honest. They are kind of fun to read. Fortune was a brilliant woman with a fascinating mind but, on the other hand, I think her beliefs were ... well, unbelievable. But then, I do not believe there is anything otherworldly about Tarot cards, crystals, or psychics who supposedly channel spirit guides, either. Clearly, these books would hold more than just entertainment value for those who do.

Mossiman's Club, London, was formerly The Belfry

* There are magic cults that belong to specific LGBTQI groups, nowadays, who come together as outsiders or refugees from mainstream religion, seeking enlightenment and empowerment through their own rites and rituals.

** I believe the church she uses is based on The Belfry in London, where Fortune used to perform the Rite of Isis for the public, and which is now a fine-dining club.

I have also read *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner*, but won't write a review because I have nothing fresh to add to what I have already said either here or in the other two reviews I have written.

TD Whittle's Review of *The Sea Priestess*

TD Whittle's Review of *The Demon Lover*

Flynn says

The vast majority of the book is wonderfully written, but the parts channeled after her death are for the most part deeply lacking, with occasional insights into what I hope Dion would have written.

Cliff Vititoe says

I love the way Dion writes, a little old fashion at times but wonderful, or so I think. She gives you enough about the characters without bogging you down with too much detail. By the time I finished the book I had a good understanding of Ms. Fortune's spirituality and beliefs.

Jen McConnel says

Dion Fortune's books are packed with esoteric wisdom, and she's sometimes a hard author to read. I've been working my way slowly through this novel for months, but last night I was finally able to finish it.

This book is the sequel to "*The Sea Priestess*", but it could easily be read and understood alone. I preferred this novel, in fact.

Lilith Le Fey is a strange woman by the standards of pre-war British society. She lives alone, practices ancient magic, and is searching for a priest to help her change the world. She finds that priest in Rupert Malcolm, a renowned neurological doctor with a prickly personality. Malcolm is a vital man, but time and again, he chooses to allow his vitality to be sacrificed to the norms of the society. When he meets Lilith, he undergoes a deep spiritual transformation.

This novel is rich with symbolism, and in fact Fortune has been quoted as saying her novels are practical manuals for magical transformation. If you enjoyed "*Mists of Avalon*" or any of Marion Zimmer-Bradley's other titles, you will like this novel. Remember, it's slow going, so take your time and don't get frustrated if

the small font and sometimes spotting punctuation throws you momentarily.

Manfred Manfred says

just about the best occult book of its type

Carolina Montague says

I read a friend's copy in 1980 and when it was reissued, got a copy of my own.

Fortune was a member of occult circles in the early to mid 20th century. She writes with the authority of one who is steeped in the occult traditions she uses in this novel.

The crotchety character of Malcolm, the doctor selected for her by the gods to work magic to create a shift in the collective consciousness by the ritual she creates is quite vivid, as is the priestess. What she seeks to shift is the repressive two-faced morality that stunts the growth of the Divine feminine.

Though all this seems quite clinical, it is rich with an off-beat humor and specific physical detail of her ritual, the place of reincarnation in it and the church she purchases to create the sacred space to perform her Moon Magic

Janet says

As Dion Fortune herself states in her introduction, this is not a novel for entertainment, but a novel that illustrates the application of the magical theories described in her non-fiction works. Perhaps to someone unfamiliar with those concepts this might be simply an interesting fantasy, but I found it quite powerful, illuminating, and inspiring.

Aaron Meyer says

My favorite of the fictional works of Dion Fortune. I liked it better than the Sea Priestess which was the first in the series. Like the Sea Priestess, this work is an essential one on the shelf just for the demonstration of how occult ideas work in life.

Micelle Coetsee says

The story started out well. The first three chapters captivated me but unfortunately the change over to the next section hindered the initial flow. From here on it became more of an instruction manual than a novel.

However, I enjoyed the content and was intrigued as to where the plot would lead. It will be an insightful read to those interested in the esoteric.

Sarah says

Read this ages ago with the pagan group on goodreads. I'm a fan of Dion Fortune. It couldn't have been easy being an occult practitioner in her day. She showed us the way through the Door Without a Key . . .

Will says

Surprisingly well written

This book is a sort of sequel to see priestess, but it was never finished by the author, and the final third was channeled by a different author. There's a lot of male versus female energy, and the different dynamics that come out of a very repressed society. I would definitely recommend reading it if you want to get lost in the mysteries.

Jai says

So far my very most favorite book of hers and of all the books I have read.

Gabriel Clarke says

An interesting book but, sadly, not a good one. The first three chapters have the same skilled sense of character and place as the first three quarters of The Sea Priestess. Then the magician with the lecture notes takes over. The other thing which is even harder to ignore is the misogyny which is explicit and pronounced in so many places. Like Margaret Thatcher, Lillith is a goddess who revels in the worship according by the men in a man's world and who seldom shows anything other than contempt for other women...

Lissa Notreallywolf says

I decided to read Dion Fortune's fiction to see how much of an influence she has been on some other novelists that I have enjoyed. Yes for Katherine Kurtz, and yes for Mercedes Lackey. It may simply be the Western Magical tradition that I am homing in on, but further reading will make that clear. I also noted that Fortune referenced her fiction in Psychc Self Defense which was recommended by my friend Ted. Her novels are marked by a celebration of the English "race" sort of a nationalistic pride that seems to be part of her historical period, WWI and II. She was a contemporary of Francis Yates, I see. It was also a time of great homophobia in England, in part because gay men were thought to be security risks-think about what happened to Turing. women were not considered illegal in such interactions, but apparently subject to judgement as well. Fortune is a graduate of a girls agrarian school known for it's unruly female students, sort

of a land school for the female discontent. And many girls would have been discontent in an England robbed of men in WWI and again in the second war. Fortune put her time to good use there, going on to study psychology and participate in the Land Farms in WWII.

It is not surprising that her main character in this novel is a man broken on the altars of past morality. She references Haggard and Bulwer-Lytton, and her writing has been classed among those esoteric novels as well as Charles Williams, another favorite of mine. Apparently this is her last novel, finished by her accolytes, and it is rather unsatisfying in the ending.

A priestess of Isis seeks out a tormented neurologist as her magical counterpart. The book is largely a story of his liberation at her hands on the magical plane. We are treated to long descriptions of clothes, physics and mytho-history as well as some quaint psychological theories. This is a nve which runs counter to the purely pysica romance but falls upon the same lines. He definately reminded me of Mr. Rochester.
