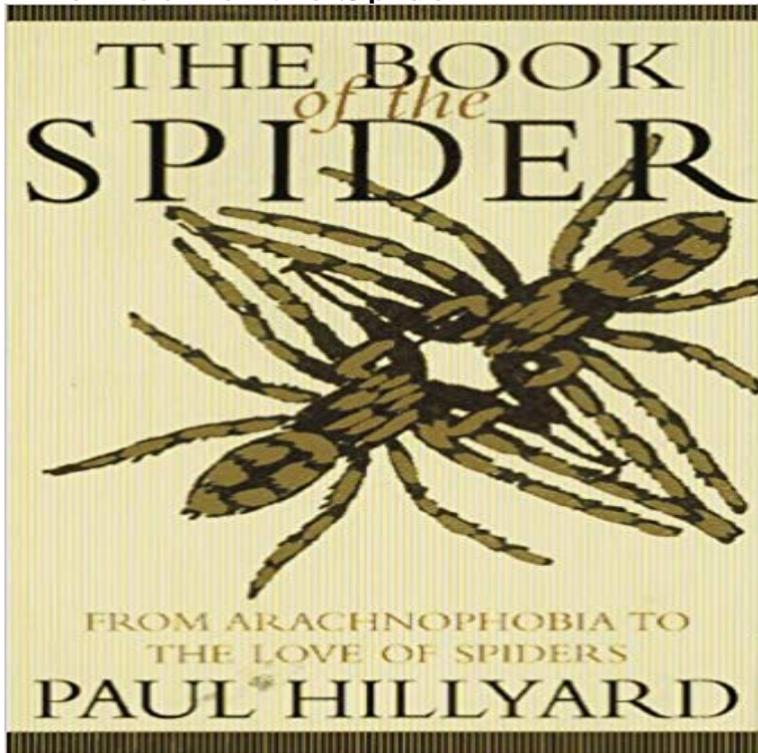


The Book of the Spider



Little Miss Muffet is not the only one who has ever been terrified by a spider. In fact, arachnophobia, or the fear of spiders, afflicts millions around the world. Some people are so tormented that they cannot ever relax, even at home, for fear they will encounter a creepy crawler. And yet, a love of spiders -- or at least a fascination with them -- touches just as many millions, perhaps more. Though some spiders are dangerous, even deadly, most are perfectly harmless -- except to smaller bugs. In *The Book of the Spider*, naturalist Paul Hillyard examines the engaging world of arachnids and the humorous and frequently absurd ways in which humans respond to this most misunderstood of God's creatures. Hillyard, an arachnologist at the Natural History Museum in London, covers the full spider spectrum, from folklore and myths to Aristotle's early scientific studies to Space Age spiders building webs in outer space. There are more than 35,000 known spider species of all shapes and sizes on planet Earth, and Hillyard addresses a plethora of questions, obvious and odd, obscure and intriguing:-- Why is black-widow venom more dangerous than a rattlesnake bite?-- How can humans forecast weather by observing a spider's actions?-- What's the best cooking method for spider à la carte?-- Why are spiderwebs often used to dress wounds and coagulate blood?-- How can spiders be beneficial in the cure of headaches, fevers, and even sexual impotence? In *The Book of the Spider* these and other questions are pondered and answered in a manner that no lover -- or detester -- of spiders will ever forget.

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