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Opium: A Portrait of the Heavenly Demon

Barbara Hodgson

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With its connotations of mystery and sinister beauty, opium holds a near mythical place in the popular imagination. From swaying poppy fields to dimly lit, smoke-laden opium dens, author Barbara Hodgson traces the path of opium's creation and consumption, and describes how it has been alternately rhapsodized, demonized, and anointed. A seductive muse that fueled the visions of artists, writers, and poets including Baudelaire, Coleridge, Wilde, and Poe, opium was also used in hundreds of commonly consumed patent medicines. Today, opium remains one of the most widely trafficked drugs and its story is by turns strange, comic, and dark. Illuminated by an amazing array of archival photographs, rare engravings, movie stills, and lurid dime store book covers, *Opium* is an engrossing look at this illicit indulgence.

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