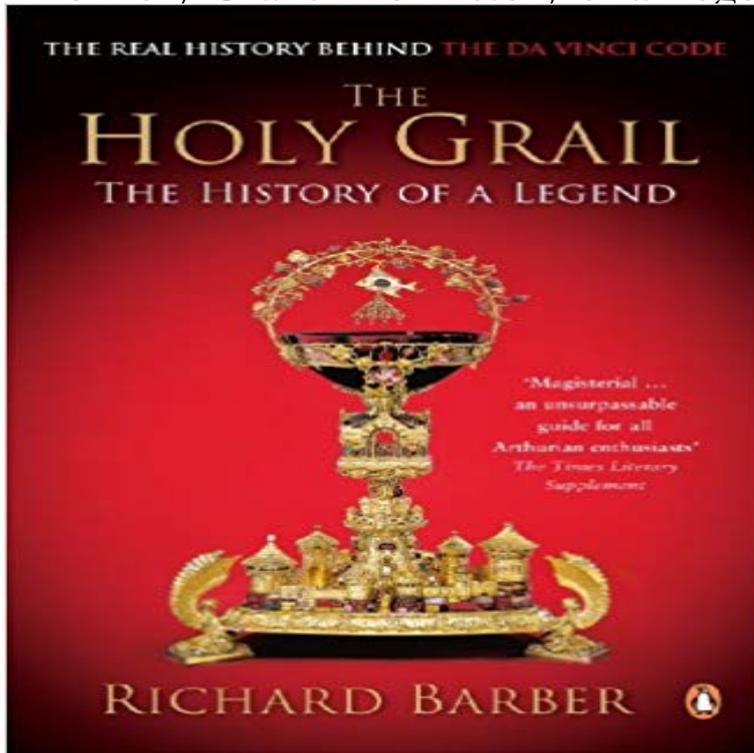


The Holy Grail: The History of a Legend



The Holy Grail is an image familiar to us all as an almost unattainable, infinitely desirable goal. The idea has passed into everyday speech and the legends behind it are as current in today's culture as they have ever been. And yet the Grail has no real religious meaning and is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. What is the truth behind this elusive symbol? Here, Barber traces the history of the stories surrounding the Holy Grail. He describes how through a long series of imaginative transformations, the grail has moved from the sphere of romance to religion, and in twentieth century popular culture has become an emblem of mysticism and man's highest aspirations, intimately linked with the central ritual of the Christian faith. The search for the grail has always been described as a quest; in this book, Barber goes on his own quest, brilliantly exploring the richness of the Holy Grail's cultural impact. Barber traces the history of legends surrounding the Holy Grail, from Chrétien de Troyes' great romances to the popular bestsellers of the late twentieth century.

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