



Spells for Eternity: The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead

John H. Taylor

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For most ancient Egyptians, death was not an end; it was merely the entering of a new phase of being. The way to eternal paradise, however, was littered with obstacles, dangers and challenges, which could only be overcome with magical spells. Collections of these, known today as the Book of the Dead, were buried with the deceased to empower, protect and sustain him in the afterlife. Written on papyrus rolls and often beautifully illustrated, they provide a graphic and fascinating insight into ancient Egyptian funerary rituals and beliefs about the underworld. Among the known spells are those for obtaining air, food and water; for transforming your body into another form; for warding off hostile snakes and crocodiles; for preventing your heart from disclosing all your sins in a final judgement. Including details of the finely painted vignettes, this visually stunning book takes the reader on a remarkable journey from tomb to eternity. John H. Taylor is a curator at the British Museum specializing in ancient Egyptian funerary archaeology.

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