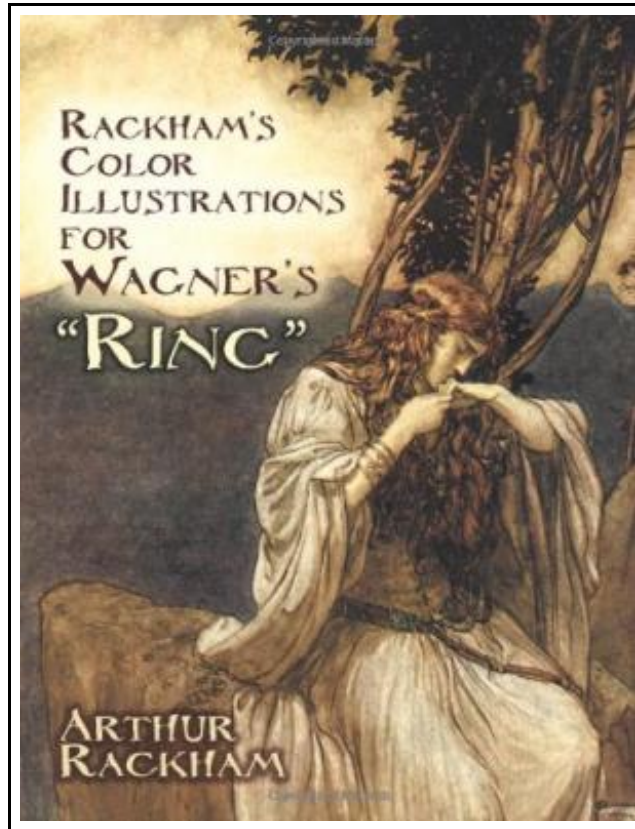


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Dover Publications Inc., United States, 2009. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 276 x 208 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. His pictures, which seemed to me then [aged 13] to be the very music made visible, plunged me a few fathoms deeper into my delight. I have seldom coveted anything as I coveted that book. C.S. Lewis Before portraying Wagner s Ring, Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) had become England s leading illustrator through his interpretations of fairy and fantastic books: Grimm s Fairy Tales, Rip van Winkle, Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, A Midsummer-Night s Dream. With his insight into elves, twisted oaks, and bearded heroes, Wagner was the logical step: with the Ring, Rackham brought his talent for ethereal watercolor and line into new realms of adult mythology. This edition reproduces, in full color, all 64 watercolor illustrations from Siegfried The Twilight of the Gods (1911) and The Rhinegold The Valkyrie (1912). The original English and American editions also contained black-and-white vignettes and tailpieces, a selection of which appear here: the original text, a dated English translation of the libretto, has been replaced by comprehensive descriptive captions and an introduction by James Spero. Rackham poured all his mature fancy into the Ring. The gnarled Nibelung Alberich sports with teasing Rhinemaidens, fiery Loge and lordly Wotan tussle with giants and serpents. An ecstatic Brünnhilde is finally consumed on Siegfried s funeral pyre in perhaps the most successful representation of this scene anywhere, either graphically or theatrically. Wagner s Teutonic forests and caves give Rackham free reign for his brooding, haunting nature backgrounds; characters, costumes, and all the tiny details are painted with such textual accuracy and empathy that today s opera companies who wish to return to staging the Ring in the traditional manner turn to Rackham s paintings for guidance. The painstaking reproduction of...

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