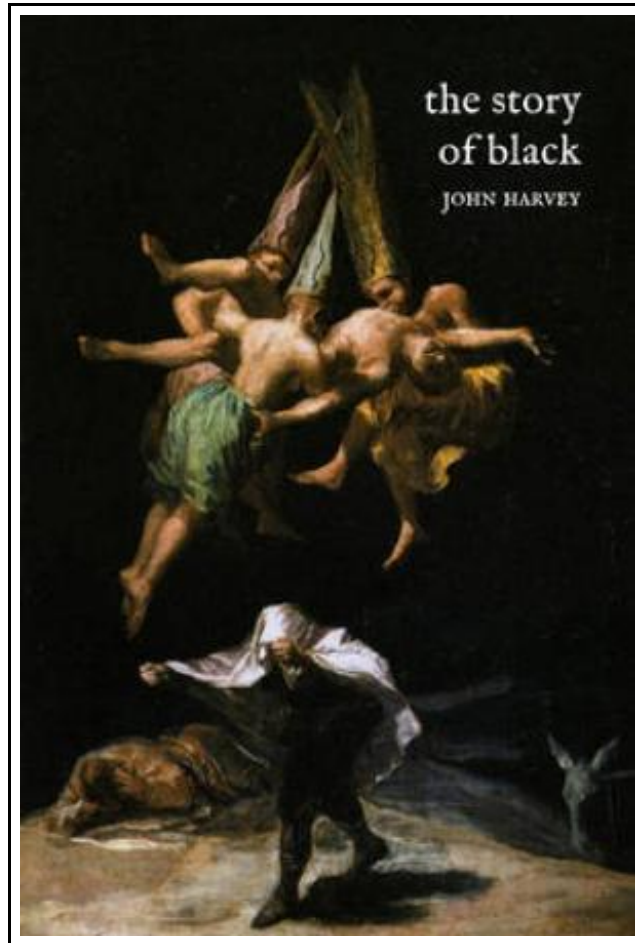


The Story of Black



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Paperback. Book Condition: New. Not Signed; As a colour, black is a single hue. It comes in no other shades. It is pure darkness, absorber of all light. But despite its commonly accepted role as one half of a pair (black and white, dark and light), in symbolic terms black envelops the entire spectrum of meaning. The Story of Black explores the ambiguous relationship the world's cultures have had with this often self-contradictory colour, examining how black has been used as a tool and a metaphor in a multitude of startling ways. The Greek word melancholia (literally 'black bile') defines depression and dark moods, yet the little black dress is the epitome of chic. For the ancient Egyptians black was the colour of death and it has since become established as the sartorial hue of priests and puritans, witches and monarchs, intellectuals and artists. The colour's innate austerity has made it the choice for both funereal dress and lawyers' gowns, and of Goths and other subcultures today. This book also assesses black's problematic association with race, observing how white Europeans exploited the negative associations of 'black' in enslaving millions of black Africans. And it looks at how artists and designers have applied the colour to their work, from Caravaggio to Turner, Reinhardt and Rothko. How can this one colour embody such disparate values as evil, glamour, death and creativity? Not simply a history of a colour but a readable sketch of the history of culture and art in the West, The Story of Black skilfully unpicks the social, political, aesthetic and sexual nuances of black throughout the ages, unearthing the secrets behind black's continuing power to fascinate, compel and divide. book.

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