



The Chemistry of Alchemy: From Dragon's Blood to Donkey Dung, How Chemistry Was Forged

Cathy Cobb, Monty Fetterolf, Harold Goldwhite

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A unique approach to the history of science using do-it-yourself experiments along with brief historical profiles to demonstrate how the ancient alchemists stumbled upon the science of chemistry.

Be the alchemist! Explore the legend of alchemy with the science of chemistry. Enjoy over twenty hands-on demonstrations of alchemical reactions.

In this exploration of the ancient art of alchemy, three veteran chemists show that the alchemists' quest involved real science and they recount fascinating stories of the sages who performed these strange experiments.

Why waste more words on this weird deviation in the evolution of chemistry? As the authors show, the writings of medieval alchemists may seem like the ravings of brain-addled fools, but there is more to the story than that.

Recent scholarship has shown that some seemingly nonsensical mysticism is, in fact, decipherable code, and Western European alchemists functioned from a firmer theoretical foundation than previously thought. They had a guiding principle, based on experience: separate and purify materials by fire and reconstitute them into products, including, of course, gold and the universal elixir, the Philosophers' stone.

Their efforts were not in vain: by trial, by error, by design, and by persistence, the alchemists discovered acids, alkalis, alcohols, salts, and exquisite, powerful, and vibrant reactions--which can be reproduced using common products, minerals, metals, and salts.

So gather your vats and stoke your fires! Get ready to make burning waters, peacocks' tails, Philosophers' stone, and, of course, gold!

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Robert Hawkins:

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Barbara Folsom:

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Dona Henry:

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