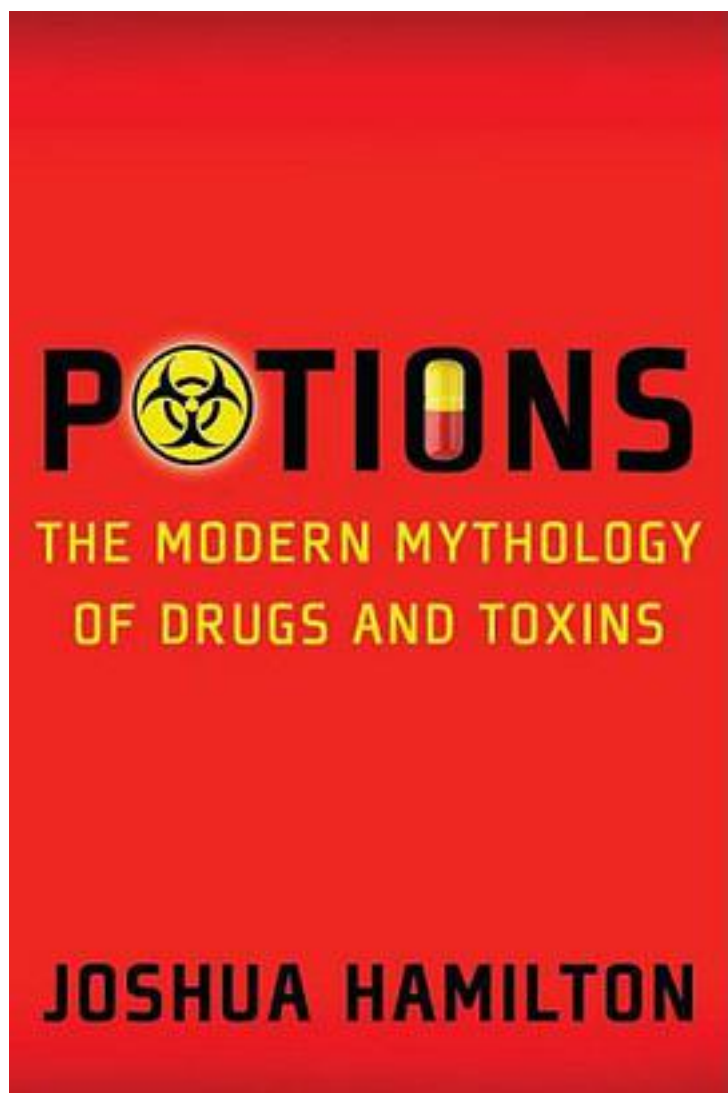


Potions



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In Potions, Joshua Hamilton, a leading authority on drugs and toxins, examines the myths surrounding chemicals, including prescription drugs, herbal remedies, and much more. One of the most dangerous modern myths about chemicals, Hamilton reveals, is that "natural" means "safe." St Johns Wort, for instance, is both natural and dangerous, clinically shown to produce adverse reactions when combined with common prescription drugs. The flip-side, that man-made chemicals are inherently more dangerous than natural chemicals, is even more pervasive, and far more detrimental. Thus many people refuse to take prescriptions because they are not "natural"--unaware that most drugs are either natural products, derived from natural products, or are closely related chemically to a natural product. And these same people will take herbal remedies--which do not have to adhere to the strict safety guidelines that drugs do. Indeed, Hamilton offers a devastating look at herbal remedies (virtually none of which offer any proven benefit) as well as a fascinating discussion of the placebo effect.

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