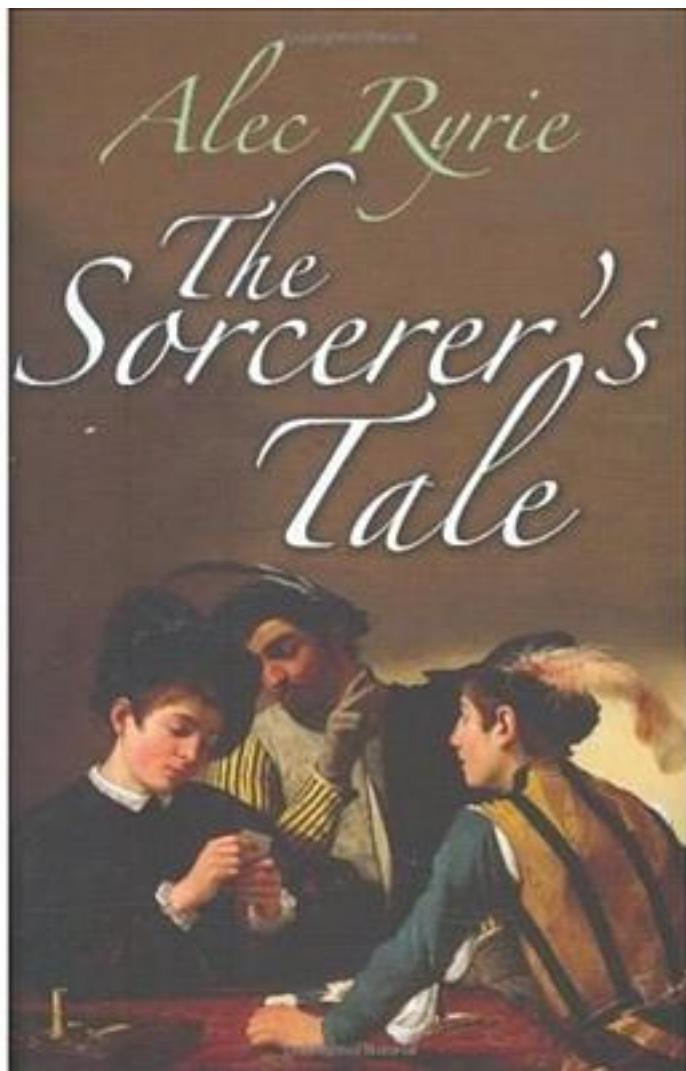


The Sorcerer's Tale



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An earl's son, plotting murder by witchcraft; conjuring spirits to find buried treasure; a stolen coat embroidered with pure silver; crooked gaming-houses and brothels; a terrifying new disease, and the self-trained surgeon who claims he can treat it. This is the world of Gregory Wisdom, a physician, magician, and consummate con-man at work in sixteenth-century London. In this book, Alec Ryrie uses previously unknown documents to reconstruct this extraordinary man's career. The journey takes us through the cut-throat business of early modern medicine, down to Tudor London's gangland of fraud and organized crime; from the world of Renaissance magi and Kabbalistic conjurers to street-corner wizards; and into the chaotic, exhilarating religious upheavals of the Reformation. On the way, we learn how Tudor England's dignified public face and its rapacious underworld were intimately connected to each other. Gregory Wisdom's career is an object lesson in how to conjure up wealth and respectability from nothing in a turbulent age. And it provides a unique glimpse into a world intoxicated with new ideas, where it was impossible to know quite what to believe - or who to trust.

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