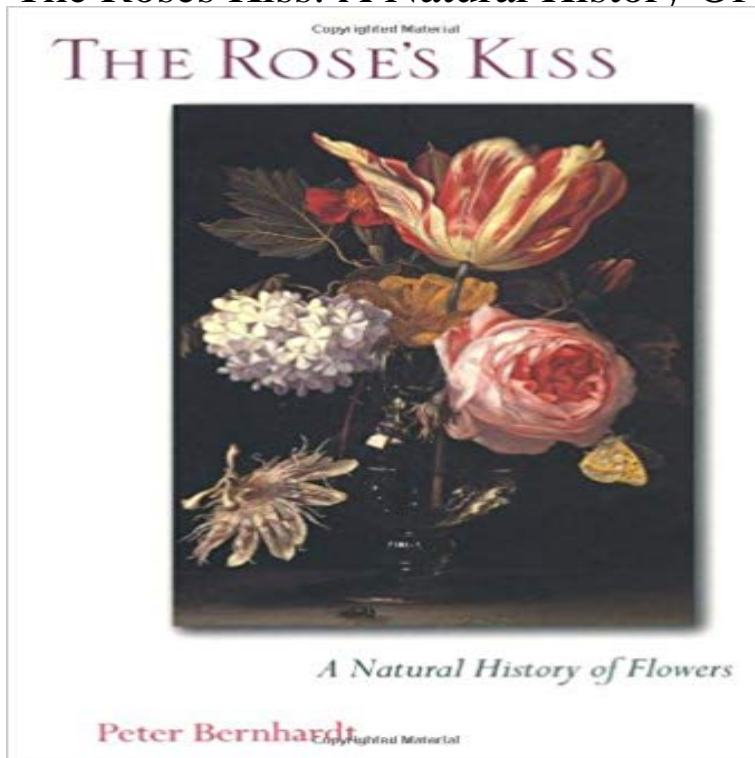


The Roses Kiss: A Natural History Of Flowers



Flowers bring joy and beauty to our lives, from the smallest patch of daisies outside our window to the elaborate floral decorations on display at weddings, banquets, and funerals. As well as offering aesthetic benefits, they teach us much about how the world works—each blossom is a living factory that manufactures organs and compounds ranging from the flavonoids that make a rose red to the pollen that gives us hayfever. In *The Rose's Kiss*, botanist Peter Bernhardt rekindles our sense of wonder at the plant life all around us. He presents a fascinating and wide-ranging look at the natural history of flowers—their forms and functions as well as their hidden interactions with the surrounding environment and the other living organisms they depend upon for survival. Using both familiar and exotic examples, he examines: flower architecture, including the wonderfully descriptive names of floral parts and their respective roles in a plant's life-cycle; the secret exchange between a bud and its environment that determines blooming time and the lifespan of individual blossoms; colors, scents, and other mechanisms that plants use to attract pollinators and keep them returning season after season; the incredible diversity of organisms that pollinate plants—cockroaches, flies, moths, parrots, hummingbirds, bats, and others; extinct plants and their fossil blossoms, showing the evolution of flowering plants over the past 125 million years and much more. Delightfully interwoven with intriguing facts and stories from history, folklore, and mythology, *The Rose's Kiss* is a wonderful example of literary science writing at its best. It should hold wide appeal for nature lovers, garden enthusiasts, and anyone interested in learning more about the inner workings of the natural world.

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