

ELIXIR

BRIAN
FAGAN

READ BY JAMES LANGTON

"At a time of increasing threats of regional 'water wars,' *Elixir* provides crucial temporal depth and worldwide scope to an emerging water scarcity crisis that we can no longer ignore." —R. GWINN VIVIAN, author of *The Chaco Handbook*

From ancient Mesopotamia to the parched present of the Sun Belt, Brian Fagan's *Elixir* spans five millennia of human relationships with water—relationships that have shaped every human society. Fagan's sweeping narrative moves across the world, from ancient Greece and Rome, whose mighty aqueducts still supply modern cities, to China, where emperors marshaled armies of laborers in a centuries-long struggle to tame powerful rivers.

Fagan sets out three ages of water. In the first age, which lasted thousands of years, water was scarce or at best unpredictable—so precious that it became sacred in almost every culture. By the time of the Industrial Revolution—the second age—human ingenuity had made water flow even in the most arid landscapes. Water was no longer a mystical force to be worshipped but a commodity to be exploited. The American desert glittered with swimming pools with little regard for sustainability. Today, as the earth's population explodes and ancient aquifers run dry, we are entering a third age of water, in which we will have to learn once again to show humility, even reverence, for this vital liquid. To solve the water crises of the future, we may need to adapt the water ethos of our ancestors.

Brian Fagan was born in England, did fieldwork in Africa, and taught at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His many books include *Cro-Magnon*, *Fish on Friday*, *The Little Ice Age*, *The Long Summer*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *The Great Warming*.

Actor James Langton trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He has narrated numerous audiobooks, including *Globish* by Robert McCrum and Fagan's *Cro-Magnon*, for which he won an *AudioFile* Earphones Award. Born in York, England, James is now based in New York City.



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Running Time: 13.5 Hours • Unabridged

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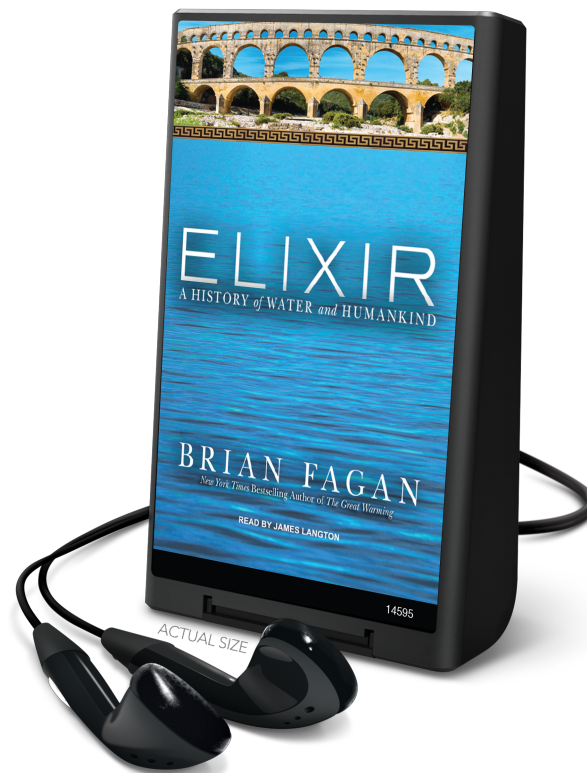


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