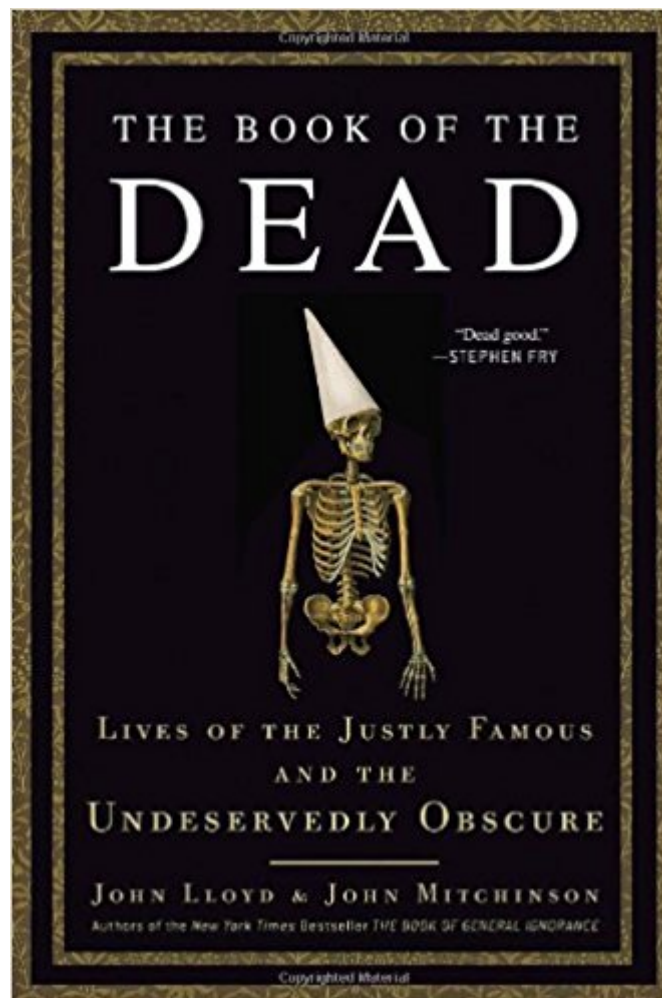




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# The Book Of The Dead: Lives Of The Justly Famous And The Undeservedly Obscure



## Synopsis

The team behind the New York Times bestseller *The Book of General Ignorance* turns conventional biography on its head and shakes out the good stuff. Following their Herculean or is it Sisyphean? efforts to save the living from ignorance, the two wittiest Johns in the English language turn their attention to the dead. As the authors themselves say, “The first thing that strikes you about the Dead is just how many of them there are.” Helpfully, Lloyd and Mitchinson have employed a simple but ruthless criterion for inclusion: the dead person has to be interesting. Here, then, is a dictionary of the dead, an encyclopedia of the embalmed. Ludicrous in scope, whimsical in its arrangement, this wildly entertaining tome presents pithy and provocative biographies of the no-longer-living from the famous to the undeservedly and until now permanently obscure. Spades in hand, Lloyd and Mitchinson have dug up everything embarrassing, fascinating, and downright weird about their subjects’ lives and added their own uniquely irreverent observations. Organized by capricious categories such as dead people who died virgins, who kept pet monkeys, who lost limbs, whose corpses refused to stay put, the dearly departed, from the inventor of the stove to a cross-dressing, bear-baiting female gangster finally receive the epitaphs they truly deserve. Discover: \* Why Freud had a lifelong fear of trains \* The one thing that really made Isaac Newton laugh \* How Catherine the Great really died (no horse was involved) Much like the country doctor who cured smallpox (he’s in here), Lloyd and Mitchinson have the perfect antidote for anyone out there dying of boredom. *The Book of the Dead* like life itself is hilarious, tragic, bizarre, and amazing. You may never pass a graveyard again without chuckling.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this biographical miscellany, British authors Lloyd and Mitchinson scan the lives of "three score and eight" historical figures ranging from the world famous (Marx, Freud, Alexander the Great) to the forgotten (Mary Seacole, Titus Oates, Archibald Belaney). The authors' aim with these capsule sketches is to provide material about their subjects that "their official biographers would have unquestionably left out." This means sex, of course, but also includes mental illness, hearsay, and just plain bad taste. As the average sketch runs about four pages, there is not much opportunity for depth. The authors' combat this through prurience, glib psychologizing, and by linking their subjects thematically: Leonardo da Vinci and Lord Byron are in the same section because they had "a bad start in life," while Genghis Khan and Robert Peary were "driven

to do it." "Trivia buffs and know-it-alls alike will exult to find so much repeatable wisdom gathered in one place." [New York Times](#) "Eye-watering, eyebrow-raising, terrific . . . moving slightly faster than your brain does, so that you haven't quite absorbed the full import of one blissful item of trivial information before two or three more come along." [Daily Mail \(UK\)](#) "Lloyd and Mitchinson dare to ask questions I stopped asking when I supposedly learned to know better." [Associated Press](#) "Dead Good." [Stephen Fry](#)

Here is another fun, fascinating book from "the Johns" from BBC's Quite Interesting show. This time around they are featuring short biographies. Some of the bios features things you probably don't know about some very famous people. Others are about very interesting people you probably know little or nothing about, but who are nevertheless intriguing. I never knew Henry Ford had so many strange quirks. I never knew Buckminster Fuller's life was changed by a personal tragedy. Some reviewers are trying to make sense out of the chapter categories. Really, I don't think it matters. The authors are just having fun with chapters about people who had pet monkeys, etc. Just read and enjoy the biographies without looking for any central theme. As in their other books, this one is about knowledge for its own sake. These guys just enjoy sharing interesting, entertaining information. Enjoy this book, and then look for their other books. I only wish we could watch their show here in America. BTW, I read the Kindle version, and had no e-readers problems with it at all.

The font was bold and clear. The "go to" features all worked.

GREAT

Why pick up this book, why not? It was very inspiring reading these stories of flawed humans, people I was always taught to admire for reasons due to fame. I read about real people with horrid, sometimes messy lives, who go on to make something of themselves. Something I'm currently trying to do for myself, because I am capable. I could not have had a better book to read at such a turning point in my life.

I did enjoy this book. It details little known facts about well known people of history and more obscure people of history. Some of the obscure people were really unheard of and thus not as interesting to read about. The book is well written, each person of topic has around 6 pages written about them, so the book is easy to read in bits and pieces as you desire. I liked it.

Interesting, and I found some of the accounts hilarious! It is informative, and best of all, great shorter reads nice for carrying to appointments, waiting for a plane, or short breaks when the kids are down.

This is an excellent book for those periods between finishing one serious read and beginning another. It's not a book you want to read all at once, just nibble at it from time to time. It is very well constructed and written with both serious reflection and dry humor where applicable. Some of the information contained herein, about the lives and accomplishments of the famous and not so famous, is fascinating.

Anecdotes from history. Lots of short stories woven into pretty little themes. Learned much about the lives of historical figures would not have bothered with separately. Read it over the course of many months. Very easy to pick up and set down.

I was gifted with this book from one of cousins when I was visiting back home. After reading the first few chapters I promptly ordered the book for a friend of mine. I would highly suggest this for any avid reader who enjoys learning while reading, esp since this is presented in such a humorous and interesting manner.

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