



# **Mental Floss Presents Forbidden Knowledge: A Wickedly Smart Guide to History's Naughtiest Bits (Mental Floss Presents)**

*Will Pearson (Editor), Elizabeth Hunt (Editor), Mangesh Hattikudur (Editor)*

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Think of anything bad, from art heists to Genghis Kahn, and it's likely to be included in this wickedly smart and humorous guide to the seedy underbelly of basically everything. The brainiac team at "mental\_floss", creators of the hit magazine and last year's *Condensed Knowledge*, have scoured the darkest, dirtiest corners of history and the globe to gather this ultimate collection of the bad stuff you're not supposed to know and you certainly never learned in school.

Organized by theme, with chapters for each of the seven deadly sins, the book includes feuds, plagiarists, hoaxes, lies, schemes, scandals, evil dictators, mob bosses, acts of revenge, angry queens, cannibals and much more, all organized into bite-sized—albeit foul-tasting—lists (i.e. "The Fascist Style Guide: Five Dictator Grooming Tips", "Four Biblical Girls Gone Wild" and "Three Delicious Animals We Charbroiled Into Extinction."). It's the perfect way to add some spice to a dull conversation and proves that learning can be not only easy, but exquisitely sinful.

## **Mental Floss Presents Forbidden Knowledge: A Wickedly Smart Guide to History's Naughtiest Bits (Mental Floss Presents) Details**

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## **From Reader Review Mental Floss Presents Forbidden Knowledge: A Wickedly Smart Guide to History's Naughtiest Bits (Mental Floss Presents) for online ebook**

### **Jackie Coghlin says**

I found it funny...even if it was inaccurate. ?

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### **Sandra Strange says**

This miscellany of historical topics covers R rated bits such as monarchs' sexual proclivities to national inferiority complexes and the wars they caused. The varied historical topics are organized according to the Medieval church's Seven Deadly Sins (Lust being one, thus the sexual stuff). It's all historical and tastefully presented, very informative and quite entertaining (but R rated just by its topics, but only in places, well labeled and easily skipped).

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### **Kelley says**

Another fun book from the folks at Mental Floss that want you to have fun while learning "new stuff". This time they take the theme of the Seven Deadly Sins and fill you in on the secrets of the world and people you may or may not have heard of.

History like this ignores the importance of dates and dead people, but this is Mozart once you have mastered the scales. Have fun.

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### **Pewterbreath says**

This is one of those random facts books that is fun to kinda doodle through in the bathroom or while waiting for a bus or something. I don't think it's particularly significant, in the sense that you don't really LEARN anything, but it's an entertaining little fillip--and actually list books are quite addictive.

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### **Jim says**

Basically candy for the trivia set. Much I had already read about, but still many good and interesting tidbits, though honestly I cherry picked my way through the volume, as some subjects simply didn't interest me all that much. More than a few things to both make you smile, and also disgust. I like Mental Floss online. A nice diversion from the regular reading fare.

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## **Jen says**

I love trivia and it's my secret dream to go on Jeopardy someday, so this book was fascinating to me. However, I don't think that I would refer to all of these entries as "wicked." In fact, there were many where I didn't see the link to the chapter heading.

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## **Spazfungus says**

Unfortunately the dedication "Mental Floss would like to thank the Devil for making a book about sins possible....and Voldemort. It's your inspiration that truly fills this book" was the wittiest most well written part of this book. Look for intelligent historical satire elsewhere

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## **Clare says**

You will be smarter after reading this book. Your IQ score probably won't change but you'll be able to hold your own on some very interesting conversations.

Some of the facts contained here were surprising. Most were new to me, but some were not. In either case, The authors presented the facts in a new light and with humor.

This is a great read for someone who does not have time to sit down and read a full book at length. Instead you can pick up a chapter here or there and set it down for a couple weeks. When you return, you don't need to remember where you left off - each chapter can stand alone.

The book is equally as enjoyable as reading a Mental Floss magazine. Enjoy!

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## **Vanessa says**

This is an awesome book for trivia junkies who love to pull out shockers at opportune times. It's split up in sections by topic (Lust, Greed, etc.), and each little portion is only 3-6 snippets. It's PERFECT for pre-slugger reading, where you want to get a little bit in, but prefer something not too heavy, that your half-asleep brain will be able to digest. I recommend!

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## **Schnauel says**

It's an entertaining read, especially if you only have a few minutes here and there to do some reading. As with any book of this nature, if you know something about a subject before reading the book and they offer a different explanation you wonder about the accuracy of the rest of the information.

I've read in other places that the Spanish Flu started in America, not China, and the reason it was called the Spanish Flu was because their newspapers openly acknowledged it and the devastation it was causing in contrast to other countries where it was kept quiet so as to not lower morale. Mental\_floss says that it's called

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the Spanish Flu because it hit Spain particularly hard.

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## **Diana says**

Bite sized lists of historical information are presented within the confines of the seven deadly sins.

A fun trivia book, even if the connections of the lists to the sins were sometimes extremely tenuous. I read this on the Kindle, so I'm not sure if the oddly inserted sidebars are a fault of the book or the conversion to digital format.

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## **Grayson says**

This has some serious factual errors in it. I mean, really basic stuff -- I'm sorry, guys, but pepper was NOT used to mask the taste of spoiled food. Ugh. I gave up about 10% of the way through, during the incredibly inaccurate section on Christopher Columbus.

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## **Jonathan Lu says**

As a sometimes reader of their magazine, figured I would be interested to pick this one up to learn some more random facts for my useless array of interesting info. Book began pretty blas?... dictators have weird mustaches and clothing, bands require weird demands for their contracts but not that witty or entertaining. Here's one I'll be sure to google... article published by Alan Sokal - "transgressing the boundaries: toward a transformative hermeneutics of quantum physics", which he wrote in order to demonstrate the ease at which a fake and meaningless article could be published without peer review and picked up by scientific journals.

In the chapter about sex, some great quotes... from Clark gable's wife - "god knows I love Clark, but he's the worst lay in town. If he had one inch less he'd be the queen of Hollywood." Wilt the Stilt - "If you look at it, you can say that I had so many women because I was such a bad lover, they never came back a second time." How did flirting go down during Victorian times? Evidently women had a complex system of signals using fans to communicate discreetly - touch right cheek = ok, left = not interested.

And who knew that the founder of Kellogg cereal was a masturbation expert? Evidently he created cornflakes with the thought of how to get people to beat it less through improved diet. I'll have to pick up the bible again... evidently in chapter 18 of the first book of Samuel, it's written how Saul asked for the foreskins of 100 philistines from David in order to grant permission to marry his daughter. Expecting that David would die trying, he instead came back with 200 foreskins, and wedding bells rang.

What else did I learn about Russia? Evidently Rasputin had a 12" cock, and how he managed to remain in such control over Czar Nicolas was that Nick's wife was in love with him. And Catherine the great did not die of sex with a horse after all, but an aneurysm while shitting. Ok so there were far more chapters than just sex, but that's all I got.

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## **Katie says**

Blurbs of history. Broken up by the Seven Deadly Sins. Interesting, but only a few paragraphs are written about each topic. Glossed over some of the topics. Definitely interesting for someone who wants "just the facts." Definitely loaded with trivia. Liked the Pride and Sloth sections best.

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## **Ben says**

Fun easy little 'trivia' book to read. Sound facts, though there is no citations (but mental\_floss is a pretty good accredited source, so there might be only small trivial issues), it's easy to read, and light, basically a bathroom book. Broken down into the 7 deadly sins, it ranges the gambit from tiny and trivial interesting facts to large facts that we don't know (but probably should) to things like you know X but it's really Y. Overall fun book.

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