



Mostly Rapscallions: Salient Sillies about the Rich and Infamous in History

P.J. Sullivan

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This new slant on history is more up-to-date than Herodotus, more digestible than Gibbon, more fun than a barrel of Toynbees. It is stranger than fiction, but definitely not fiction. No one could make up this stuff!

Think you know history? Who were the good guys during the Petticoat War? What did Marie Antoinette see in Louie XVI? Did Casanova ever find true love? Why did Benito Mussolini stop wearing bowler hats? Why did Joan of Arc hang out with the world's wickedest man? Who was Cupid Dewey and why should you care? Get up-to-date with this entertaining and informative book of irreverent revelations about the jokers in history's deck. Because history is not just a boring litany of dates and battles, it is a cockeyed cavalcade of lunacy.

Mostly Rapscallions: Salient Sillies about the Rich and Infamous in History Details

Date : Published April 2012 by Infinity Publishing (first published September 19th 2008)

ISBN : 9780741461674

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Format : Paperback 270 pages

Genre : History, Humor, Biography, Nonfiction



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From Reader Review Mostly Rapscallions: Salient Sillies about the Rich and Infamous in History for online ebook

Richard Sahn says

Exciting and bitingly satirical. Just what the doctor ordered for those of us who don't trust authority figures who are famous and established as heroes. This book has three things to offer a reader: history, biography, and humor. The first two are rock solid. The author did his homework and the reader might even learn something. The humor does not always work, but some of it could make a cow laugh!

This is a book about people who made history, their quirks and human sides. It takes mere names out of history books and makes them into real people. They are a representative sampling from Western civilization: presidents and generals, jacks and queens, misers, serial killers, bloodsuckers, warmongers, weirdos, wackos, all-around bad guys, etc. Something for every taste. Some are well known: Napoleon, Hitler, U. S. Grant. Some are not so well known: Anthony Comstock, Gilles de Rais, Hetty Green. But all are curious case histories reflective of their times. They prove that the rapscallions who plague us today are nothing new.

There could be a better gender balance—a few more chapters about female rapscallions. The subjects range from 15th century France to 20th century America. Europe and the United States are well represented, plus forays into the histories of Mexico, South Africa, and India. There is a lot of history here.

Not recommended to Pollyannas who cannot handle negativity, because this is satire—not a polite literary form. It can get caustic at times, but always in good fun.

A quick and enjoyable read with substance. A funny book on a theme of historical biography. The many illustrations are appropriate and artfully done.

1957tabbycat says

This book is well researched and will be enjoyed by both seasoned students of history as well as novices.

The illustrations are outstanding, and there are many.

Humor in the style of Jonathan Swift.

You think times are bad now and politicians are thieves and rapscallions or worse. They were in the good old days, the golden age and every other time.

No doubt Sullivan would like to go after today's politicos too I think he does not want to be sued or worse!

Andrea Love says

This is a delightful and irreverent look at historical figures you only thought you knew. Your history books in school never could have included the numerous flaws and despicable behaviors so many historical figures had. But, really, they are people too, plain and simple, warts and all. This book reads quickly, the author has done a fantastic job of getting right to the point with each character. This is an excellent change of pace for anyone who feels stuck in a rut, or looking for a sarcastic or more realistic portraits of the past.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the author through the GoodReads FirstReads Giveaway program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 [...] : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

A.B. Shepherd says

I won this book in a Goodreads Giveaway and I was so excited to get it in the mail along with a brief note from the author. I really, really wanted to love it. After all, interesting tidbits about some famous historical figures...what is not to love, right?

I hate to say I didn't love it. The author writes as if we are all historians and know exactly who and what he is referring to when he throws words around such as last names of figures I've never heard of, as well as references to historical events or political catch phrases of the time period in which the figures lived. In addition he uses foot notes which aren't necessary as foot notes. They contain some interesting tidbits of information, but there is no reason they could not have just been included as part of the text. It is almost as if he feels since the book is about history it requires foot notes.

I really wish I had loved this book. In the end, I couldn't force myself to read more than half of it. It does contain some interesting facts, but I didn't really enjoy it.

P.J. Sullivan says

This book proves that history can be fun, when viewed through the lives of the jokers who made it. Sure it can be boring in the abstract, when seen in terms of political or economic isms, of territorial boundaries or dates or battles; but on the human level, the up-close and personal level, it becomes a cavalcade of psychological case histories. Because historical personages were real people, as nutty as the rest of us. To understand them is to understand the world they created. Is there a more entertaining way to learn history? This is nonfiction, fact-based satire. Based on real facts, it is real history. These personages took part in real historical events: the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the Petticoat War, the Dreadful Decade, the porkless Thursdays of World War I. Lots of history here, between the laughs. As Edgar Johnson said, "Satire is enjoyable compensation for being forced to think." This book is ideal for multitaskers who would like to laugh and learn at the same time.

Printed in easy-to-read 12 pt. type for your reading pleasure. More than fifty illustrations. With footnotes that

are admittedly unnecessary, but how could we do without them? Passed by the grammar police. Guaranteed free of those annoying split infinitives and dangling participles. And no cheap puns! Well, OK, a few. But hardly any! You probably won't even notice them. Released in an updated third edition in April 2012. Read it now, while it is still legal. Recommended to readers who think history is boring. It doesn't have to be! You'll see. Not recommended to grumps and gourches who have no sense of humor. Ask your doctor if "Mostly Rapscallions" is right for you.

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Lois says

Described by their author as “unauthorized uncut uncensored uncouth,” these potted pen pictures of (in)famous people from the past may be unofficial, but are, nevertheless, well researched and largely verifiable biographical accounts of some of the most interesting characters that have ever walked this Earth, including “religious wackos” (such as Oliver Cromwell and Anthony Comstock), “Imperialist Warmongers” (such as Hernan Cortes and Napoleon Bonaparte), and “Popular Hate Figures” (such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini). From the sampling of names, you can already see that the figures are of international (ill) repute—and no wonder, as one can see from checking out P.J. Sullivan’s credentials. After studying history “in the field” (the form of field is anyone’s guess, but, from all accounts, appears to have been rather muddy and trodden down by sundry bovine and porcine species) in over a dozen countries, and after five years of “total immersion” (which once more begs the question “In what?”—certainly anything but holy water m’thinks, as his portrayal of the religious is far from being sanctimonious and above the surplice), Sullivan returned to his country of birth, where he now resides in Humboldt County, California. No doubt his current residence also has much to do with his openness of expression and his scandalous disregard for the proprieties that should, lawfully or by divine right (in some cases both), be accorded the esteemed dignities (lol) that he describes.

Mostly Rapscallions: Salient Sillies about the Rich and the Infamous in History is a romp through history, with a focus on the bizarre and challenging (sometimes challenged) personalities who, largely of their own volition, chose to stand out above the rest of us more ordinary and prosaic folk, mainly to their own detriment, albeit they must have wished it rather differently. Sullivan is a master of the art of showing the not-so-salubrious sides of those who tried their utmost to show the rest of the world how truly extraordinary and exceptional they were. Too bad that so many of them landed up in an untimely end...

Strictly not for use as a school or college history primer, *Mostly Rapscallions: Salient Sillies about the Rich and the Infamous in History* is fun to read and a delight to behold, including, as it does, numerous illustrations of the redoubtable personages that people these pages. As with all satire, there is a deeper intent than the mere entertainment of the reader, though, which is summed up by Sullivan’s pertinent question in his Introduction to this quaint gem of a book: “What better way to deal with tyrants and bullies than by laughing them out of town?”

Jane says

This is a satirical look at some of history's scoundrels. Too much satire and not enough history for my tastes. The bibliographical sources are listed as library resources at a couple of library systems. The picture sources are cited though.

Dinda Lestarini says

It was really fun to read this book.

Wes Gehring says

P.J. Sullivan's "Mostly Rapscallions" is the best humor book to come along in "years"! The comedy text's subtitle provides a capsule view of its contents: "Salient Sillies About the Rich and the Infamous in History." Sullivan's inspires heckling of history is reminiscent of the work of Will Cuppy's "The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody" and Richard Armour's "The Classics Reclassified." Sullivan's text is also a fun shish kabobbing of academia, including laugh out loud footnotes, such as: "Bismarck slept with his hounds. I don't know where his wife slept. It's really none of my business," or "Ivan [The Terrible] must have lots of descendants alive today, but they don't seem to want to talk about him." History wrapped in humor is the only way to go, since you're laughing your way to intelligence ... well, maybe not you over in the corner. Regardless, Sullivan's satire is 5 STARS all the way. Wes Gehring

Martha says

hilarious exposure of truly bad behavior among the muckety-mucks of history. A fun read

Pauline says

Really fun to read. I especially enjoyed P.J.Sullivan's caustic wit and his excellent understanding of the history behind the lives of the various "rapscallions'. He has a good feeling for the territories he is writing about.

Sara Corbin says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I've often thought there's a tendency to romanticize the "good old days" in general, which may be a human psychological need on some level, but reading this book certainly is a good reminder that corruption is certainly nothing new on the political or world stage!

Hema says

This is the most interesting book that i have read recently. I had a good laugh and reading history was never interesting. I can't imagine the amount of research the author must have done. This book is a keeper.

Chris Fletcher says

This book was won through a Goodreads Giveaway ... thanks to P.J. Sullivan (the author) for donating it

PJ Sullivan has picked 26 historical characters to victimise with this irreverent set of short biographies.

In the preface the author promises a 'carefully hidden ... laugh in each chapter of the book'. He is not lying - but unfortunately the laughs are hidden, or almost buried, amongst many groans. Some "jokes" are truly terrible! To be honest there is a point in each essay which reminds me of my grandfather rambling incoherently after one too many whiskies, with a crazed gleam in his eye.

Despite the front cover's claim to be 'Unauthorised Uncut Uncensored Uncouth' I felt the book to be lacking the venomous and incisive wit that creates great satire - more than once Sullivan teases you with a hint of juicy detail, only to stop in his tracks claiming that he can't possibly say it in a family book like this.

Nevertheless, the book is interesting and I suspect that it would be a great present to a young teenager interested in history who is too old for Terry Deary's Horrible Histories and has not yet discovered the brilliant 1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England. It really does make you want to find out more about a few characters he has attacked.

As the title (if not the preface) suggests, this book is more 'silly' than 'satire'. I would like to have seen the author include more primary material: the satires, jokes or letters of contempt from when each character was alive, for example Gillray's prints or soldiers jokes about Hitler.

Overall, it was an enjoyable read and there were a few chuckles to be had with the added bonus of some interesting facts.

Cheryl says

From the description: "Get up-to-date with this entertaining and informative book of irreverent revelations about the jokers in history's deck. It is stranger than fiction, but definitely not fiction. No one could make up this stuff!"
