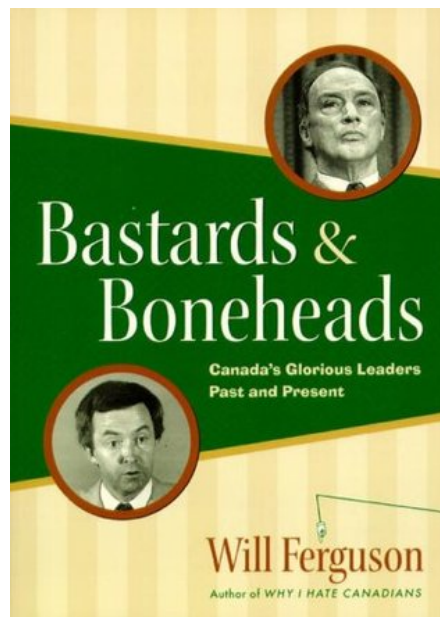




Bastards & Boneheads: Canada's Glorious Leaders, Past and Present

Will Ferguson

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Bastards & Boneheads: Canada's Glorious Leaders, Past and Present Will Ferguson

This is it! After years of research, often late into the night, best-selling author Will Ferguson has come up with the most sophisticated system ever devised for evaluating Canadian leadership. It's called BASTARDS AND BONEHEADS.

Bastards succeed. Whether their goals are noble or immoral, Bastards are ruthless. Active. They cause events to unfold by an act of focussed will. Boneheads fail, usually by stumbling over their own two feet. Boneheads are reactive. Inept. They cause events to unfold mainly by accident. Bastards screw Canada. Boneheads just screw up.

BASTARDS AND BONEHEADS makes an excellent parlour game. Pierre Trudeau was a Bastard. Joe Clark was not. Brian Mulroney managed to be both. Your turn: Jean Chrétien—Bastard or Bonehead?

But Ferguson doesn't limit himself to the prime ministers. No, sir. He takes on the full sweep of Canadian history, examining and evaluating the key personalities behind our most momentous events. When the English captured Quebec in 1759, was it a "Battle of Boneheads" or a "Contest of Bastards"? Was the War of 1812 won by Bastards? Or lost by Boneheads? From the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War to Canada's contribution to the Holocaust, from the battle for women's rights to the rise of the separatist movement, Will Ferguson looks at our past head-on, wars and all. This is history on the edge: opinionated, hard-hitting, outrageous and always thought-provoking. Watch out, Canada. Will Ferguson is headed our way.

Bastards & Boneheads: Canada's Glorious Leaders, Past and Present Details

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From Reader Review Bastards & Boneheads: Canada's Glorious Leaders, Past and Present for online ebook

Ben says

Consistent with Canadians' self-deprecating sense of humor, this is an entirely readable and entertaining account of Canadian history. Ferguson classifies all prime ministers--- and indeed all major figures of Canadian history--- as either bastards (successful at implementing their agenda, regardless of whether it was good or bad for Canada) and boneheads (abject failures at whatever they were trying to accomplish). I've read and re-read it so many times, my copy is starting to fall apart! Highly recommended for any Canadian, particularly those who want to learn more about this land's history, but usually find it too damn boring. Trust me, Bastards and Boneheads is the antidote to dreary history textbooks!

Lynn says

Alrighty. This book is HILARIOUS. The only reason I didn't give it 5 stars is because of the title and because each of the PMs is rated as one or the other at the end of each chapter. So, if you don't care about the wording--go ahead! Give it 5! I go back to this when I want a refresher in Canadian PMs and/or a good chuckle. Now THIS is how we should have learned about these guys in school!

Rebecca says

The title suggests it's about Canada's leaders but it's actually a great history read. Actually, it's by far the best history book I've read about Canada. Other Canadian history books are so hard to get into that I lose interest but this one I was able to read because it didn't feel like a boring history lecture.

Marion Thompson says

I agree with the conclusion in that the " lessons we learn, the events we choose to forget, and the issues we choose to ignore have a lasting impact both in present policies and on future goals. A nation with no sense of its past has very little understanding of its present - and very little chance of controlling its future. History is a verdict and we are all on the jury."

Nadine Anderson says

Delightful, irreverent, and hilarious, but also highly informative. If Bastards and Boneheads was used to teach Canadian schoolchildren about Canadian history, they might actually sit up and pay attention.

Shane Mackenzie says

I love this book. As a budding political historian, this gave context and humour to the figures I most adore studying i.e. The Prime Ministers. It was brutal to all. Thus, it was fair. I immensely enjoyed this and will assuredly crack this open again when I need a chuckle.

Erika says

I have to say that I have learned more about the history or Canadian Politics from this book than I ever had in High School. I wish they gave me this book to read back then. This has inspired me to read more and learn more about our political systems.

It's too bad that Will Ferguson wrote this before Harper came into power, he certainly wouldn't have named Molroney the worst PM ever - although at that time he was right, as I would have loved to hear his take on our current political nightmarish situation. It would have been fun to read his views on Paul Martin as well.

This book takes a real hard look at our relationship with our Aboriginal peoples, the French citizens and how the women of Canada contributed to the life blood of this nation. Ferguson makes Canadian politics interesting and, almost, fun to read about.

I thoroughly enjoyed this and will recommend it to everyone I know and ever meet in the future.

Pat says

Look out, Parliament Hill! Will Ferguson is here...

This irreverent but incisive book will have you laughing so hard, you'll forget that Canadian history is supposed to be boring. As he characterizes a significant cross-section of important figures in our past as either "Bastards"(who "screw Canada") or "Boneheads" (who "screw up"), he also explains in witty detail why they earned the rating he gave them. His commentary is not restricted to the Prime Ministers; for example, both Nellie McClung and Tecumseh also make the "Bastard" list.

This book should be required reading for all introductory courses in Canadian History...

Kathleen McRae says

Funny and excellent!

Bianca Woods says

Great book for anyone who argues Canadian History isn't interesting. Ferguson's take on Canadian leaders is humorous and accessible, yet doesn't dumb down complicated issues. Honestly, if I could teach a history

course built around this book (or Ferguson's equally fascinating Canadian History for Dummies) I'm sure I could get more Canadians excited about their history.

Vanessa says

A terrifically funny and insightful book from a very funny man. I learned a great deal about Canadian history and politics.

I made the mistake of lending it to a political reporter, who never returned it (and indeed disavowed all knowledge of borrowing it in the first place, the cad), so I had to buy a second copy the next time I visited Canada.

Emily says

I'm not sure why, but I was not able to get into this book as well as Ferguson's others. Admittedly, I didn't actually finish it...I got about part way through the last section where he goes through a ranked list of Canada's prime ministers. Since I am not sure what it is about this book that couldn't capture my attention, I'm still giving it a fair rating, as what I did read was interesting, and it may just be my particular attempt at reading it that failed. No matter, I highly recommend all of Ferguson's other works of nonfiction pertaining to Canada's history and society. He's a gifted writer with a great sense of humor and perspective.

Megan Bowers says

Recommended for: people who want to learn about Canadian history but don't want to read a boring textbook.

Even though I would say I had a pretty firm grasp on Canadian history before reading this book, I still learnt quite a bit. The authour knows his stuff and doesn't shy away from talking about the less-talked about darker parts of our history, including our legacy of racism, xenophobia, and our utterly horrendous treatment of the First Nations peoples.

Even though I think the method of categorizing historical figures as either "Bastard" or "Bonehead" is a bit too simplistic, the way in which the different characters were brought to life made this book, in my opinion, an interesting and enjoyable read.

Gina says

I read this ages ago and it was what made me realize that Canadian history can be just as enjoyable as any other. This is a very Canadian look at Canadian history and anyone who thinks our history is boring clearly hasn't read it.

Liz says

I used to hate history - particularly Canadian history. How many ways can you spell b-o-r-i-n-g? This guy (rude, irreverent, opinionated, smart, an exhaustive researcher) changed my mind. Whadya know...history can be entertaining AND instructive! Important because those who don't know history are bound to repeat it blah blah blah. All true. Will Ferguson, you changed my life and my reading habits.

Brandon says

When I couldn't figure out what to read after the latest Dennis Lehane novel and before Don Winslow's forthcoming epic due out later this month (The Force), Alaina handed me a book that she had been suggesting I read for a while now - Will Ferguson's "Bastards & Boneheads". Annoyed with the same old criteria for evaluating Canada's leaders past and present, Ferguson breaks everyone down into two categories - you're either a hard-nosed, uncompromising bastard, or a clueless bonehead who mostly stumbled into success or wallowed in failure.

As a kid in grade school, I was taught Canadian history and try as I might, I couldn't find it in me to care. The subject matter just didn't line up with my interests, which isn't surprising considering all I wanted to do was watch professional wrestling, play video games and eat snacks - wait, has anything changed? I guess now that I'm a bit older, my curiosity has gotten the better of me. I actually do care how this country was founded and developed! I do want to learn about important historical figures and events! I suppose I'm a grown-up now.

If only all history texts could be written like this! With Bastards and Boneheads, Ferguson painstakingly researched the men and women who helped shape Canada and with the help of a healthy dose of snark, produces an entertaining AND informative read. If you thought Canada was this tremendous country without blemishes, you'll think twice after reading Ferguson's book. Whether it's our mistreatment of the Native population, the mistreatment of early Acadian settlers, the mistreatment of the French population, Canada's unapologetic racism during the Second World War.. it all adds up to an often embarrassing history.

It's not all bad though! Ferguson does write about several Canadians with impressive histories such as Laura Secord, Agnes MacPhail, Louis Riel and many others. He writes of bloody battles within Canada and around the globe. The last chunk of the book details Canada's 20 (up to then) Prime Ministers as he tries to rank them from impressive to idiotic. His write ups on former Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney are interesting as both are memorable for completely different reasons (Ferguson declares Mulroney to be the worst PM in Canada's history).

Bastards & Boneheads is a great read for someone who perceived Canadian history to be "boring". It is a relatively quick read clocking in at just under 300 pages (before sources/glossary), so I was done before I knew it. Luckily, I'm not left wanting more as he has a variety of books to grab next.

Teresa says

A great way to explore Canadian history.

I appreciated the overview of the Quebec constitutional challenges and the First Nations situation. Helps me understand complex relationships and the reasons or at least, issues that leading up to where we are today.

Tekenduis says

Will Ferguson takes Canadian History on head-to-head, no holds barred. From far before the dawn of Canada, to the reign of Jean Chretien, Ferguson ranks our countries Prime Ministers, and Leaders according to his rather elegant system: "Bastards screw Canada. Boneheads just screw up." From Samuel de Champlain (Bastard) to Jean Chretien (likewise), no one is safe.

Katherine says

If this book were required reading in schools, you would have far more kids not only knowing something about Canadian history, but interested in learning more. I am embarrassed by how little I know, but in my defense, we were taught precious little of it, and what we were taught was dead boring.

Some of what I learned wasn't pleasant - we Canadians aren't always as nice as our reputation would have you believe - but it was all fascinating, and because it is being relayed by Will Ferguson, often hilarious.

Kirstin says

An interesting way to posit Canada's leaders--certainly a provocative title to catch the eye. Yet it kept getting buried in my "currently reading" pile. I made it well into the twentieth century history however, and the "Canadians are just so nice" assumption got a little more tarnished along the way.
