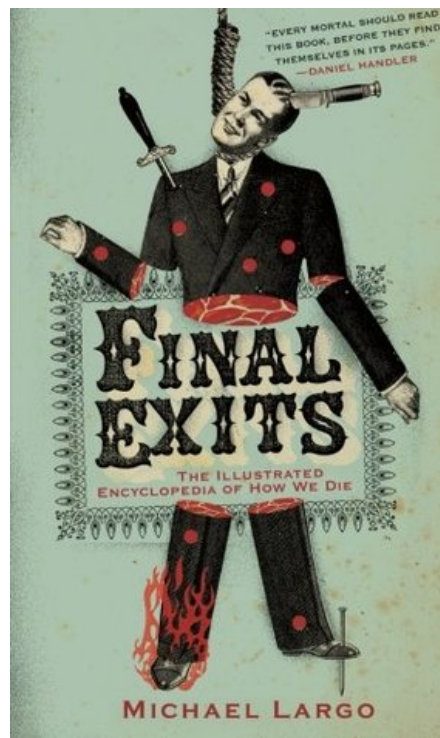




Final Exits: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of How We Die

Michael Largo

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Final Exits: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of How We Die Michael Largo

To die, kick the bucket, to meet your Maker, dead as a doornail, get whacked, smoked, bite the dust, sleep with the fishes, go six feet under—whatever death is called, it's going to happen. In 1789 Ben Franklin wrote, "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." Death remains a certainty. But how do we die? It's the enormous variety of how that enlivens final exits.

According to death certificates, in 1700 there were less than 100 causes of death. Today there are 3,000. With each advance of technology, people find new ways to become deceased, often causing trends that peak in the first year. People are now killed by everything, from cell phones, washing machines, lawn mowers and toothpicks, to the boundless catalog of man—made medicines. In *Final Exits* the causes of death—bizarre or common—are alphabetically arranged and include actual accounts of people, both famous and ordinary, who unfortunately died that way. (Ants, bad words, Bingo, bean bag chairs, flying cows, frozen toilets, hiccups, lipstick, moray eels, road kill, starfish, and toupees are only some of the more unusual causes.)

Final Exits: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of How We Die Details

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Author : Michael Largo

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HeavyReader says

First of all, this encyclopedia is not really illustrated. Oh sure, there are some pictures, a few of the actual subject under discussion, but most of them are just stock photos. That was quite a disappointment. I thought I was going to see illustrations of actual dead people, which would probably gross me out at first, but I think I would be better off if I did more actual looking at death in the face. But anyway...disappointing illustrations.

The information in the book is really fascinating. Some of the information is so out of this world that I had a hard time believing it and had to keep checking that I was actually reading nonfiction. But yep, as best as I can tell, this information is real.

I guess I've always been interested in death and the way that our modern society covers up and sanitizes death, but since reading *Stiff* and watching all five seasons of *Six Feet Under*, I'm a little obsessed with learning more. This book is a step in that direction.

I helped someone on Whatsthatbook.com find this book, so I am putting it on my "found" shelf. Here's the link to the "finding this book" thread

<http://www.whatsthatbook.com/index.ph...>

Amy Spector says

The danger is worse than I thought.

Wes Hazard says

Peerless toilet reading. And I mean that in the best way possible. This is a wry and zippy encyclopedia of various ways that people have died, focusing mainly on Americans in the last 150 yrs or so. Entries range from the relatively mundane (Lyme Disease), to Darwin Award worthy catastrophes (I now know that there's a pretty strict limit on the number of coffee enemas you can safely administer to yourself in a 24-hour period).

Basically the ways in which we can die are limited only by the objects that happen to be at hand and our own creativity (or stupidity) and this book is happy to take you on a sardonic fact-laden tour of those methods. Filled with a wealth of historical tidbits, cool images, and bits and pieces from various police reports and death certificates this is a book about death that manages to keep things light and airy instead of straight-up morbid...if that's your thing. Sticking to the encyclopedia format, the book is broken down alphabetically (The "P" section covers such ground as "Platform Shoes", "Poland's Syndrome", & "Potluck Dinners") with individual entries that are compact and breezy. All of which makes for really great subway reading, an occasional break between other books, or, as I said, an addition to your W.C. library. Just remember: "1,213 die from complications caused by aggressive toilet time each year."
...The more you know...

Jamie says

A unique structure-the whole book is a bunch of stories and facts.

Had grammatical errors throughout though, which made me question some of the info in it.

Danger says

It's endless entertaining to whip this book out and tell my family, friends and love ones of all the ways they can die. Personal favorite? The spiders in the soup.

Angie Lisle says

I read a lot of morbid books. I was excited to stumble on this one in my library - it seemed like one I would love.

The presentation is horrible. Other people may not be bothered by the organization of this book, but I had major issues with it. The information isn't organized very well - chapters are alphabetically arranged but within those chapters, it's difficult to tell where one topic ends and another begins. This makes the book especially difficult to read if you just try to read one or two sections at a time. You really should try to read this chapter by chapter instead - it's easier to bookmark that way.

The author rambles - facts are inserted willy-nilly. You're never sure what you're going to get in each section.

The cross-references system is so bad that it's almost nonexistent.

Some of the facts are wrong, which makes me wary of every fact presented in the book. This presents a huge problem in my enjoyment of the book - which is a shame, because there is a lot of information here that could be interesting, if only I trusted the author.

Windy says

This isn't really a life-changing book, and I doubt it will actually extend my lifetime, as the writer claimed (I hope sardonically) it would in his preface. However, it is an interesting read, if only to satisfy your voyeuristic tendencies and deep down desire to just laugh at people who are more idiotic than you. Sometimes I felt that certain details were glossed over or slightly slanted, and simply listing sources in the back doesn't quite satisfy me. I would never seriously quote a statistic from this book. However, I did enjoy how Largo obviously was mocking some of the more ridiculous ways to go out. Of course, not all of it is funny. Driveby shootings? Children abandoned in cars? Not funny. But ruptured stomachs or choking due to eating contests? Actually, that's just stupid.

Kristina says

Fascinating. It was interesting to read about the many different ways in which people have died. In a way, this may sound sadistic, but death is a part of life that many of us do not see. On the other hand, this book almost left me wanting to know more. I know Largo researched these events, but I didn't know where he found this information. Some stories were almost hard to believe, and I'm not saying they were not true. I just wanted to know more details, that's all. Overall, this is a great book for my collection. I would recommend reading it. Look at spontaneous combustion, and hair.

Meaghan says

This was a compulsively readable book of death trivia, well-illustrated, with numerous interesting tales of people who died in unusual ways. I noticed several inaccuracies, however, and some sentences that were so grammatically flawed they made me wince.

Bobby says

A 4.5 stars book. Chock-full (or choke-full if you prefer) of interesting factoids about the banal and the more exotic ways we die. Despite the somewhat morbid title, it has more of The Onion-like flavor the way it's written, ie, more wry than depressing . Almost gave it 5 stars but two things kept me from doing so. One, I felt the author incorrectly attributed a causal relationship between two things just because they happen to be associated together. Especially when he was trying to make certain scientific claims...a big no-no and something that I just could not let slide (probably due to having taken way too much science!) And secondly, he's a bit tangential at times (though I don't think that's a huge problem for this book).

Bird says

Those who know me know I have macabre tastes, so this was a great read. Why not 5 stars? No goddamn sources! Without sources, this is a collection of anecdotes.

Lanea says

Save your money! This is an absolutely terrible book. It's a cool concept, and I'd seen many positive reviews on Goodreads and Amazon, so I bought it. What a disappointment! The author provides no references or notes on his "research," so he may as well have made up all of the content. It's full of typos, factual errors, and ridiculous statistics. He claims at one point that less than 3% of the 100 million Americans who go to amusement parks die because of injuries received there. Excuse me? I would hope that less than 3% of amusement park patrons die. If anywhere near 3% of them did die from injuries sustained at parks, they would have been banned ages ago. But "less than 3%" could mean .001%--what a horrible misuse of statistics!

Even worse, in the section on flesh eating viruses, the idiot author switches from virus to bacteria and back

again over and over. He does not know the difference between viruses and bacteria but he has the gall to write about either in a book he's calling non-fiction, and an "encyclopedia?" Does he also dispense medical advice on the street corner, encouraging one and all to buy his magic magnetic heal-all bracelets? A biologist friend of mine was with me when I read his poorly-written, bogus nonsense section on "flesh-eating viruses" and I thought she was going to hurl the book into the fireplace when I read the non-sensical, misleading drivel to her. The book only survived because I told her I needed to refer to it when I panned it.

Malbadeen says

This is my kind of non fiction - short excerpts of totally useless but highly entertaining information. The writing itself is nothing to write home about and some causes of death don't really seem worthy of an entry (i.e. "dwarfism" - they have shorter life expectancy rates....zzzzzzzzzz) but the causes are in alphabetic order and it's easy enough to skip around. Hop right to L's and find out about the man that died from Laughing for 3 days straight or go right for the R's where you can learn about the dangers of revolving doors, makes no difference! It is however sadly lacking an entry on shark attacks - what's up with that? people die from shark attacks don't they?

It's great company when you end up stuck in a hotel room with a group of good-for-nothing-lazy-sleep-iners that don't like to get up at 6:00 when they're on vacation.

Anna says

Ο θάνατος είναι συνθώς κάτι δυσρεστό, που συνοδεύεται απ' θλίψη για τους συγγενείς που χουν χ'σει το δικ' τους άνθρωπο, απασχολε' εδ' και αι'νες τη θρησκεία που προσπαθε' να δ'σει απαντ'σεις για το μετ', αλλ' και την επιστ'μη για τον 'διο ακριβ'ς λ'γο. 'χει εμπνε'σει ιστορ'ες και ιστορ'ες που εκφρ'στηκαν στημ μουσικ', τον κινηματογρ'φο, τη λογοτεχν'α, τη ζωγραφικ'.

Μια 'λλη 'ψη του θαν'του είναι η χιουμοριστικ', στα πλα'σια του black humour. Με αυτ' τη σκοπι' είναι γραμμ'νο αυτ' το βιβλ'ο, το οπο'ο περιλαμβ'νει καταγραφ' περιπτ'σεων θαν'του με ιδι'τερο τρ'πο, τρ'πο που μ'νο γ'λιο θα προκαλο'σε σε κ'ποιον που το διαβ'ζει και θα τον 'κανε να αναφωνε' "κο'τα το βλ'κα π'ς π'γε και π'θανε". Χαρακτηριστικ' παραδε'γματα: εκνε'ρισε τη γυν'κα του και αυτ' τον σκ'τωσε με τα τακο'νια που φορο'σε, 'νας τ'πος που 'ταν η μασκ'τ μιας ομ'δας φρ'ντισε να εκνευρ'σει (με μοιρα'α αποτελ'σματα για τον 'διο) τους οπαδο'ς της αντ'παλης ομ'δας, ? κ'ποιος απολ'μβανε τη β'λτα του στο κ'μπριο αυτοκ'νητ' του, αλλ' δεν πρ'σεξε και αποκεφαλ'στηκε απ' τον κορμ' εν'ς δ'ντρου!!!

Για 'λους τους φαν τ'τοιων ιστορι'ν, νομ'ζω 'τι θα το απολα'σουν. Το βιβλ'ο δεν ε'ναι λογοτεχνικ', ε'ναι γραμμ'νο με μορφ' εγκυκλοπα'δειας, μ'λιστα τα περιστατικ' ε'ναι με κ'ποιο τρ'πο αλφαβητικ' κατανεμημ'να!!!

R says

This is a readable book on a very interesting subject - the different ways people die. Yeah, there are some examples that I didn't even think about as a real cause of death. But overall what a disappointment! The

author appeared to be making up facts to back up his writing as the statistics were all screwy and there were no citations. As a history person I find this very suspicious. Over and over again he used misleading or wrong information. For example, he says that President William Henry Harrison died from a cold after talking too much at his inauguration to prove to the American people that they should not have reelected an old man. Reelect? Yeah, he died one month after the inauguration but he was not reelected. It was his first term. And no...the inventor of chewing gum did not choke on a piece of gum, he actually died from pneumonia. I have a feeling Michael Largo found some interesting information then twisted it around for it to sound more sensational. Also, this guy needed an editor. Don't even get me started on the typos, misspellings, wrong dates and improper commas. Some examples include "heath tip" instead of "health tip," "Edinborough" instead of "Edinburgh," "serve electrolyte imbalance" instead of "severe electrolyte imbalance," and "Los Angles" instead of "Los Angeles". I know I'm not the world's greatest writer, but I don't plan on writing a book.

Josh says

I read this over the course of a year or so. Really entertaining. Even though it's pretty dry, the encyclopedia titles for ways people die is in itself hilarious. I also especially love how under "Marijuana," Michael writes, "There have been no deaths associated with marijuana." Either way, great coffee table book for the more macabre types, but also just really interesting information on the myriad ways in which we die.

Spencer says

the cover of this book is repulsive but my kids were entertained as we slept in the tent and read about amusement park fatalities. This book was fun stuff. But I just don't trust the author.

57 kids died since 1990 due to toy basketball net entanglements?

golf carts cause 25 fatalities a year?

since 1970 2880 infants have died when entrapped in the footrest of a reclining chair?

since 1980, 9 kids have died by folded up cafeteria tables falling on them?

75 kids died of lawn darts from 1965-1988?

since 1958, at least 45 people have died because they were allergic to sperm?

that's what the author claims.

These are people we are talking about, not numbers, and each of these people have an absurd death.

Someone had to speak at the funeral of the guy who was eaten by an alligator. and I guarantee he didn't use shadow puppets in his eulogy.

Marcus Mennes says

I happened upon this book while browsing at the Seattle Public Library, and enjoyed it so much that I purchased a copy. Not that I take pleasure in the contemplation of death, or preoccupy myself with morbid thoughts of an early demise, but I found this pop-encyclopedia to be damn fascinating.

In his preface the author explains, "It took more than ten years to gather the multitudinous statistics on fatality." We might imagine him hanging around morgues, poring over thousands of coroners' reports. However he came upon his material, this project is impressive for the breadth of its categorizations and the numerous, and often gruesome incidents portrayed.

The book covers the common culprits: Heart Disease, Cancer, Automobiles, etc., but also has a particular emphasis on unusual ways of dying: Autocastration, Death By Umbrella, Narcissism, Quinsy, Kinky Hair Disease, Dandy-Walker Syndrome, ad infinitum...

The Big D is certainly a subject that relates to all of us, whether we accept it or not. It could be assumed that contemplating this book's portent might influence you to be overly cautious; apprehensive even to leave the house. Granted, it is good to be aware and take precautions. Yet, I would argue in favor of this book for the opposing P.O.V. I Mean, if there is a chance, however minute it might be, through some random, cosmic blunder...that today is the day when you will be taken out by a sniper, plowed down by an S.U.V., or plunked on the head by a meteorite...so be it, why worry about, or fear events that are out of your control?

Someday, my friends, we will all know death's enclosure...

Rabbit {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says

This was an interesting read but it made me a tad bit paranoid, albeit temporarily. LOL

Aaron says

I read this book wrong. Start to finish. Why did I do that? It's statistics and trivial facts. It's supposed to sit on your shelf and be picked up by guests when they come over! But I had to prove to myself that I could finish it. But I did realize that as a race, humans are a lot like cats. You know - how we always sit around and wait for our cats to make mistakes? And when they do we all laugh! Well, this book is like that, only with death and humans instead of mistakes and cats.
