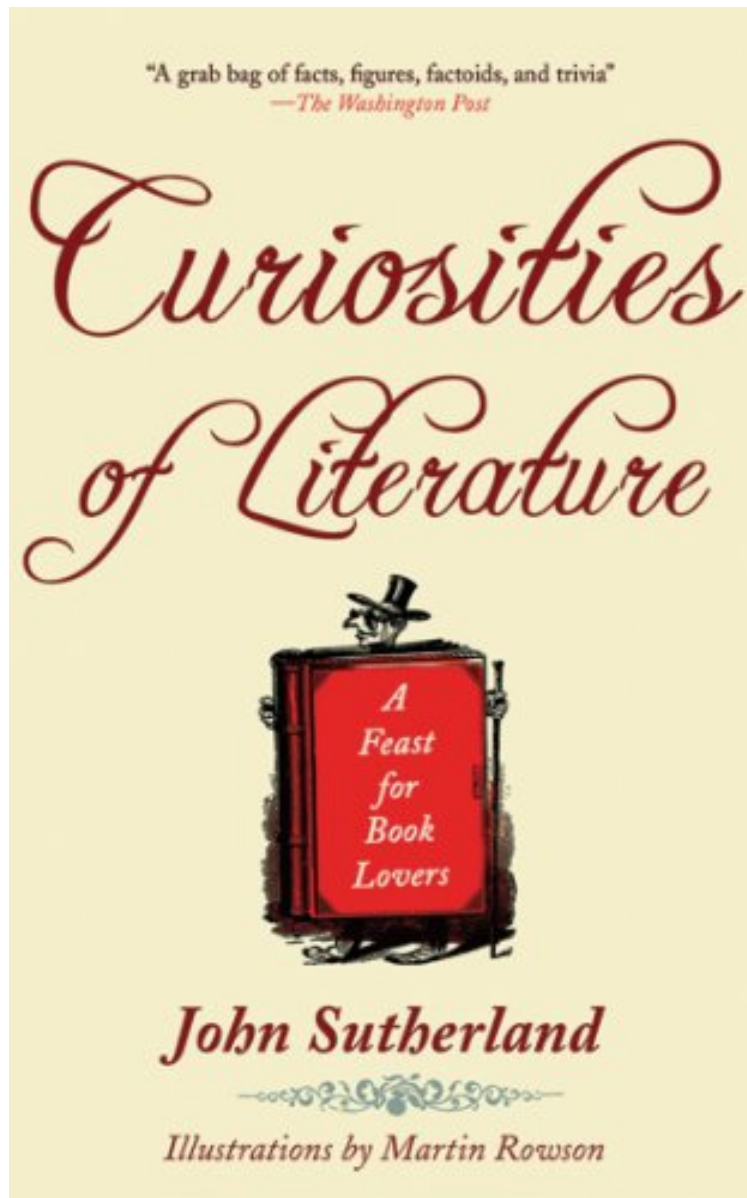


Curiosities of Literature: A Feast for Book Lovers

John Sutherland

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John Sutherland : Curiosities of Literature: A Feast for Book Lovers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Curiosities of Literature: A Feast for Book Lovers*:

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. If you love Victorian and 20th Century literature By Lauren Hahn you will certainly enjoy this book. Sutherland, who is an English professor at University College London, has made a career of writing about oddities and conundrums in Victorian literature. This book is different in that it

provides light-hearted, short articles about a wide range of literary topics such as Proust's asthma, Thomas Carlyle's wedding night, and the odd circumstances of Thomas Hardy's burial. He also provides entertaining lists, such as the most difficult literary works to read (*Finnegans Wake* is mentioned), books with canine first-person narrators, famous misquotes, youngest and oldest novelists, and books, according to a 2007 survey, least likely to be finished by readers. (*War and Peace* is included.) Sutherland wears his erudition lightly and is very funny. Unlike the other reviewer who pronounced Sutherland pompous and arrogant, I found this book is so witty and enjoyable that I actually read part of it at the beach. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By JENNY HANSON Excellent trade. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative By Derek Humphry A pleasant, light read at bedtime

Which author had the heaviest brain? What was the original title of *1984*? When did cigarettes first appear in English literature? And, while we're at it, who wrote the first Western, and is there any link between asthma and literary genius? Sutherland's irreverent literary exploration illuminates every topic imaginable from author advances to Civil War literature to Victorian sex to odd things eaten by literary characters (think Patrick Bateman's girlfriend in *American Psycho*). This is a treasure trove of fascinating information for all book lovers.

From Publishers Weekly Author and literature professor Sutherland collects a sundry list of literary fact and trivia into a chaotic assortment of narratives. Organized under a stream-of-consciousness list of themes ("Literary Baked Meats," "Better Than Sex, Some Say," "Mammon and the Book Trade"), Sutherland has set few boundaries for himself regarding subject matter: irritable bowel syndrome, the wedding night, and Rose of Sharon's absurdly generous gift in the conclusion of *The Grapes of Wrath* all come into play. Though he might be self-indulgent, Sutherland delves into the minutiae with grace and good British wit, bringing humor and appeal to even the most (seemingly) dull subjects. Average readers don't need to worry about comparative illiteracy; Sutherland is so thorough that prior knowledge isn't necessary. A lively read for anyone who wants to learn more about their favorite classics, and a lively cheat sheet for those who want to impress their friends in the lit crowd. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. A thoroughly engaging compendium of literary arcadia. . . . Highly recommended. (Nicholas Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness*) About the Author John Sutherland (born 1938) is an English professor, journalist, and author of over seventeen books. Currently a Professor of Modern English Literature at University College London, he specializes in Victorian fiction, 20th century literature, and the history of publishing. He lives in England.