

Rancid Rulers

The Book of Bad Things has lurked in the shadowy courts and dripping dungeons of kings, queens, emperors and empresses – especially those who performed unparalleled acts of cruelty and barbarism...

To keep flies away from him, King Pepi II of ancient Egypt always had a supply of slaves nearby, their bodies smeared with honey to attract the troublesome insects.

When Catherine the Great, ruler of Russia from 1762 to 1796, discovered that she had dandruff, she imprisoned her hairdresser in an iron cage for three years to stop the news spreading.

The Mughal emperors of the Indian subcontinent would sometimes execute their enemies by crushing them to death with an elephant.

In the 16th century, King Gustav I of Sweden had the royal goldsmith sentenced to a grisly death. The goldsmith's crime? He took a day off without asking his master.

Despicable Deaths

Throughout history, The Book of Bad Things has been an unwelcome, unwanted witness to many murderous moments and despicable deaths...

In 1649, during the English Civil War between Parliamentarian and Royalist forces, Sir Arthur Aston was beaten to death with his own wooden leg.

Hollywood dancer Isadora Duncan died of a broken neck and strangulation in 1927, when a long scarf she was wearing became caught in the wheel of a car.

The Reverend Hagermore used to lock up his servants at night so they couldn't go out. As he went to release them on New Year's Day 1746, one of his pet dogs attacked him and he fell into a pond. With his servants still imprisoned, no one could help him as he drowned in the water...

