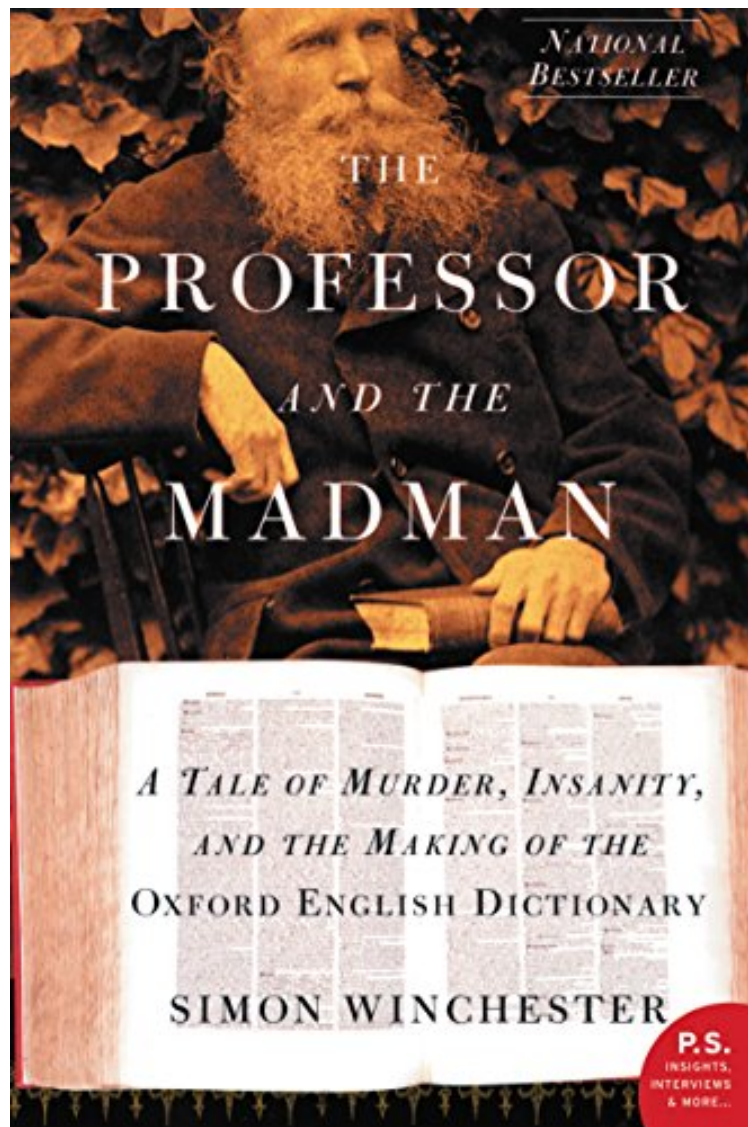


(Free) The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary

The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary

Von Simon Winchester
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Von Simon Winchester : The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen5 von 5 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. This is

an enthralling, well-written and touching book. Von booklover10 "The Professor and the Madman" will not appeal to every reader. If you like lexicography, if you are interested in Victorian England, and if diseases of the mind fascinate you, then read this book. It is one of the strangest accounts that I have ever read. I devoured this book in one sitting. Winchester fascinates us with this story of the contribution that a convicted murderer named William Minor, who was confined to an asylum for the criminally insane, made towards the gargantuan Oxford English Dictionary. This book is written sparsely and elegantly. It could easily have been a bloated tome, but Winchester pares the story down to its essentials. The cliché that truth is stranger than fiction is certainly borne out by this tale of obsession. I use the word "obsession" both in the sense of the paranoia that plagued William Minor during most of his life and the obsession to create one of the most ambitious and scholarly works of all time. Winchester does an admirable job of making "The Professor and the Madman" both accessible and intriguing. 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Professor's Joy Von Samuel C. Admittedly, I'd rate the book a bit lower for personal, literary pleasure--it doesn't provide penetrating character studies or provocative philosophical questions about the nature of language and semantics. But the book succeeded in doing the impossible--injecting life, energy, and enthusiasm into my (required) linguistics course. My students suddenly became interested in the OED and the history of words at the same time they were seduced into traveling from brothels and prisons in Victorian England to America's Civil War battlefields to questions of human psychopathology and brilliance. The author has taken someone prosaic bits and pieces of history and created an impressive imaginative edifice, call it what you will--docu-novel, new journalism, creative history. It combines scholarly attention to quotations from the OED with a somewhat melodramatic, sensationalist style in a felicitous synthesis that is engaging but never insulting. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Intriguing, But Not Great Von Kevin Wohler Even though I am not one to read much non-fiction, I was intrigued when someone at the local bookstore recommended to me this story of the origins of the Oxford English Dictionary. The idea that murder and insanity were somehow tied to the history of such a prestigious book appealed to me. Picking up the book, I read the first chapter -- a short introduction -- and knew immediately I was hooked. Unfortunately, what began with a sensational twist turned out to be a rather convoluted story that drifted between the biographies of two separate men and a history of not only the OED, but of the modern dictionary in general. While each of the parts was interesting, the book as a whole was poorly written... Perhaps the greatest flaw in Winchester's telling is his inability to distinguish for the reader when he is telling facts and when (like the entire introduction) he is telling a myth. There are a number of misconceptions about the history of Minor and his association with the dictionary, but it is not until the final quarter of the book that those myths are expelled. Most errantly, Winchester also takes time to speculate on several points of Minor's life without the slightest bit of evidence to support such wild claims. While he admits his lack of evidence, it only helps to label his work as amateurish, or poor journalism at the least.

Kurzbeschreibung New York Times Bestseller Simon Winchester's classic about the making of the Oxford English Dictionary soon to be a major motion picture starring Sean Penn and Mel Gibson. The making of the Oxford English Dictionary was one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken. As definitions were collected, the overseeing committee, led by Professor James Murray, was stunned to discover that one man, Dr. W. C. Minor, had submitted more than ten thousand. But their surprise would pale in comparison to what they were about to discover when the committee insisted on honoring him. For Dr. Minor, an American Civil War veteran, was also an inmate at an asylum for the criminally insane. Masterfully researched and eloquently written, *The Professor and the Madman* is an extraordinary tale of madness, genius, and the incredible obsessions of two remarkable men that led to the making of the Oxford English Dictionary and literary history. The linguistic detective story of the decade... Winchester does a superb job of historical research. William Safire, *New York Times Magazine*. de The compilation of the Oxford English Dictionary, 70 years in the making, was an intellectually heroic feat with a twist worthy of the greatest mystery fiction: one of its most valuable contributors was a criminally insane American physician, locked up in an English asylum for murder. British stage actor Simon Jones leads us through this uncommon meeting of minds (the other belonging to self-educated dictionary editor James Murray) at full gallop. Ultimately, it's hard to say which is more remarkable: the facts of this amazingly well-researched story, or the sound of author Simon Winchester's erudite prose. Jones's reading smoothly transports listeners to the 19th century, reminding us why so many brilliant people obsessively set out to catalogue the English language. This unabridged version contains an interview between Winchester and John Simpson, editor of the Oxford dictionary. (Running time: 6.5 hours, 6 cassettes) --Lou Schuler *Pressestimmen* "I found *The Professor and the Madman* both enthralling and moving, in its brilliant reconstruction of a most improbable event: the major contributions made to the great Oxford English Dictionary by a deeply delusional, incarcerated "madman," and the development of a true friendship between him and the editor of the OED. One sees here the redemptive potential of work and love in even the most deeply, "hopelessly," psychotic." -- Oliver Sacks, M.D. Remarkably readable, this chronicle of lexicography roams from the great dictionary itself to hidden nooks in the human psyche that sometimes house the motives for murder, the sources for sanity, and the blueprint for

creativity."-- "Kirkus s" (starred)"An extraordinary tale, and Simon Winchester could not have told it better. . . . [He] has written a splendid book."-- "The Economist""Madness, violence, arcane obsessions, weird learning, ghastly comedy, all set out in an atmosphere of po-aced, high neo-Gothic. The geographical span is wide, from Dickensian London to Florida's Pensacola Bay, from the beaches at Trincomalee to the Civil War battlefields of the United States. . . . It is a wonderful story."-- John Banville, "Literary ""This is almost my favorite kind of book: the work of social and intellectual history which through the oblique treatment of major developments manages to throw unusual light on humankind and its doings. . . . Simon Winchester's effortlessly clear, spare prose is the perfect vehicle for the tale . . . absolutely riveting."-- Will Self, "The Times" (London)"It's a story for readers who know the joy of words and can appreciate side trips through the history of dictionaries and marvel at the idea that whenShakespeare wrote, there we no dictionaries to consult.... Winchester, a British Journalist who's written 12 other books, combines a reporter's eye for detail with a historian's sense of scale. His writing is droll and eloquent"--Bob Minzesheimer, "USA Today"Winchester's history of the OED is brisk and entertaining"--Mark Rozzo, "Washington Post Book World""The Professor and the Madman...is the linguistic detective story of the decade.... Winchester does a superb job of historical research that should entice readers even more interested in deeds than words."--William Safire, "New York Times Magazine"elegant and scrupulous"--David Walton, "New York Times Book "Winchester has written a powerful account of the shifting foundations on which meaning is built, and the impoverishment of a language that could not describe or give peace to one of its makers."-- Lithe Sebesta, "New York Post"Mr. Winchester deftly weaves...a narrative full of suspense, pathos and humor.... In this elegant book the writer has created a vivid parable, in the spirit of Nabokov and Borges. There is much truth to be drawn from it, about Victorian pride, the relation between language and the world, and the fine line between sanity and madness."--Daniel Mark Epstein, "Wall Street Journal "a fascinating, spicy, learned tale"-- Richard Bernstein, "New York Times"Simon Winchester, in his splendid, oddball slice of history "The Professor and the Madman, has come up with an irresistible hook... [an] utterly fascinating account of how a combination of scholarship and nationalism begat what would become the "Oxford English Dictionary... If the initial sections of [Winchester's] tale have the appeal of a gaslight Victorianthriller, Winchester doesn't leave it at that. He's a superb historian because he's a superb storyteller.... The strange richness of it all is enhanced by the flawless clarity of Winchester's prose. Winchester, investigating an odd bit of background trivia about the making of one of the world's great books, has the courage of his own curiosity. The elegant curio he has created is as enthralling as a good story can be and as informative as any history aspires to be."--Charles Taylor, "Salon "One of the great strengths of this book is historical mise-en-scene, particularly for nineteenth-century America and England...[a] marvelous work of historical and philological imagination."-- Linda Bridges, "National