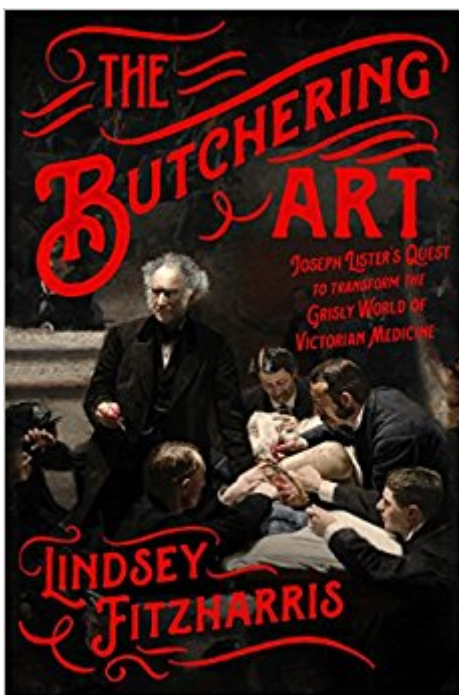


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# The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest To Transform The Grisly World Of Victorian Medicine



## Synopsis

A Top 10 Science Book of Fall 2017, Publishers Weekly  
The gripping story of how Joseph Lister's antiseptic method changed medicine forever  
In *The Butchering Art*, the historian Lindsey Fitzharris reveals the shocking world of nineteenth-century surgery and shows how it was transformed by advances made in germ theory and antiseptics between 1860 and 1875. She conjures up early operating theaters—no place for the squeamish and surgeons, working before anesthesia, who were lauded for their speed and brute strength. These pioneers knew that the aftermath of surgery was often more dangerous than patients' afflictions, and they were baffled by the persistent infections that kept mortality rates stubbornly high. At a time when surgery couldn't have been more hazardous, an unlikely figure stepped forward: a young, melancholy Quaker surgeon named Joseph Lister, who would solve the riddle and change the course of history. Fitzharris dramatically reconstructs Lister's career path to his audacious claim that germs were the source of all infection and could be countered by a sterilizing agent applied to wounds. She introduces us to Lister's contemporaries—some of them brilliant, some outright criminal—and leads us through the grimy schools and squalid hospitals where they learned their art, the dead houses where they studied, and the cemeteries they ransacked for cadavers. Eerie and illuminating, *The Butchering Art* celebrates the triumph of a visionary surgeon whose quest to unite science and medicine delivered us into the modern world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In *The Butchering Art*, Lindsey Fitzharris becomes our Dante, leading us through the macabre hell of nineteenth-century surgery to tell the story of Joseph Lister, the man who solved one of

medicine's most daunting and lethal puzzles. With gusto, Dr. Fitzharris takes us into the operating 'theaters' of yore, as Lister awakens to the true nature of the killer that turned so many surgeries into little more than slow-moving executions. Warning: She spares no detail!"

Erik Larson, bestselling author of *Dead Wake* and *The Devil in the White City*"With an eye for historical detail and an ear for vivid prose, Lindsey Fitzharris tells a spectacular story about one of the most important moments in the history of medicine—the rise of sterile surgery. *The Butchering Art* is a spectacular book—deliciously gruesome and utterly gripping. You will race through it, wincing as you go, but never wanting to stop." Ed Yong, bestselling author of *I Contain Multitudes*

Lindsey Fitzharris has a PhD in the history of science and medicine from the University of Oxford. She is the creator of the popular website *The Surgeon's Apprentice*, and writer and presenter of the YouTube series *Under the Knife*. She writes for *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Lancet*, and *New Scientist*.

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