



The Knife Man: Blood, Body Snatching, and the Birth of Modern Surgery

Wendy Moore

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In an era when bloodletting was considered a cure for everything from colds to smallpox, surgeon John Hunter was a medical innovator, an eccentric, and the person to whom anyone who has ever had surgery probably owes his or her life. In this sensational and macabre story, we meet the surgeon who counted not only luminaries Benjamin Franklin, Lord Byron, Adam Smith, and Thomas Gainsborough among his patients but also “resurrection men” among his close acquaintances. A captivating portrait of his ruthless devotion to uncovering the secrets of the human body, and the extraordinary lengths to which he went to do so—including body snatching, performing pioneering medical experiments, and infecting himself with venereal disease—this rich historical narrative at last acknowledges this fascinating man and the debt we owe him today.

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