

[Mobile book] All the Time in the World: A Book of Hours

## All the Time in the World: A Book of Hours

Jessica Kerwin Jenkins

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**Jessica Kerwin Jenkins : All the Time in the World: A Book of Hours** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All the Time in the World: A Book of Hours:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Garden of Historical DelightsBy culture loverThe subtitle for this book is "a book of hours." Indeed, that is probably the closest label available, as the book is formatted into a sort of super Day Runner, with each timeslot having a brief essay on a person or event that took place at that hour.

Alternatively, you can think of it as a collection of "On this day in history" articles, except it would be "on this HOUR in history." I prefer to consider it a historical smorgasbord of fascinating occurrences. There are just under 100 brief essays on various topics, most attached to a particular time such as Noon or 7:30pm. Interspersed are twelve seasonal can't-be-tied-to-a-specific-time pieces, labeled with the name of a month. As I said, MOST of the articles focus on a single event, such as 11am (when Oscar Wilde, having just arrived in the US, "takes" New York) or 1:50am ("Last Call at La Rotonde"). Some offer brief narratives outlining the development of an item (such as 7:30am's essay on looking glasses) or a concept (11:45am's essay on sun worshippers). Others, such as the 3:50am "Dreamers Take Flight" gently pinballs from ancient Greece to the Marquis Saint-Denys (probably the first person to try to "program"

his dreams AND draw "the faint geometric visual hallucinations that swirl when one's eyes are closed, just on the cusp of sleep.") to psychologist Mary Arnold-Forster. The period covered ranges from the beginning of the World (at 9am naturally, at least according to Bishop Ussher's famous calculation) to a handful on the late 20th century. While a few topics may be predictable (10am: "the Royal Table is Laid"), not many other works would include both the 18th century Spanish custom of ladies taking hot chocolate even in church (at 9:05 AM) and "Moonlight Bathes the Colosseum," concerning the 19th century Grand Tour who "flocked to see Rome's Colosseum by moonlight" (at 9:05 PM). Geographically, we journey from Europe to Asia to America (with a handful in the Middle East, such as the 11:45pm essay on coffee). There are illustrations throughout. A few culinary essays, such as 8:55pm "Desserts Aflame" include recipes for things like crepes Suzette or the hot chocolate mentioned above. (The ingredients for Nostradamus' famous "Love Jam" are included but you'll have to determine for yourself how many "mandrake apples picked at dawn" to combine with "the blood of seven male sparrows.") A list of sources for each essay are in the back of the book. This is a short work of slightly over 250 pages (not counting the bibliography), so you may be tempted to finish it in one or two sittings. Try to refrain, however. Just as you would not attempt to eat an entire box of truffles all at once, so too is your enjoyment extended by limiting yourself to just a few entries at a time. I enjoyed this book immensely and plan to peruse the author's previous work next. Bon appetit! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Cute By Serena Love the book--but it's not quite what I expected. It's less about specific times and events and more of just trying to link charming little historical stories somehow to time. It's a lovely little book for history and humanities lovers. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Way to While Away the Hours Reading By Lady Eve Sidwick Love Jessica Kerwin Jenkins' books. Anecdotal contemplations of a wide array of dizzying subjects. Completely absorbing, interesting, amusing. I bought mine (as well as her Encyclopedia of the Esquisite) for myself but both books would make great gifts.

Entertaining, unexpected, and full of charm, the follow-up to Jessica Kerwin Jenkins's *Encyclopedia of the Esquisite* presents a miscellany of engaging stories, detailing the intriguing customs, traditions, and guilty pleasures pursued throughout the ages. All the Time in the World takes its cue from an iconic component of medieval life, the book of hours, which prescribed certain readings and contemplations for certain parts of the day throughout the year. Divided into more than seventy-five entries, All the Time in the World is brimming with witty bons mots, interesting etymologies, and arresting anecdotes encompassing an array of cultures and eras. Subjects covered include the daylong ceremony of laying a royal Elizabethan tablecloth; the radicalization of sartorial chic in 1890s Paris; Nostradamus's belief in the aphrodisiac power of jam; the sensuous practice of sniffing incense in fifteenth-century Japan; the American fascination with flaming desserts; the short-lived artistic discipline of "lumia"; or visual music; the evolution of coffee from a religious ritual to a forbidden delight in the Middle East; Henriette d'Angeville's fearless and wine-fueled ascent of Mont Blanc; the elaborate treasure hunts concocted by London's Bright Young Things; and the musical revolution known as bebop. An antidote to the contemporary cult of "getting things done," All the Time in the World revives forgotten treasures of the past while inspiring a passion for good living in the present. From the Hardcover edition.

From Booklist\* \* Jenkins uses the template of the medieval book of hours, which provided readings and meditations for certain times of the day and seasons, to create an unusual look at how we pass the time. Her hours are vignettes exploring the curious, the beautiful, and the ephemeral, a reflective approach that counters our hyper-scheduled cult of Getting Things Done. This lovely and lovingly researched literary gem encompasses diverse eras and cultures and reveals a world of fancies and intriguing bits of history, including the bicycling fad in 1890s Paris, which changed elite fashion from frilly carriage costumes flaunted by ladies pretending to take the air to pantaloons and bloomers that became so popular the minister of the interior lifted the ban on women wearing pants. French Dadaist artist Francis Picabia's 1924 creation of the short-lived *instantaneacutisme* movement, which promoted the exhilaration of living in the moment, granting "liberty for all"; inspired his outrageous, groundbreaking ballet *Relacirc;che*, created with Erik Satie to attack traditional theater's artificiality. As Satie said, Let us distrust Art: it is often nothing but virtuosity. There is much to contemplate and marvel over in Jenkins's scholarly and highly entertaining book of exuberance. --Whitney Scott "A literary excursion around the clock and through the year in miniature essays about a host of diverse, fanciful topics . . . In its chronological presentation, there are more than seventy-five chunks of oddities of civilization from, for example, the mounting taste for coffee to old Shanghai's cabarets . . . A small cabinet of wonder, detailing some diverting oddments and minutiae of past times." --Kirkus "This compendium of cultural curiosities delivers equal parts education and inspiration with a lively voice and a tasteful nostalgia for slower, more deliberate, and arguably more entertaining times. When the clock ticks, the scene shifts to a new and delightfully unexpected snippet of history. The morning hours bring pancakes (complete with gluten-free recipe), midday watches the slow demise of the siesta, and giddy dancers waltz toward midnight. The cast ranges from the glamorous to starving artists to far-flung ancients . . . An insightful and contemplative study in culture and all its frivolous progress." --Publishers Weekly "This lovely and lovingly researched literary gem encompasses

diverse eras and cultures and reveals a world of 'fancies' and intriguing bits of history . . . There is much to contemplate and marvel over in Jenkins' scholarly and highly entertaining book of exuberance." --Booklist (starred review)About the AuthorJESSICA KERWIN JENKINS began her career in New York writing for Women's Wear Daily and W magazine, later becoming the W's European editor in Paris. Her first book, Encyclopedia of the Exquisite, was an and Barnes Noble top one hundred pick and was featured in such publications as the New York Times Book , the Wall Street Journal, and Vanity Fair. She currently writes for Vogue and lives on the coast of Maine.