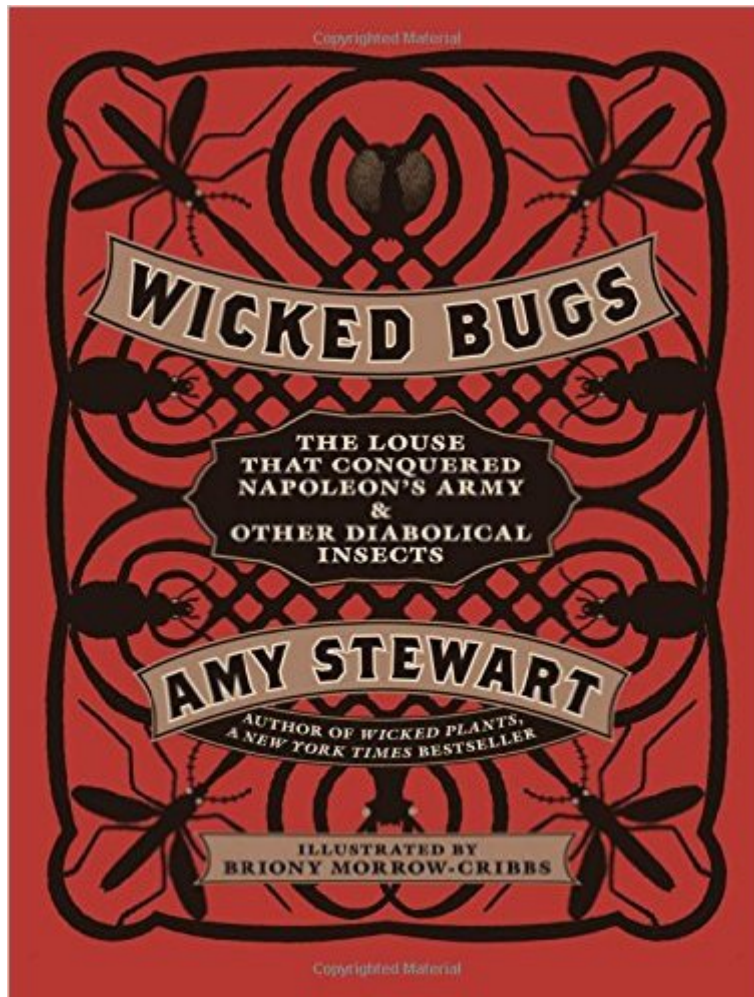


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Wicked Bugs: The Louse That Conquered Napoleon's Army & Other Diabolical Insects



Synopsis

In this darkly comical look at the sinister side of our relationship with the natural world, Stewart has tracked down over one hundred of our worst entomological foes—creatures that infest, infect, and generally wreak havoc on human affairs. From the world's most painful hornet, to the flies that transmit deadly diseases, to millipedes that stop traffic, to the bookworms that devour libraries, to the Japanese beetles munching on your roses, *Wicked Bugs* delves into the extraordinary powers of six- and eight-legged creatures. With wit, style, and exacting research, Stewart has uncovered the most terrifying and titillating stories of bugs gone wild. It's an A to Z of insect enemies, interspersed with sections that explore bugs with kinky sex lives (She's Just Not That Into You), creatures lurking in the cupboard (Fear No Weevil), insects eating your tomatoes (Gardener's Dirty Dozen), and phobias that feed our (sometimes) irrational responses to bugs (Have No Fear). Intricate and strangely beautiful etchings and drawings by Briony Morrow-Cribbs capture diabolical bugs of all shapes and sizes in this mixture of history, science, murder, and intrigue that begins—but doesn't end—in your own backyard.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You'll more than likely find this title in the Nature section of your bookstore, but it could realistically be shelved under Horror. This book is seriously scary. In a breezy, light tone and pace, it describes all sorts of frightening details about insects, especially in terms of what they will do to you if you run across them. Covering various continents, there's really no place you are safe from these tiniest of creatures—sure, they may not hunt you down exactly, but the odds are with them that one of their kin

will be dining with (or on) you. Flies, caterpillars, spiders: the diseases they carry and their methods of transmission are all detailed, with anecdotal stories illustrating just how effective they can be. The book is a sequel to *Wicked Plants* by the same author (which I haven't yet read), and it's extremely well-researched. One section details early forms of biological warfare, when soldiers would hurl hornet's nests or scorpion-filled baskets over the city walls of their opposer, causing havoc and sickening many. Another section explains why you should be a cat-person, as the diseases that rats, mice, and vermin still carry (the plague in the past) are easily able to sicken you. I made the mistake of reading this before bed. I don't recommend that, as you'll find yourself convinced something is crawling in your sheets. Despite the light-hearted presentation, the book does a serious service by showing just how interlinked species are, and how extinction of some animals or insects causes a disparity that often increases the danger of illness and infection. The balance of habitats is essential to keep most of these bugs manageable. Really, there is no such thing as a "small" bug in the living world as all factor in somehow.

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