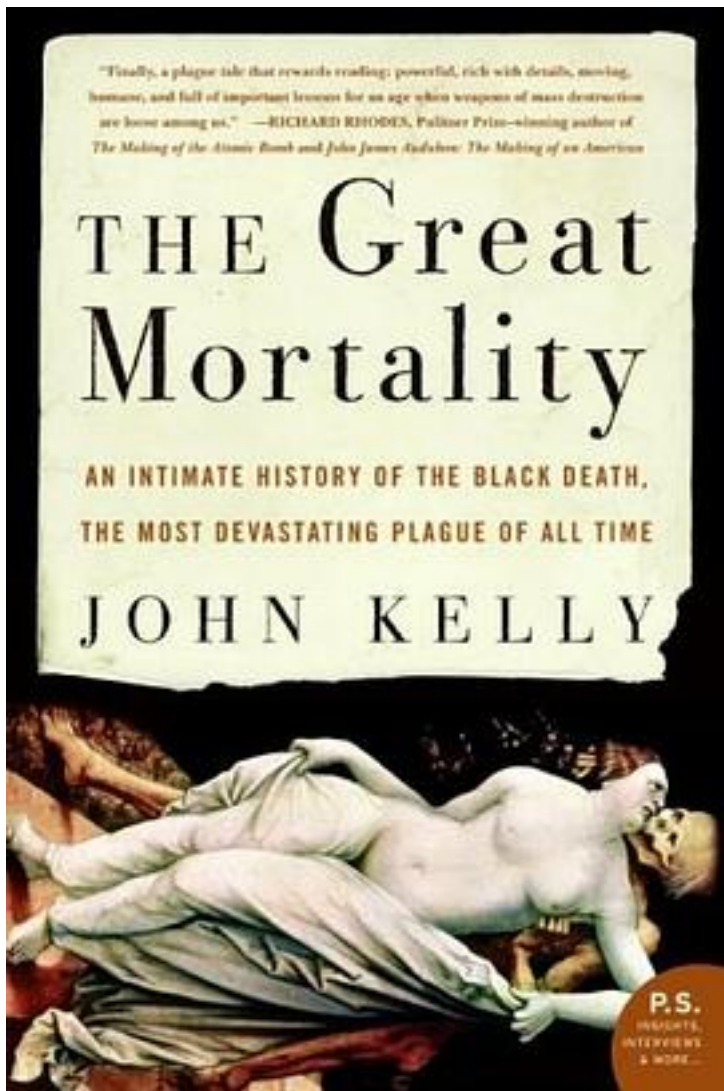


The Great Mortality



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著者:John Kelly

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A book chronicling one of the worst human disasters in recorded history really has no business being entertaining. But John Kelly's *The Great Mortality* is a page-turner despite its grim subject matter and graphic detail. Credit Kelly's animated prose and uncanny ability to drop his reader smack in the middle of the 14th century, as a heretofore unknown menace stalks Eurasia from "from the China Sea to the sleepy fishing villages of coastal Portugal [producing] suffering and death on a scale that, even after two world wars and twenty-seven million AIDS deaths worldwide, remains astonishing." Take Kelly's vivid description of London in the fall of 1348: "A nighttime walk across Medieval London would probably take only twenty minutes or so, but traversing the daytime city was a different matter.... Imagine a shopping mall where everyone shouts, no one washes, front teeth are uncommon and the shopping music is provided by the slaughterhouse up the road." Yikes, and that's before just about everything with a pulse starts dying and piling up in the streets, reducing the population of Europe by anywhere from a third to 60 percent in a few short years. In addition to taking readers on a walking tour through plague-ravaged Europe, Kelly heaps on the ancillary information and every last bit of it is captivating. We get a thorough breakdown of the three types of plagues that prey on humans; a detailed account of how the plague traveled from nation to nation (initially by boat via flea-infested rats); how floods (and the appalling hygiene of medieval people) made Europe so susceptible to the disease; how the plague triggered a new social hierarchy favoring women and the proletariat but also sparked vicious anti-Semitism; and especially, how the plague forever changed the way people viewed the church. Engrossing, accessible, and brimming with first-hand accounts drawn from the Middle Ages, *The Great Mortality* illuminates and inspires. History just doesn't get better than that. --Kim Hughes --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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目录:

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