

Quercus

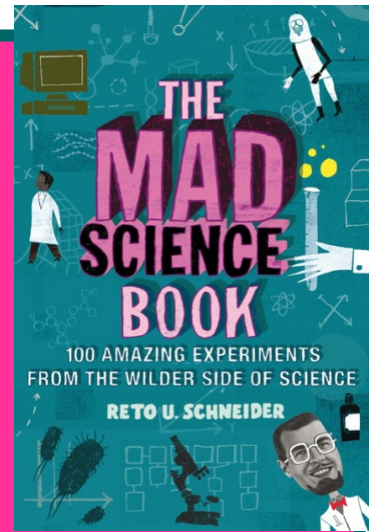
Media Release

The MAD SCIENCE BOOK

By Reto U. Schneider

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What happens when a human child is adopted by a family of apes? Does a dog think a robot dog belongs to the same species? If three men meet who all think they are Jesus, how do they decide who is right?

You don't have to be an eccentric obsessive to be a scientist, but it helps ...

In *The Mad Science Book*, Reto U. Schneider tells the extraordinary tales of 100 of the more unusual experiments conducted across seven centuries of science. From the attempts of the 14th-century Dominican monk Theodoric von Freiberg to discover the cause of the rainbow, to the efforts of the 20th-century psychologist Harry Harlow to be the perfect mother to a family of reluctant rhesus monkeys, these are stories that are often bizarre, sometimes mind-boggling – occasionally stomach-churning – but always informative and enlightening.

Among the myriad delights on display in this cabinet of scientific curiosities are the renowned doctor from Padua who sat in a pair of scales for 30 years, recording the minutest changes in his weight; the sheep, the duck and the rooster who became the world's first air passengers; the disgusting Dr Stubbins Ffirth, who swallowed other people's vomit in an attempt to prove that yellow fever cannot be transmitted from one person to another; and the ever-optimistic Charles-Édouard Brown-Séquard, who injected himself with essence of guinea pigs' testicles as an anti-ageing remedy. There is trivia here in abundance, but also quirky, yet genuinely influential, science.

Born in 1963, Reto U. Schneider is a distinguished science journalist. A graduate of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich with a degree in electrical engineering, he is the author of *Planetenjäger (Planet Hunter)*, the story of the discovery of the first planet found outside the solar system.

For more quirky science facts visit www.madsciencebook.com

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