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# Twisted True Tales From Science: Insane Inventors



## Synopsis

Nikola Tesla was crazy smart. He invented the idea for cell phones in 1893, discovered alternating current, and invented a death ray gun. Of course, he also talked to pigeons, ate only boiled food, and was scared of women who wore jewelry. He was an insane inventor. So was Henry Cavendish, who discovered hydrogen, calculated the density of the Earth, and was so scared of people that he had to write notes to communicate. Sir Isaac Newton discovered the laws of gravity, believed in magic, and thought he could make a potion to create gold. These stories may sound twisted, but they're all true tales from science!

## Book Information

Series: Twisted True Tales From Science

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

While the series is geared for 9 12-year-old readers, I believe it would be interesting to middle schoolers as well. This was truly a fun book to read. I highly recommend it and believe all who pick it up will read it clear through to the end. --Jacqueline Pfeiffer, NSTA Recommends[This book] is full of true stories that most of us have never heard before. Because of Stephanie Bearce we are entertained and at the same time more educated than we have ever been. These scientists/inventors thought in ways so different from the usual. And this is a good reminder to those who work with gifted children that wonderful brains need freedom to think in original ways. --Elaine

Wiener, Gifted Education Communicator With color illustrations and a smattering of black-and-white photographs, this addition to the series offers a taste of the wacky drive that inventors often need in order to innovate . . . Given the brevity of the chapters and the cartoonish artwork, even reluctant readers will garner insights from this title . . . VERDICT Elementary and middle school libraries, as well as public libraries, should consider this title for purchase. --Sarah Knutson, School Library Journal

Stephanie Bearce is a writer, teacher, and history detective. She loves tracking down spies and uncovering secret missions from the comfort of her library in St. Charles, MO. When she isn't writing or teaching, Stephanie loves to travel the world and go on adventures with her husband, Darrell.

Human curiosity not only advances the frontiers of science, but also develops the desire to know about other people's lives. This book combines both (sort of) by giving readers a glimpse into the eccentricities of some individuals who have challenged and expanded scientific understanding. The book is divided into three parts titled "Don't Try This at Home," "Anything for Science," and "Strange Days of Science." The classifications and criteria used to differentiate chapters in one section from another seem arbitrary. The first chapter serves as an introduction highlighting the absurdity of risking one's life for testing one's invention or augmenting scientific understanding. Each section contains about half a dozen chapters, and most chapters profile a main personality. While the primary focus is on their eccentricities, there is (of course) acknowledgment of their scientific contributions. Virtually all luminaries are from the pre-modern and modern era, and there are none from outside the Western World. The last two chapters of each section describe experiments that readers can try with everyday objects. This book is clearly aimed at middle school students. Its size, illustrations and narrative do not make it intimidating for that age group. While the book does have its shortcomings, for the price, readability, illustrations and extensive bibliography, it is recommended for middle school students (and curious adults). I received a review copy of the book.

"Don't try this at home!" warns author Stephanie Bearce as she writes about inventors who experimented on themselves and others who put themselves in danger while searching for answers. Learn how many inventors lost their lives, or their sanity, but left behind many useful discoveries that helped future generations. Then read more about these insane inventors when you check out the websites and articles listed in the back of the book. In the

Inventor's Lab after each section, readers can have fun trying their own experiments, from making an electromagnet to finding out what makes things glow in the dark, and more. Short chapters that highlight different inventors and the quirky and often dangerous things that they did, along with some additional facts throughout the book, make this a fun, easy read. Great research and captivating writing make *Insane Inventors* an excellent read for students and adults alike.

You don't have to be crazy to be curious, but you do have to be curious (and sometimes crazy) to experiment (especially on yourself), learn about the world and come up with ingenious inventions. *Insane Inventors* is another cool book from Ms. Stephanie Bearce's series on *Twisted True Tales From Science*. In this book, Ms. Bearce takes us on a fun and interesting trip through time, exploring the world of inventors and their contributions to society. The book appeals to middle grade readers, but would also provide young adults and adults with a fun and interesting read. The format and style lend to an easy read. It includes Science Lab activities throughout and has a good bibliography as well as a list of websites for further research. This book would be an excellent to use in a classroom or for home teaching. Read it! You'll learn some new and fascinating facts.

Stephanie Bearce's *Twisted Tales of Insane Inventors* may be aimed at middle graders but it is a fun, fast, and engaging read for anyone. The book begins with an interesting introduction to the nature of scientific experimentation and its resulting discoveries through history, and then moves quickly into the stories of the various scientists highlighted in the book, covering the risks they took to reach their discoveries and the extreme sacrifices they were willing to make. Details of these scientists' experiments and their colorful quirks as individuals are presented in an entertaining way with descriptive overviews of their studies and experiments, inventions, and discoveries. This book will appeal to kids who aren't into science as well as those who are. Young and old enthusiasts will add to their store of knowledge with each page, while kids and adults less scientifically inclined will find themselves hooked and unable to resist reading more. DIY experiments interspersed through the book include, among others, making an electromagnet, a bottle squirt gun, building your own flashlight, and building a moving force machine. All require only three-to six everyday objects and contain simple and clear directions. Curiosity is the only prerequisite for this book! History, science, attention grabbing human interest facts, and simple hands on experiments make this book an easy shoe-in on any parent's or kid's reading list.

Were they brilliant, crazy, or just plain dumb? This is the third volume in the latest four-book series from author Stephanie Bearce and publisher Prufrock Press. This book focuses on inventors who often risked their own health and safety in order to prove something to themselves and others in the name of science. For example, in his quest to find out about human digestion 200+ years ago, Lazzaro Spallanzani swallowed and "recovered" (from vomit and excrement) various items. He wanted to understand digestion. The chapter devoted to him is appropriately titled, "Puking for Science." This volume may not be for the squeamish, but even the most reluctant juvenile reader will be intrigued and entertained by these stories of unique experimentation. And like the other books in the series, it includes instructions for safe, at-home experiments. This is sure to be popular with readers who enjoy being "grossed out."

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