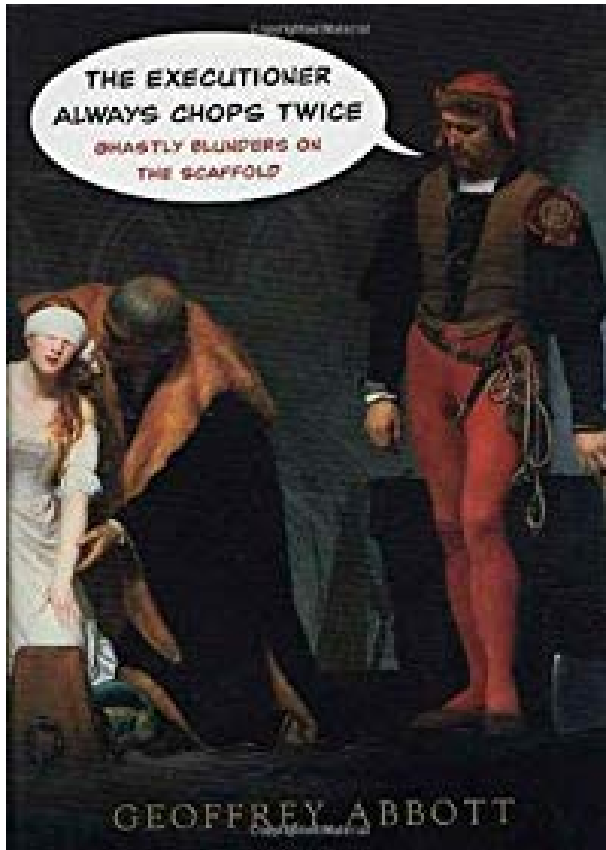


The Executioner Always Chops Twice: Ghastly Blunders on the Scaffold



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A morbidly fascinating mixture of bungled executions, strange last requests, and classic final one-liners from medieval times to the present day. Sometimes it's hard to be an executioner, trying to keep someone from popping up to make a quip when they should have spectacularly sunk without a trace. Or to be told that the condemned to the guillotine won't have a last drink for fear of "completely losing his head." The business of death can be absurd, and nothing illustrates this better than these tales of the gruesome and frankly ridiculous ways in which a number of ill-fated unfortunates met (or failed to meet) their maker. Did you know: When Sir Thomas More was ordered to position his head on the block, he said "though you have warrant to cut off my head, you have none to cut off my beard?" When the guillotine took three strokes to sever the neck of Isabeau Herman, the mob attempted to stone the executioner to death for cruelty? After the English hanged the pirate Captain Kidd they chained his body to a stake on the Thames River as a warning to seafarers? From the strange to the gruesome, from the weird to the completely unbelievable, *The Executioner Always Chops Twice* is popular history at its best: witty, lively, and wonderfully bizarre.