



Black Sheep and Lame Ducks: The Origins of Even More Phrases We Use Every Day

Albert Jack

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The fun and fascinating follow-up to the international bestseller *Red Herrings and White Elephants*

Why do people put their "skeletons in a closet," "have a hunch," "get the cold shoulder," "get dressed up to the nines," or "call a spade a spade?" These phrases are used every day, yet most people have little or no idea where most of them come from. In *Black Sheep and Lame Ducks*, Albert Jack takes readers on a journey through the curious- and often bizarre-origins of hundreds of their favorite idioms and expressions.

For example, "wearing your heart on your sleeve" comes from the Middle Ages, when a lady would "give her heart" in the form of a handkerchief pinned to the sleeve of a knight who was about to go into battle. And calling someone the "black sheep in the family" refers to a thousands- year-old belief that a black lamb in a flock was unpopular because its fleece was undyeable and therefore less valuable.

With *Black Sheep and Lame Ducks*, any language-lover can feel like a "Smart Aleck"-and also know exactly who that was.



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