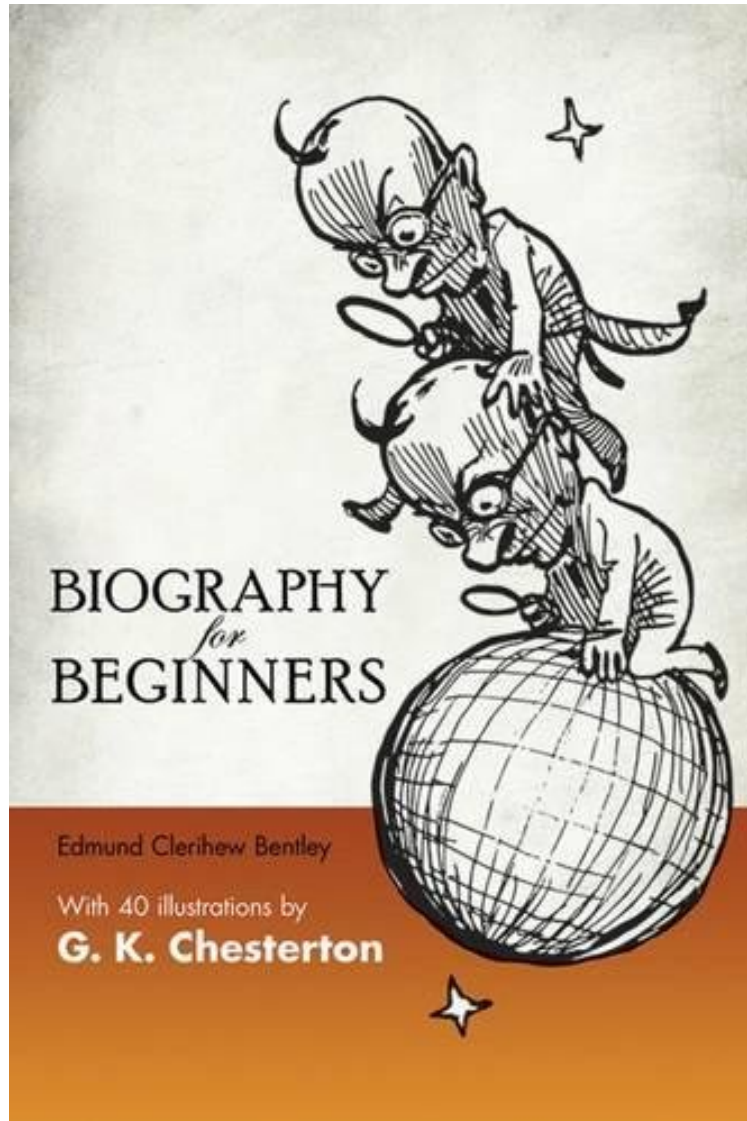


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Biography for Beginners (Dover Books on Literature Drama)

Edmund Clerihew Bentley

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Edmund Clerihew Bentley : Biography for Beginners (Dover Books on Literature Drama) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Biography for Beginners (Dover Books on Literature Drama):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "Karl Marx Wrapped Up in his Sharks"By Bassocantor"Funny quips by the sharp-tongued Mr Edmund Clerihew,Lead me to write this brief but pointed review;When we add snarky sketches penned by G.K.,We entice the harried reader to stay."This is a re-publication of the third edition of the

original Biography for Beginners, published in 1925. I admit I had never heard of this little gem. The 4-line quips are known as, what else? "Clerihews." I can't decide what I like better--the clever 4-line clerihews or the Chesterton comics. The quips sound a lot like Chesterton--they have that "snarky" feel to them like Chesterton writes. For those readers familiar with Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, these quips sound similar to Johnson's cracks. Of course, Chesterton is known for his sharp literary tongue--but sketches? Had no idea of his artistic talent. These are really well-done. One of my favorite Clerihews: "That you have all heard of Hume I tacitly assume; But you didn't know, perhaps, That his parents were Lapps." Were Hume's parents really Lapps? It looks like Chesterton thought so; at least his sketch shows two eskimo-looking folks on snowshoes. The end of the book contains an "Index of Psychology," which is a nice sorting of all the attributes to the various subjects. For instance, we discover that the attributes of "Contentions and disagreements, love of," is a quality of Erasmus, Besant and Rice, Clifford, and Raleigh. Lots of funny quips paired with even funnier illustrations by Chesterton. Recommend! A Review by Chris Lawson¹ of 2 people found the following review helpful. Elegant, Compact, and Dead On By David Wineberg Possibly the easiest book to read, Biography for Beginners consists of a four line ditty describing the identifying bent of some famous man, plus a caricature by GK Chesterton, illustrating that trait. It is whimsical but accurate, in the nature of better political cartoons. The subjects tend to be names from pop culture and British history, so many will not be recognized, particularly by Americans. But the British are just as dismissive of what preceded their own self importance, and will puzzle over many. Nonetheless, the book gets republished again and again, and we are rapidly approaching its hundredth anniversary. At the back, the author divides the biographies by adjective, listing the men by the words that describe them. Of note is Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's, who appears 24 times. Not bad for a four line description. Apparently Mr. Bentley had an issue with Wren. Or Wren was an outsized brigand - I mean character. Or both. The whole exercise reminds me of Flix Fnon, a newspaper editor who wrote entire stories in three line poems, about two decades before Bentley's book. The English translation/collection is called Novels in Three Lines. His stories are so elegant, I am delighted Bentley followed up in English. David Wineberg¹ of 1 people found the following review helpful. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED A MUST READ By BLUE FISH What a very interesting and comical book this one is, satirical, humorous together with associated cartoon character touching on the finer points of rhyming lines and a unusual form of verse.

The Art of Biography Is different from Geography. Geography is about Maps, But Biography is about Chaps. With these rhyming lines, English novelist and humorist Edmund Clerihew Bentley introduces this book and an unusual form of verse of his own invention. Bentley's four-line poems, known as "clerihews," offer satirical views of historical figures, from Edward the Confessor and Odo of Bayeux to Sir Walter Raleigh, Jane Austen, Karl Marx, Theodore Roosevelt, and many others. The witty verses are accompanied by the book's outstanding feature: whimsical full-page illustrations by G. K. Chesterton.

From the Back Cover