

Fascinating Historical Facts found in this Humorous Novel:

- **What was it like to be the first family in a small town to have an indoor bathroom? Were the neighbors jealous of horrified of this brand new invention? Read chapter one to find out!**
- **Why (and how) did parents in 1896 make their children give contagious diseases to each other? Read chapter two to find out!**
- **How cool would it be if a travelling peddler set up his store right in front of your house for an hour or two? What would it be like to do your specialty shopping just 30 yards from your front door? Read chapter four to find out?**
- **What would it be like going to a school where the teacher was allowed (and expected) to thrash students who misbehaved right in front of the whole class? Read the shocking chapter seven to find out!**



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Recommending books to smart readers since 2007



The Great Brain

by John D. Fitzgerald

Finally!

Historical Fiction about a Boy Genius in 1896!

Don't tell anyone, but I've been building a time-machine at home. As I tinker with its gears and circuits, I often wonder how a gifted and talented thinker like me will be treated in past eras I choose to visit.

With the discovery of John D. Fitzgerald's The Great Brain, I know for sure that 1896 will be one of my first destinations when the time machine is functioning. I know the main character of this series—Tom “The Great Brain” Fitzgerald—doesn't really exist, but if he did, I'd totally visit him. He and I would be great friends, even though he has a few questionable characteristics.



I also know that the turn of the nineteenth century was a fascinating time to grow up. Things were certainly different, but they were also the same, as you will learn if you choose to read this great book like I did.

When you have your own time machine built too, I know you'll want to visit 1896 too after reading this book. Hey, look me up when you get there. We can use our genius brains to have adventures like “The Great Brain!”

This Book is Simply Great ...Great like a Brain

A synopsis: When you have an amazing brain, you want to do great things with it, right? Twelve-year-old Tom D. Fitzgerald has such a brain, and he does some pretty great things...sort of.

You see, just like a Batman's unique powers, a great brain can be used for good... or *evil*. Although Tom never achieves evil, he certainly doesn't only do good in this book's eight adventurous chapters. He's certainly a unique hero with some dark qualities.

You see, in addition to a "great brain," Tom also has a "money-loving" heart, and many of his gifted and talented schemes are designed to empty his friends' and classmates' pockets of their allowances and personal treasures.

Despite his greed and monstrous ego, Tom is loved by his family, especially by his younger brother (J.D.) who narrates the stories in this fun little book. Interestingly enough, J.D. grows up to be John D. Fitzgerald, the author of this novel, so the stories are loosely based on his real-life brother and family, and the small town he grew up in.



Each chapter comes with a wonderful illustration by Mercer Mayer. Mayer's pencil-sketch style and his abilities to capture emotion of characters' faces really adds to the charm of this book.

The pictures really help you understand the bond that exists between the narrator and his sometimes-scheming brother.

I dare you not to laugh when...

- ...the Great Brain makes a tidy profit showing complete strangers the family's toilet!
- ...the boys create a terrible game called "Jackass Leapfrog!"
- ...you discover how Tom is planning to get his strict teacher fired.

I dare you not to cheer when...

- ...Tom's great brain saves the lives of two lost boys and their dog.
- ...Tom pummels the town bully for picking on a younger who can't speak English very well.
- ...the Great Brain helps a suicidal, one-legged boy find worth in himself again.

At the very least, you should read it to...

- ...discover the power of the "silent treatment" when dealing with siblings
- ...learn the importance of always keeping your tetanus shots up-to-date
- ...understand why a large family would give every child the same middle name.

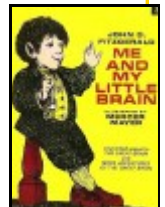
A final persuasive attempt:

John D. Fitzgerald (1906-1988) had a great career as a writer of books for both children and adults. By far, he is best known for his *Great Brain* series, which this is first book in that series. Personally, I read all eight books of the series when I was your age, and they are all very entertaining and full of interesting information—both historical and practical.

By far the two best books in the series (in my humble opinion) are the third and fourth book. In [The Great Brain at the Academy](#), Tom is sent away to a private school in the big city, and watching Tom learn to trick and scheme people in a big-city environment after watching him do it for so many years in his small town...well, it's a very fun situation when a character you've learned to like and understand finds himself in a very different setting.



The other "best book" in the series does not have the series' main character in it hardly at all; in [Me & My Little Brain](#), the younger brother/narrator tells what happens during the school year that his older brother is away at the academy. Poor little J.D. tries so hard to scheme his friends (like he's watched his brother do for so long), but he truly has a smaller brain because he ends up poorer every time he tries to make a little money in his brother's absence.



Sadly, you can't read these two "best books" in the series until you've read the first book first! So do it!