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New Book by Fitzharris '04 Makes Best Seller List

This story was updated July 11, 2022, with quotes from Lindsey Fitzharris.

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Less than two weeks after its release, the latest book by award-winning author and medical historian Lindsey Fitzharris '04, *The Facemaker*, launched to a spot on the New York Times Best Seller list.

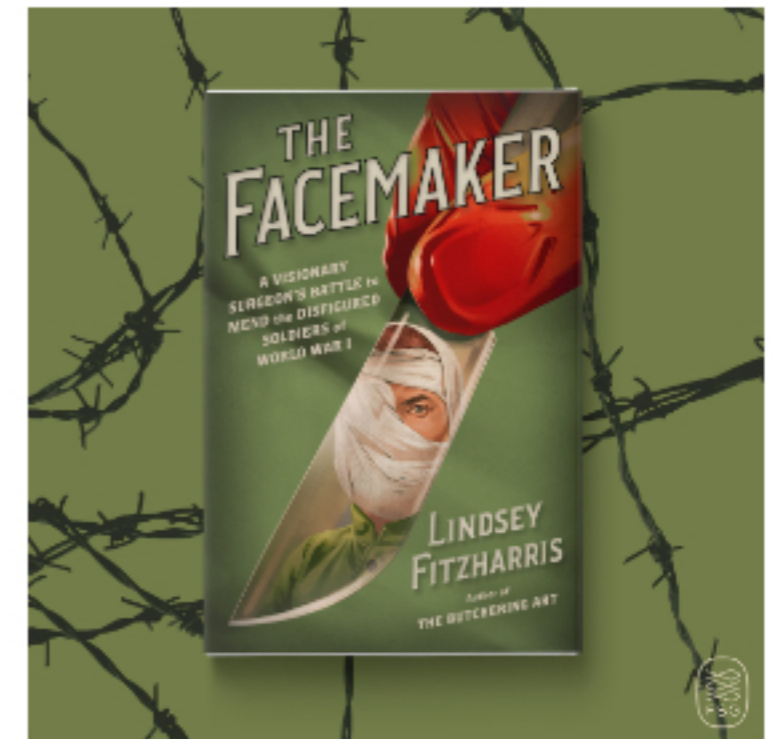
The Facemaker follows the story of World War I surgeon Harold Gillies, the man who pioneered plastic surgery. Fitzharris writes about the life and career of Gillies, who lived in a time when there were no textbooks or guides for facial reconstruction. Paired with the expertise of artists, this surgeon not only helped soldiers breathe and eat again, but also reconnect with their identities.

Through her research, Fitzharris found Gillies to be an inspiring figure.

"When I decided to tackle this subject, I knew very little about Harold Gillies, the pioneering surgeon who rebuilt soldiers' faces during the First World War," she said. "But I did know there was a harrowing, pulse-quickening story there."

This is Fitzharris' second book, following the critically acclaimed biography *The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine*, which won her the [PEN America/E.O. Wilson Prize for Literary Science Writing](#).

"This book was far more complex than *The Butchering Art* as it wasn't as straight-forward in terms of narrative. *The Facemaker* is as much about the disfigured soldiers of the First World War as it is about the surgeon who transformed their lives," Fitzharris said.



"The Facemaker" follows Lindsey Fitzharris' first book "The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine."

[In a 2018 IWU Magazine feature](#), Fitzharris said her morbid curiosity about history blossomed at Illinois Wesleyan University under Emeritus Robert W. Harrington Professor of History Michael B. Young, who introduced her to the history of science.

A Mount Prospect, Illinois native, Fitzharris holds a bachelor's degree in history from Illinois Wesleyan, and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Oxford, where she also studied as an undergraduate during her junior year through the [IWU Pembroke Program](#).

Fitzharris also hosted a [YouTube series called Under the Knife](#), appeared in the PBS series *Secrets of the Dead* and hosted her own show called [The Curious Life and Death Of...on the Smithsonian Channel](#).

Released on June 7, 2022, [The Facemaker can be found anywhere books are sold and online.](#)

By MJ Soria '25