



Peter Leeson

Author of *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates* (Princeton)

Any particular story to tell concerning the writing of this book?

I proposed to my soon-to-be wife, Ania, with this book. The book's dedication is the proposal . . . She was very surprised.

Before dessert I had the maitre d' bring a 'pirate chest' I had bought to the table. The chest was locked so I gave her a key. When she opened it, inside she saw the book. She was thrilled to see the book and at first thought that was what we were celebrating. But after a minute she noticed the book was book-marked at the dedication page. She opened it to that page and read the dedication and was shocked, which was great. Then I lifted up the false bottom in the chest I had created and below it was the ring.

It went perfectly . . . There were 3 layers of surprise. First, when the chest came out, at which point she thought it might be a proposal. Second, when she opened it and saw the book, at which point she thought that's what the full surprise was. And third when she read the dedication and 'found' the ring, when she realized it was indeed a proposal!

What's some good advice that you've received concerning writing? What's some advice that you could offer young writers?

Keep it simple. It's almost cliché to say something like, "50% of what you write is for you, not the reader, and so could and should be cut." But this is true, and while it's very hard to adhere to this rule in practice, I believe in striving to do so as much as possible.

How did you find the publisher for this book? What has your experience as a publisher been like?

I was very fortunate because my publisher, Princeton University Press, approached me about writing this book. Everyone I've worked with at PUP has been truly outstanding and I feel incredibly lucky to have had the chance to do so.

What are you working on at the moment?

I'm working on a project that explores what I'm calling the "law and economics of superstition." Many important superstitions, I argue, have a rational choice foundation, and perhaps most critically, perform important social governance functions where government can't be relied on for this purpose. I'm also working on a book that examines the economics of anarchy in everyday life.

What are you reading?

Today, I'm reading *Gypsy Demons and Divinities*, by Elwood Trigg and *Expensive Habits*, by Peter Mayle.

Peter Leeson, BB&T Professor for the Study of Capitalism at George Mason University has a blog at austrianeconomists.typepad.com.