



The Corpse: A History

Christine Quigley

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Throughout the centuries, different cultures have established a variety of procedures for handling and disposing of corpses. Often the methods are directly associated with the deceased's position in life, such as a pharaoh's mummification in Egypt or the cremation of a Buddhist. Treatment by the living of the dead over time and across cultures is the focus of study. Burial arrangements and preparations are detailed, including embalming, the funeral service, storage and transport of the body, and forms of burial. Autopsies and the investigative process of causes of deliberate death are fully covered. Preservation techniques such as cryonic suspension and mummification are discussed, as well as a look at the "recycling" of the corpse through organ donation, donation to medicine, animal scavengers, cannibalism, and, of course, natural decay and decomposition. Mistreatments of a corpse are also covered.

The Corpse: A History Details

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From Reader Review The Corpse: A History for online ebook

Mairi says

I read this to review it for Morbid Curiosity Magazine and *loved* it. I've written a lot more about just why I loved it but I'll just leave it at that for here.

Myrna says

A must read if you are into this type a thing.

Lauren says

Fascinating and informative and so, so corpsey. A bit right-slanted at times, but mainly science-based and well worth the read.

Bess Lovejoy says

A must-read for the morbidly curious.

Petra X says

The book is misnamed. It should be called. The Corpse: A History of it and it's treatment in the West, primarily in the UK and US. The author very oddly calls Jews, 'Hebrews' most of the time.

I've read about a quarter of the book. Each chapter is devoted to a subject, such as the word 'death' in speech and all it's synonyms, and use of, such as 'looking like death warmed up'. It's quite exhaustive and tedious to read. The chapter I'm reading now is on bodies lying in state, I can't wait for it to end. .

The book reads as if a researcher had got the chapter title and then produced a list of everything to do with it, each one of which then needs to be fleshed out. It's neither an engaging nor entertaining format and if the interest level doesn't go up, it's going to be another dnf.

I'm getting very intolerant about books that don't hold my attention. Before I would do my best to finish them, now I just don't care. I added a list of about 300 books I own but haven't read this weekend, and some of them I'm dying to read, I'm not going to waste time on ones that I'm not enjoying and aren't adding interesting knowledge to my life. This one is headed that way, but.... I'll give it another 50 pages.

Mary says

This book is an excellent read if you want to know the history of death/dying. I was amazed at some of the facts I read (& at times felt squeamish). For instance, cats will eat your body sooner than a dog would (as a mode of survival), and in eleventh-century France human flesh was sold in the marketplace. We're all going to die eventually, but I hadn't thought about what I wanted when I do (i.e. burial, cremation, etc). After reading this, I'm strongly considering donating my body to science. My perspective now being that the body is a vessel/temporary. "We're here one day, gone the next." It's the soul that carries on; if I'm buried, I won't be there. I'd have no knowledge that visitors are by my gravestone. I want my death (memorial service) to be a celebration; a celebration of my life, and life in general.

noelle says

repetitive at times; minor typographical & factual errors, but does not fall prey to the issue I had with *Stiff*--it does not have the same irreverent tone and it's more matter of fact, which is what I dig. (although I can see why some people don't.)

Sue says

Reads like a textbook--an old-fashioned one, because almost no pictures. Certainly contains a lot of information; not entirely boring.
