

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers is a captivating exploration into the often-overlooked world of human decomposition and the scientific studies that have transformed our understanding of death. Written by acclaimed author Mary Roach, this book delves into the fascinating and sometimes bizarre ways in which scientists have studied cadavers to unlock the secrets of life, death, and everything in between. Through a blend of humor, rigorous research, and compelling storytelling, Roach offers readers an eye-opening perspective on the curious lives of human cadavers.

Overview of "Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers"

What is the Book About?

"Stiff" examines the myriad ways in which human bodies have been used in scientific experiments and research after death. Roach takes readers on a journey through history, highlighting innovative and sometimes controversial methods used to understand anatomy, physiology, and the processes of decomposition. The book addresses questions such as:

- How are cadavers used in medical training?
- What are the scientific benefits of studying human decomposition?
- How have these studies advanced medicine and forensic science?
- What ethical considerations surround the treatment of human remains?

The Author: Mary Roach

Mary Roach is renowned for her engaging and humorous approach to science writing. Her curiosity-led investigations have uncovered fascinating stories that challenge conventional perceptions of science and death. Roach's ability to combine rigorous research with wit makes "Stiff" a compelling read for both science enthusiasts and general audiences alike.

The Historical Perspective on Human Cadavers

Ancient and Medieval Use of Cadavers

The use of human remains for scientific purposes dates back centuries. In ancient Greece and Rome, dissections were performed to better understand anatomy, though often limited by social and religious taboos. During the Middle Ages, dissection was largely restricted, but the Renaissance brought a resurgence of anatomical studies, exemplified by figures like Andreas Vesalius.

The Evolution of Anatomical Studies

The 16th and 17th centuries saw a surge in dissection practices, leading to more detailed anatomical knowledge. However, the procurement of human bodies was often clandestine due to legal restrictions, leading to the phenomenon of grave robbing. These historical contexts set the stage for modern practices by highlighting the importance of ethical considerations and scientific necessity.

Modern Uses of Cadavers in Science and Medicine

Medical Education and Training

One of the primary uses of human cadavers today is in medical education. Anatomy labs provide students with invaluable hands-on experience. Roach discusses:

- How cadaver dissection helps future surgeons learn precise anatomy.
- The development of plastinated specimens that are preserved for repeated use.
- The importance of respectful treatment of human remains in educational settings.

Forensic Science and Crime Investigation

Cadavers are essential in forensic science to determine causes of death, estimate time of death, and identify victims. Roach explains:

- How decomposition patterns assist in forensic analysis.
- The use of cadaver dogs trained to detect human remains.
- The role of forensic anthropologists in excavating and analyzing remains.

Scientific Research on Decomposition

Studying how bodies decompose has provided insights into:

- Estimating the post-mortem interval.
- Understanding the stages of decomposition.
- Developing better methods for locating missing persons and crime scene investigation.

Innovative and Bizarre Studies Involving Cadavers

Cadavers in Space and Extreme Environments

Roach recounts experiments where human remains have been sent into space to study the effects of zero gravity on decomposition, providing data relevant to space travel and astronaut safety.

Cadaver Experiments for Safety Testing

Some studies have involved using human bodies to test:

- Car crash safety features.
- Fire resistance of materials.
- The impact of various environmental factors on decomposition.

Bizarre and Controversial Experiments

Throughout history, there have been experiments that raise ethical questions, such as:

- The use of unclaimed bodies for scientific research.
- The development of "body farms" for understanding decomposition in different environments.
- Roach discusses the ethical debates surrounding these practices and their contributions to science.

Ethical Considerations and Modern Regulations

Respect and Consent

A core issue in the study of human cadavers is ensuring respectful treatment. Roach emphasizes:

- The importance of informed consent from donors.
- The role of body donation programs.
- Cultural and religious sensitivities surrounding death.

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Modern regulations govern the use and disposal of human remains to ensure ethical standards. These include:

- The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act.
- Institutional review boards overseeing research.
- Guidelines for the respectful handling of remains.

The Impact of "Stiff" on Public Perception of Death

Changing Attitudes Toward Mortality

Roach's book challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions of death and the dead. By exploring the scientific utility of cadavers, she demystifies death and portrays it as a vital part of scientific progress.

Promoting Body Donation

"Stiff" has contributed to increased awareness and acceptance of body donation programs, emphasizing their importance for future medical advances and scientific discovery.

Conclusion: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers

Mary Roach's "Stiff" offers a compelling and thought-provoking exploration into the lives—or rather, the afterlives—of human cadavers. It highlights how human remains have been instrumental in advancing science, medicine, and forensic investigation, all while tackling complex ethical issues. The book serves as a reminder that even in death, the human body continues to serve a purpose, contributing to knowledge and progress in ways that might surprise and inspire us.

Why Read "Stiff"?

- Engages readers with humorous and accessible science storytelling.
- Provides a historical perspective on anatomy and decomposition.
- Sheds light on scientific and forensic advancements.
- Challenges perceptions of death and encourages respectful treatment of human remains.
- Inspires curiosity about the scientific uses of human cadavers and their importance in society.

Whether you're interested in medicine, forensics, history, or simply looking to understand death from a new perspective, Mary Roach's "Stiff" is a groundbreaking read that uncovers the curious and often surprising lives of human cadavers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some surprising insights about the use of human cadavers in scientific research from Mary Roach's 'Stiff'?

Mary Roach reveals that cadavers have been instrumental in advancing medical procedures, such as testing crash safety features and developing surgical techniques, highlighting their continued importance beyond traditional anatomy studies.

How does 'Stiff' explore the history and cultural attitudes toward human cadavers?

The book delves into historical practices like body snatching and the evolution of cadaver donation, shedding light on societal fears, ethical debates, and changing perceptions about death and the treatment of the dead.

What are some of the most unusual or interesting experiments involving human cadavers discussed in 'Stiff'?

Roach covers experiments such as testing fuel efficiency using human bodies, the development of seatbelts, and the use of cadavers in creating realistic medical training models, showcasing the wide range of innovative uses.

How does Mary Roach approach the topic of death and our mortality in 'Stiff'?

Roach addresses death with humor and curiosity, aiming to demystify and destigmatize the subject by sharing fascinating stories about cadavers' roles in science and how understanding death can deepen our appreciation for life.

Why has 'Stiff' become a trending book in discussions about science, ethics, and mortality?

Its candid, humorous, and informative exploration of a taboo subject resonates with readers interested in science, ethics, and mortality, sparking conversations about the importance of body donation and the scientific use of human remains.

Additional Resources

Mary Roach's *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* is an engaging and thought-provoking exploration into the often-overlooked world of human cadavers. With her characteristic wit, meticulous research, and a touch of humor, Roach delves into the fascinating, sometimes macabre, stories behind the use of human bodies in science, medicine, and education. This book challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions of death and the departed, transforming what might be a grim subject into a captivating journey through history, ethics, and scientific innovation.

Overview of Stiff: An Introduction to the Concept

Mary Roach's *Stiff* is more than just a recounting of how bodies are used after death; it's a celebration of human curiosity and resilience. The book begins with an exploration of the historical context—how societies have viewed the dead and the various ways humans have sought to utilize or honor their remains. Roach introduces the reader to the concept that cadavers are not merely discarded or mourned but have played a vital role in advancing science and medicine.

Throughout the narrative, Roach examines the myriad ways in which human bodies have contributed to societal progress—from testing safety measures to inspiring artistic endeavors. Her approach is both humorous and respectful, making complex scientific procedures accessible and engaging for a broad audience.

The Historical Perspective: How Society Has Treated the Dead

Ancient and Medieval Practices

Roach takes readers back to ancient civilizations where bodies were used in rituals, mummification, and even as tools for understanding mortality. She discusses the Egyptians' elaborate burial practices and the early use of human remains for anatomical study.

Modern Evolution

The book traces the evolution of body donation and scientific curiosity through the centuries, highlighting key moments such as the development of anatomical theaters in the Renaissance and the controversial figures like Thomas Dwight and others who pushed the boundaries of medical knowledge.

Features & Highlights:

- Rich historical anecdotes.
- Insight into changing societal attitudes toward death and the body.
- Ethical debates surrounding body donation.

Pros:

- Provides context that deepens understanding.
- Raises questions about respect and scientific progress.

Cons:

- Some historical details may seem tangential to the main focus.

The Science of Using Cadavers

Medical Education and Dissection

Roach vividly describes the vital role of cadavers in medical training—dissecting bodies to teach anatomy, which remains essential despite technological advances like virtual simulations. She recounts her own experiences observing dissections, emphasizing the importance of tactile learning.

Trauma and Forensic Studies

The book explores how bodies are used to understand trauma, with detailed descriptions of crash tests and ballistic studies that inform safety standards. Roach discusses the use of cadavers in forensic science, helping investigators understand cause and manner of death.

Product Testing and Safety Research

One of the more surprising segments involves the use of cadavers in testing airbags, seat belts, and other safety devices, illustrating how human bodies have contributed to reducing fatalities and

injuries.

Features & Highlights:

- Detailed explanations of scientific procedures.
- Anecdotes from scientists and medical professionals.
- Insights into the importance of cadaver-based research.

Pros:

- Illuminates the practical importance of cadavers.
- Demystifies complex scientific processes.

Cons:

- Some readers may find the technical descriptions intense.

Innovative and Unusual Uses of Cadavers

Art and Artistic Inspiration

Roach discusses artists like Gunther von Hagens, who have used plastination and human bodies in art exhibits such as Body Worlds. These displays aim to educate and fascinate, although they sometimes provoke controversy.

Environmental and Burial Innovations

The book covers pioneering methods like human composting and alkaline hydrolysis, which are greener alternatives to traditional burials and cremation. Roach examines how these methods may become more widespread in the future.

Space and Extreme Environments

A particularly captivating segment covers experiments involving the use of human cadavers in testing conditions similar to space or extreme environments, aiding in the design of suits and habitats for astronauts.

Features & Highlights:

- Exploration of non-traditional uses.
- Ethical considerations of body commodification.
- Impact of these practices on public perception.

Pros:

- Showcases innovation and forward-thinking.
- Expands understanding of the potential of human remains.

Cons:

- Some applications may seem unsettling or provocative.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Roach thoughtfully addresses the complex ethical dilemmas surrounding body donation, consent, and the treatment of human remains. She examines different cultural attitudes, from reverence to commodification.

Key Topics Covered:

- Body donation programs and how they operate.
- Consent and autonomy of the deceased.
- Cultural taboos and religious beliefs influencing practices.

Features & Highlights:

- Balanced discussion of ethical issues.
- Personal stories from donors and families.
- Legal frameworks governing body use.

Pros:

- Encourages critical thinking about death and respect.
- Provides a nuanced view of sensitive topics.

Cons:

- Some readers may find the ethical debates challenging or uncomfortable.

Humor and Accessibility: Roach's Signature Style

Mary Roach's narrative style is both humorous and accessible, making a potentially grim subject approachable. Her use of wit, vivid descriptions, and personal anecdotes keeps the reader engaged. She often injects levity into discussions of death, emphasizing humanity's resilience and curiosity.

Features & Highlights:

- Light-hearted tone amidst serious topics.
- Engaging storytelling.
- Clear explanations of scientific concepts.

Pros:

- Makes complex topics enjoyable.
- Keeps readers interested despite the macabre subject matter.

Cons:

- Humor may not resonate with all readers, especially on sensitive topics.

Impact and Reception

Stiff has been widely praised for its originality, thorough research, and engaging prose. It has sparked conversations about death, scientific ethics, and the potential uses of human bodies. Many readers appreciate how Roach transforms a taboo subject into a source of fascination and learning.

Reception Highlights:

- Critical acclaim for balancing humor with serious inquiry.
- Popular among both scientific communities and general audiences.
- Inspired subsequent books and discussions on related topics.

Criticisms:

- Some critics argue that the book occasionally trivializes death.
- Others feel it may oversimplify complex ethical issues.

Conclusion: A Must-Read for the Curious and the Courageous

Mary Roach's *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* is a remarkable exploration of a subject that everyone will confront at some point—death. It challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions, offering a blend of scientific insight, ethical reflection, and humor. Whether you're interested in medicine, ethics, history, or simply enjoy compelling storytelling, *Stiff* provides a comprehensive and entertaining look into the lives (and afterlives) of human cadavers.

Final Thoughts:

- A compelling blend of science, history, and ethics.
- Engaging, humorous, and thought-provoking.
- Suitable for a broad audience, from casual readers to professionals.

Pros:

- Illuminates the importance of cadavers in advancing human knowledge.
- Offers a respectful yet candid look at death.
- Encourages curiosity about the unknown.

Cons:

- May be unsettling for some readers.
- Occasionally lacks depth on certain ethical debates.

In sum, *Stiff* is a must-read for anyone intrigued by the intersection of death, science, and human curiosity. Mary Roach's masterful storytelling transforms a taboo subject into a fascinating exploration of life, death, and what comes after—an enlightening journey that leaves a lasting impression.

Mary Roach Stiff The Curious Lives Of Human Cadavers

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Summary and Analysis of Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers Worth Books, 2017-02-07 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of Stiff tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Mary Roach's book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter summaries Profiles of the characters and places Important quotes Fascinating trivia Glossary of terms Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach: Acclaimed journalist Mary Roach's bestselling book Stiff offers an inside look through the through the weird world of human cadavers. This globe-spanning story is deeply informative, surprisingly funny, and occasionally disgusting. These superheroes, as Roach refers to them, brave high-speed car crashes, gunshots, decomposition in the sun, and other indignities all in the name of advancing science and making life better for the living. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Stiff Mary Roach, 2003-03-25 An oddly compelling, often hilarious forensic exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Stiff Mary Roach, 2025-04-25 Beloved, best-selling science writer Mary Roach's acutely entertaining, morbidly fascinating (Susan Adams, Forbes) classic, now with a new epilogue. For two thousand years, cadavers – some willingly, some unwittingly – have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. They've tested France's first guillotines, ridden the NASA Space Shuttle, been crucified in a Parisian laboratory to test the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin, and helped solve the mystery of TWA Flight 800. For every new surgical procedure, from heart transplants to gender confirmation surgery, cadavers have helped make history in their quiet way. Delightful—though never disrespectful (Les Simpson, Time Out New York), Stiff investigates the strange lives of our bodies postmortem and answers the question: What should we do after we die? This quirky, funny read offers perspective and insight about life, death and the medical profession. . . . You can close this book with an appreciation of the miracle that the human body really is. —Tara Parker-Pope, Wall Street Journal Gross, educational, and unexpectedly sidesplitting. — Entertainment Weekly

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Technologies of the Human Corpse John Troyer, 2021-08-03 “One of our greatest thinkers” on death presents a radical new approach to thinking about dying and the human corpse (Caitlin Doughty, mortician and bestselling author of Smoke Gets in Your Eyes). A fascinating exploration of the relationship between technology and the human corpse throughout history—from 19th-century embalming machines to 21st-century death-prevention technologies. Death and the dead body have never been more alive in the public imagination—not least because of current debates over modern medical technology that is deployed, it seems, expressly to keep human bodies from dying, blurring the boundary between alive and dead. In this book, John Troyer examines the relationship of the dead body with technology, both material and conceptual: the physical machines, political concepts, and sovereign institutions that humans use to classify, organize, repurpose, and transform the human corpse. Doing so, he asks readers to think about death, dying, and dead bodies in radically different ways. Troyer explains, for example, how technologies of the nineteenth century including embalming and photography, created our image of a dead body as quasi-atemporal, existing outside biological limits formerly enforced by decomposition. He describes the “Happy Death Movement” of the 1970s; the politics of HIV/AIDS corpse and the productive potential of the dead body; the provocations of the Body Worlds exhibits and their use of preserved dead bodies; the black market in human body parts; and the transformation of historic technologies of the human corpse into “death prevention technologies.”

The consequences of total control over death and the dead body, Troyer argues, are not liberation but the abandonment of Homo sapiens as a concept and a species. In this unique work, Troyer forces us to consider the increasing overlap between politics, dying, and the dead body in both general and specifically personal terms.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Spook Mary Roach, 2005 Draws on the achievements of scientists, engineers, and mediums to consider the feasibility of life after death, from a reincarnation researcher's experimentation with out-of-body experiences to laboratory investigations into ghosts.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: *Packing for Mars* Mary Roach, 2025-04-25 America's funniest science writer (Washington Post) explores the irresistibly strange universe of life without gravity in this New York Times bestseller. The best-selling author of *Stiff* and *Bonk* explores the irresistibly strange universe of space travel and life without gravity. From the Space Shuttle training toilet to a crash test of NASA's new space capsule, Mary Roach takes us on the surreally entertaining trip into the science of life in space and space on Earth.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Grunt Mary Roach, 2025-04-25 A New York Times / National Bestseller America's funniest science writer (Washington Post) Mary Roach explores the science of keeping human beings intact, awake, sane, uninfected, and uninfested in the bizarre and extreme circumstances of war. *Grunt* tackles the science behind some of a soldier's most challenging adversaries—panic, exhaustion, heat, noise—and introduces us to the scientists who seek to conquer them. Mary Roach dodges hostile fire with the U.S. Marine Corps Paintball Team as part of a study on hearing loss and survivability in combat. She visits the fashion design studio of U.S. Army Natick Labs and learns why a zipper is a problem for a sniper. She visits a repurposed movie studio where amputee actors help prepare Marine Corps medics for the shock and gore of combat wounds. At Camp Lemmonier, Djibouti, in east Africa, we learn how diarrhea can be a threat to national security. Roach samples caffeinated meat, sniffs an archival sample of a World War II stink bomb, and stays up all night with the crew tending the missiles on the nuclear submarine USS Tennessee. She answers questions not found in any other book on the military: Why is DARPA interested in ducks? How is a wedding gown like a bomb suit? Why are shrimp more dangerous to sailors than sharks? Take a tour of duty with Roach, and you'll never see our nation's defenders in the same way again.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Living Death in Early Modern Drama James Alsop, 2024-07-31 This book explores historical, socio-political, and metatheatrical readings of a whole host of dying bodies and risen corpses, each part of a long tradition of living death on stage. Just as zombies, ghouls, and the undead in modern media often stand in for present-day concerns, early modern writers frequently imagined living death in complex ways that allowed them to address contemporary anxieties. These include fresh bleeding bodies (and body parts), ghostly Lord Mayors, and dying characters who must carefully choose their last words – or have those words chosen for them by the living. As well as offering fresh interpretations of well-known plays such as Middleton's *The Lady's Tragedy* and Webster's *The White Devil*, this innovative study also sheds light on less well-known works such as the anonymous *The Tragedy of Locrine*, Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, and Munday's mayoral pageants *Chruso-thriambos* and *Chrysanaleia*. The author demonstrates that wherever characters in early modern drama appear to straddle the line between this world and the next, it is rarely a simple matter of life and death. This book will be of great interest to students, scholars, and practitioners in theatre and performance studies, and cultural and social studies.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* Daina Ramey Berry, 2017-01-24 Groundbreaking look at slaves as commodities through every phase of life, from birth to death and beyond, in early America In life and in death, slaves were commodities, their monetary value assigned based on their age, gender, health, and the demands of the market. *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* is the first book to explore the economic value of enslaved people through every phase of their lives—including preconception, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, the senior years, and death—in the early American domestic slave trade.

Covering the full “life cycle,” historian Daina Ramey Berry shows the lengths to which enslavers would go to maximize profits and protect their investments. Illuminating “ghost values” or the prices placed on dead enslaved people, Berry explores the little-known domestic cadaver trade and traces the illicit sales of dead bodies to medical schools. This book is the culmination of more than ten years of Berry’s exhaustive research on enslaved values, drawing on data unearthed from sources such as slave-trading records, insurance policies, cemetery records, and life insurance policies. Writing with sensitivity and depth, she resurrects the voices of the enslaved and provides a rare window into enslaved peoples’ experiences and thoughts, revealing how enslaved people recalled and responded to being appraised, bartered, and sold throughout the course of their lives. Reaching out from these pages, they compel the reader to bear witness to their stories, to see them as human beings, not merely commodities. A profoundly humane look at an inhumane institution, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* will have a major impact how we think about slavery, reparations, capitalism, nineteenth-century medical education, and the value of life and death. Winner of the 2018 Hamilton Book Award – from the University Coop (Austin, TX) Winner of the 2018 Society for Historians of the Early American Republic Book Prize (SHEAR) Winner of the 2018 Phillis Wheatley Literary Award, from the Sons and Daughters of the US Middle Passage Finalist for the 2018 Frederick Douglass Book Prize from Yale University’s Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: *The Explainer* CSIRO Publishing, 2013-10-01 Ever wondered how vaccines work, why whales strand themselves or if luck exists? *The Explainer: From Déjà Vu to Why the Sky Is Blue, and Other Conundrums* is a collection of around 100 of the best articles published in ‘The Explainer’ and ‘Monday’s Medical Myths’ sections of *The Conversation*. The book answers questions on everyone’s mind about a diverse range of topics, abstract concepts, and popular and hard core science. Sections include: animals and agriculture, body, climate and energy, medical myths, mind and brain, research and technology, and more. Expert authors combine facts, analysis, new ideas and enthusiasm to make often challenging topics highly readable in just a few short pages. This book is for the curious, those with a thirst for answers, and those with a fascination of how phenomena, new technologies and current issues in our daily lives work.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: *Eclipse of Man* Charles T. Rubin, 2014-09-02 Tomorrow has never looked better. Breakthroughs in fields like genetic engineering and nanotechnology promise to give us unprecedented power to redesign our bodies and our world. Futurists and activists tell us that we are drawing ever closer to a day when we will be as smart as computers, will be able to link our minds telepathically, and will live for centuries—or maybe forever. The perfection of a “post-human” future awaits us. Or so the story goes. In reality, the rush toward a post-human destiny amounts to an ideology of human extinction, an ideology that sees little of value in humanity except the raw material for producing whatever might come next. In *Eclipse of Man*, Charles T. Rubin traces the intellectual origins of the movement to perfect and replace the human race. He shows how today’s advocates of radical enhancement are—like their forebears—deeply dissatisfied with given human nature and fixated on grand visions of a future shaped by technological progress. Moreover, Rubin argues that this myopic vision of the future is not confined to charlatans and cheerleaders promoting this or that technology: it also runs through much of modern science and contemporary progressivism. By exploring and criticizing the dreams of post humanity, Rubin defends a more modest vision of the future, one that takes seriously both the limitations and the inherent dignity of our given nature.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Writing Nonfiction* Christina Boufis, 2012-11-06 Narrative nonfiction, also known as creative nonfiction or literary nonfiction, is true stories told using literary techniques and creativity. Narrative nonfiction essays are often featured in magazines such as *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Harper's*. Book-length narrative nonfiction works have grown in popularity since Truman Capote published *In Cold Blood* in 1965. Nonfiction works such as *Into Thin Air*, *The Orchid Thief*, *The Perfect Storm*,

and Seabiscuit have smashed sales records and brought the genre into focus for the mainstream. With the rise of self-publishing and blogs comes a new generation of writers who want to tell their stories to a wider audience. The Complete Idiot's Guide® to Writing Nonfiction gives narrative nonfiction writers the instruction and tools they need to elevate their storytelling to an art form that appeals to more readers. In this book readers learn: What narrative nonfiction is. The literary building blocks of narrative nonfiction. How to research nonfiction subjects. Tricks for remembering details of events from one's own life story. How to conduct interviews for a book or article. How to find inspiration when writing nonfiction stories. Word choice and grammar help. How to overcome roadblocks such as stalled motivation and inhibitions when writing about real, living people. How to craft several types of narrative nonfiction by example. How to find markets for their work and get published. In addition, author Christina Boufis interviews successful narrative nonfiction writers in many subgenres and gets their insights on what inspires them and how they overcome their own obstacles.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Death's Summer Coat Brandy Schillace, 2016-01-15 Death is something we all confront—it touches our families, our homes, our hearts. And yet we have grown used to denying its existence, treating it as an enemy to be beaten back with medical advances. We are living at a unique point in human history. People are living longer than ever, yet the longer we live, the more taboo and alien our mortality becomes. Yet we, and our loved ones, still remain mortal. People today still struggle with this fact, as we have done throughout our entire history. What led us to this point? What drove us to sanitize death and make it foreign and unfamiliar? Schillace shows how talking about death, and the rituals associated with it, can help provide answers. It also brings us closer together—conversation and community are just as important for living as for dying. Some of the stories are strikingly unfamiliar; others are far more familiar than you might suppose. But all reveal much about the present—and about ourselves.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Inseparable: The Original Siamese Twins and Their Rendezvous with American History Yunte Huang, 2018-04-03 “An astonishing story, by turns ghastly, hilarious, unnerving, and moving.”—Stephen Greenblatt, author of *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* In this “excellent” portrait of America’s famed nineteenth-century Siamese twins, celebrated biographer Yunte Huang discovers in the conjoined lives of Chang and Eng Bunker (1811-1874) a trenchant “comment on the times in which we live” (Wall Street Journal). “Uncovering ironies, paradoxes and examples of how Chang and Eng subverted what Leslie Fiedler called ‘the tyranny of the normal’ ” (BBC), Huang depicts the twins’ implausible route to assimilation after their “discovery” in Siam by a British merchant in 1824 and arrival in Boston as sideshow curiosities in 1829. Their climb from subhuman, freak-show celebrities to rich, southern gentry who profited from entertaining the Jacksonian mobs; their marriage to two white sisters, resulting in twenty-one children; and their owning of slaves, is here not just another sensational biography but an “extraordinary” (New York Times), Hawthorne-like excavation of America’s historical penchant for tyrannizing the other—a tradition that, as Huang reveals, becomes inseparable from American history itself.

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: Death Embraced: New Orleans Tombs and Burial Customs, Behind the Scenes Accounts of Decay, Love and Tradition Mary LaCoste, 2015-05-20 *Death Embraced* is like no other book you have ever read. Fascinating and entertaining, it leads readers to ponder issues that should not be avoided. Some may want to use it as a guide to visiting New Orleans graveyards . . . or as a guide to life. An amazing book by an even more amazing writer, historian and educator with vast knowledge of the Crescent City's history and an intimate understanding of many of the Big Easy's lesser-known cultural traditions and customs. A must-read for anyone who is serious about learning the true history of New Orleans. I dare you to try to put it down after reading its first few pages. -Edmund W. Lewis, Editor, *The Louisiana Weekly* A gem of a book, full of little things you didn't know you wanted to know. With subtitle wit and serious depth of knowledge, Mary LaCoste shares the down and dirty of one of New Orleans most mysterious institutions. -Liz Scott, *New Orleans Magazine*

mary roach stiff the curious lives of human cadavers: The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction Joyce G. Saricks, 2009-04-12 Experienced librarian and coach Ruth Metz outlines a focused and results-oriented plan for achieving the best results from staff members through a coaching style of management.

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