



Spoiler Alert: You're Gonna Die

Korttany Finn , Jacquie Purcell

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One thing you can count on in life is the fact that you are going to die. How's that for a buzzkill? Most people diligently ignore the reality of their future demise. Thinking about death somehow seems wrong. Luckily, a real life coroner challenged a few thousand internet strangers to do the thinking for you. The result is a collection of morbid and slightly embarrassing questions all about The End. Honest, and often hilarious, answers from a woman who has made a career out of death will leave you with a new perspective on life.

Spoiler Alert: You're Gonna Die Details

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Petra says

With a title like that, I simply couldn't resist although I don't read a lot of non-fiction these days. My only criticism, the book was far too short.

Based on an Internet forum where participants were invited to ask a coroner questions, this is a well written summary of some of these questions and answers.

If you are interested in the work and experience of a coroner (who has a fantastic sense of dry humor), I suggest reading this little gem. It was fascinating. I particularly enjoyed the parts on the actual job of a coroner, on the body and on autopsies. Some of the information was quite specific to Jacqui Purcell's location of work, so not everything will be relevant to readers from other areas and countries, and the topic itself is obviously not everybody's cup of tea, but if you're filled with a morbid curiosity about death, what happens thereafter and even how to prepare for it (some valid points there), I can recommend this. I hope Korttany Finn and Jacqui Purcell decide to continue their writing partnership because I absolutely loved their witty commentary.

Thanks for providing me with a free copy via NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

Mary says

I love, love, loved this book. It gave such a great look into the life of a coroner. It's also written in a way that keeps things light and witty. Strongly recommend!

Heather says

Well, that wasn't what I thought it was gonna be. I expected a sort of micro-non-fiction ala Mary Roach's *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*. Instead, this read like a Reddit AMA. That isn't a bad thing, though. The more casual, off the cuff writing made it very relatable and easy to read. If you've ever had questions you wanted to ask a coroner, but never had the opportunity to ask, I can almost guarantee it was asked and answered in this book.

I was also surprised at the length of this book when I first opened it. It is short. My copy was only 88 pages. When I started, I was sure I was gonna say in my review "I wish it was longer". But actually, I think it was a very good length. Long enough to feel in-depth but short enough to hold the interest. All in all a great and unique read.

****I received this copy via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review****

Leslie says

To begin with, I want to mention that this book is actually a lot more important than I thought it was going to

be. I originally decided to read this book because it was filed under "Humor" and I thought I needed a good humor book. I want to be clear when I say that although this book is not something that may, at first, sound interesting to you or something you want to read, I do highly recommend you read it. I learned so many new and important things from reading this book; a book I probably would not have given a chance had it been filed anywhere else other than "Humor" because of the morbid title.

Let's face it, death is inevitable. There are so many uncertain things in the world. Death isn't one of them. Unless, of course, you believe in vampires. But right now, that's neither here nor there. This book lets us come face to face with something—although it's something we try so hard not to give a thought at all—absolutely unavoidable. We are going to die one day, one way or another.

This book, surprisingly had a lot more life lessons than I anticipated. While the main topic is death, there are a lot of pointers on how to avoid tragic deaths such as car accidents, kids choking, babies suffocating, etc. For example, Jacquie mentions that when a child is gagging, you should NOT interfere. You are to let them work it out on their own as it is safer. Jacquie explains very well that with babies, it's important to know the difference between choking and gagging when eating. To quote her directly, "It's a cruel, cruel reality that children aren't immune from tragic death. The best you can hope for is prevention."

With this book, we get a really detailed insight on what it's like for a coroner. I personally learned so many things that I never would have learned without this book. With this being said, I am so glad that I picked this book up. It has taught me both big and little things necessary in our everyday lives.

Although this book should be taken seriously and not at all lightly, I do understand why it was filed under Humor. I thoroughly enjoyed Jacquie's humor throughout this book. She clearly found a way to speak to an audience about death without making it all seem so morbid and terrifying. She actually made reading about death enjoyable and something knowledgeable too! This book was definitely thought provoking. I recommend you pick this one up! After all, it is a book about something that will happen to every single one of us. There's no avoiding it!

Kristin says

Super funny and very enlightening. This makes a great book to have on your coffee table for company to have a light read.

Cindy says

Not to ruin your day or anything, but you're going to die. Probably not today, but eventually, at some point, chances are really high that you'll die. This book goes over a few of the ways that could happen, and then what happens to your body after you're dead.

Ever wondered what a coroner does, exactly what happens in a post-mortem, how embalming works? This book covers all of that and more. It's in a breezy conversational style, but it's not disrespectful exactly. Just trying to take the mystique out of death. It doesn't try to answer any of the philosophical questions about death or dying, just the practical stuff. It was a surprisingly fun read too.

Not very deep, but it was a quick informative read. Free with Kindle Unlimited.

Xxertz says

In Five Words or Less: Your questions about death, answered.

I received this book from netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review

BLUF: Very enjoyable Q&A with a coroner detailing just about everything you want to know about the death business.

The Good

The Format:

The Q&A format is perfect for this book. It keeps the text light and allows the readers to know what exactly we are delving into.

Morbid Curiosity, Answered:

Purcell answers your most important questions:

Do you judge hair people? Like a woman with unshaved legs?

Yes.

What's the strangest item you've found in a body?

*I found a remote control and a Snickers bar, still in the wrapper, in the fat rolls of a really, really, obese person. It was sort of uncomfortable having to give the remove back to the family.
"Um... We found this..."*

And answers ones you may not have known you ever had, such as why hospitals cannot remove medical equipment/devices from corpses.

The Underlying Message

"Death is something we all know is coming, yet isn't typically embraced"

"This stuff needs to be normalized."

Purcell believes strongly that we need to pay attention to death before it happens. She discusses the options

that are available for our bodies, with some proper planning. I never knew how many options were out there and it really opens your eyes not only to your own opportunities, but to the idea that your loved ones really don't know how you feel or what you want if you don't tell them.

The Bad

Too Light:

There is a lot of information in this book, but I was hoping for more intimacy with the actual autopsy process. Purcell briefly describes the process, but continues onto other, non-autopsy related questions.

Um.. Tell Me More?:

At the end, the text states that you have to wear underwear upon death, unless specifically stated otherwise to your funeral director. I never knew this until it brings it up and, after bringing it up, it was never explained. Why?

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This is so minor of a complaint, I apologize for its pettiness. The author or coroner (not really sure which) says the following in reference to The Body Farm:

Though the idea of human bodies being stripped naked and dumped out in nature, left to the animals and elements to desecrate, while researchers study the effects may seem horrific (or incredibly awesome depending on what level of mess up you are), there are tangible benefits to this important research taking place.

For being a book on death and the normalization of such, it was uncomfortable for me to think that one of these two contributors to this book consider people as "messed up" if they find interest in The Body Farm. It seems a bit contradictory.

Favorite Quotes

I hate, hate, hate to watch shows about death investigations on TV. [...] They have unreal expectations and come up with so many "what-ifs" that it makes things ridiculous! It seems like people look at a case and ask, "Do we have DNA?" No. "Well, then, I don't know what else we can possibly do here. Let's add this to the 200,000+ unsolved deaths and we'll come back to it someday if technology advances." The realist is, the offender for the majority of all unsolved case is listed in the case notes and is usually someone who'd been mentioned or interviewed within the first five days of the investigation.

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If nothing else, I hope you read this book and developed a better understanding of how the death industry works and some of the options available to you. I also hope it encourages conversations within your family about your own wishes for after you die, because when your time comes, your family will want nothing more to honor you by granting your final wishes.

Don't make it a guessing game

Jacqueline (Fall In Love With The Sound of Words) says

Warning: This book goes into some detail regarding dead bodies such as decomposition, autopsies, and cremation. Read if you don't have a queasy stomach.

When I had requested this book from Netgalley I had thought it would be a humorous outlook on death, almost like in the adage of "So you Created a Wormhole: A Time Travelers Guide to Time travel by Phil Hornshaw (which was epic!). Turns out, although there were some funny parts, this book is a more or less guide on what we should be thinking, and talking, about long before our time comes; and come it will. Death, and taxes, as they say are 100% reliable; it will come sooner or later (eek!). There is no defying it. Now whether that death will be a sweet and painless shift in your sleep, or a tragic accident no one could have predicted, there is just no way of knowing. Your time can come in any way that fate seems to hand you. With this thought in mind, Finn and Purcell attempt to create a dialogue with people to not just accept that death is inevitable, but that we need to make it less taboo of a discussion. Who wants to leave their loved ones scrambling with decisions to make in the aftermath of your demise; when these decisions could be made by you before you even go. I sure don't.

Jacquie Purcell, who is a coroner by day, and a snazzy super mom by day and night, sees everything to do with death. She brings many points as to why it is never too soon to start thinking about the aftermath of your death. You will not be here to handle it, your loved ones will. I had no idea there were so many decision to make after dying. Jacquie, who has left no question unanswered (so admirable! The internet can be weird), describes not just accidental deaths, but murders, and suicides, from tragic to gory, from the initial examination to the autopsy, no stone is left unturned. I learned more about the process after death, then I particularly wanted to. However it does shed light on important things. For example, if you ended up getting an autopsy all of your organs and viscera are removed and then put in a plastic bag and sewn back into the body. Now if you were someone like me, who HATES plastic I would want to not have that plastic bag inside my body (yes I know I am dead, but that stuff leaks back into the soil!), which is something you can apparently request not to have. Of course you can't exactly request no autopsy. The coroner has final say, no matter what!

I think this is a good starting point for learning what you can and can't do, and it really isn't too soon to start making these decisions. Unless of course you just don't care what happens to you.

I received this ebook from Netgalley and the publisher for free in exchange for an honest review.

Bruce Gargoyle says

I received a digital copy of this title from the publisher via Netgalley.

Ten Second Synopsis:

A coroner in the US answers internet users' questions about death and what comes after (in a medical sense), interspersed with witty introductions to each category.

If you have any sort of interest in the workings of the death trade – that is, those people whose job it is to deal with the dead in any manner – then this is a concise and easy-to-read introduction that should suit you perfectly. The questions and answers are divided into a number of categories both for ease of reference and so (I assume) you can skip over the bits that don't interest you/gross you out/make you feel a bit weird for being too interested in them. The book covers a pretty broad range of content, from information about the types of qualifications and work experience that you might need if you are thinking of getting into work in the post-life industry, to lesser-known methods for body disposal for those who think burial or cremation is too mundane, to what exactly goes on during an autopsy. The book never gets too in-depth on any one topic so I wouldn't recommend it for those who really want specifics on a certain area – although if you are looking for a book of that nature I would certainly recommend *Working Stiff* by Judy Melinek or *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* by Caitlyn Doughty or even *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by Mary Roach, which I read way back in that mystical time before I started blogging – but it's certainly a thorough and accessible introduction.

The introductions to each category written by Korttany Finn are quite funny and Jacquie Purcell has mastered the art of dry humour, so you won't get too bogged down in the sadness and unsightliness of close encounters with corpses.

The saddest part of my reading experience here is that I wanted it to be longer. I wasn't prepared for such a concise tome and so I was disappointed that it wasn't more in-depth. Also, although this is no fault of the authors, there were a whole lot of questions in the first section that are specific to the USA (and in some instances specific to the state in which Purcell works), which prompted the slightly irritating realisation that if I wanted to know about how things work in Australia, I would have to research it myself. As my natural laziness prevents me from doing any such research, I will have to live with this feeling of slight irritation, until someone publishes and places in my hands a book which focuses on post-death practices in Australia.

The fact that this book features answers by a coroner, as opposed to a funeral director or someone who does the work of handling corpses in some capacity, the perspective is slightly different from other books I've read on the topic. It took me a few moments to realise that I wasn't actually 100% sure what a coroner does, although I had some ideas. Those who love crime shows like CSI will probably think they have a good idea about what a coroner does, but this book might change their minds!

Also, the book grew out of a question and answer thread run by Purcell on a parenting blog, so it's good to know that the questions in the book were actually asked by actual people and therefore, if you have ever idly pondered similar questions, you are not as weird and morbid as you think you are.

Overall I found this to be an interesting interlude on my quest to read lots of books about death, with some fascinating information that I certainly hadn't considered before. If you are interested in this topic, but you're looking for a reasonably quick read, then I'd certainly recommend you pick this one up.

Annamaria says

This was such an interesting and light read (considering its topic yes, it was quite light indeed!). Post-mortems always fascinated me and in a parallel universe I probably am a coroner after all! I would have enjoyed more facts about the practical experience of an autopsy but still I enjoyed this read and discovered things I didn't know before (such as what can be done with your cremains once the entire process has come to an end) (also, I learnt the word *cremains*, how cool is that?!) so I would recommend it to anyone who's got

an interest both in the Mortuary Sciences area and in morbid topics as I do!

I kindly received this book from its publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Diana Van Hauter says

Couldn't Put It Down!

I am among the many thousands of "internet strangers" who devoured the original threads and was ecstatic to learn about this book. I will recommend this book to everyone I know. Thanks so much for your insight and personal experiences with a topic that is equally terrifying and fascinating to most of us. It felt like I was just hanging out with you and having an amazing discussion about a difficult subject.

Krystal says

Easy and quick read.

Loved this book! The topic, while morbid, is extremely fascinating. I loved the commentary that went along with this book, and I still believe it's the best thread ever! Deputy is simply the best!

Karen says

I really enjoyed this book. It was full of very honest and interesting information.

archdandy says

I think about death a lot. I don't know if that's the norm because according to this book description it isn't. But I have a lot of anxiety issues when it comes to death and I can't help thinking about. I try to put it out of my head when thoughts about it pop in and I try not to dwell on it because that makes it much worse. So it would probably seem like a bad idea for me to read a book like this. I did go into it with a little trepidation wondering if it would trigger my anxiety but I was hoping that it wouldn't. While I do have serious issues with death I do also like to learn about things and I feel like learning more about something actually helps me with my feelings of dread towards it.

Fortunately this was very practical in the way it handled discussing death and I did learn quite a few interesting tidbits about it. The humour didn't really come through for me but I didn't mind the lack of it. I liked how straight forward the answers were and the explanations of some of the circumstances of death were easy to follow. My favourite part was the chapter on the different options one has when they die for what happens to their body. I had heard of some of the options before like being planted as a tree but I figured that it was a far fetched one and that it probably wasn't readily available for a lot of people. So I was surprised to see so many alternative options listed just like the more traditional ways of dealing with a body. One thing I do wish is that the book was longer, I found myself wanting more at the end.

**I received a copy of this from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*

Cherie' says

whoa I know what profession I'm glad I didn't get into. this book shocked, saddened, and made me sick. What crazy stories about death. All in All I'm glad I read it.

Cherie'
