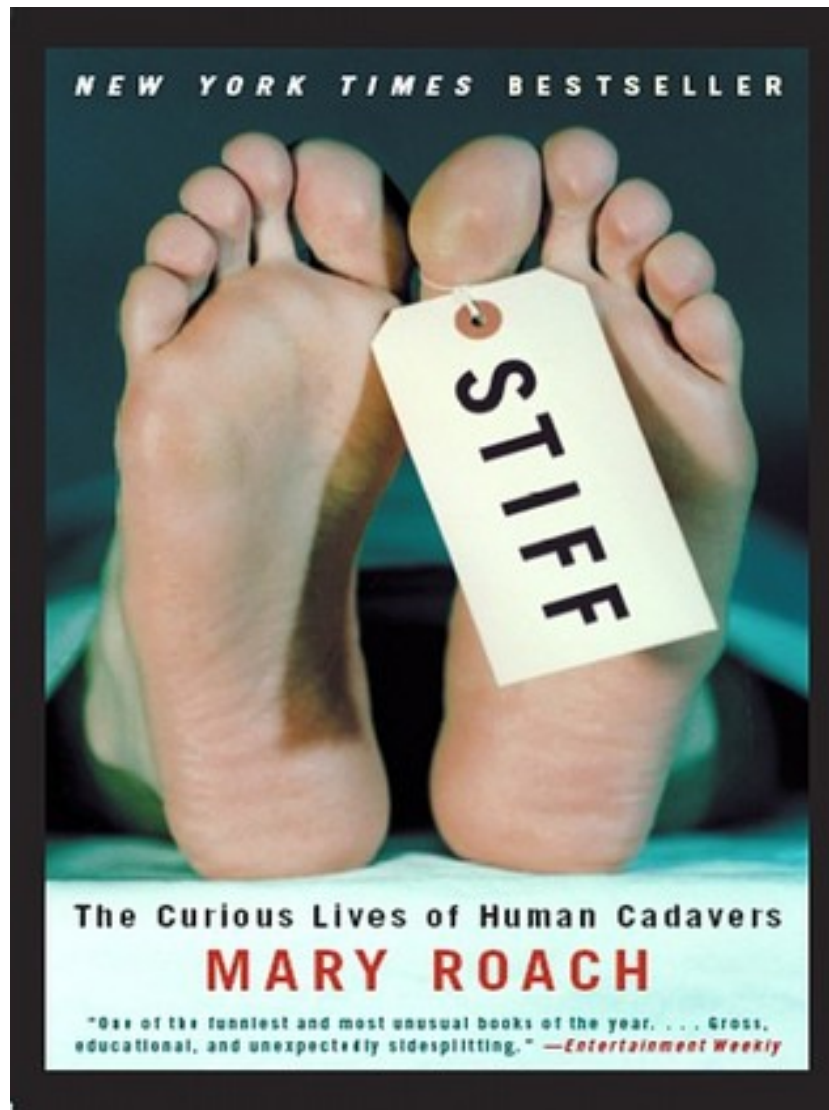


# Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers Book PDF Download



By:  
Mary Roach

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## What people Say:

### Trevor

If you can't cope with the idea of death without a hearty dose of euphemism " this probably isn't going to be the book for you.

When I became an archivist at the City of Melbourne a very dear friend of mine became a technician at the city Morgue. I figured at the time he had watched a couple of episodes too many of Quincy M.E. and that he would find a normal job eventually. It is probably 15 years since I stopped being an archivist " my friend still cuts up dead people for a living.

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A few weeks after he started work I asked him how it was all going and he replied, "Good, yeah, I can even eat spaghetti now." Sometimes it is best not to ask.

This book is a bit of a career guide for those of us who are post-life. There are a remarkable number of interesting things one can get up to after life. Many of these choices are presented in this book in an up-close-and-personal way that I particularly enjoyed.

I'm a fairly robust character, but there were many moments when I made involuntary noises during this book. The swallowed fly was a case in point and by far the worst. The noise I made was loud enough and distressing enough for my daughters to ask what was the matter " they didn't ask again.

Part of my friend's job involves removing people's brains " this is also described in some detail here. The problem is that once the brain has been removed you can't really pop it back from whence it came " so instead it is placed in the chest cavity. This means the head needs to be "packed" and generally this is done with newspaper. One of the decisions made by those putting you back together again is which newspaper would seem most appropriate for you. (I assume in these days of obsessive Orwellian Double-Speak the corpses are called clients or customers or something equally ridiculous " although I wish it was after Waugh and they were called Loved Ones.) I really don't mind what happens to me once I'm dead " I figure

I'm going to be busy enough explaining to God why He doesn't exist to be worried about what happens to my body – but I must admit that spending eternity with my head stuffed with a Murdoch rag does seem to be a punishment disproportionate to any crime I have committed whilst alive.

## Dan Schwent

Mary Roach writes about what happens when you donate your body to science. Hilarity ensues. Well, maybe not hilarity but it is a good dose of edutainment.

Way back around the time the earth's crust cooled and life spread across the planet, late 1994 or early 1995, I should think, I visited a chiropractic college with the rest of my Advanced Biology class. This trip was memorable to me for three reasons:

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- 1) It was the first time I experienced an excruciating caffeine withdrawal headache
- 2) It was the first time I saw a human cadaver
- 3) I smoked five of my classmates playing pool in the student lounge at lunch.

Obviously, #2 is the one pertinent to this review, although I am still quite proud of #3. The cadaver I saw had its face covered and its skin looked shriveled, somewhat like beef jerky. My 17 year old mind briefly wondered where the man had come from before my hormone-fueled brain returned my attention to the nubile young ladies in the room. Anyway, let's get down to review business.

## Tung

In my nonfiction phase during the year, I grabbed this one and after finishing it, regretted its purchase. The book is about medical use of corpses and the human body, present-day and in the past. The subject matter is extremely interesting, and some of the methods, tests, and history behind human body experiments is worth the read. The book makes you want to be an organ donor, or want to donate your body to medical science. The problem is that the author is one of the WORST writers I have ever

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## Matthew

First read of 2017 complete! It was a good one - 4.5 stars.

Who knew that a book about what happens to our bodies after we die could be so interesting. This book covers everything to the horrific to the incredibly fascinating. This book may not be for the squeamish, but I think Roach did a great job combining information and humor in a respectful manner to make it more easily accessible to a wider audience.

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I recently helped to prepare a funeral plan for my Mother. She is still alive, but it was suggested that we prepare ahead of time to make sure that all wishes are met and there is no scrambling when the event happens to figure out what is wanted and where the money comes from - less stressful for all! After reading this book, I am not saying I will go back and change any of our decisions, but it definitely gave me a lot of thinking points I would not have considered and may have had an affect on how my decision making went if I had read this before the planning took place.

After death - the inanimate body lives on and something has to be done with it - read this if you want to know more!

Side note - This is my second Mary Roach (I also read

) and I liked this one a bit better.

## Kemper

Mary Roach details a lot of uses for human cadavers in this book, but she missed a major one. As taught us, you can always use the corpse of your boss to scam your way into a free weekend at a

beach house. That scientific research is all well and good, but there's nothing in here at all about the best ways to simulate a life like corpse for your own selfish purposes. I learned more from Andrew McCarthy than I did reading this!

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Ah, but seriously folks! This is the second book I've read by Roach, and I admire the way that she can take touchy and gross subjects like corpses in this one or human feces in

, treat them seriously but still manage to keep a sense of humor about them. While she always has one eye on the science, she never uses it to shield out the normal human responses, and this allows her to provide a clear eyed account of the uses and disposal of the dead. (One of my favorite parts involved Roach asking someone how heads were removed from cadavers for surgical practices and was told that one woman in the lab removed them all. She later met the woman who actually did the chopping and Roach admits that all she could think was, "You cut off heads!!")

So we get treated to a gory set of stories about how science uses corpses in a variety of ways including the study of impacts for the auto industry, how a brain-dead woman's organs are removed by a transplant team, and a field of bodies left to rot for forensic research. We also get an overview of how science has used or misused bodies to advance both legitimate research and outright quackery in the past. There's also a long section reflecting on the best way to dispose of human remains since traditional burials and cremations are costly, environmentally harmful and wasteful.

While I found this really interesting and enjoyed Roach's writing and approach, there were times when this book completely disgusted me, and I've got a pretty high tolerance for gore. One section about the history of various mad scientists grafting severed heads of dogs and monkeys onto other dogs and monkeys and actually managing to keep them alive for some time was almost too much, and I kind of wished she would have left that chapter out.

Still, this was a really interesting book. I just wouldn't try to eat a plate of lasagna while reading it.