



Making an Exit: From the Magnificent to the Macabre---How We Dignify the Dead

Sarah Murray

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Thoughtful, amusing, and provocative, Making an Exit will transform the way you look at life's last passage. Because, as Murray discovers, death is, for many, not an ending but the start of something new.

Author and journalist Sarah Murray never gave much thought to what might ultimately happen to her remains—that was, until her father died. While he'd always insisted that the "organic matter" left after a person takes their last breath had no significance, he surprised his family by setting down elaborate arrangements for the scattering of his own ashes. This unexpected last request prompted Murray to embark on a series of voyages to discover how our end is commemorated around the globe—and how we approach our own mortality.

Spanning continents and centuries, *Making an Exit* is Murray's exploration of the extraordinary creativity unleashed when we seek to dignify the dead. Along the way, she encounters a cremation in Bali in which two royal personages are placed in giant decorative bulls and consigned to the afterlife in a burst of flames; a chandelier in the Czech Republic made entirely from human bones; a weeping ceremony in Iran; and a Philippine village where the casketed dead are left hanging in caves. She even goes to Ghana to commission her own fantasy coffin.

The accounts of these journeys are fascinating, poignant, and funny. But this is also a very personal quest: on her travels, Murray is seeking inspiration for her own eventual send-off.

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