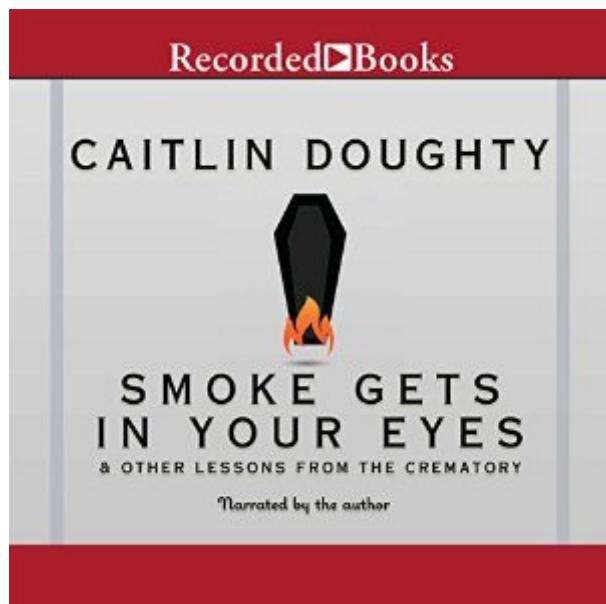


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# Smoke Gets In Your Eyes: And Other Lessons From The Crematory



## Synopsis

Most people want to avoid thinking about death, but Caitlin Doughty - a 20-something with a degree in medieval history and a flair for the macabre - took a job at a crematory, turning morbid curiosity into her life's work. With an original voice that combines fearless curiosity and mordant wit, Caitlin tells an unusual coming-of-age story full of bizarre encounters, gallows humor, and vivid characters (both living and very dead). Describing how she swept ashes from the machines (and sometimes onto her clothes), and cared for bodies of all shapes and sizes, Caitlin becomes an intrepid explorer in the world of the deceased. Her eye-opening memoir shows how our fear of dying warps our culture and society, and she calls for better ways of dealing with death (and our dead). In the spirit of her popular Web series, "Ask a Mortician", Caitlin's engaging narrative style makes this otherwise scary topic both approachable and profound. Caitlin Doughty, the host and creator of the "Ask a Mortician" Web series and the collective Order of the Good Death, is on a mission to change the way we think about death.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had trouble coming up with a title for this review that wouldn't turn off anyone because I think this is an important book and I hope many, many people read it. The author of this book has been fascinated with the subject of death and dying since she was a young girl and witnessed the death of another young girl who took a fall at a local mall. For years afterwards she was filled with angst and trepidation and described herself as "functionally morbid." When she went to college she got a

degree in medieval history with a focus on death and rituals and afterwards got a job working at a mortuary - the Westwind Cremation & Burial. This book describes her experiences facing death straight on and how it actually eased her own existential angst and made her better able to appreciate and enjoy her own life. We not only read (detailed) descriptions of what happens to bodies in a crematorium, we also learn about other mortuary practices and what really happens behind the scenes. The author makes such an important case against our own culture's tendency to avoid death (and aging!) and to try to avoid its very existence. She points out how in the past and how even today - in other cultures - family and neighbors took care of their dead and witnessed dying all the time. She points out how important that is to accepting our own death and by doing so, make it less frightening and esoteric. Lest I give the impression that this is a depressing book, for me it was not. There are so many laugh-out-loud moments and when I finished the last page I found myself with a little less of my own existential angst. This book reminded me a lot of science writer Mary Roach and I feel like I'd love to hang out and be friends with both of them. Ms.

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