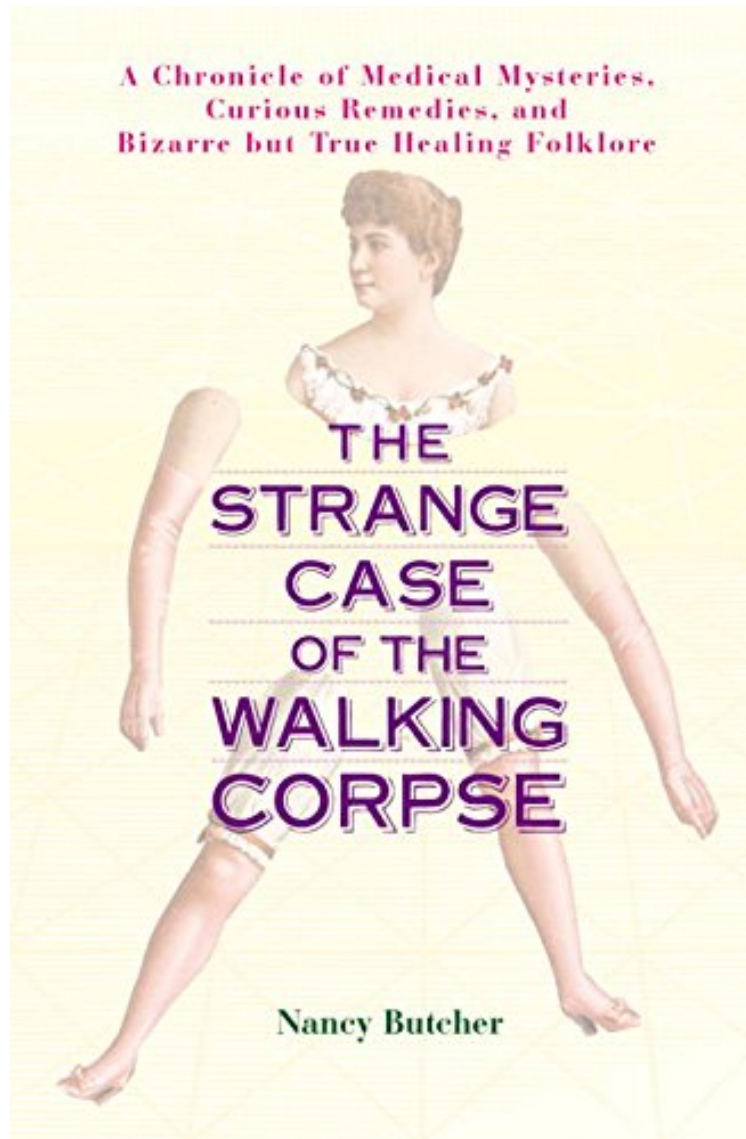


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The Strange Case of the Walking Corpse: A Chronicle of Medical Mysteries, Curious Remedies, and Bizarre but True Healing Folklore

Nancy Butcher

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very disappointed. By Laura O. Brokaw I have long enjoyed medical mysteries in the genre of Oliver Sack's "The man who mistook his wife for a hat" and "The Beetle of Aphrodite" by Howell and Ford, and was the mood for a good read in the same genre. This book, despite its clever title and good cover art was a sore disappointment. The author is a correspondent for [...], and while I find that a nice online site for finding recipes and general information, I don't expect to get that style from a published book. The book has little snippets of information, with seemingly no source material -- no backstories are added and often no names are involved -- the diseases are described but they aren't presented as mysteries at all. It reads like a catalogue rather than a book, and although there is a bibliography in the back, the feeling is that the author got all her information online, from questionable sources -- and you can get much the same info in an hour or two surfing on the web. The several pages devoted to bizarre sexual terms especially doesn't seem to fall under a medical mystery. Don't bother with this one. Really.

Did you know that bananas can cure warts; chewing on raw ginger can relieve nausea; sniffing vanilla can help suppress your appetite; or that raw potato can soothe a burn? Healing is full of curious remedies--some based on time-honored folklore, others straight from the medical journals. Nancy Butcher has gathered together some of the most unusual natural cures that have been proven effective today, and even throws in some unbelievable and--thankfully--abandoned therapies from times past. Filled with case histories of unique illnesses, historic documentation of strange medical practices, and the author's own insightful commentary, this book explains not only how to cure headaches, sleep better, and improve your sex life, but also that people with Cotard's syndrome actually believe they are dead.

From Publishers Weekly Butcher, whose previous books had the more wholesome topics of weight loss and sleeping (101 Ways to Stop Eating After Dinner; 101 Ways to Fall Asleep), here delves into the dark corners of medicine to unearth weird maladies and surprising cures. More a gathering of medical trivia than an actual chronicle, her book jumps from topic to topic, covering obscure ailments such as "cat-eye syndrome" (a rare chromosomal disorder) and "jumping Frenchmen of Maine" (an ill-understood neurological disorder), as well as more familiar diseases such as Black Plague, Hansen's disease (leprosy) and rabies. For each disease, Butcher offers a short synopsis of its discovery and attempted cures. In addition to uncommon ailments, the book outlines medicines that took a long time to be accepted by the medical establishment, or that remained on the fringes of acceptability. Some of these, such as urine or aged frog eggs, are best left to history. Others may have uses in the modern world: Butcher offers a table of herbs, for example, that alleviate various aches and pains. Subsequent chapters cover parasites, mental illnesses, sexual dysfunctions, sleep-related maladies and strange beauty treatments (some Victorian women owed their milk-pale complexions to a careful ration of arsenic). Butcher's anecdotes read like a collection of personal notes without an overarching theme, and are thus best for browsing; the book contains enough bizarre, disgusting and amusing medical minutiae to keep readers turning pages. Bw illustrations. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. ...makes for entertaining (if often shocking) reading. -- New York Times, October 5, 2004

About the Author Nancy Butcher has written on health and wellness subjects for WholeHealthMD.com and other websites as well as creating wellness booklets for Time-Life Books. She is the author of the New York Times bestselling children's book *It's Snow Problem*, and *101 Ways to Stop Eating After Dinner*.