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On The Day I Died: Stories From The Grave



Synopsis

"Positively tailor-made for readingâor reading aloudâby flashlight," declares Kirkus Reviews in a starred review. The phenomenally versatile, award-winning author Candace Fleming gives teen and older tween readers ten ghost stories sure to send chills up their spines. Set in White Cemetery, an actual graveyard outside Chicago, each story takes place during a different time period from the 1860s to the present, and ends with the narrator's death. Some teens die heroically, others ironically, but all due to supernatural causes. Readers will meet walking corpses and witness demonic possession, all against the backdrop of Chicago's rich historyâthe Great Depression, the World's Fair, Al Capone and his fellow gangsters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a spine-tingling series of ghost stories, loosely held together by a teen's narrative as he visits an overgrown cemetery late one night. It starts with a good turn - Mike offers a ride to a drenched girl, who leaves her shoes in his car. Upon returning them, he is told that Carol Anne drowned 60 years ago, and returns once a year on the anniversary of her death. In the forgotten graveyard, Mike hears atmospheric voices from forgotten teens, each of whom met an early death. From Edgar in the 1800s, tormented by images in the wallpaper, to Scott, whose camera may have photographed his own death, each ghost story is about 10 pages long. They are beautifully plotted and intelligently written, with enough twists and turns and rising mists and cobwebbed attics to send goose bumps up even adult spines. A great choice for adventurous middle school readers who want to rise above simple thrills for sophisticated yet chilling tales.

About me: I'm a middle school/high

school librarian
How I got this book: Purchased for the school library

Has an eerily spectacular start... Hooks you immediately, but heads south when the rubber ducky takes a nose dive via sinister sea monkey-like serpent beast! But when "Edgar" and his "ponderings" plagiarizes Poe's *Berenice*... I was stopped dead in my own literary tracks- too close to the master for comfort! (I grin). Those damn pearly whites. It's been done before- literally.

On the Day I Died is a sometimes cheesy, sometimes chilling, but always fun collection of short stories recounting the deaths of teens throughout the past two centuries in the Chicago area. I very much like this type of set-up in a short story collection, where there is a frame story that gives a reason for and ties together all of the other stories in the collection. In this case it is Mike coming to the graveyard to listen to the tales of the deceased. Candace Fleming makes use of a variety of cultures throughout time, and I loved how true to each time period's particular style of horror these stories stayed. The Depression with its wise guys and gangsters, the 50s with its fascination with outer space, the obsession with objects in the 70s-80s, and the Gothic feel of the 19th century. Sticking to the vernacular of each time period really helped set the mood of each character, even if it did seem a bit extreme at times. Waiting to hear how each character finally kicked the bucket was a bit like waiting for the bell man's arm to be chopped off in *Hot Tub Time Machine*. You know it's coming, you're just not sure how, and the anticipation had me jumping the gun on more than one occasion. The ghosts in the graveyard get that whole barroom story-topping mentality of 'you think that's bad? You should hear my story', which really made me grin. Some of the stories were laughable (Johnnie), some were incredibly cheesy (David), but some of them did give me genuine chills (Gina and Edgar). Candace Fleming retells the classic *The Monkey's Paw* in a modernized setting, and also weaves in aspects of other classics like *Berenice* and *The Yellow Wallpaper*. I'd recommend *On the Day I Died* to younger teens who like to be scared, particularly anyone who was a big fan of the *Goosebumps* series.

Title: *On the Day I Died*
Author: Candace Fleming
Driving home late one night, Mike encounters a strange girl in the middle of the road. Determined to help, Mike takes the girl home only to find out she has left her shoes in his car. The shoes lead him to the graveyard where Mike realizes the girl is dead. What he finds in the graveyard will chill you to the bone!! I loved everything about this book. It kept me on the edge of my seat from the very beginning. The stories the ghosts tell were both thrilling while dramatic. The author's description and the use of imagery was spot on. Each

story the young ghosts tell describes in detail how their life ended. One example, David, learned a costly lesson when insta-pets grow into gigantic, deadly monsters and escape into the community reeking havoc on his neighborhood. Candace Fleming is a master of Imagery. Her descriptions were so detailed, I found myself grimacing from time to time. An example of one of these well crafted descriptions is as follows: But Miss Bolam didn't scream. Instead she froze. Her black eyes bulged and her dried apple face turned the color oatmeal. A choking, gargling noise rose from deep in her throat, and then...she just dropped into a heap on the floor. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is a fan of exciting horror stories. The short stories come to life as you read and you will find it difficult to close the book and stop. Be prepared to be up late if you read this book... 1) because you won't be able to stop reading and 2) you will have nightmares if you do try to sleep! Don't just stand there, go check it out now!

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