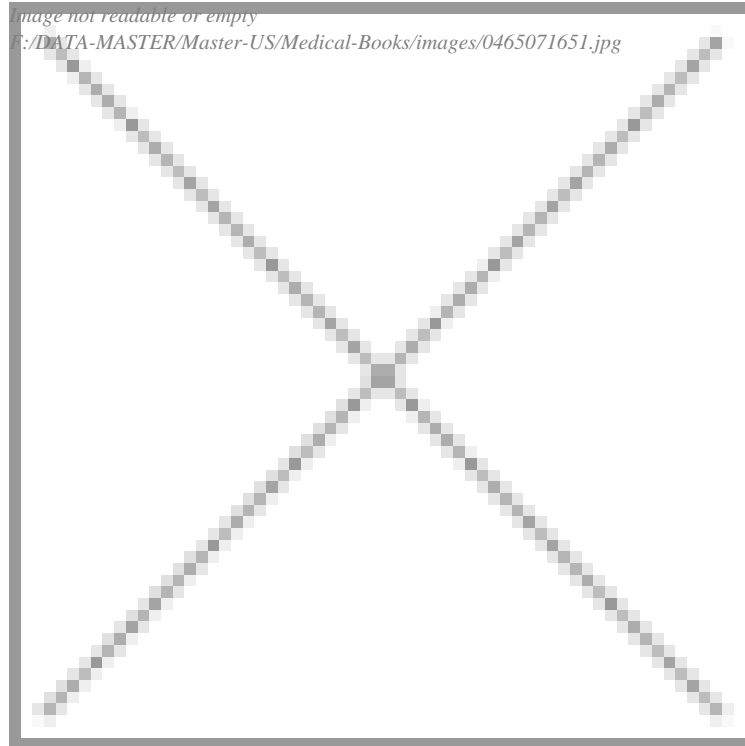


(Read now) Hunger: An Unnatural History

Hunger: An Unnatural History

Sharman Apt Russell

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Sharman Apt Russell : Hunger: An Unnatural History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hunger: An Unnatural History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. InterestingBy Ed HolstenWish author would have stayed on actual topic of hunger. The chapter on Ireland was meaningless. The chapter on experiments in Poland and Minnesota was excellent.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A beautiful tapestry of hunger-related topics written in prose that reads like poetryBy David EvansIn marvelously non-technical fashion, Russell describes the biology of hunger: what happens to your body as you go eighteen hours, thirty-six hours, and thirty days without food. She shows how hunger strikes have changed the world (from Gandhi's non-violent strikes to the Irish Republican Army and British suffragettes), the role of fasting in myriad religious traditions, how hunger has defined certain traditional cultures, and even how hunger has been used as entertainment.Some chapters illuminate fascinating chapters in the history of hunger. "The Hunger Disease Studies" narrates how internationally renowned Jewish scientists in the Warsaw Ghetto used the omnipresent starvation to perform scientific studies on every aspect of starvation, searching for meaning in terrible suffering. "The Minnesota Experiment" describes an enlightening study of starvation and refeeding during World War II. Russell casts her net wide, examining the social and biological aspects of anorexia, giving an inside view to famine relief in Somalia and Ethiopia, and showing how hunger affects children distinctly.Russell's skilled prose makes even the World Health Organization's technical instructions on refeeding a malnourished child interesting. She reminds us that science is a kind of poetry. As with all the best non-fiction, her endnotes offer a wealth of fascinating literature on every aspect of hunger, a literature I'll be sure to dive into. As

another reviewer wrote, Russell's writing "is an extraordinary mating of exciting, sure-footed science and inspired prose poetry" (Burlington Free Press, 10 August 2003). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. very informative
By B. Bonazzola
I ordered this book because of the reviews and because it was linked to the subject I was interested in first place: fasting. I am so glad I read it, it is very informative in so many levels, from the physiology of hunger/fasting/starving and some events in human history that all know but only in the surface (i.e. the Irish famine, the World War II, the Varsow Ghetto, etc).-There's only one little part I felt awkward and it was the WHO manual to treat starving people, thus it was also informative, it's not like you are going to put it into practice in plain street and if you are going to give a hand in Africa, I hope you are going to read something else than three paragraphs telling you not to give protein right away.-Anyway I really think it's a great book, it captivated me and teach me a lot.-

Every day, we wake up hungry. Every day, we break our fast. Hunger is both a natural and an unnatural human condition. In *Hunger*, Sharman Apt Russell explores the range of this primal experience. Step by step, Russell takes us through the physiology of hunger, from eighteen hours without food to thirty-six hours to three days to seven days to thirty days. In quiet, elegant prose, she asks a question as big as history and as everyday as skipping lunch: How does hunger work?

From Publishers Weekly
Russell's playful survey of the effects of hunger, which moves inexorably toward a wider moral meditation on starvation, suggests, "Hunger is a country we enter every day, like a commuter across a friendly border." Observing that "not eating seems to be innately religious," Russell (*Anatomy of a Rose*) explores the biochemical and cultural dimensions of hunger, from the stunts of "hunger artists" to the practices of fasting ascetics and so-called "miracle maids" (virginal women who appeared not to require food), touching on her own abortive experience of fasting. Turning to the history of political protest, Russell describes the force-feeding of British suffragettes and the strategic fasts of Mahatma Gandhi. She captures the limits of human cruelty and frailty in detailing the medical studies of starvation conducted in the Warsaw Ghetto; famine and cannibalism in the Ukraine and China; and the findings of the "Minnesota Experiment," which studied how semistarvation influences behavior. Addressing the stark facts of current world hunger, Russell reports on the medical challenges of reintroducing food to the chronically malnourished, on the iconic image of the starving child and on the efforts of humanitarian agencies to end world hunger. With its expert blend of scientific reportage, world history and moral commentary, Russell's work is informative and haunting. (Sept.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From School Library Journal
Adult/High School
A fascinating, multilayered analysis. Russell describes the physiological effects of hunger, starting with what occurs in the digestive system while the subject is watching a commercial for the Olive Garden restaurant and ending with the body's processing of the last bit of pasta and anchovy. Her discussion of the biological aspects is concise, interesting, and free from scientific jargon. After covering what happens when the body has food, Russell gives a sobering account of what occurs in the mind and body when food is withheld. Using fasting periods from 18 hours to 30 days, the author shows the extraordinary ways in which the deprived body tries to save itself. Her choices for the historical overview of hunger include hunger artists, religious and politically motivated fasting, therapeutic fasting, famines, experiments on starvation, anorexia, and efforts to combat world hunger. The short essays on the Warsaw Ghetto, the potato famine in Ireland, Colin Turnbull's studies of the Ik tribe, and the industrialization of China are so interesting and well written that they invite further research. This is an important topic for teens to explore. As Russell points out, one in 10 Americans lives in a food-insecure household. The lasting biological and psychological effects of hunger on children are critical.
Kathy Tewell, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA
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From Booklist
*Starred *
Russell's refined works of narrative nonfiction include *Anatomy of a Rose* (2001). Now, in her most hard-hitting book to date, she takes on a crucial yet little understood aspect of existence: hunger. Russell begins with the biology of hunger, that is, how our bodies tell us when we need to eat, but her concern is what happens when we don't eat. Hence her fascinating overview of fasting, from religious abstinence to the heroics of hunger strikers, particularly Mahatma Gandhi, as well as her discussion of anorexia nervosa. These compelling lines of inquiry pave the way for the book's most significant sections: Russell's unnerving chronicling of twentieth-century wartime starvation and catastrophic famines. Equally bracing is her report on the everyday hunger of millions of the world's working poor, including Americans, and her candid and informative assessment of just how difficult it is to orchestrate effective relief efforts. As Russell's extraordinarily well-crafted, far-reaching, and heart-wrenching investigation joins ranks with the revelations of global health experts Laurie Garrett and Paul Farmer, we can only hope that our hunger for knowledge and justice will lead to international efforts to eliminate this unnecessary scourge. Donna Seaman
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