They Lost Their Heads! What Happened to Washington's Teeth, Einstein's Brain, and Other Famous Body Parts

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Be prepared to gag a little bit as you enjoy this gruesome collection of stories about unfortunate people who lost body parts in life or death. But also be ready to amaze the people around you with little-known tales about the bodies of famous people such as Abraham Lincoln, Vincent van Gogh, Elvis Presley, Thomas Edison, and others. For example, did you know that Albert Einstein’s brain was stolen and kept in a sock drawer? Or that the first conjoined twins were connected at the abdomen but still married, had children, and lived to be 62 years old? The book also contains factoids about funny customs—like the sixteenth-century practice of grinding up mummies and eating the powder for better health. As you pick up the book, the author warns you not to eat while you read . . . so you’ve been warned.

This is a fantastic nonfiction addition to any middle-school student’s or teacher’s library. Author Carlyn Beccia has a gift for speaking right to young adults in the sort of hilarious and cheeky language that will captivate even a reluctant reader. While using lots of detail, Beccia keeps attention spans by using funny footnotes directed to the reader and goofy illustrations. While the text is ultra-engaging, the story-specific drawings on each page truly are the cherry on top of a luxuriously rich compilation of disturbing tales. A list of sources and an index will allow readers to narrow down the topics they are most interested in.

*Contains mild violence, mild drug abuse, and mild sexual content.