

Book Review

Books For Youth - Fiction - Historical Fiction

The Corpse Queen

By Heather M. Herrman.



Sept. 2021. 416p. Putnam, \$18.99
(9781984816702). Grades 9-12.
[REVIEW](#). First published
November 5, 2021 (Booklist Online).

In 1850s Philadelphia, Molly Green, 17, grapples with the supposed suicide of her best friend at the orphanage. Abruptly, Molly is sent to live with a wealthy aunt she never knew existed. Her aunt, it turns

out, is the “Corpse Queen,” the woman who traffics in cadavers for a medical school run by Dr. LaValle. In exchange for her luxurious new living situation, Molly is to accompany her aunt’s assistant each night to retrieve bodies, helping to deliver and prepare them for the doctor. Molly’s new activities foster an interest in medicine and friendships with sex workers in a cabaret, all while area murders of young women at the hands of “The Knifeman” increase. Despite a few close calls, Molly is determined to end his killing spree before she becomes his next victim. Stylishly smart and macabre, the story tempers grisly occurrences with Molly’s feminist attitudes and unflagging concern for the poor and the young women populating the city. While some scenes concern dissection and gruesome murders, others sparkle with class-defying friendships and warmth. Part mystery, part thriller, and part family discovery, this is a delicious horror story from which the reader can’t look away. — *Jeanne Fredriksen*



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Booklist Editors Recommend

Titles similar to *The Corpse Queen*

- *Burn Our Bodies Down*
- *Rotters*
- *The Grace Year*
- *The Dark Descent of Elizabeth Frankenstein*
- *Stalking Jack the Ripper*