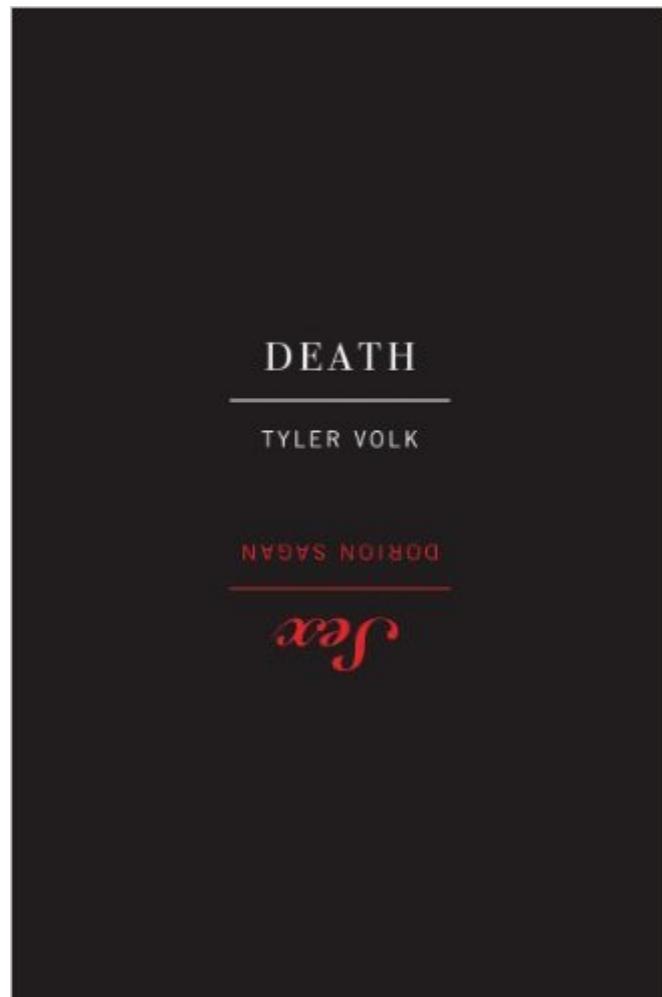


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# Death & Sex



## Synopsis

WINNER OF THE BOOKBINDER'S GUILD OF NEW YORK 2009 AWARD FOR BEST NONFICTION HARDCOVER! On DEATH . . . What is shared by spawning Pacific salmon, towering trees, and suicidal bacteria? In his lucid and concise exploration of how and why things die, Tyler Volk explains the intriguing ways creatures-including ourselves-use death to actually enhance life. Death is not simply the end of the living, though even in that aspect the Grim Reaper has long been essential to natural selection. Indeed, the exquisite schemes and styles of death that have emerged from evolution have been essential to the great story from life's beginnings in tiny bacteria nearly four thousand million years ago to ancient human rituals surrounding death and continuing to the existential concerns of human culture and consciousness today. Volk weaves together autobiography, biology, Earth history, and results of fascinating studies that show how thoughts of our own mortality affect our everyday lives, to prove how an understanding of what some have called the ultimate taboo can enrich the celebration of life. . . . and SEXIn Sex, Dorion Sagan takes a delightful, irreverent, and informative romp through the science, philosophy, and literature of humanity's most obsessive subject. Have you ever wondered what the anatomy and promiscuous behaviors of chimpanzees and the sexual bullying of gorillas tell us about ourselves? Why we lost our hair? What amoebas have to do with desire? Linking evolutionary biology to salacious readings of the lives and thoughts of such notables as the Marquis de Sade and Simone de Beauvoir, and discussing works as varied as *The Story of O* and *Silence of the Lambs*, Sex touches on a potpourri of interrelated topics ranging from animal genitalia to sperm competition, the difference between nakedness and nudity, jealousy's status as an aphrodisiac and the origins of language, Casanova and music, ovulation and clothes, mother-in-law jokes and alpha females, love and loneliness. A brief, wonderfully entertaining, highly literate foray into the origins and evolution of sex. Two books in one cover, Death & Sex unravel and answer some of life's most fundamental questions.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (23 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Presenting people with a copy of "Sex and Death" might be a kind of interesting social experiment in and of itself. Which side do you read first?"Death and Sex" is an innovative in both the concepts within and the physical design of the book. Both authors, Tyler Volk and Dorion Sagan (yes, THAT Sagan, although he doesn't make a big deal out of it), have written longer, more scientific books on their respective subjects (What is Death?: A Scientist Looks at the Cycle of Life and What Is Sex?), and the proposal was to condense down some of the ideas into a single volume that was equal parts philosophical, scientific and entertaining. The book presents Death on one side, and Sex on the other, and it is the reader's choice on where to begin.Volk's work, "Death" begins with the philosopher Epicurus (a great starting place for almost everything, in my opinion) and goes on to a deeper exploration of just what "death" is. Cellular-level death occurs all over out bodies on a constant basis, and so parts of us "die" in order for the greater organism to survive. However, the individual molecules that make up our bodies have their own lifecycles, and will be dispersed from our corpses only to be swept up in the assemblage of something else until their own lifespans expire.

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