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The Human Body

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~~Not a Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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One reason why it takes a long time to qualify as a doctor is because nobody ever designed the human body - it evolved the way it is without any specification to be maximally effective but very complicated, so it takes a lot of understanding and a lot of learning. The hardest thing for the tyro anatomist to grasp is that within the dense package it matters vitally what bits of it are neighbours to what other bits, and this is where a book like **The Body Atlas** helps enormously.

In essence it is a dissector's manual, working its way through the whole body showing all bones, muscles and soft tissues in surgical detail. The clarity of Fornari's illustrations and their labelling provide fine information about what's inside us. Parker's text does two jobs - it provides information to go with the pictures and little tasty extras about body function (how you burp, how much food you eat in a year and so on). And for once the book's layout and design really do enhance its content, so that as well as being a pre-medical book of great value, its general interest rating is also high. Only those who faint at the sight of skin should avoid it.

So remarkable is our body that it's provided inspiration in every field of human expression. Stories like 'Frankenstein' and songs like 'Your feet's too big' have been written about it, folklore and legend have sprung up around it and its owners' curiosity is still boundless. Steve Parker's second offering ranges widely in an engaging attempt to bring together anatomical facts with social history, scientific discovery, art and literature. The result is an entertaining mish-mash of side-lit body information, as far from a text book as you could get. Obviously, seeing as we've all got one, the human body is the ultimate in cross-curricularity, but Parker has the grace to let us discover that for ourselves.

All secondary schools should buy the Atlas - it's essential; it would be nice to think that some would find room for the Focus, too.

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