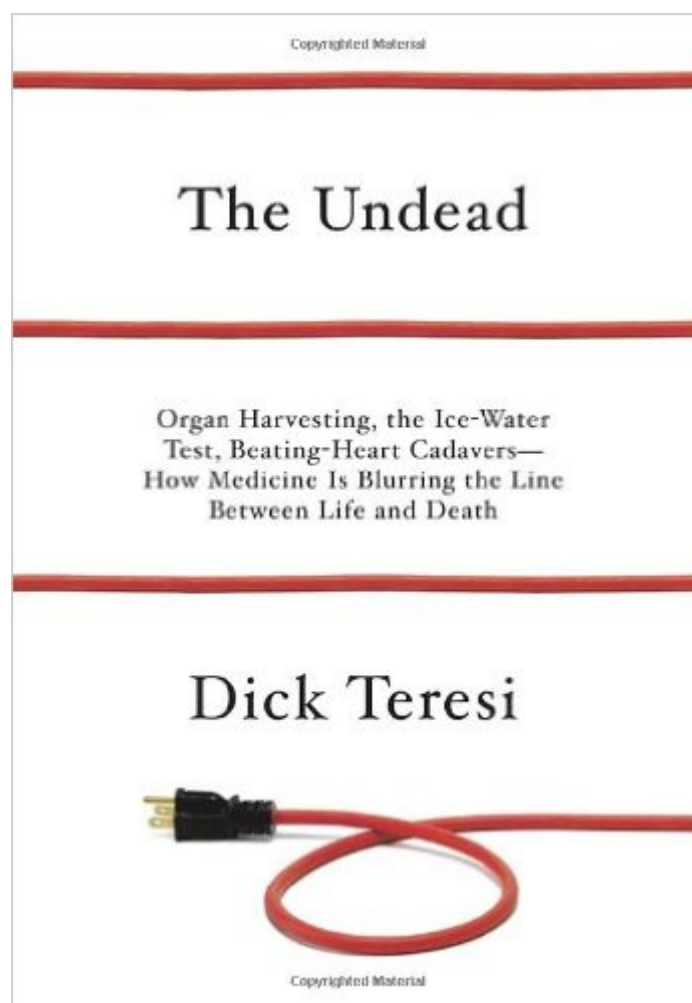


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# The Undead: Organ Harvesting, The Ice-Water Test, Beating Heart Cadavers--How Medicine Is Blurring The Line Between Life And Death



## Synopsis

Important and provocative, *The Undead* examines why even with the tools of advanced technology, what we think of as life and death, consciousness and nonconsciousness, is not exactly clear and how this problem has been further complicated by the business of organ harvesting. Dick Teresi, a science writer with a dark sense of humor, manages to make this story entertaining, informative, and accessible as he shows how death determination has become more complicated than ever. Teresi introduces us to brain-death experts, hospice workers, undertakers, coma specialists and those who have recovered from coma, organ transplant surgeons and organ procurers, anesthesiologists who study pain in legally dead patients, doctors who have saved living patients from organ harvests, nurses who care for beating-heart cadavers, ICU doctors who feel subtly pressured to declare patients dead rather than save them, and many others. Much of what they have to say is shocking. Teresi also provides a brief history of how death has been determined from the times of the ancient Egyptians and the Incas through the twenty-first century. And he draws on the writings and theories of celebrated scientists, doctors, and researchers—Jacques-Bénoîtin Winslow, Sherwin Nuland, Harvey Cushing, and Lynn Margulis, among others—to reveal how theories about dying and death have changed. With *The Undead*, Teresi makes us think twice about how the medical community decides when someone is dead.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am about to purchase this book after listening to the author discuss it on NPR. I will post a review

on the book AFTER reading it. In the interim, however, I find it intriguing that though the book was published on March 13, on that very same date it had already received 16 critical one-star ratings. By March 16 (just 3 days later), there were an additional 14 one-star ratings - totaling 30. All this before the book could have possibly even been delivered to (much less read by) any of these "reviewers." So what operation orchestrated that smear? After reading the book, I may indeed conclude it stinks. Or I may appreciate the author's research and cautions. Or something in between. I won't know until I read and evaluate its content. (I'm giving it an initial 3 stars simply because reviews require a star selection in order to post. My stars rating may go up or down after reading it.) We all have our biases. I do as well. At least read the material before you take shots at it rather than simply regurgitating the opinions of others telling you what you should write.

Sheesh!\*\*\*\*\*Ok, it's 4 weeks later, and now having actually READ the book, here are my thoughts: First, I have bumped up my overall opinion from an original "non-committal" of 3 stars to 4 stars. I wouldn't say this was a great read, but a pretty informationally compelling one - especially if you are or lean toward becoming an organ donor at death. (As a side note, this book is nothing about donating organs while you are alive, such as donating one of your two kidneys for someone you match up with.

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