



The Undertaker's Daughter

Kate Mayfield

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“*The Undertaker’s Daughter* is a wonderfully quirky, gem of a book beautifully written by Kate Mayfield...Her compelling, complicated family and cast of characters stay with you long after you close the book” (Monica Holloway, author of *Cowboy & Wills* and *Driving With Dead People*).

How does one live in a house of the dead? Kate Mayfield explores what it meant to be the daughter of a small-town undertaker in this fascinating memoir evocative of *Six Feet Under* and *The Help*, with a hint of Mary Roach’s *Stiff*.

After Kate Mayfield was born, she was taken directly to a funeral home. Her father was an undertaker, and for thirteen years the family resided in a place nearly synonymous with death, where the living and the dead entered their house like a vapor. In a memoir that reads like a Harper Lee novel, Mayfield draws the reader into a world of haunting Southern mystique.

In the turbulent 1960s, Kate’s father set up shop in sleepy Jubilee, Kentucky, a segregated, god-fearing community where no one kept secrets—except the ones they were buried with. By opening a funeral home, Frank Mayfield also opened the door to family feuds, fetishes, murder, suicide, and all manner of accidents. Kate saw it all—she also witnessed the quiet ruin of her father, who hid alcoholism and infidelity behind a cool and charismatic façade. As Kate grows from trusting child to rebellious teen, the enforced sobriety of the funeral home begins to chafe, and she longs for the day she can escape the confines of Jubilee and her place as the undertaker’s daughter.

“Mayfield fashions a poignant send-off to Jubilee in this thoughtfully rendered work” (*Publishers Weekly*).

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