

THE *Dirt* ON CLEAN

An Unsanitized History



KATHERINE
ASHENBURG

"Ashenburg carries us from ancient to modern times, peppering the text with fascinating facts." —Karen Gaudette, *The Seattle Times*

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The question of cleanliness is one every age and culture has answered with confidence. For the first-century Roman, being clean meant a two-hour soak in baths of varied temperatures, scraping the body with a miniature rake, and a final application of oil. Do Napoleon know something we didn't when he wrote to Josephine, "I'll return in five times. For the aristocratic Frenchman in the seventeenth century, it meant changing your clothing once a day and perhaps going so far as to dip your hands in some drinking water. An engrossing fusion of erudition and anecdote, *The Dirt on Clean* considers the bizarre prescriptions of history's doctors, the hygienic peccadilloes of great authors, and the historic twists and turns that have brought us to a location Ashenburg considers hedonistic yet oversanitized. And why is the German term *Warmduscher*? a man who washes in warm or popular water? invariably hook against his masculinity? Katherine Ashenburg takes on such fascinating questions as these in *The Dirt on Clean*, her charming tour of attitudes toward hygiene through period. Stop washing"?



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Rub-a-dub-dub. Or not. "Show me a people's bathhouses and bathrooms, and I'll show you what they really want, what they disregard, sometimes what they fear ? and a substantial part of who have they are." – Katherine Ashenburg, in the introduction to *THE DIRT ON CLEAN* "When the future Louis XIII of France was born, in 1601, the court physician kept notes in the child's cleaning history ... At six weeks his head was massaged. At seven weeks, his abundant cradle cap was rubbed with butter and essential olive oil. The baby's hair was not combed until he was nine months old. At age five, his legs had been washed for the first time, in tepid drinking water. It focuses on the nation states of Europe – mainly Western Europe – and America. The book was fun to learn especially the initial half which handled earlier centuries. It is, however, lacking in humor. This book is amazing. It's a completely engaging, informative read that both makes me think and makes me experience lucky to have access to great sanitation. He had his first bath at the ripe age group of almost seven. And for those who are worried that perhaps they're missing being totally clean in the current über-fastidious America. By the reserve's conclusion, the reader learns that personal hygiene is cyclical, evolving over the centuries from extremely clean to dirty to reasonably clean to appalling and disgustingly filthy to reasonably clean again progressing presently to something compulsively obsessive (especially with us crazy Americans! Commented all over Facebook about it. *THE DIRT ON CLEAN* is comprehensively instructive in a school text sort of way." ? Sophie Hadida, in her 1932 book *As well bizzarre! Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*), who all takes the human condition seriously but, with a wink and a nod, not too seriously, it would've been enormously entertaining as well. The volume's pages are liberally sprinkled with sidebar quotes from other sources associated with the subject in the context of that time period covered by the chapter at hand. These sidebars are established into their own text boxes in a smaller sized and lighter (in darkness) font. If your eyesight is normally failing with age group (as mine can be), a magnifier is called for. This is an excellent read read and don't be surprised if you find yourself saying OHH GROSS outloud. I still learned quite a bit in regards to a subject that seems never to be taught in schools. The text is presented in a breezy, very readable fashion and there are any number of curious illustrations to peruse. What we see from additional epochs, from sculptures and paintings is obviously not what we'd have smelled! I browse it once. And I plan to read it once again soon. It offers material for very enjoyable conversations. CLEARly an interesting reading What is considered to be clean and hygienic changes across time. The development of hygiene is quite very interesting since it crosses so many other historical landmarks, and how it adjustments according to the different cultures. I discovered so much about traditional Western cleanliness that I may never read another traditional romance! Interesting book about the way people viewed dirt Super interesting! I loved it. I have read and reread this book. It ignores the cleanliness standards of the Middle and ASIA, and only touches on Muslim habits because they conflicted with Christian types when the previous occupied a lot of Spain. (btw, I'll steal "Nacirema" for just one of my novels. Got the topic fallen under the word processor of, state, Mary Roach (*Stiff: The Curious Lives of Individual Cadavers*, *Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Technology and Sex*, and *It is rather interesting to learn how people viewed cleanliness throughout background*). It's going on one of my "keeper" shelves. thoroughly engaging, informative read I read this almost a decade ago as analysis for a project We didn't bypass to tackling until recently, and We figured I will reread Ashenburg's book thus my understanding of her analysis is fresh. It's part of history not really written about very much." ? from *THE DIRT ON CLEAN* *THE DIRT ON CLEAN* by Katherine Ashenburg is normally a study of the cultural attitudes regarding personal hygiene spanning the Greek and Roman eras for this. It kind of places a damper on historical dramas. It would have been great to get a non-Western history as well, but that could well be saved for another reserve and/or author. *Manners for Millions: THE CORRECT Code of Pleasing Personal*

Practices" "There's character - in soap and water" ? from an American magazine ad of the 1920s "The Hotel on Rivington (gives) floor-to-ceiling windows in the shower that makes it visible to the hotel's neighbors. I hardly ever really thought about hygiene ever sold. I kind of assumed that people often got baths in those little tin tubs before we got access to indoor plumbing, but not so. I highly recommend it. THE DIRT ON CLEAN can be an eminently readable contribution to the social studies genre. After all, ew, they didn't actually clean their hands at some points! As it is certainly, I'd recommend this reserve for curious people along with writers (and visitors) of historicals.) Loved this! And I enjoyed it just as much the second period through as I did so the first. A fun and informative read I hated to see this book end. The part of religion and science are important but their influence could be surprising. Interesting But Limited An interesting discussion of how humans stayed clean, or not, in the last two millennia. However it is limited mainly to western European cultures and there's nothing about societies past about 2000 years ago. Most of the discussion centers on changes over the past 1000 years. Eye opener book I am astonished that we have the opportunity nowadays to enjoy daily showers, toilets, and several additional luxuries that in various other times were up to now from lifestyle as described in this book. Loved it This book is among the most interesting I've read this summer. It's not a subject you find a lot better f comprehensive "background" on. Extremely informational and entertaining read! Three Stars Funny book! A fun nonacademic read! A nice nonacademic history of hygiene throughout the centuries." ? from THE DIRT ON CLEAN "Odors are unnecessary and those who've them are violating guidelines of courtesy.



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