



EVERYBODY SHOULD BE FAMOUS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. AFTER THEY DIE.

The public's appetite for a grief-fest, conspicuous since Princess Diana's death, has shown few signs of abating in recent years with Jade Goody and Gary Speed being notable recent examples. In the case of Fabrice Muamba the public's mawkishness now even extends to the living. *A Matter of Life and Death* by Paul Carroll poses the question: 'has all this grieving gone just a little bit too far?'

A Matter of Life and Death is an intelligent, humorous and fast-moving exploration of values and motives in today's reality - TV age: society's 'mourning sickness', the power of marketing, media cynicism, anonymity as fame and the influence of Twitter.

The action centres on advertising maverick Farren Mortimer who sets up AMOLAD to bring the funeral business into the 21st century - his ideas capture the public's attention as he cashes in on the new zeitgeist of conspicuous public mourning. Appointed as the government's 'bereavement czar' it looks as if Mortimer can't put a foot wrong as he single-handedly puts the 'fun' into funerals. But commercialising death isn't without its problems; not everybody gives 'Mr Eulogy' and his slick marketing techniques their blessing.

But who wants to bury Mortimer the most? Is it the anarchist graffiti street artist who has made AMOLAD a particular target for his ire? The self-seeking road safety campaigner with designs on Mortimer as well as his money? The award-seeking journalist who smells a BAFTA? Or someone much closer to home?

As the government's inaugural 'People's Remembrance Day' bank holiday date approaches, will it be redemption or requiem for Mortimer?

Carroll skillfully heads each chapter of the book with a song that could be played at a funeral, a concept inspired from his days working on the PR account of Co-operative Funeral Services. "We came up with the Funerals Top Ten - the most popular songs played at funerals each year - for CRS Funerals in the mid 1990s, and that became the starting point for *A Matter of Life and Death* when I decided to write my debut novel," says Paul.

PAUL CARROLL has worked in the public relations arena for over thirty years, running his own highly successful award-winning agency (Communique PR in Manchester), handling a number of well-known brands and forging a reputation among his peers for creative thinking.



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