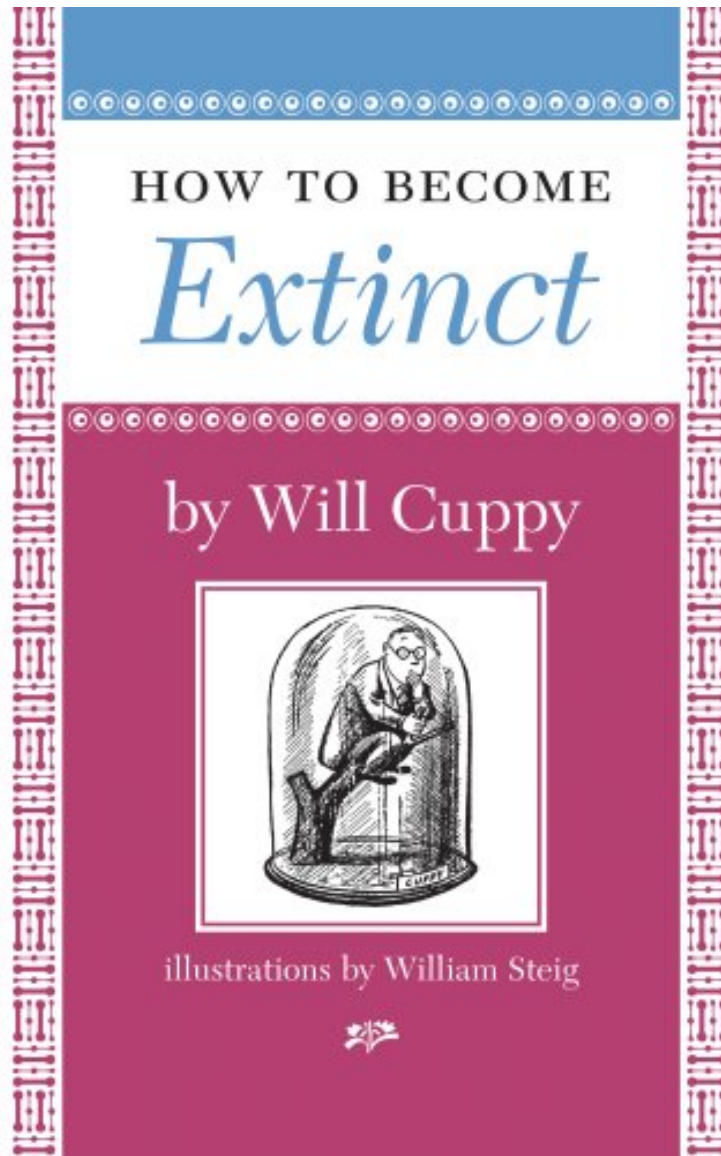


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How to Become Extinct

Will Cuppy

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#446327 in Books David R Godine 2008-08-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .50 x 5.40l, .40
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Will Cuppy : How to Become Extinct before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Become Extinct:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Gentle humor from a great writerBy Kilian85710Will Cuppy (1884-1949) was a well-known journalist, columnist and humorous. His best known book The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody was published posthumously. It, like How to Be a Hermit was a collection of essays, previously published in magazines like the New Yorker.The focus of How to Be a Hermit is Cuppy's time living in a shack on a small

island, Jones Island, off Long Island's south shore, from 1921 to 1929. The nearby Coast Guard crew helped him repair the shack and shared supplies and recipes with him. In 1929 the encroachment of the Jones State Park forced him off the island, but a dispensation from the head of the parks department allowed him to keep the shack, and he continued to visit the island until his death. These gently humorous essays show the difficulty of living alone, dependent on the mercy of the coast guardsmen and the seasonal visitors to the island, who left behind miscellaneous canned goods when they left. He quotes the acerbic comments of his only companion, a black cat. He supported himself by writing book reviews for \$0.25 each, and writing a column for the New York Herald Tribune, and selling articles to the New Yorker and McCall's magazine. Very shy of people, Cuppy never married, thus the subtitle. He described a hermit as "simply a person to whom civilization has failed to adjust itself." Civilization never adjusted itself to Will Cuppy, and he got his revenge by writing these wonderful essays.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Plan: How to Leave This World Laughing By John Michael Albert I had never heard of Will Cuppy until Garrison Keillor mentioned him one day on The Writer's Almanac. Since I've always had an attraction to humorous writing (humor certainly beats the alternative, vis-a-vis our temporary residence in this vale of tears), I thought I'd dive in. An lo and behold, he had a volume entitled How to Be a Hermit, A Bachelor Keeps House, a subject that has fascinated me (bachelor and urban hermit) since I first heard of the Christian Desert Fathers and all those Zen-y monks in their caves. This book is such a delight. If you're at all attracted to the reader-as-confidante writings of David Sedaris or Paul Rudnick, to name only two contemporary humorists whose names come to mind, you should read this. Here you have their "Roaring '20s" counterpart, published in the year of the Stock Market Crash, when I'm sure all that roaring had turned into a deafening din. If you need more teasing, I mentioned my major discovery to my friend Kathy who responded, "Oh, yeah. Will Cuppy. He floated around in the shadows of the Algonquin Round Table--always present but just outside the photo, if you know what I mean." So, here's a volume to add to your stack of Aristophanes, Plautus, Ovid (if you consider the Metamorphoses funny), the Decameron, Gulliver's Travels--all those books whose basic theme is, "If you don't leave this world laughing, you missed the point entirely--and you may just have to take the test again."

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Hilarious history from a master writer By DrT Will Cuppy needs to be more widely recognized as the amazing humorist that he is. During his life he was best known for his short sketches about various animals, but all his life, on the back burner, he'd been working on this history of the world. In a series of biographical sketches, Cuppy takes a look at Hatsheput, Pericles, Hannibal, Atilla, Charlemagne, Lucretia Borgia, William the Conqueror, Philip the II, Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, and Miles Standish, among others. Without being unnecessarily disrespectful, he reduces each of these figures to the humans that they were. Each of his facts, no matter how incongruous, is absolutely true, else he wouldn't have included it. Amazingly, his approach does not get the slightest bit tiresome as the book goes on--the chapter about the Pilgrims is just as funny as the chapters on the ancient Egyptians. And do not on any account skip the footnotes--Cuppy's use of footnotes is another uniquely hilarious aspect of his presentation. This really is world history the painless way! If you're a history buff at all, you'll crack up laughing.

In these forty brief essays, the perennially perturbed Will Cuppy turns his unflinching attention on those members of the animal kingdom whose habits are disagreeable, whose appearances are repellent, and whose continued existence is not necessarily a foregone conclusion. He is not - decidedly not - without reason. (The pike is pretty nasty as fish go, don't you agree?) And while Cuppy may frequently leave in his wake more questions than answers, we surely owe him a debt of gratitude for at least asking. After all, someone has to consider the distinctions between Stoats and Ermines, or why the Age of Reptiles simply had to come to an end. And if his take on the Giant Ground Sloth is less than flattering, who are we to quibble? And grateful we are, if only for the author's flawless observations: the carp's "falciform pharyngeal teeth;" a fish that sings through its "glenoid cavity;" M. Danois, who is "seventy- two times as smart as the average Tunny." No other writer of our ken could pinpoint the coloring of the Common Viper as "gray, greenish, yellowish brown, reddish, or black." Decorated with illustrations by the ever-delightful William Steig, this bestiary of fanciful, fretful, and ferocious creatures is sure to enlighten the naturalist in all of us, the one who never really understood why, exactly, so little is known of the Dodo's daily life, even if it's too late to ask about it now.

About the Author A failed dramatist who lost his beloved Jones Island hideaway to the predations of Robert Moses, Will Cuppy (1884-1949) wrote extensively on his life as a hermit, the natural world, and just about anything else that proved the world was out to get him. His remains ended up in a leaky shoebox, proving him right.