Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage

Every day, we generate an enormous amount of garbage. In the United States alone, we produce over 250 million tons of trash each year. That's enough to fill the Rose Bowl Stadium more than 20 times over.

Most of this garbage ends up in landfills, where it slowly decomposes over time. But what exactly happens to our trash once we throw it away? And what are the environmental consequences of all this waste?

Landfills are the most common way to dispose of garbage in the United States. These massive pits are lined with plastic and clay to prevent contamination of groundwater. Once the garbage is dumped into the landfill, it is compacted and covered with soil.

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by Heather Rogers

4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1289 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 306 pages
Lending	: Enabled

Over time, the garbage in landfills decomposes, releasing methane gas. Methane is a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Landfills

also produce leachate, a toxic liquid that can pollute groundwater.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that there are over 2,500 active landfills in the United States. These landfills are located in every state, and they are a major source of pollution.

Garbage is also a major problem in the ocean. Every year, millions of tons of plastic waste enter the ocean, where it can harm marine life and pollute beaches.

Plastic is not biodegradable, so it can take hundreds of years to decompose. In the meantime, it can break down into smaller pieces, which can be ingested by fish and other marine animals.

Ingesting plastic can cause a variety of health problems for marine animals, including starvation, malnutrition, and reproductive problems. It can also block their digestive tracts and cause them to die.

Plastic pollution is a serious threat to the ocean and its inhabitants. It is estimated that there are over 150 million tons of plastic waste in the ocean today. This number is only expected to grow in the years to come.

Recycling is one of the best ways to reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills and the ocean. Recycling involves collecting and processing used materials so that they can be made into new products.

Recycling helps to conserve natural resources, such as trees, water, and minerals. It also reduces the amount of pollution that is produced by manufacturing new products.

There are many different types of materials that can be recycled, including paper, plastic, metal, and glass. Recycling rates vary from community to community, but the average recycling rate in the United States is about 35%.

Recycling is a great way to reduce our environmental impact. By recycling our garbage, we can help to conserve natural resources, reduce pollution, and protect the ocean.

Composting is another great way to reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills. Composting involves decomposing organic matter, such as food scraps and yard waste, into a nutrient-rich soil amendment.

Compost can be used to improve the soil in gardens and farms. It can also be used to reduce the need for chemical fertilizers.

Composting is a great way to recycle organic waste and reduce our environmental impact. By composting our garbage, we can help to create a more sustainable future.

The way we deal with garbage is changing. In the past, we simply dumped our garbage in landfills or burned it. However, these methods are no longer sustainable. Landfills are filling up, and burning garbage produces harmful pollutants.

Today, we are looking for new and innovative ways to deal with garbage. Some of these new methods include:

- **Waste-to-energy plants:** These plants convert garbage into electricity or heat.

- **Anaerobic digestion:** This process converts organic waste into biogas, which can be used to generate electricity or heat.
- **Advanced recycling technologies:** These technologies can recycle more types of materials than traditional recycling methods.

These new methods are still in their early stages of development, but they have the potential to revolutionize the way we deal with garbage. By embracing these new technologies, we can create a more sustainable future for our planet.

Garbage is a major problem, but it is also an opportunity. By reducing the amount of garbage we produce, recycling more, and composting our organic waste, we can help to create a more sustainable future.

The future of garbage is in our hands. Let's make the right choice.

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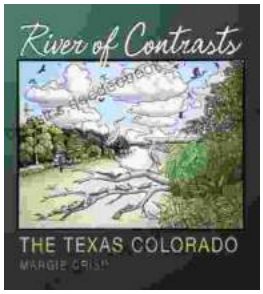

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