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- "Tears have been central to myth, religion, poetry, and fiction through the ages, but until recently, remarkably little has been written in an attempt to explain and understand tears themselves. Perhaps no other fundamental human activity has received so little direct and sustained attention." ~ Tom Lutz Tom Lutz presents an understanding of tears to explore crying as expressed in cultural context. He explains the reasons why people don't weep at funerals in Bali, reveals the chemical content of emotional versus lubricating tears, and delves into tribal rituals that seek to wash away psychic pain. "Crying: The Natural & Cultural History of Tears" looks at tears from every angle an anthropologist could wish for and while Tom Lutz uncovers the mystery and intrigue of tears, he also appeals to the psychologist in us all who longs for deeper explanations. This can at times read more like an intellectual treatise rather than an emotive argument, but all the while, Tom Lutz seems to seek a validation for crying in a world where no one can agree on a similar standard for the shedding of tears. Some cultures have specific rules for when you may or may not cry that seem shockingly cruel on the surface, but reveal an underlying need for survival in difficult circumstances. The harmful mourning rituals of some tribes made horror movies sound like a summer picnic. The spiritual significance of tears is especially interesting, as is the way humans express their feelings of loss. As Tom Lutz so aptly states: "...without desire there are no tears." Desire takes many forms and at times a desire that is fulfilled is also the cause for tears. We may also fear the loss of what we desire or desire something we can't have and so are then frustrated. What

can you do in the first twelve weeks of life that will ensure a baby doesn't cry as much in the future? How do parents in tribal situations deal with crying? Why do some cultures promote weeping and expect demonstrative grief, while other cultures shun the idea to the point of removing a weeping person from the scene of a funeral? Why are men more comfortable with crying in our modern society? A discussion on childcare unveils a few details that didn't seem pertinent to the topic at hand, but do reveal a certain curiosity of the author. The way he explores this topic made me think he may in fact have written this book for an audience of psychologists. While this book is very intriguing, it doesn't seem to reach out to the casual reader, nor does it keep specifically to the topic of emotions. For the adventurous reader, the topics expand and travel to new destinations, opening the mind to ideas that relate very much to the dimensions of the soul and the deeper understandings of how humans function on all levels of existence. This is not a casual study of emotions, but more of an in depth discussion of everything related to crying and its cultural significance. This topic is fascinating and if you have an interest in Homer, Freud, Plato, Shakespeare, Socrates, Darwin, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Dostoyevsky, Dorothy Parker, D.H. Lawrence, Daniel Goleman and Dr. Benjamin Spock, then this is your book. Philosophy, psychology, medical terminology and cultural expectation are all cleverly woven together to create a fascinating and well-researched unveiling of why we cry. If you want to research this topic even more, there are lists of movies and books within the pages of this book to keep you busy for years! If you love this book, you may enjoy books by Daniel Goleman, especially "Emotional Intelligence." ~The Rebecca Review