



## Dead Man and the Restless Spirits

*Lou Harper*

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*Dying sucks hairy monkey balls, even when you're not the stiff.*

Denton Mills has a secret: he can see dead people. Or rather, how they died. It's quite a drag in a city like Chicago, teeming with the echoes of the no-longer living. Rather than whine about it, Denton has learned to live with his troublesome talent. His adaptability comes in handy when he meets his enigmatic new neighbor.

Bran Maurell catches Denton's eye right away, but unfortunately Mr. Tall, Dark, and Mysterious is as standoffish as he is alluring. However, after an unexpected introduction from Bran's cat brings the two men together, Denton discovers they have a mutual interest in the spirit world. Herbalist by day, Bran moonlights as a witch, performing house cleansings for a fee.

From Bran, Denton learns that his knack for interacting with the dead qualifies him as a necromancer. It makes good business sense for them to team up and rid Chicago of its pesky spirits one grateful client at a time. Amongst ghostly adventures the attraction between the men is impossible to ignore. They seem like perfect partners—unless Bran's not-so-little secret comes between them.

**Warning:** men loving men, ghosts with attitudes, and a portly feline with hidden talents.

**Note:** Denton also plays a small but important role in *Spirit Sanguine*.

## Dead Man and the Restless Spirits Details

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## From Reader Review Dead Man and the Restless Spirits for online ebook

### ttg says

4-4.5 stars – Very enjoyable set of 3 connected paranormal mysteries about “Dead Man” Denton, who can see or sense ghosts, and his tall, dark, & sexy (and very introverted) male witch neighbor Bran.

If you’ve read Harper’s Spirit Sanguine, you may remember Denton as a major side character there. It’s not necessary to read Spirit Sanguine to enjoy Dead Man, although I recommend both books—they’re both a fun read.

Whereas Spirit Sanguine focused on the growing relationship between vampire Harvey and slayer Gabe (and who both make a quick appearance in this book), Dead Man focuses on Denton, graphic designer/ghost-seer, and overall easy-going guy who grabs at the chance to move into a cheap apartment, one that comes with just one warning—his new neighbor is creepy.

Denton mostly finds neighbor Bran sexy as hell, but overly aloof, and seemingly a dick. But first impressions soon change as they continue to crash into each other (partially helped by Bran’s fat black cat), and soon Bran’s wall caves a little under Denton’s endlessly leering opportunism, and he invites Denton to follow along on some spirit-banning business (while informing him that yes, guy witches are called witches too.) Go-with-the-flow Denton follows along, not quite ready yet to share his own secrets, but soon both find themselves opening up and connecting.

I really dug the book—I find it low-key, and also excessively readable and enjoyable, and filled with lots of great little touches and details that reveal so much about the characters and their quirks. (Like Denton’s sweet tooth or Bran’s penchant for loose-fitting jeans.) Their relationship develops over the three stories, each one about a different spirit, and it was fun to see introverted, socially awkward Bran’s slow thaw, and Denton’s realization that this fun thing between them might actually be pretty serious. There are also some nice surprises that I didn’t see coming, which made me want to go back and reread to see what signs had been dropped earlier.

As usual with Harper’s books, I found the writing and the dialogue effortless and realistic, so it was always easy for me to sink into the story and picture Denton and Bran moving around Bran’s plant-filled apartment while dodging “big-boned” Murry. I also appreciated that the MCs didn’t click well at first, their styles being so different. Fortunately for Bran, Denton is both easy-going and very randy, so he doesn’t give up easily. (I find Denton pretty refreshing. He might be a little short & skinny, but he is no blushing, shrinking violet, and is pretty open and upfront about sex and needs and what fun things can be done to assist with conflict resolution.)

If I had one point against, it’s that, although I was very satisfied with the story (and it ends well, so no cliff-hanger endings for those of you who worry), it still felt like such a taste for me, and I totally could swim in this world all day. There are still a couple questions I’m thinking about. (view spoiler) I hope to read more, because I totally would buy another book with these guys.

If you like urban fantasy/paranormal with your m/m romance, I definitely recommend this and also its companion Spirit Sanguine. You don’t need to read one to understand the other, but both are great reads IMO.

Which leads me to drag out this sketch AGAIN. (Shakes fist at Lou Harper.)

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### **?•? Michaelle ••? says**

4 Stars

Fun, interesting and sexy...I would definitely read more about this demon-witch and necromancer couple. Also that bit of hotness there at the end? Kinky, delicious fun.

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### **Elspeth says**

This was more like a bunch of shorts stuck together than a novel. So there were time skips which are not my thing. One time skip jumped over their first time. I missed that, I enjoy the feels these characters would have had.

So down went three stars to two.

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### **Kaje Harper says**

This book is constructed as episodic novellas, but it flows together fairly well. Denton is a website designer who also sees ghosts and the echoes of recent death. Bran is an herbalist and witch who lives next door to Denton's new apartment. At first Bran seems remote and uninterested, but gradually Denton's cheerful personality and unusual skills catch his attention.

The set-up here is fun, the banter has some nice moments, and the guys compliment each other. The take is very light. It skates over a host of possible deeper issues, from Bran's past to the fact that Denton can't drive due to "episodes" triggered by running into people's death moments. There is potential for real emotion, but it never quite happens. The cases they deal with are more puzzles to solve than heart-and-mind engagement. There is a very matter-of-fact tone to both the paranormal and the personal aspects of these stories.

Taken on that level, the book is a fun read, and I will pick up the next one (especially with the promise of the frog in the title.) But if you are looking for dark, emotional, or intense paranormal or romance, then this won't be the book for you. It does have an excellent cat, though.

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### **Heather C says**

Omg this was so much fun! And also my first experience with Lou Harper's writing, but I'm still not sure how I've never heard of the Dead Man series before. Please, let there be more to come!

Set in Chicago and told as a series of three "episodes", *Dead Man & the Restless Spirits* tells the story of Denton, a web page designer who can "see dead people". He has recently been hooked up with a new

apartment with the help off his BFF, Joy. Joy has also warned Denton all about the broody, snooty and mysterious next door neighbor...THE neighbor who has a habit of tending to his balcony plants in nothing but a bathrobe. Turns out, Bran (that's mystery man's name), is a witch (plus a bit of something else), and even has a fat black cat companion named Murmur. Bran figures out that Denton is a necromancer and tricks Denton into helping him out with one of his cases. And that's how Denton and Bran begin...

Like I said earlier, this was a lot of fun: a perfect balance of humor and smexiness and mystery...and surprisingly a bit of tenderness as the romance progresses. Each little episode has a standalone mystery, from enraged ghosts to insane possessions to ghosts that can't let go. But the romance continues to develop with each story. I just *adore* Denton and Bran together. I was pleasantly surprised with how satisfied I was with the conclusions, but even more happy because there was still another story to be read. Please, please, please let there be more of Denton and Bran stories to come. I've already read the freebie *Dead Man & the Lustful Spirit* and I still want MORE! Want to know more about Denton and Bran and what they will get themselves involved in next.

Totally recommended! I plan to read *Spirit Sanguine* as soon as possible; want to read Gabe's story and would love to see more of Denton.

#### **Reviewed for The Blogger Girls**

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#### **Caipi says**

This was a light and fun read.

Denton, a necromancer, moved into a new apartment, right next door to Bran, a herbalist and witch. It didn't take long and the two were building a lovely relationship and working together as ghostbusters.

I loved the most Denton's sense of humor!

3,5 stars

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#### **Tami says**

I liked it. I really did.

BUT it was not so very special - though it had some, well, extraordinary *parts* .

There was some funny banter in the beginning and some nice and interesting stories/cases with paranormal context, but overall, it was more a nice read.

And I notice that I am not so invested in those two guys that I would wait nail-bitingly expectant for the next installment. Don't know why, but it just didn't grab me that much, though I felt a mite bit protective of Denton.

As I said, a nice read, nothing wrong with it, just not that gripping for me.

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## **Will Parkinson says**

Must. Have. More.

This is not a plea. This is a requirement. I \*NEED\* more of these guys. When I learned Bran's secret, and what other stuff he was keeping hidden, I knew that I'd love this book.

One of the secrets that Bran has needs to be explored. It's not fair to torture this prickly sweet pear like this, Ms. Harper.

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## **Susan says**

### **3.5 stars**

Lou Harper is a new-to-me author and I really really enjoy her style. Her writing is funny and quirky and sarcastic and those all appeal to me.

The story is about Denton, who as a necromancer, is able to see dead people as well as feel & summon spirits. He doesn't know much about his gifts or how he can utilize them until he meets his new neighbor, Bran. Bran is mysterious and a man of few words and Denton is drawn to him immediately...despite it being obvious, the guy has secrets.

Denton in his pierced, care-free, take-no-sh\*t way is charming and funny. Bran in his brooding, stoic, powerful way is sexy and hot. When Denton is finally able to break down the walls with Bran (and get to his secrets!), the pairing is likable and the partnership between them is sweet. Bran teaches Denton how to utilize his gifts and Denton teaches Bran how to lighten up! Being a sucker for a strong man reduced to a sap by love, I really enjoyed this coupling.

The story as a whole is interesting. It reads more like an episodic serial than a novel and that actually felt like I was getting to know these MC's over a span of time and shared experiences. That also, however, made the story feel choppy and I found myself putting my kindle down often and not being compelled to power through in one sitting.

And though the story, I could tell, wanted to break through and be fresh and original, it harkened me back to a similar feel & plot in Jordan Castillo Price's "PsyCop" series...which had the benefit of being my "first" and thus, of course, I compare all others to it. Denton is no Vic Bayne and Bran, though a hottie, would so lose to Jacob in a death match for sure! *Dead Man & the Restless Spirits*, in my mind, places a distant second.

Though I do like Denton and Bran, I didn't really get to know them well enough to LOVE them. I think I just need more. It's a solid book 1. I am looking forward to the series continuing and I do recommend this to anyone who enjoys this paranormal-in-a-contemporary-setting genre.

Oh and for all of you rando's out there in GR-land that I notice chit chattin' about tentacle sex...well...there *might* be something of the kind'ish in this book...just sayin' ...

## **Sammy Goode says**

Okay. Fan girl moment--sorry...Squeee, I loved this book! There, done. Now I can be a serious reviewer again. I so admire this author. With each book, Lou Harper solidifies her spot as a top notch story teller whose novels remain fresh and exciting. The plot lines have just enough twists and are packed with more than their fair share of action making them exciting to read. The dialogue is rich and humorous and often reveals so much about her characters. Her characters...oh my...vibrant, alive (even when undead), believable and engaging; these are people you actually want to meet, whose lives are fascinating and entertaining.

We first met Denton briefly in Spirit Sanguine and thankfully he now stars in his own story. Slightly hyper, with just a bit of snark, Denton moves through his life trying to avoid the dead spirits that pop up with alarming frequency. His encounter with the next door neighbor, Bran, leads him to discover that he can also affect a spirits journey, pushing them back to the afterlife where they belong. The two men begin a tentative partnership, but Bran is elusive and Denton is determined to discover what keeps the witch from letting go and allowing Denton into his life and his bed.

First, I just have to say--this story was fun--pure and unadulterated fun. The author hit gold with these two characters and then proceeded to play them off one another with the result being a witty, sexy little story that I just never wanted to see end. Here was Bran, so serious, so closed off to social interaction coming up against Denton, who never really got the idea that he should think before he speaks. They are polar opposites who somehow work together in a glorious way, complementing the other.

As they stumble their way through one job after another, you watch as Denton evolves into this caring and truly thoughtful man. When he discovers Bran's secret, the way in which he calms and assures Bran, cares for him, it is just tender and oh so sweet. Bran slowly comes out of his shell due to Denton's careful yet persistent challenge to let loose a little and give the two of them a chance at something more than just a working partnership.

Oh dear reader, I am hardly doing this novel justice. I was enthralled from beginning to end. The story was fast moving, interesting and well executed. The dialogue was intelligent, snappy, and fresh. The characters, well developed, fascinating, and just downright funny. Dead Men & The Restless Spirits grabbed my attention straight out of the gate and kept me glued to its pages the entire way.

I must admit that this latest novel has guaranteed that Lou Harper will be an auto buy for me in the future. In a genre that is, in my opinion, glutted with what seems to be the same tired story line just told in a different voice, Lou Harper shines out as an innovative and entertaining storyteller that demands your attention. I look forward with great anticipation to what this author offers up next. In the meantime I have this little gem to reread and that is perhaps the highest praise I can offer--that this novel will be one I will savor again and again.

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## Cole Riann says

Review posted at The Armchair Reader.

I was super excited to read this spinoff of *Spirit Sanguine*, which I really loved, because I really felt like I liked Denton a lot in that book. He's really funny and he's a natural to have his own book, with the fact that he can see ghosts and all, or at least, the remnants of death. And I really did enjoy it. I think that I ended up feeling quite different about it than *Spirit Sanguine*, no matter how much I enjoyed it and not relating to the fact that it is essentially different than that book. I'll get to why in a bit, but most if it has to deal with the way that the story is told.

We first met Denton Mills in *Spirit Sanguine*, a book that was all about a different type of vampires. In a way, I feel like the viewpoint of vampires from that book (as Lou Harper has called "the Byronic portrayal of vampires—you know, dark and brooding, woe is me...") is somewhat related to how Denton feels about them. He's another type of paranormal entity in a city filled with them (Chicago), but where he sees them as other, he's just like a regular guy with a gift, or a curse. They try to stay away from one another for the most part, probably as it is thought of in *Spirit Sanguine* because of the death that surrounds vampires. Our picture of him in that book is separate from and quite lonely, though with a quick wit and acerbically funny facade.

*Dead Man...* shows Denton's world, and while they're mostly the same the focus is different. The vampires are quite separate from his daily life (except when he thinks about Gabe and the crush he had). But he's still quite lonely. He has a hard time relating to people, especially those who don't know his secret. But when staying in his best friend Joy's apartment, he finally starts to learn about his gift and the wider world of witches and necromancy -- all because of the hot guy next door (who might also be a serial killer) and the man's cat, Murry.

This book is enjoyable for itself, even if you haven't read *Spirit Sanguine*. But if you have read that book, then I think you'll enjoy this one as well because in writing style they're similar in many ways. Denton is really funny and just in the first chapter or so and especially with his interactions with the cat, I was totally hooked. I think that is what made the book enjoyable for me, mostly Denton's interaction with his surroundings and with Bran. They make a really great pair, but the real joy of reading the book comes from Denton's voice. That said, I think that you really have to enjoy that for the book to be a total winner for you. Because while I enjoyed their paranormal investigative efforts together I also felt like they were quiet small mysteries that didn't go nearly as in depth as I would have wished. And that's fine, because I know that their story isn't finished and Lou has plans for more for this couple. But it does mean that I ended this book feeling less of a connection between the two than in many of Lou's other books. On the other hand, that makes me even more excited for the sequel, because I'm interested in where this couple will go. And, of course, I love Denton :)

So I wholeheartedly recommend this one, just for the joy of reading it. It's a fun book, and not long, so you can enjoy it in a day or one sitting when you need a little pick-me-up, a little humor and some really good writing. Now that I've read almost all of her backlist, I can see that Lou has written some of the best characters in the m/m romance genre. Perhaps its that I find my reading preferences and her writing style mesh really well, but I think that Denton highlights what I really love about Lou's characters, which is that they're smart, funny and perceptive. And that they always have a different and unique way of looking at the world. I can't say more than that.

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## **Lou Harper says**

Denton was a supporting character in *Spirit Sanguine* but managed to steal most of the scenes he was in. I had to give him his own story. He has a special relationship with the dead; among other things, he can see what he calls "death traces."

I based his talent on my hodge-podge of ideas regarding ghost sightings and stuff. According to my utterly unscientific theory, paranormal phenomena like ESP, psychics, and ghosts are strongly connected to human emotions. People leave traces of themselves behind at times of extreme emotion, and what's more emotional than the moment of death, right? In a way, Denton's a lot like a bloodhound being able to sense something other people can't.

Of course, someone like Denton can't have any garden-variety romantic interest. So Bran Maurell is something...else. And that's all I'm gonna say.

Oh yeah, the cover. I worked on this for months. I had real hard time with it at the beginning, not having a clear idea what I wanted. But after a few false starts I made this, and I'm pretty darn happy with it.

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## **Monique says**

**These two men are the perfect match for each other and their tale is most definitely one of opposites attract, we have a veritable delight of paranormal beings, from ghost to witches and demons to vampires, each story had me captivated and linked seamlessly, and paced so we as readers absorbed enough information to keep reading and greedy for more!**

After reading *Spirit Sanguine* and *Dead Man and the Restless Spirits*, it is abundantly clear that Lou Harper has a wicked sense of humour... she breathes life into Bran and Denton, and not only them but the whole supporting cast including a visit with Harvey and Gabe plus Bran's Mother, who in my opinion deserves a novella all to herself... I just loved her. We also meet Denton's business partner Joy who is smart and funny and especially intuitive when it comes to Denton, ohh and she looks like a pixie... so cute!

*Dead Man and the Restless Spirits* is three novellas within a book, personally I liked the format, it is like a television series, such as *Law and Order* or *CSI*, where each episode is a complete story, but the characters have an underlying plot, a thread that continues throughout the series... and this is the same, each plot is engaging, whilst the characters keep you intrigued to the end and Lou Harper paced the individual and the whole perfectly and her characterisation was excellent, she definitely gave both Denton and Bran distinct personalities, especially the audacious, fun and crazy, scrawny multi coloured sock wearer, with piercings, great humour and a witty dialog... Denton!

For me, Denton is the star here, we first meet him in *Spirit Sanguine* where he has the ability to feel the trace

of death which leaves an imprint in time of the deceased's final moments... he can also see vampires and they refer to him as the "*Dead Man*"

Denton needs to find somewhere new to stay, and his business partner and friend Joy knows just the place, the only downside, the neighbour is a little creepy! Only Denton finds the man far from creepy, to him he is tall, dark and very handsome, definitely someone he would like to be better acquainted with, only his charms fall on deaf ears!

After Denton finds his neighbours furball of a cat making itself at home in his apartment, it gives him the perfect opportunity to go and knock on the illusive man's door... only to receive yet another cold welcome, but Denton is not one to be brushed off lightly and he continues to break down his defences... the poor man doesn't stand a chance! The fact that Denton is both intrigued and most definitely attracted to Mr. Tall, dark and handsome only spurs on his perseverance.

Denton's gaydar had already sussed Bran was gay... so of course our not so shy and retiring Denton pulls out all the stops to make sure Bran could see exactly what he has to offer! But he becomes increasingly frustrated by Bran's distant behaviour, Denton wants more than just a fumble, he wants an emotional attachment that Bran either doesn't want to give or has no idea how... he is more interested in helping him become more knowledgeable about his gift/curse, help him hone his skills and seems determined in that aspect at least.

*"A necromancer is someone who has a special connection with the dead, who can communicate with them" "Communicate is stretching it. I can feel them." "You're untrained" "And how would I go about getting trained? Not something you can find in the Yellow Pages."*

Denton's personality is infectious, he is an open book of emotions, yet Bran is like wading through treacle, only providing just enough information for your mind to start working overtime to figure out just what is behind that cool, calm and indifferent facade, the man has no social skills whatsoever... but that's fine, because Denton more than makes up for it in spades!

*"I can't believe I got you in the sack at last" he said, nestling between Bran and the back of the couch. It was a warm and cozy spot, matching Denton's mood.*

It made me smile this journey I travelled with Bran and Denton, how their relationship developed, how they worked together to overcome the perceived obstacles on Bran's part, to see the wall around his heart slowly crumble, through perseverance on Denton's, we see the once stoically guarded man unravel and lose his self consciousness and insecurities and it is like watching the tight petals of a bud finally bloom. Their trust grows, accepting each others quirks to become comfortable and at ease. I laughed at Bran's resistance to Denton and how the monosyllables at the beginning of book one turned into him actually cracking funnies by the end of three, and with Denton... well, he never wavers from his exuberant and fun personality, whose mouth runs at ten to the dozen and spends most of his time being horny!

*This book was provided by the author in exchange for a fair and honest review*

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## **Ami says**

### **3.75 stars rounded up**

Lou Harper continues her style of writing episodic stories (after *Dead in L.A.* and *Spirit Sanguine*) with this first book in "Dead Man" series, starring Denton Mills. It's a spin-off from *Spirit Sanguine*, where Denton first appears.

I would like to comment on the episodic stories first. While this structure makes the book light and enjoyable to read, since each 'episode' will be about a case that Denton and Bran handle, it also makes it slightly lack of deep study on the characters, especially Denton as the narrator of this story. Like everything is on the surface only.

I mean, personally, I don't feel like I know more about Denton by the time I reach the end -- he can see dead people, Bran helps him nurture his power, he is a good match for Bran, and he's never serious. But what else? What will make Denton tick? What will make Denton sad? Bran, on the other hand, might start as an enigma for his stoic and introverted attitude. However, he opens up a bit and Bran's mother provides a story that help my seeing Bran as a character.

Apart from that -- I enjoy this as much as I enjoy the predecessor, *Spirit Sanguine*. It is fun to read that Denton's power is more than just being able to see dead people. Bran being a male witch is interesting, especially since he deals a lot with herbs -- and not simply spells. The other information about Bran ((view spoiler)) also gives another layer to him as character.

Each of the story has a ghost for Denton and Bran to 'banish' (or send towards the light). The last story, by the way, is the most heartbreak for me. I admit that I get my eyes all teary because of it. I can't help it. A story about a ghost who waits for the lover to come after 4 decades just touches my heart.

In conclusion, another enjoyable story from Lou with characters that are easy to love. I would love to read more adventure of Denton and Bran. Oh, by the way, there's a cat, ((view spoiler)) with significant number of scenes. I approve!

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## **Bitchie says**

Once again, Lou Harper gives you a book with a couple of separate short stories, both of which are quite enjoyable. Denton, who you met in the *Sanguine* series, can see dead people and ghosts, and he moves next door to Bran, an herbalist slash witch. It's Bran who helps Denton realize he can do more with his abilities, and they grow closer. Bran has something a little "extra" down below, which was quite fun to read about!

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It was also nice seeing *Sanguine*'s Gabe and Harvey, even if it was only for a minute. (view spoiler)

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