



## Dead Things

*Matt Darst*

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Nearly two decades have passed since the fall of the United States. And the rise of the church to fill the void. Nearly twenty years since Ian Sumner lost his father. And the dead took to the streets to dine on the living. Now Ian and a lost band of survivors are trapped in the wilderness, miles from safety. Pursued by madmen and monsters, they unravel the secrets of the plague ...and walk the line of heresy. Ian and this troop need to do more than just survive. More than ever, they must learn to live.

## Dead Things Details

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Author : Matt Darst

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## From Reader Review Dead Things for online ebook

### Chip Fehd says

A superbly written story. It's one of the rare character driven zombie stories you'll find where the zombies actually take a back seat. Emotionally satisfying and hard to put down.

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### Holly Cochran says

#### READ THIS BOOK! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

The author sent me the book as a prize in a drawing. I consider myself incredibly lucky in that regard. I just finished the book and it is, without a doubt, fantastic. I don't know which creeps me out more - the zombie stuff or the church-run country. The novel is almost TOO true to life. I hope there is a sequel, because I love not only the world building, but the characters, the reality, the blending of current events with an all-too-plausible future, and add zombies. One of the reviews on the back of the book said it was Zombieland plus Clerks plus Crichton. Yes, and being a lover of all three, hooray! The writing style is unique, and the story is told from several characters' points of view in turn. The skipping about between POV's was tricky at first, but I was able to quickly get the hang of it. I enjoyed the backstories as much as the current action. The character interactions were realistic, well executed, and moved the story along nicely. Throwing in random character arguments about Star Wars vs Dune was a great touch, especially since I have been a part of similar discussions at seemingly inappropriate times. It added to the truth of the characters. The superbly researched sciency-stuff in relation to the origin and nature of the zombification, as well as about the different kinds of zombies, was translated perfectly into layman's terms without talking down to the reader, and was all too realistic. I think this may be one of the funniest, and scariest, books of it's genre I have read. Highly recommended. Well done, sir. ~Holly C in KC ~

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### Chris Smith says

I'll start by admitting that I'm not a zombie fan: It's a genre that's really overstayed it's welcome. However, I'm always up for a decent story, well written characters, and the possibility of a new twist on a tired motif. Sadly, this book had none of those things.

The biggest issue I had with this book is that the author suffers from "Brownian Crichtonitis": devoting huge swaths of the book to long-winded exposition, soap-boxing, or "look at this cool theory I thought up!", which MAY touch briefly on the plot, but more often than not yanks the reader out of the urgency of the situation. The segment comparing "Star Wars" to "Dune" was, by far, the worst offense.

The characters didn't stand out in the least. I only remember their names because I just finished the book yesterday. There were practically no development in any of them, and what little there might have been seemed so sudden due to a lack of relevant back-story for anyone. Again, had the author cut down on the incongruous monologue/dialog fluff, there might have been room to make me care about the characters.

I get that this is a "zombie book", and it seems all zombie stories aren't about the living, but about the dead. The living are the minor players and are used to showcase how foul the zombies are. I gave this book two

stars because when the zombies entered the picture, they really did shine. Most zombie theory is squarely in the science category, and this is no exception. It would have bolstered the story to get more into that aspect, but the author painted himself into a corner with the *other*, more frightening focus of the book, which was the rule of the Church.

After the collapse of American society, the Church became the authority, banning scientific study and returning the country to the era of witch burning. Zombies are bad enough, but having to deal with what must be a biological epidemic and *not* being able to tackle it biologically meant that the author COULD NOT offer a satisfactory resolution, and the characters are basically screwed.

The ending...well, I wasn't even aware that the ending was near. It pretty much drew to a screeching halt, with what little plot traffic there was piling up in a heap on the last few pages. It sounds like there *might* be room for a sequel or two. I hope that if the author decides to tackle this opportunity that he spends more time on the characters, and less in using them as mouthpieces for unrelated exposition.

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### **Suzanne Robb says**

When I first started to read this book I was a bit lost as the POV is an omnipresent one. We know what everyone is thinking. Usually this works against a story, but NOT in this case.

The story is very much character and plot driven. This is not your typical zombie apocalypse. It has come and gone, and what this writer does is weave a world pieced together by bits of the aftermath. What he imagines is something that is scarily possible, though I will not spoil it for you as to what happens.

The main character is likable in his naivety and loyalty to those around him. His best friend is someone you at first dislike because of his know it all stance on things, then again we all know that person.

The strongest point of this book was the massive amount of research that was done. There were parts so interesting I did not know if I should take notes or go and learn more. From blood types, to mythology, to Star Wars V. Dune, there is something in here for everyone. The one part about comets did seem to slow that section down a tad but took only a few paragraphs to pick right back up.

The ending was bittersweet, albeit inevitable and I would have liked to know more about the father and what he did all those years.

All in all a creative read for those who like stories that are character driven with new takes on an old theme.

This is not a gory hack and slash zombie story, so if that is what you are looking for, this might not be for you.

However, if you are looking for something intelligent, realistic, and incredibly well thought out with a unique story - this is for you.

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### **Jan says**

I have to agree with the reader comments concerning the author's irrelevant, rambling dialog inserted during inappropriate moments in the novel. There could have been so much more done with the tension of these moments. I also felt the character should have been fleshed out a bit more. I feel I barely 'know' them and I'm 75% through this book already. Not one of them has engaged my full interest.

I really feel that long rants on various subjects and lists of quoted reference material were great for filling space. Matt needs to stick to the story and perhaps get an editor who can help keep the story in focus rather than the writer's tirades and mind-wanderings. They may have had a place in the novel if they were heavily edited.

Other than that, the story and the precepts have their moments and this could have been a wonderful book with a little more care before publishing.

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### **Greg says**

So what did I like? The gradual reveal was done great. No big info dump of the backstory, but little pieces here and there, where it made sense. Sure there were some flashbacks, but still they felt "right."

This is and isn't your standard zombie book. It is in that the expected stuff happens; the zombies are zombies, etc. What's different is the story of the society and "government" that survives and how it relates to the main characters.

If you're a zombie book reader, read this...

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### **Holly says**

This is my first exposure to zombie lit, and I absolutely enjoyed it. *Dead Things* tells the tale of a society years after a zombie epidemic. Most of the U.S. has been overrun by the undead, but large pockets of survivors remain. The political debates of today have been settled (at least publicly) because the government has been replaced by religious institutions. That background allows themes (like church vs. science) to play out. Things heat up when a small plane traveling from Kentucky to a remote colony in Texas goes down in a zombie infested zone. A few escape, facing monsters, mad men, and inner demons as they make their way home.

I think the characters were probably the strongest part of the book. They are a pretty believable collection of individuals, and I thought the author did a good job developing the female characters particularly. On the whole, the pacing worked. The book was obviously well-researched, but there is a scene or two that may have been a little weighed down by all of the science. I would highly recommend this book to budding zombie fans, people who like science, fanboys, and even older young adults.

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## **Ryan Thomas says**

This is a thinking man's zombie tale. I loved it. Finally someone has put art back into horror.

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## **Robert says**

I'm impressed yet again with another "zombie" book. I have been fortunate enough to select books in this genre that keep the subject interesting. I liked that this book didn't really center around zombies, but more on the people who are surviving the outbreak and the type of civilization they live in. I really enjoyed the role the "church" takes on in this story. I wish the author went a little further in this area because I truly believe that the religious aspect is even scarier than the zombie aspect.

I also enjoyed the bits of humor throughout the book. Just enough to lighten things up a bit.

Please note that I received this book free from the Goodreads Giveaways promotion.

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## **Clack says**

This first novel by writer Matt Darst ranks highly in my top ten list of 2011. I won't go into too much detail suffice to say you ought to go out and buy this right now !!!

This beautifully crafted novel will appeal to the nerds (or should I say intelligent? in all of us), with his careful use of social commentary and character dialogue, Darst has strayed into areas that most novels just ignore, and leave us more "astute" readers thinking "why and how" ?, Darst answers these questions. Dead Things has clearly been researched in great depth and it is refreshingly original to read a novel that the author has clearly spent so much time crafting.

The post apocalypse world Darst has created is entirely new in this genre and about time too, I was growing bored of endless testosterone fuelled shoot outs involving flat characters with unbelievable personality traits. Darst has crafted his characters both male and female with an attention to detail and believability I have only ever read in Dickens and King.

The only fault I can see is that he needs to write a prequel or two, the world he has crafted post apocalypse is so refreshingly "new" to this genre; that it would be fitting that us readers get to the read the journey that led to it, further, his characters are so extraordinary that this novel was not enough time to really get to know them.

If you are looking for an intellectual read, challenging but never dull containing horror, drama, and social commentary, then this is the book for you. Darst as a first time writer has raised the standard within the genre; and I look forward to reading more of his work.

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## **Jessica says**

I won this book in a Goodreads Firstreads giveaway.

I give this book 4 thumbs up (my two and two from the zombie sneaking up behind me)! What an excellent debut novel.

Matt Darst takes the reader into an alternate future, 20 years post-zombie infection. The tale is told from a narrator who sees all and knows all (including the thoughts & feelings of the characters). I think this provides the reader the best viewpoint of everything going on. The story is about a group traveling via plane from one church-stronghold survivor city to another. But alas, the plane crashes in the middle of unchartered dead-mans land. And it follows those who survive on their trek homeward. There are several sub-stories that involve both the backstories of the characters, and side-stories of people in their lives. I think this only helps enhance the readers view of life in this time. The twists and turns, realizations and discoveries as to the true nature of the epidemic leave me wishing the book was longer.

The author obviously did a lot of research to be able to explain some concepts in the detail he does. It is also obvious that he has a "geek-streak" as he references many movies, books and Star Wars multiple-times. The references to current pop culture in a book can't help but make me wonder if I should be a little more prepared for a zombie apocalypse than I am.

I really look forward to future writings of Mr. Darst! He can tell one heck of a story.

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## **Heather says**

Loved this book! It's a totally unique take on the done-to-death zombie genre, and Darst did his research very, very well. I know that others have commented on his "lists", and I have to say that they didn't bother me a bit, although it would have been nice to read them in conversation form. Other than that, the story was amazing, and again, I loved that I couldn't figure out where he was going with his zombie theory until close to the end of the book. Zombie fans who are sick of the same old thing should read this one!

(Note - I did write to Darst telling him how I loved the book, and he very kindly sent me a copy! So, not only is he a great writer, he's a very nice guy.)

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## **Dave Lightfoot says**

I was totally blown away by this novel.

The writing style is exciting, quirky, intelligent, humorous and completely engrossing.

I was immediately grabbed from the first page and couldn't stop reading until the very end.

Matthew Darst weaves a tale set in an apocalyptic world that keeps the reader interested and constantly wanting more with a style that is rarely found in this genre. The story itself is brilliant, a true zombie novel that fits well into the genre. The difference between this and many other "zombie" stories is the intelligence and humour that are dashed throughout the pages. His writing style made me think of a mix between Terry Pratchett (for his use of words) and Kevin Smith (for his use of nerdy knowledge and comedy).

I would not only recommend this book to fans of the genre, I would demand that they read it.

I shall be looking out for more from this author.

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### **David Bernstein says**

I really enjoyed Dead Things, the narrative for one really stood out. It was different than most books I've read, and a good change for me, as i usually enjoy past tense books more. But it wasn't even the present tense that i enjoyed as it was the way in which the author wrote--his style. A lot of telling, instead of showing, but it really worked, which for most authors it doesn't.

It's clear the author loves certain topics and educating the reader, hence the long sections of off-the-main-story segments, like the Star Wars/Dune discussion. Enthusiasts will love it. The author did a TON and i mean a TON (unless he already new it all) of research for this book. There is no doubt you will learn something from this story, whether it's about a movie or a disease or how something works. Speaking of the story, it is a good one; I liked the subtle humor and the action, which was less than most zombie books. Dead Things is totally worth a read whether you are a zombie fan, an apocalyptic fan, or just want a good old adventure story with interesting characters.

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### **Annabel says**

Read this book if you want to read about the scientific way why a zombie apocalypse might occur. Or if you want to read about the difference/similarities between Star Wars and Dune. Or if you want to read about endless cross-references to vampire outbreaks vs. meteor crashes.

Don't read this book if your looking for a nice, exciting, adventurous book about a zombie world because you will be distracted from the story by all this useless nonsense. The story could be SO good if the author just stayed with the plot. Two stars. (It would have been one star but I did really like the ending)

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