



# Dust

*Joan Frances Turner*

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## **Dust** Joan Frances Turner

Nine years ago, Jessie had a family. Now, she has a gang.

Nine years ago, Jessie was a vegetarian. Now, she eats very fresh meat.

Nine years ago, Jessie was in a car crash and died. Nine years ago, Jessie was human.

Now, she's not.

After she was buried, Jessie awoke and tore through the earth to arise, reborn, as a zombie. Jessie's gang is the Fly-by-Nights. She loves the ancient, skeletal Florian and his memories of time gone by. She's in love with Joe, a maggot-infested corpse. They fight, hunt, dance together as one—something humans can never understand. There are dark places humans have learned to avoid, lest they run into the zombie gangs.

But now, Jessie and the Fly-by-Nights have seen new creatures in the woods—things not human and not zombie. A strange new illness has flamed up out of nowhere, causing the undeads to become more alive and the living to exist on the brink of death. As bits and pieces of the truth fall around Jessie, like the flesh off her bones, she'll have to choose between looking away or staring down the madness—and hanging onto everything she has come to know as life...

## Dust Details

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Author : Joan Frances Turner

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## From Reader Review Dust for online ebook

### Neil says

Do we need a book that tries to make the plight of zombies sympathetic? If the answer is this book, then definitely no. Turner is not a bad stylist, but her story here meanders between gross-out scenes, whining, and a confusing plot that jumps here and there but somehow always produces one scene after another that is the same. Worst of all, Turner tries to invest all of this with capital-M Meaning, but honestly, it's very hard to care about the teen zombie protagonist.

Also, to make the zombies sympathetic, Turner breaks tradition and gives them active brains that just can't communicate with humankind and more strength than they are usually given. This creates all kinds of plot holes. First, zombies who are this smart and strong would probably be impossible for humankind to fend off. Second, it becomes clear in some scenes that while verbal communication is difficult, these zombies could communicate with humans in other ways, such as writing. If that's so, it's hard to imagine why more communication between the species hasn't occurred.

I'm wasting too much writing about a bad book. Stay away. It will eat your brains.

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### Erin says

*Dust* is a gamechanger in the world of zombies. It requires you to forget everything you have learned thus far about zombies. Forget the craving for brains. Nevermind the halting, staggering or the twitching, the tics and speed walking. Joan Frances Turner has written a novel that introduces you to zombies for the first time as emotional beings; they think, communicate, wonder, fight, worry, need and care. Under the decay of death the fear they instill, they are just trying to get by.

Jessie is dead. Then undead. She died young and now lives out the life of an undead in a gang of others like her, some young, some hundreds of decades old. They hunt, because of course, they are hungry but unlike many of the other gangs of undead, Jessie and her friends would rather not partake of human "hoo-meat." When a hoo visitor raises some questions, Jessie begins searching for answers, and that search leads her to the recesses of her past and the uncertainty of her future.

*Dust* is both unequivocally tender and explicitly brutal. The violence is straightforward and striking; Joan uses adjectives I never want to hear or read again to describe the crushing of bones, the seeping of flesh, bodies and personalities turning to dust. The analogies are a harvest of gore, every meaning cultivating the taste of violence in your throat.

...the panic he'd barely been hiding oozing like a vein of oil into his eyes.

...this was constant, insistent, tugging at every corner of my body like a whining toddler who wouldn't let go.

...a hand with skin like a deflated balloon sawing back and forth...

...that chemical stench...strong as a soaked cotton ball against the nose.

Turner has managed to make zombie fiction sublime and provoking literature, and in just her first novel shows her evocative talent for character creation.

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### **Shelly says**

From my blog, The Books I Read...:

I first heard of this book through an email newsletter I get from my local library. The summary sounded rather interesting so I put it on hold.

First and foremost this is a zombie novel told from the point of view of the zombies. These are not your typical zombies; they communicate with each other, they form groups for company, safety and survival, and fun. Zombies, intelligent or not, are NOT sexy and Turner does not shy away from keeping that point right in the reader's face. Many reviews of this book have mentioned the overly gross/disgusting descriptions of the zombies, their life stages, the way they eat etc, but none of those scenes bothered me much at all because the writing in the novel is great.

Turner has done an amazing job at building her world. The zombie culture is well written and fleshed out and even though Jessie and her crew don't have much ambition; they're content to eat, sleep and fight, that in itself is still interesting to read about. I found the first half of the book to be more enjoyable than the second simply because the characters were just that much more, pardon the pun, alive than in the second half.

So, why three stars? I liked the book. I did finish it. My biggest problem was that the second half of the book took a huge turn towards the almost mystical/philosophical and I wasn't really expecting it. I was hoping for a much more dramatic reveal about the sickness and how/why it was occurring and I didn't get that. Instead the whole how/why was rather a let down and the ending of the book was almost too pat and a touch corny.

I've heard there are to be two more books in this series. I'd certainly be willing to read them when they're released, if only to see where this world could possibly be heading.

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### **C Solis-Sublette says**

Who knew that zombies are offended by the term "zombie" and prefer to be called "undead" or "regenerators"? Who knew zombies could communicate with one another and actually have emotional drives? Well, that is what we learn from reading this novel. Plot-wise, it drags a little. But, I guess that may not be a bad thing considering that we are dealing with zombies. And, thanks to some kind of chemical accident, the living and the undead are evolving into something worse (yes, there is something worse than being a zombie). I think what made me grow bored with this novel - a little bit - is that it is very hard to wrap my head around the idea that living humans and zombies can coexist and even come to fight on the same side. I don't know. There are some really good action sequences (if you're into zombie action) and the imagery can be quite repulsive at times but, overall, this novel just doesn't do much for the zombie genre.

But...there are worse reads. And, I have to admit, this was a risk for the author. If nothing else, that is admirable.

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### **Emily says**

I wanted to like this book. I tried to like this book. I slogged through it, hoping to like it in the end. But sadly, I did not like this book.

I'm a bzz Agent and this book was one of my campaigns. When I got the assignment and read the first chapter online, I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. I requested at the library and waited.

I'm a fan of supernatural fiction, though zombie books aren't my norm. I had to get through the graphic descriptions of the zombies at first, but once I moved past that I thought, "hey, this isn't half bad." It had family, friends, real life issues, from the zombies.

Admittedly, it wasn't very well written. Fairly juvenile, in fact. But, I could have gotten past that too, if the story wouldn't have gotten so...bizarre.

What started out as a teenage zombie story, with perhaps even a promising romance, tried to become some kind of creation story and it completely lost me. An "illness" comes and wipes out not only the zombies, but the humans as well. Both are reborn as a weird alive undead creature. But then, even those creatures are wiped out and only a few of the zombies who got sick survive, to start a new world.

So, I wanted to like it. I wanted to create bzz about it. But in the end, I couldn't recommend it to anyone.

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### **Jen (That's What I'm Talking About) says**

NOTE: I am running a giveaway for this book at my blog from Sept. 6-10, 2010. Please visit here for entry: <http://twimom227.blogspot.com/2010/09...>

I'm going to start by telling you that this is my first zombie book. I didn't know what to expect, but my ideas of zombies were formed by horror movies. This is NOT what Jessie is about. She is a teenage girl that died and was reborn into a new life of the "undead." The undead don't feed on human brains (unless they want to), but rather the freshly killed flesh of any animal. The story, told in the first person POV of Jessie, opens with a hunt for a deer and slides into Jessie's memories of being "reborn" and meeting her gang.

This story is about life and death. It's a journey of a girl trying to figure out what it means to be alive--whether one is human (a hoo, as she calls them) or undead. Jessie is happy with her gang, but as events unravel, her life is turned upside down and inside out. The gang's adventures begin to change when they notice a hybrid-type human/undead creature in their woods. Each member of the gang has suspicions and hides truths. Some tell lies and most are scared. As the number of strange sightings increases, a change takes hold over the gang members, as they too become like the "others" in the woods.

My Rating: #3 stars.

Liked it, there were a few issues - recommend

FOR MY FULL REVIEW and a chance to win this book, please visit my blog That's What I'm Talking About

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## Crystal Starr Light says

Another Book Bites the Dust

NOTE: I received this book as part of the Amazon Vine Program

Nine years ago, Jessie and her parents died in a car accident. Now, Jessie is among the undead, the "zombies". She is a part of a gang in the Great River County Park. But things are taking a strange turn. A "hoo" (human) woman is found in a state not quite human, not quite undead. And their leader, Teresa, is beginning to look more human. What is happening...and does it mean death for the undead?

### I Liked:

This is definitely not your stereotypical zombie story. While my zombie knowledge is restricted to one fan fic, the movie "Shaun of the Dead" and plenty of second-hand mythos, I do know that typical zombie movies include humans chopping up the "invading" zombies. "Dust" isn't that book. Instead, it shows how zombies are capable of teaming up, communicating, and forming their own societies apart from human societies. The main character, Jessie, was a decent character. Her past made her a sympathetic character, she was competent and close to the action.

My favorite characters were Florian, Linc, and Renee. Florian was old and wise, always giving out helpful advise. His death nearly brought me to tears. Linc was a great friend: kind, caring, looking out for Jessie, siding with her, and supporting her. Renee was cool, because you saw what it was to first join this society of undead. She had to suffer with bullying, but eventually, she pulled out and grew a backbone (ha!).

The concept is interesting. As I said above, this isn't a stereotypical zombie novel, and the whole reason I picked up this book (not being a zombie fan) was because of this new perspective. Plus, I thought it ironic that Jim (Jessie's brother) would create something that would kill humans and regenerate zombies.

### I Didn't Like:

Let me get this out of the way: If you are in the slightest queasy, then drop the book and run. This is probably the grossest book I've ever read. Yes, I understand it's a zombie novel, that should be expected to some extent, but I couldn't help but feel that the grossness was concentrated on too much. We read numerous descriptions of the state of decay of the characters, of killing deer and other wild animals, of eating said animals and their entrails, and other disturbing descriptions. For me, it was far too much, and I nearly abandoned the book for that reason.

Now that that's out of the way, there were other problems with this book that made me bored, frustrated, and upset. The first was our main character, Jessie.

Jessie had a backstory that made me sympathize with her, but there was almost nothing to her character, other than her intense anger at "hoos". I understand the humans were trying to kill the undead, but how about instead of being angry and spiteful all the time, trying to communicate with the humans and reach an understanding? You know, get the humans to give the undead space, instead of cowering in a park and griping about how bad humans are? I know not all humans would be open to that, but Jim is an example of how communication between the two worked. And isn't it strange that she hates hoos so much for hating her...isn't that a little hypocritical? How can she be on her high horse looking down on hoos and expect to come out on top to the reader?

The other characters have lopsided results. It's obvious we are supposed to miss Florian (which I do), but Joe? Joe was a creep, from page one. I didn't like him in the beginning and was actually glad when he was gone. Furthermore, apparently Jessie really liked Joe and was nearly romantically involved with him. I say "apparently" because I never got any of that, not until Joe dies. Their chemistry was nill, Joe's character was nill, Joe's appeal was nill. Renee, I suppose, wasn't meant to come off as interesting as I found her. Lisa was bland. There was an interesting thread about her daughter, but that never went anywhere. Jim was horrible. I tried to like him, but he was disgusting and always conveniently appeared when the plot dictated (somehow reaching the beach before Jessie? How does that work?). And what was the point with Sam, Mags, Billy, and Ben? They all left or died anyway. Seemed a waste of time to include so much time with characters that go nowhere.

And while I loved the concept of the novel, I felt a huge opportunity was missed: the great debate on what is "living" and what is "dead". While a few moments glimpsed it in passing, I felt on the whole it was glossed over. Jessie would just start to bring it up, to think about it, then...bleh. Nothing. Next scene.

As for plot...gah! Astoundingly underwhelming and horrible. The basic plot, I suppose, is this plague that kills living and undead. Number one, wasn't this book touted as a new take on zombies? Why are we abandoning this concept in favor of the stereotypical "zombie creation and fighting" narrative (only slightly twisted in that humans don't turn into zombies, both turn into something new)? Number two, I have never seen a plot thread so badly mishandled. The only way the plot ever moves is the introduction of characters: the drunk woman, Renee, Teresa, Jim, Florian and Jessie's messed up dreams (more on that in a bit)... That is not the way a good plot moves. A plot moves fluidly, from one state of being to another in a manner appropriate to the characters and situations, and not in abrupt jolts when characters arrive to exposit for pages on end. Jessie does no investigating, no clue-seeking, not even a dorky Nancy Drew/Hardy Boys investigation that at least would propel the story somewhere! No, the author is forced to drag characters to where Jessie is and have them explain to Jessie (and the poor confused reader) what is going on.

Furthermore, these conversations are A) too long, B) too wordy, and C) unnecessary. Instead of having Jim come to Jessie and exposit that he created the virus, how about Jessie do some investigation? Tap into a computer network? How about Jessie hunting him down and getting him to help her investigate Teresa's changes? Anything that would not include having a character come and spend 20+ pages explaining why he or she is here! But, of course not! Why have something showing Jessie's character when we could fill pages with circular conversations, Jessie being angry (shock of all shocks), and info dumps?

And this leads me to Florian. Ah, poor Florian. After Jessie seems to die the first (second?) time, Florian comes in one of those lame dream sequences to exposit to Jessie what is happening and what she needs to do. I'll say, if done well, this could be good, but the way Turner does it just makes me want to hit my head against a brick wall. How does Florian know about this meteorite? Why is he telling them to go to the beach? And if this is Jessie's mind/sub-conscious, HOW DOES SHE KNOW THIS??

If you take out the whole plague plot, all you are left with is a rather boring picture of the life as an undead. Zombies fighting with each other. Zombies complaining about hoos. Zombies hunting. Zombies walking. Zombies eating. Zombies dancing. Huh...am I detecting a pattern in here? Perhaps...if we took away the "zombie"...WOWSER! I just had a revelation! Without the "zombie" in this zombie novel, this could almost be snuggled into the "literature" section next to all those "cozies" about life on a farm or in a new small town. Weird...

The conclusion is so full of horse manure, it's sick. Probably the weakest, most unsatisfying, most WTF conclusion I've ever read. What was the point? What does it all mean? What happened in the rest of the world? What did Jessie learn? Don't expect any answers!

The whole tone of the novel is unclear. Partly probably since Jessie was a teen when she died, the novel does sound like a teen novel. However, I would never recommend to that age group, what with all the f-bombs. So that leaves me more than a little confused as to who the audience is.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

F-bombs abound. Also expect milder curses.

Jessie likens killing another zombie to what sex must have felt like.

Tons of violence. Jessie loses her arm in the first page. The zombies tend to fight each other at the slightest provocation (this is explained in the book, though, as an attribute of being a zombie). A human woman stumbles upon the zombies, and she eats a squirrel, vomits, chokes, and dies. Take that image, multiply it by twenty and you have this novel.

Overall:

I was optimistic about this book. And there were parts that weren't bad. But even gross factor and the fact that I read an uncorrected proof aside, I don't think this is a well-written book. Jessie is a one note character, the plot is so hinged on characters it's frustrating, and there is little about the book that makes it worthwhile zombie reading.

I know the recent trend is to take classics and insert vampires, zombies, werewolves, and sea monsters. I almost feel this book is the exact reverse: to take zombies and make them human, only removing the thought-provoking conversations and inserting a pedestrian plot. It's too bad that a book marketed as a new approach to the zombie fiction ended up leaning back upon the same zombie stereotype.

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## All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of [AllThingsUrbanFantasy.blogspot.com](http://AllThingsUrbanFantasy.blogspot.com)

I don't know that I've ever had a book make me feel as physically nauseous as I did while reading DUST. It is grotesque, gruesome, and gory from start to finish.

I'm kind of marveling at the 180 that I've gone through with DUST. I liked the concept of a zombie novel written from the perspective of the undead, I loved the book trailers that spoofed the old Public Service Announcements, and I still think the first line is one of the best ever: "My right arm fell off today. Lucky for me, I'm left-handed." But I discovered before even finishing the first chapter is that there maybe a very good reason why zombies don't always get the starring role.

DUST is intelligently written, the character of Jessie (pardon the pun) fully fleshed out, and the zombie sub culture unsettling in its realism. But, and this is a big but, the actually storyline staggers along like a rotting corpse ultimately decaying into a bizarre and confusing ending that was trying to be poignant but instead was corny and possibly ridiculous (depending on how you interpret it).

And I can't downplay how vivid and detailed the descriptions of putrefying flesh are. There are pages and pages of sensory overload on the various stages of zombie decay from the fresh rotters, bloaters, bugs, and finally mummy-like dusters. And I'm not even going to start on the cannibalistic feasts. I'm just glad I read this book on an empty stomach:

Mags giggled from deep in what was left of her throat and Joe threw an arm around me, sprays of maggots shooting from the rips in his leather jacket like little grubworm confetti.

A lot of reviewers and authors I admire are raving about this book, praising it for how daring and real it is. No argument here on how real it is, but the daring part fell flat for me, especially the ending. More than anything else, however, is the gross factor that was so disgusting and incessant that I had to put DUST down several times while I fought to control my gag reflex. If I could give this a 1 1/2 bat rating I would, but since

the writing itself is good and the world building very creative, it gets a 2 out of 5. Consider yourself warned.

Sexual Content: None

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### **Christie says**

"My right arm fell off today. Lucky for me, I'm left-handed."

With a first line like that I knew I was in for an interesting read. Jessie is a teen girl who was killed by a drunk driver. Her parents also perished in the accident leaving behind her two older siblings. Months later she dug her way from her grave, and joined the ranks of the undead.

As a self-proclaimed zombie sympathizer I knew this book was a must read. FYI they prefer the term undead ;) Dust is one of those books that you can't get out of your head. It has been days since I finished and I'm still thinking about it.

Dust is a fresh and exciting addition to zombie culture. Jessie was an excellent narrator and seemed to embrace her new life. I love books with a strong female lead, dead or not. I was drawn in by the idea that they retain their memories and even some emotions. I loved the idea that they have the ability to understand the speech of humans as well as communicate amongst themselves. Their behavior was similar to pack animals, and the bonds they formed were fascinating. This book will make you forget everything you thought you knew about zombies. An engaging plot combined with an almost poetic writing style made for late nights of reading. I don't want to give too much away because there is so much to be discovered in this novel. It's about time the undead told their side of the story.

This book does contain violence as well as adult language. The squeamish may want to proceed with caution. Lots of talk of decay and the likes. I must say I've never had the description of maggots and rot presented in such beautifully worded sentences. The author's writing style drags you in and makes you feel like you're experiencing it first hand. I'm thrilled to learn there will be a sequel.

Read full review on my blog: [The Fiction Enthusiast](#)

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### **Trisha says**

Jessie is one of the undead, a zombie, living out her days with her gang in the woods, hunting and fighting. But a new disease is spreading through the undead and the living that may wipe out both. While this sounds all apocalyptic and exciting, the truth of the matter is that the novel dragged on for much longer than necessary.

The dirty, the disgusting, doesn't necessarily phase me when it is naturally integrated into a thought-provoking and entertaining story. With Dust, however, it's really all I remember - various descriptions of torn flesh, vicious fights, etc. The plot itself, revolving around a disease that morphs both the undead and the living into something entirely new, kept me interested for a good portion of the book, but after a while, I just wanted the story to be over. At 374 pages, Dust really drags out the action, primarily by including all of those yucky descriptions I mentioned earlier.

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## Kelly says

Sometimes, when I give a book a middling rating, it means the book was middling throughout. This is not one of those times. I intensely disliked the first half of *Dust*, and it took me about a month to get through it. The second half, I loved, and read in one day.

*Dust*'s greatest strength — and also its greatest drawback — is that Joan Frances Turner writes description extremely well. She has the gift of evoking that one perfect image that puts you right there in the character's mind: a dimly remembered strawberry, or a lost connection described as:

*"a light shining from a farmhouse window on some dark, empty highway, streaking brightly across your windshield as you drive past, and then fading. And then gone."*

It becomes a drawback when Turner conjures up, with the same skill, the imagery of human decomposition. Readers with cast iron stomachs may not mind, but many others will feel physically ill throughout much of *Dust*. It was a little too much for me, I confess.

Turner's undead, who prefer not to be called zombies, are sentient and have an entire culture of their own. They communicate via radio waves when their mouths and throats can no longer form words. They have their own life cycle, starting when they tunnel up from the grave, continuing through the stages of decomposition, then culminating in a second death. It's easy to feel pity for the undead, who retain their mental and emotional capacities but whose bodies are rotting and whose loved ones feel nothing but revulsion if they meet again. Yet this thinking is something of a trap, it turns out; many of the undead are content with their lot and don't want their old lives back, and one human goes to appalling extremes in an attempt to "fix" someone who doesn't want to be fixed.

*Dust* contains plenty of thought-provoking material, echoing several real-life controversies while (thankfully) not paralleling any one issue so closely that the book becomes a polemic. The thought-provoking elements, however, are drowned out during the first half of the book by the nauseating descriptions and by too much senseless violence. The heroine, Jessie, is in a gang, and she and her friends are constantly involved in bullying, gang hazing, intergang turf wars, and the like. I could, in a way, understand the frustrations that fueled the aggression, but I still had trouble liking the characters. The grossness hampered my experience, too, by causing me to read less closely than I should have been reading. Turner doesn't spoon-feed anything. Many of the character conflicts are implied between the lines, and the world-building is subtle. For example, it's clear that Turner's world is not quite the world we know, but we're not explicitly told when and where the divergence took place (by which I mean "when did humans become aware of zombies," not the event in the geological past). If you "step back" from the story because it's about to make you lose your lunch, you may miss something important in the process.

At about the halfway point, *Dust* really sank its teeth in, pardon the bad pun. I don't want to spoil the plot twists, but I'll say that the gang warfare largely falls away in favor of science-gone-wrong and beautifully written musings on the nature of life and death, family and friendship. There's still plenty of unpleasant imagery; this is easier to take, though, once the plot starts moving more quickly and the characters become more fleshed-out, plus now the icky moments are interspersed with passages of lovely prose like the one quoted above. Jessie's plot arc is compelling, and so are the little glimpses Turner gives us of the world outside Jessie's immediate frame of reference. So much can be conveyed by a brief mention of a skyline

looking wrong.

I closed *Dust* with a feeling of satisfaction and an appreciation for Turner's craft. It would be inaccurate, though, to claim that I enjoyed the book all the way through, hence the rating. *Dust* is worth reading (especially the second half), but to get to the best parts you'll have to go through a lot of stomach-turning imagery. Your mileage may vary.

Review originally published at Fantasy Literature

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### **Anita Dalton says**

This book will be deeply disgusting for the average reader. It wallows in rot, cannibalism, graphic depictions of animal hunts, human decomposition, vomit, vomit and more vomit, the effects of zombie-on-zombie violence and so much more. Dwelling in the head space I do, I only got creeped out by a couple of scenes and those were scenes that discussed in depth the insect infestations the zombies dealt with. The rest, sadly, became tiresome as the novel went on because the reader gets his or her senses clubbed with all the depictions of nastiness. In a novel this foul, when such descriptions became old hat, you're doing it wrong, as the kids say.

But until that happens, it's a fun, nasty, sad, interesting ride. Because we don't know what Jessie was like when she was alive, save for her anger at her parents' terrible marriage and the way her older siblings chose to deal with it, it's hard to know if becoming a zombie changed Jessie in significant ways. Jessie is a hard character to like because she is ruled by self-interest, has absolutely no compassion for anyone except Florian, the eldest member of her gang, and Joe, a complete jerk of a young, male zombie. Jessie is just flat-out unpleasant. It is tempting to say that she is this way because being a zombie changed her but Linc, a sensitive and nice zombie boy, shares none of Jessie's emotional emptiness. Moreover, Linc, who was beaten to death by his parents, should have far more reason to hate the hoos and his fellow zombies, but doesn't. One just gets the impression that had she lived, Jessie would have just become a nasty girl who dated assholes who used her. She alludes to this fact herself, and I also wonder if Jessie more or less stayed stalled at 15, even as she aged as a zombie. Nothing in the rule book says we have to have a character whose motivations make sense, who evokes in us any understanding or sense of connection, but it would have helped to have liked Jessie more. There are little glimpses of the person she was capable of being, but it was not until the end that we see any real redemption in Jessie and by then it was a bit too late. It was just too hard to care about her character arc. Moreover, as pitiless as Jessie was, it bled over into how I read this book. When your protagonist is emotionally flat except for anger, much of the book just won't matter. Read my entire review [here](#)

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### **karen says**

it is october.i am going to read a bunch of zombie books. this is the first.

and it was very okay. by now, she has written a sequel, and i am hoping that she has gotten her mythology tightened enough to allow her plot a narrow strait through which to flow, because the major problem with this one was trying to understand the rules; they seem awfully fluid and she frequently neglects to address the big picture.

quickly: so in this book, zombies can communicate with each other in a way that does not require tongues and lips and etc, but is more like a telepathic communication, and a resting state that sounds like music. okay, fine. and they dance, collectively, ritualistically, when some inner switch is thrown and they feel a compulsion. ooookay, that's fine, i am very much of the "take what you are feeling and dance it" state of mind. sure. next. even though humans ("hoos") are aware of the possibility/probability of the undead, people are still buried when they die, just "away" from civilization, even though these zombies are fast enough to catch deer and other woodland creatures. huh? were i in charge of this land, everyone would be cremated to avoid the possibility of them coming back to eat me, but i'm not - joan frances turner is, and i will go along with her rules. all of them, even if they seem silly and inconsistent.

and many are. i don't even want to go into all of them here.

but there is enough that is new and intriguing in the zombieverse to make me want to keep reading. what if there was a disease that struck, and affected both humans and zombies alike? and it made humans sick and made them resemble zombies, but it made zombies (oh, and i am apparently falling prey to a huge taboo here, as "zombie" is considered a racist term. but i am using it as a reclamation, i am writing a zombie rap song) but it made *the undead* stronger. regenerate. not need to eat living flesh. and that is a great twist on the living dead mythos. where do we go from here? oh, many places, each a little odder than the last. beaches, stones, death, second death, third death...no time to explain, just keep up and keep reading.

but what about..?? oh, i guess it doesn't matter.  
hmmm.

if this review is scattered and unclear, i think a bit of it can be blamed on the book. it meanders, and there are about three different ending points, each more confusing than the last. i need to read the sequel, because i need to know the further-reaching ramifications of what is happening here, if she even bothers to address them. i am not positive she will, because she seems to have left many obvious questions unanswered, but...

this sounds like a negative review, but the book is fun to read, i am just trying to understand why the story is so loose and shambly and lacking in perspective. i like the idea of this mythology, i like the surface of it with the itching bugs and the pro-undead solidarity. i like knowing what happens when a vegan becomes a zombie, but it really needs to have more depth, overall.

i move on to another zombie book.  
rarr...

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### Missie says

<http://www.theunreadreader.com/2010/0...>

Forget everything you ever knew about Zombies. I've got some new zombie factoids for you. Zombies have always existed; no one know why. Zombies have super human strength. And, zombies communicate telepathically with each other. Okay, so maybe we kind of already knew those things, but did you know that zombies can also dance and laugh and love... They can also make you cry, and not just in the 'OMFG! A Zombie is about to eat my brains' sort of way.

I never expected a book about zombies to be so full of mystery and adventure, especially coming from a

zombie's point of view! Jessie is as bad ass as a rotten old corpus can get! She fights, she hunts, and she hates 'hoos' (aka humans). And who could blame her; they are pea brains who think the undead are mindless savages, which is just so prejudice, as Jessie would say! In Jessie's world, you can't become a zombie just because another zombie bites you. Some humans tunnel up undead, some don't. And all of this added to the mystery of the story.

So begins the tale of Jessie and her gang. Her undead life has been perfect for the past 9 years. Then a new class of living dead begins to appear, and it's up to Jessie to figure out what is happening to cause the change.

While *Dust* was a fun read, it was also a bit drawn out. The writing is stellar, thought provoking even, and I enjoyed the story, but I was able to put the book down more than a few times because Jessie's journey was so long winded, and I found myself losing interest along the way.

The book is told in three parts, *Dry Bones*, *Danse Macabre*, and *Resurgam* (very cool titles). But towards the last part, I couldn't help but wish the book would end already. I wasn't sure if the story ever reach a clear climax, although there were several mini ones, but once the basic plot was revealed, I thought, okay, got it. A new disease is affecting human and zombies alike; now they are all starving, they are all dying. Only a few will survive.

You pick up the jest of this early on, yet the story kept going. And with 374 pages, I thought, it must be continuing on like this because there is more to the love story part of it, but nope. The 'love story' wasn't very well developed, so it didn't seem very important, which was somewhat of a disappointment because I wanted to know more about the relationship between Jessie and Joe. Yes, Jessie reflects on Joe quite a lot and says he was important to her, but with hardly any interaction between them throughout the story, I didn't really get the why of it. And Jessie's dream scenes were too repetitious and incoherent, which was sort of good in a way because it did give you the feeling that you were in the mind of a zombie that may be actually finally dying.

In spite of this, I really admired Jessie as a character. She was loyal, loving, logical, and lethal. And some of the member of her gang, the Fly-by-Nights, were really cool, too! I mean, what is cooler than a zombie that can rock a fedora? They were a great, bonded family, when they weren't beating each other up! It was fun to hang out with the Flies and see the different dynamics included in their relationships with one another, and it saddened, sometimes to the point of tears, when one of them was lost.

Overall, demented, in a good way, and unique story, with scary looking characters, faces and bodies in various stages of rot and maggot eaten, and yes, they use expletives as part of their everyday speak, but it is not overly done, about Zombies who are just looking for a way to survive. But don't feel sorry for them or they will beat you up and eat you, and not necessarily in that order, cuz they are awesome like that!

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## Patrick says

I picked this book up on tour so I had something to read while traveling. I picked it up because Amber Benson had written a blurb for the cover, and that was enough to win my trust.

I start to read it and am pleasantly surprised. It's a zombie story told first-person from the point of view of the zombie.

I read it in one sitting that night on the train when I really should have been catching up on my sleep. It's a clever book, and I really enjoyed it.

Is it a perfect book? No. But its unique take on an old, painfully cliche piece of horror-movie history makes this more a five-star than a four-star book.

I've noticed a lot of low-star reviews here on goodreads have a redcurrant theme of: "Ugh! It was so gory! Plus there's cannibalism!"

Really, what did you expect from a first-person POV zombie story? Flower arrangement? Haiku?

I didn't find the level of gore strange or particularly off putting. Then again, it should be noted that I'm probably not a good example of an average reader....

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