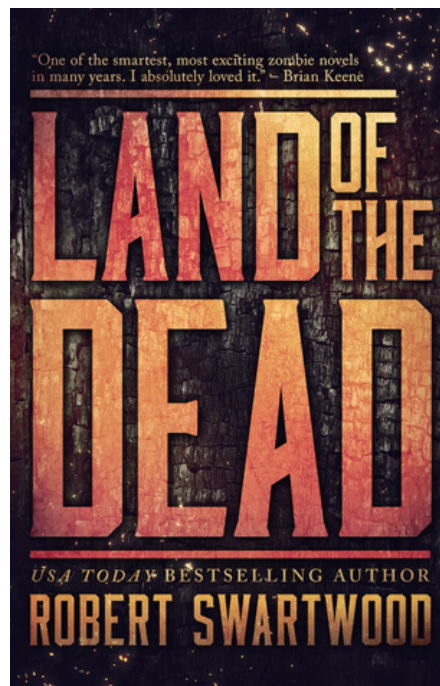




Land of the Dead

Robert Swartwood

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From USA Today bestselling author Robert Swartwood comes a post-apocalyptic thriller like you've never seen before.

In a dystopian future where the animated dead reign, the few remaining living are feared and pursued. Conrad is a Hunter. He's one of the best. But when he hesitates one night in killing a living child, he soon finds himself in a desperate fight to save his son — and the entire world.

Previously released as **THE DISHONORED DEAD**, Robert Swartwood's groundbreaking novel has been re-released with a new title.

Praise for **LAND OF THE DEAD**:

"One of the smartest, most exciting zombie novels in many years. I absolutely loved it." —Brian Keene, bestselling author of *The Rising* and *Ghoul*

"Land of the Dead is one of the most original and gripping zombie novels I have ever read, offering a glimpse into the life of a zombie in a world turned backwards, where zombies live and humans are feared. Highly recommended!" —Jeremy Robinson, bestselling author of *XOM-B* and *Island 731*

"Land of the Dead is simply brilliant, and its telling a superb achievement. Robert Swartwood has given us a wonderful twist, not only on the zombie novel, but on the dystopian tale as well. It's like *Brave New World* meets *Logan's Run*, but with a bite all its own. Strongly recommended!" —Joe McKinney, author of *Dead City* and *Flesh Eaters*

"Robert Swartwood gives the word 'zombie' a new meaning." —Swedish Zombie

"One of the most unique zombie novels I've ever read ... a must-read." —wezombie.com

"A definite page turner with lots of action, tension and suspense." —buyzombie.com

Land of the Dead Details

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From Reader Review Land of the Dead for online ebook

Rebecca Heap says

like the idea behind this book, as it is done from the perspective of a zombie world where the living humans are the outcasts and monsters. Did find it a bit odd that the living humans are known in the dead world as "zombies" when it is clearly the dead that are such! I suppose this is because of the alternative viewpoint of the novel but this means that the author has to come up with a different name for the dead themselves i.e. the animated dead (in other words zombies!?!). It reminded me of the film called Daybreakers where vampires are the norm and humans are hunted.

I did read all of the story and found it fairly gripping. It was adequately well written. However, there are too many failings for me and I just wish it had all been done better. For example, there is too little explanation for the whole animated dead existence - apparently, it has just happened!? They have no beating heart or working lungs etc so shouldn't have ANY of the living bodily functions and yet they eat and reproduce as normal!?

When children reach the age of 10 they are called by an energy giving cube called a Pandora, which has the ability to bring them to life but this is not desirable in the dead world (in fact newly-made 10 year old "zombies" are hunted down and killed). Conrad knows that his son is starting to hear the call of his own Pandora and it occurs to him to have his son monitored but why, when he ends up working with "zombies" (living humans) who collect the Pandoras, does it not occur to him to just have one of them find his son's nearby Pandora and confiscate it?!!

The animated dead are not supposed to have imagination or emotions but are not convincingly portrayed as not possessing these. All the "dead" characters act like ordinary human beings and the only way the author reminds you that they are not is through awkward phrases such as "animation day" instead of "birthday", rather than in an effective portrayal of their difference. Strangely, the character who seems the most "dead" is Conrad himself and I found him unsympathetic, especially as he seems to fall in with the "zombie" cause by accident (because of his new job). I expected him to gradually accept the living as equals but he is always scathing towards Gabriel and his arguments. You feel that if his son hadn't become a "zombie", he wouldn't have gone along with them at all!

To my mind, the author has relied too much on the originality of his idea and hasn't backed it up with the strength and depth that it really deserved.

The Behrg says

This is by far one of the most original concepts for a zombie novel I've read. The dead rule the world, hunting the living which are referred to as "zombies," while existing with families, jobs, maybe even a Starbucks, though I don't recall reading about one.

Unfortunately the concept trumped the plotting of the novel, and while I was intrigued and impressed to begin with, the story started stalling for me around the mid-way point. Villains were introduced with completely unbelievable motives, giving the classic "villain explanations" regarding their sinister plots, the dialogue became an explanation of what the characters were going to do, each character spoke exactly the same (even minor characters), and the story crawled toward an ending that was just too easy to predict.

5 stars for the concept and first half of the novel. With a little trimming and some extra attention this could have been a real gem.

Alisa Hedden says

A punch in the gut. A family history, with a secret. A marriage dissolving, when it can be saved, a father protecting his wife and children while trying to save the world from the monsters. A truth revealed, traitors and a society that fears any differences. Add into this mix a world that doesn't know it's own history. Great job by Robert. He doesn't make the mistake of explaining how the world got to this point, sticking to a strong story and the people involved. I would love to rave about it more, but then this will have so many spoilers, it would ruin the story for you.

Charles G. Hiscock says

Just couldn't get into it. The premise was interesting for about 5 minutes and then got worn.

Aimeekay says

Attention people these are NOT your ordinary zombies!!! And for once they are NOT after your brains!!! But please don't make the mistake that this means they are any less likely to kill you.

The dead in Swartwood's new novel are just like us. They have jobs, kids, families. The main difference is they simply aren't alive. Instead of dying, they expire. Basically they rot away. There are other differences too. For example they don't see color. Their world is black, white and various shades of grey. They are also taught from a young age to fear the living, or zombies, as they call them. They even play video games where the main objective is to kill impossibly deadly living. Why are the living so scary? Mainly because they have imagination. A dangerous and destructive force, that is believed to be the reason why the living lost the wars in the first place. It's such a dangerous force any dead person actually showing imagination is to be 'expired' immediately.

Conrad is no different than any other Hunter. Until one night he hesitates to kill a living. That sets into motion a series of events that slowly unravel every truth he has ever learned. Did the 'zombies' really lose the war? If so why is everything in the dead world named after the living? What else is the government hiding? What are the Pandora's cubes? Who keeps creating them and why?

I love what Swartwood has done with Dishonored Dead. It's truly from the dead's perspective. Despite the rotting and falling apart and the whole 'dead' thing, they really are just like us. They love and hate. They keep dark secrets. And they just want to live out their dreams and be happy like any other human being. Their point of view is just a little...well a little off. The way that Swartwood brings that perspective to life, or should I say death, is unique and quite entertaining. There are some dark parts to this book. For example the torture of a 'zombie' child in an effort to get its parents to reveal critical information. It is definitely not a kids book. Not just from the blood and gore scenes, there are also a few deep themes running through the book. For example the idea of the living and the dead being able to coexist versus the idea of complete genocide of the living in favor of the dead. These themes do not detract from the story itself though, and if you are looking for a 'fresh' zombie read I would definitely recommend this one!

In compliance with FTC guidelines, I'm disclosing that I received this book for free through Goodreads First

Reads.

(I may I recomend everybody should go check out all the awesome first read giveaways they have!)

Albert says

[why the zombies call the living zombies, and where the pandoras came from (hide spoiler)]

Meredith Morgan says

A zombie novel with a twist. Where the earth is populated by the dead, who live and act as though they are alive. They have families, lives, jobs. The "zombies" are the living who are almost extinct and who are constantly being hunted to eradicate them. Children are in danger of turning into a "zombie" when they turn 10. They hear a beating heart noise, go looking and digging, they find a cube called a Pandora Box and this is what changes them to a "zombie" if they get to hold it. Often Hunters come along and stop them from holding it, but when they do hold it they become a living zombie. If Hunters find them, they are killed. Sometimes their family will try to hide them. This is the story of one Hunter who works for a special government department who investigates the "zombies" he finds himself working with zombies to track down buried pandora boxes to put into storage. He eventually finds out that he almost turned into a "zombie" when he was 10, and finding his original pandora box is what causes a ripple effect, where all the boxes explode across the world and change the dead into living "zombies". A good read written from a totally different viewpoint of zombies.

John says

The concept for this novel is 5 stars. It's an interesting premise but the execution is absolutely terrible. If you write a book about zombies where the dead are the ruling class and the living are the "zombies" then why would you make the zombies EXACTLY like living people??? There are references to the dead not having imagination, not having feelings, etc and yet the dead in this book cry out in pain when they're hurt, they fall in love, they have BABIES, and they act in every way like normal people do.

The only notable differences are the parts about zombies decaying and having to use special lotions. The author could have done so much more to make the animated dead different from the living. It was such a waste of a good concept.

There was a short story at the end of the book that the author wrote a long time ago which was later expanded into what this novel became. That short story was SO much better than the book! It was an entertaining read and it shows that the author had a cool concept but he didn't have the skills to expand it into a full book. Once he tried to develop it into a full book everything fell apart.

Even going past the poor execution of a great concept the book still fails. The characters are terrible. The main character is stupid and we're told he's a great hunter but it's never shown. The villain is absurd and straight out of a comic book. The supporting characters are weak, people randomly decide to act out of character and "turn bad". It's like the author was just pulling plot twists out of a hat. What a waste of time.

Doghouse Gav says

Great twist of a story

I've read also of zombie books but this one has managed to turn the tables. A really good book with a nice writing style. Very much enjoyed.

MaryFrances says

A twist on the usual zombie story

Conrad sees the world in black and white. He's dead, after all, and hunts the living as his father did. When he hesitates to kill one night, he learns the world exists in shades of gray, metaphorically speaking. With the dead about to win the long standing war against the living, Conrad finds the strength to change the world. This is a great story, well paced with excellent characterization and plenty of action. Definitely NOT your usual zombie story and well worth your time .

Tina says

In a world where the dead are animated and the living are known as zombies, Conrad lives with his pregnant wife and young son. He is a Hunter, working for a government that mandates all children play a minimum number of hours of violent video games each day, at a job which calls for him to find and exterminate the living zombies. His son is nearing the dangerous age of ten, a time when the dreaded Pandora sings a siren's song, tempting children to dig them up his or her own and become one of the living through its power. Conrad has some experience with Pandoras, having looked for his when he was a child, stopped by his father, the greatest Hunter of all time. When Conrad hesitates one night to kill a zombie, he's swept up in in a political and social struggle, pitting the dead against the living and their dead sympathizers, one which centers around his biggest Hunter rival, Phillip.

The book also includes two short stories based in the Land of the Dead. One chronicles the story of a child who finds and digs up his Pandora; the other fills in the backstory of Phillip.

The book is a refreshing take on the typical zombie story. I've not read anything that shows the flip side - the dead having families, jobs, social interaction, even celebrating "animation days" with cake, balloons and presents. It was fascinating to watch Conrad's internal growth, as he came closer and closer to accepting zombies and their right to exist. A very original concept, executed with a tight plot and sympathetic, believable characters.

Erika says

I like the idea of the self-aware undead. I've never read a zombie novel quite like this one; Robert Swartwood's animated dead are intelligent. They talk. They live in houses and drive cars. They go to work, get married, have kids. They have a government, and they aren't "zombies." The zombies are the living. The animated dead rule the world--they think they are the next step in human evolution. The tables are turned

from the traditional zombie lore: the living are feared and hunted, and the animated dead can turn into the living.

The book is well written and is definitely a page turner... It was one of those "just one more chapter" books that take you into the wee hours of the morning. But entertaining factor aside, I felt the plot was loose and there wasn't much depth to the story.

There's not much of a link between the antagonist (Philip) and the protagonist (Conrad). Apparently Philip basically stalks Conrad and does all these horrible things to him because he doesn't like him. And why doesn't he like him? Just because. There's obviously some jealousy there but that component of the story is weak, too (not to mention Philip has a rather rapid rise from Conrad's coworker to evil leader of the dead world).

The "evolution" of the animated dead is never explained except for "one day everyone in the world was living and...the next day half of the world was the animated dead." The origin of the Pandoras (the presumably naturally occurring cubes that turn the dead into the living) also lacks any explanation. They just ARE.

There were moments where I didn't fully follow the significance of whatever was happening (and which ultimately ended up being largely unimportant in the aggregate), not to mention a couple "well, that escalated quickly" comments to myself (I admit it, I talk to myself when I read...).

In short: super entertaining and gripping (in the "oh my god what happens next" sense) but not much substance.

Casciato says

I got a hundred pages into this before I bailed. Usually I don't review/react to books I don't finish, but it seemed worth an exception. I wanted to like this. The base idea, about a world where the zombies have won the zombie war, held promise. The execution just did nothing for me. Clunky, full of poorly examined ideas, awkward prose, flat characters, poor world building: name a problem, this book had it.

Kat says

I received this book through the Goodreads First Reads giveaways.

This is probably the best zombie novel I've ever read, and I very much would like to read a sequel. Wonderfully written, very original, consistent, didn't want to put it down.

Netanella says

This is a book about race and class, politics and terrorism, family and love. It is social commentary and environmental commentary.

In the most trite of phrases on these reviews, "it is not your typical zombie story". It is, however, most

awesome.

Set in a world where zombies are the norm and the remnants of the living are exterminated like vermin, "The Dishonored Dead" follows Conrad, an undead Hunter of humans who refuses to kill a human one day and gets caught up in terrorist plots, government uprisings, human conspiracies. He becomes embroiled in a secret governmental group called Living Intelligence, who seek to better understand humans in order to prolong their own zombie existences. They seek out Pandoras, which are buried, quartz-like structures that call to 10-year-old zombie children with a heart-beat sound, each to its own zombie child, and turn them into human beings upon touch.

Conrad is one of the world's most famous Hunters. And his son is about to turn 10.

The writing in this story is superb. I was immediately sucked in and couldn't put the book down once I got started. The little details of zombie life - they don't have living rooms in their house, they have existence rooms. Birthdays are animation days. Everything is grey. Only humans see color and experience emotions - maybe.

Want a great read? Pick this up.
