



Zom-B Circus

Darren Shan

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"The other big news this month is that I'm releasing an extra Zom-B book in March!!! Called Zom-B Circus, it's not a full-length book -- it will be about half the size of a normal Zom-B book -- and it doesn't focus on B Smith (though she has a small but crucial part to play in it). Instead it focuses on a teacher from B's school who gets caught up in the madness when the zombies attack, and undergoes a most surprising and disturbing transformation. The book will be a stand-alone, though it also links in with B's story in certain ways, featuring appearances by some of the characters we have already met (or will meet soon) in the main series. It also gives us a chance to have another look at Mr Dowling and his merry crew in wild, kill-crazy action, to catch up on what they've been up to while they've been keeping low in the series..."

(from the Shanville Monthly January issue)

Zom-B Circus Details

Date : Published March 27th 2014 by Simon & Schuster (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Darren Shan

Format : Paperback 118 pages

Genre : Horror, Zombies, Young Adult, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic

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From Reader Review Zom-B Circus for online ebook

Gisbelle says

There was so much craziness in this book. So much more than I had expected from a novella.

This book was about Cat, a teacher from the high school B. attended before all hell broke loose. Cat was a ruthless, heartless woman, and she was willing to do almost anything to save herself. And she did a lot of unspeakable things.

I really enjoyed this book and can't wait to read the next one.

Trisha says

those who can't find pity within themselves for the lost can hardly expect to be granted any when their own time of judgment comes.

I hated that I couldn't get this one earlier. I started in envy at all the cascading high reviews...until finally I could buy it! WOOHOO!

and I loved it! I can't lie, I love this crazy zom-b world and I can't wait for the next one. It's always so interesting because I truly never have any idea how the story is going to turn out. There have been so many crazy turns, there is just no guessing anymore.

This one was wonderful. Learning about Cat and even Mr. Dowling was crazy interesting and I completely enjoyed it

Emerald Melody says

Cat Ward likes to think that she is the 'cool' teacher. The one that can make a difference in her students lives by her teaching. But having to teach the likes of B Smith, day in and day out, makes her think that she has just wasted her life away and is now stuck in a constant, draining loop.

As she catches some students hanging around the chem lab and is instructing them to leave, all hell breaks loose. Zombies attack and invade the school.

Cat doesn't think, she just instantly thinks of her motto, 'no one gets a second chance in life' and she throws the students to the zombies as she runs to escape. It was from that day on that she changed, and possibly not for the best.

She suddenly finds a new lease of life in being a lone survivor, that she is the best there is around. She is not part of a group, any stragglers she finds, she doesn't spare a thought to throwing them to a horde of zombies to save herself. She brings no personal items or have an human attachments. Those, she believes, are the things that could kill her.

As she is exploring around, she begins to hear a whistling sound. Suddenly she is caught in a rampage of nothing but zombies and are leading her towards one of the main stadiums. She makes it in by the skin of her teeth only to encounter the most unusual and frightening thing ever. Erected in the middle of the stadium is a circus tent but the tent isn't what brings fear to her, it's the thousands of zombies sitting in the stands, staring at her.

When she enters the tent, she meets the mutants and everyone's favorite clown, Mr. Dowling. The satanic clown makes Cat his new play thing as he introduces her to the zombie circus. Cat watches as trained zombies and mutants perform normal circus acts.

When it comes to the final act, Cat is handed a whistle and told to tame the zombies. She panics. The mutant who handed her the whistle, gives her a choice, that he will help her if she tells him what she thinks of B Smith. Naturally Cat spews her detest and hatred towards the girl but suddenly finds herself on her own, to try and tame the beasts, the thousands in the stadium.

This was an interesting one for me because even though it isn't a direct connect to the main series, it leaves more questions towards the main series.

Like what does the clown and the mutants want with B? Why do they, almost, worship her?

And plus we sort of see a sad side to this, that if only B had found her strength and courage to stand up against her father's worldly view like she has in the main series, then maybe Cat Ward wouldn't have been as bitter towards the world as she was when the world became ruins.

Also I have a theory about Mr. Dowling, about who he could be and stuff but I'm just not sure if I should say it because I could be COMPLETELY wrong but then again, I could be so right. The conspiracy struggle is real

Paul McAvoy says

This is a stand alone novella from the Zom B series , and it follows the life of Cat Ward - a teacher at B Smith's school. It was given away free with SFX magazine and is available on Kindle. B is not in the novella much, but we discover the ruthless and cruel Cat Ward from the moment the zombies strike at B's school. Gruesome and fun, this is a fine little episode in series, great for newcomers as well, to get a taste of Shan's zombie universe.

Emily says

Short and sinister with a message about karma reinforced with all the gristle and gruesomeness I've come to expect of Darren Shan. I prefer B to Cat as a protagonist, but the latter was a refreshingly ruthless character to read about. We all like to think we'd be heroes in any given apocalypse, but I think Cat is a scarily accurate representation of the coldest reaction of humanity in a crisis and that is more terrifying to me than even the creepastic Mr Dowling (or at least on an even keel).

Sean Harding says

I read the Zom-B series last year but did not know about this "half-book" entry into the series, and really you didn't actually need it - B Smith is briefly mentioned but it is from the perspective of someone else.

OK and probably enjoyable for fans of the series.

Very Shan in writing style and approach.

Library_boyfriend says

3.5

Don't get me wrong; I liked it. I just think that the world in this series is not quite as intriguing and exciting without some 'B' in it.

Zanib Sajjad says

I loved this mini story! Though it isn't required to understand the whole of the plot, it certainly peaked my interest in Mr. Dowling and the babies. Why are they so obsessed with Becky? Their reaction to Cath's judgement of Becky really got me going. I mean... I need the next book. I can sense some deep twist to this zom-b infested world!

Jojobean says

This was a creepy short novella in the Zom-B series by Darren Shan. There is no B Smith in this book except at the very beginning. This story focuses on one of the teachers in the school, Cat Ward. The story starts out with her teaching a class and we get a bit of background on her. Then the story moves into how Cat escaped from the school the day the zombies attacked and how she survived all those weeks. Then she gets lured by Mr. Dowling and his mutants to his circus tent where the story gets more gory and gruesome.

Cat is a horrible person. To escape the zombies she throws her students to the zombies so she can run away. Not only that but she also knocks a few down to daze them so the zombies will eat them and she can stay ahead of the zombies. She also did this when she was out in the world. Whenever she met someone and zombies attacked she threw other people to the zombies so she can escape. She was brutal and ruthless. I get that people want to do anything to survive but come on. And the worst part was that she wasn't sorry and she didn't feel guilty for killing those people. She basically felt like those people should die if they aren't quick on their feet to throw someone else in front of them. She said she also gave false directions/information to other groups of people to lead them to zombie infested areas of London. A full zombie is one less she has to worry about. I hate her and had no sympathy for her. I was wishing her death throughout the whole story.

The mutants were nasty as usual and Mr. Dowling was so creepy. That clown really creeps me out whenever he makes appearances in the books. His description is the stuff of nightmares.

This story doesn't have any real ties to the series except to show Mr.Dowling's interest in B. But it was still and entertaining read.

This review is also posted on The Book Owl Extraordinaire

Rachel Verna says

I wrote a review on my blog.

Gemma Innes says

I really enjoyed this little short. I was amazed by what Darren Shan could achieve with a short story when I read Koyasan years ago and this little side story from the Zom-b series did not disappoint. I enjoyed that the main character was a completely new construct within the universe (with only a loose connection to the series main protagonist B Smith) and that even in the short span of 118 pages she was fully developed into someone who's fate (although fitting) had me fully invested right from start to end.

It was also really fun to see a little glimpse of the full psychotic randomness (yet ordered planning) of the wonderful antagonist Mr Dowling. He is by far one of the most interesting 'villains' I have read about in a long time.

Dan says

This is not a proper part of the Zom-B series but a short book which tells the story of Cat Ward, one of the teachers at B's school before the zombie apocalypse came. In the book we see her do anything to survive in the early days of the disaster but her actions soon catch up on her when she meets creepy clown Mr. Dowling and his circus. Yep, the title couldn't be more literal if you tried.

This is everyone you would want from an additional story in the Zom-B universe. It's proper, weird horror throughout the circus show as traditional circus acts are given an undead twist. We get closer to Mr. Dowling than ever before (well Cat does anyway) and B Smith still plays an important role in the story. She appears briefly at school in a pre-apocalypse chapter and there is a certain revelation about her which will no doubt be explained later in the main Zom-B series.

I really like how Darren Shan has done much more than given us a zombie apocalypse series. Whilst the zombie side of things is important and is done better than most, it's the bizarre stuff like the clown and the babies which make this unique.

A great short read and a welcome addition to the awesome Zom-B series.

Gayle says

A great short story concerning a teacher (Miss Ward) from B's school, and what happened to her after the Zombie Apocalypse. As you can guess from the title and cover, Mr Dowling makes an appearance. A good, chilling and gruesome story to tide me over until the next Zom-B book.

Neil says

Freebie with SFX, read it in half an hour if that, got the point, some nicely twisted stuff, but annoyed me with the obviousness of its conclusion.

Joshua says

This story was a bit anticlimactic and pointless. There was no real plot development and the character of Cat was extremely one dimensional. As far as filler goes, it was just ok.
