



## Dead Babies

*Martin Amis*

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## **Dead Babies** Martin Amis

If the Marquis de Sade were to crash one of P.G. Wodehouse's house parties, the chaos might resemble the nightmarishly funny goings-on in this novel by the author of *London Fields*. The residents of Appleseed Rectory have primed themselves both for a visit from a triad of Americans and a weekend of copious drug taking and sexual gymnastics. There's even a heifer to be slugged and a pair of doddering tenants to be ingeniously harassed. But none of these variously bright and dull young things has counted on the intrusion of "dead babies" — dreary spasms of reality. Or on the uninvited presence of a mysterious prankster named Johnny, whose sinister idea of fun makes *theirs* look like a game of backgammon.

## **Dead Babies Details**

Date : Published April 3rd 1991 by Vintage (first published 1975)

ISBN : 9780679734499

Author : Martin Amis

Format : Paperback 206 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review Dead Babies for online ebook

### Anthony Vacca says

According to Martin Amis, 25 is the age at which I set aside childish things and become a wholly wretched person. I will move into a posh house in the country with my fratish friends and our pretty but willingly vapid chicks. Like all good-looking young people, we will leech off our nebbish but rich housemate, using his seemingly endless funds to maintain a continually bacchanal existence. When we are not rolling the next joint, snorting one more line, popping open one more bottle of champagne, we will amuse ourselves by terrorizing the elderly neighbors, we'll lure birds with seed so that we may unload rifles into their grazing, we'll bludgeon a bull, go to trendy, outsider clubs and watch grandguginolesque performance theater, and even then we'll still manage to find the time to think up new ways to humiliate the poor Danny-DeVito sized sod we let live in the boiler room - our own appointed court jester, if you will. None of us will have anything resembling an actual job - certainly not our chicks, who stalk cattily about the house, taking pleasure in each others physical imperfections, while resenting that they ever hooked-up with guys like us to begin with. (Not that we really give a shit what they think.) Just to spice things up, we'll invite a trio of morally bankrupt and sexually disgusting foreigners, along with this prostitute we all used to bang, to stay a weekend that will quickly descend into violent debauchery and disturbing realizations of self-loathing.

We may be grotesquely rendered cartoons and we may find pleasure in cruelty towards others, but that doesn't matter because we are good looking, urbane, we know all the right people, and our parents are wealthy. We are the future, or something like that. 25 is going to be a very good year.

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### Shovelmonkey1 says

A horribly well written book populated by horrible arseholes being unspeakably horrible to each other, in and out of the bedroom and in between times being horrible to neighbours, visitors and local wild life.

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### Isaac Cooper says

**And so Appleseed Rectory is a place of shifting outlines and imploded vacuums; it is a place of lagging time and false memory, a place of street sadness, night fatigue and cancelled sex.**

And I thought Success ended poorly. Wow, I spoke too soon. Success has an utterly fantastic, awesome ending compared to Dead Babies. Like ... seriously. This is a funny book, no doubt. Amis clearly hates humanity and his satirical, dark humour is very clever and engaging. Dead Babies follows a household of various twenty-year-olds who are all completely fucked up. There's little Keith, the 4'11 dwarf who wants desperately to be tall. Andy, a completely unrealistic, hyper-aggressive and hyper-sexual ape. Lucy, the so called "whore with a heart of gold." There's also, my favourite, Giles (is it pronounced Guy-els?), a constantly drunk shut-in who is paranoid about his teeth and anyone mentioning teeth.

The book has very little of an actual story. It really just follows Keith, Diana, Lucy, Andy, Celia and co. as some American friends come over for the weekend, bringing with them drugs, sex, misery and pain. Despite its lack of conventional story there were enough interesting things going for most of the book to hold my interest. It was interesting seeing all the various characters and learning more about them, how they ended up at the house, how fucked up they really are. I mentioned this is a funny book, and it really is.

If you know me, dear reader, you'll know it takes a certain something for a book/movie to make me laugh out loud. Usually, it takes horribly, horribly dark, twisted humour, shock humour, etc. I'm assuming if you've read/are thinking about reading a book titled Dead Babies you have that humour. I can see a lot of the jokes in here not appealing to everyone, though. An example of this is little Keith (the dwarf) who hasn't been with a girl for years and years. He resolves to kill himself if he doesn't get some this weekend.

Very dark, yet very funny. Another example:

**“All right then,” said Keith. “Well, as I told you, it’s quite straightforward. No one likes me – actually most people dislike me instinctively, including my family – I’m not much good at my work, I’ve never had a girl-friend or a friend of any kind, I’ve got very little imagination, nothing makes me laugh, I’m fat, poor, bald, I’ve got a horrible spotty face, constipation, B.O., bad breath, no prick and I’m one inch tall. That’s why I’m mad now. Fair enough?”**

**“Yes,” said the doctor.**

The whole book reads as a satire. Apparently it's a satire of the 70's but to me it's just a satire on people in general. The prose is very, very sharp. It actually surprised me to discover this was written in the 70's, because it reads like something written now. So, yes, I mostly enjoyed Dead Babies. It rambles a little bit, goes into exposition a little too much (depicting with [by the end of the book, often excruciating] detail exactly how the characters got to the communal house), and doesn't really have a story, but it's not bad, not at all. The last act of the book tries to introduce a whodunit-type subplot, where someone from the house is going around and causing mischief to all the characters, calling himself "Johnny" but this just falls completely flat and is not interesting.

We now have to descend into the bad of this book. Despite the many funny moments, the sharp prose, and the quick pacing, the novel does delve into pretension by the end. This was something I noticed throughout the book, but it really became apparent as I approached the last act of Dead Babies. The words. The words. The horribly pretentious, obnoxious, David-Foster Wallace-level annoyingness of some of the words in this book. You may ask me, Isaac, how can mere words ruin an enjoyable reading experience? Allow me to show you. Declension. Aphorism. Vertiginous. Recondite. Adduced. Concertina-ed. Sudary.

And many, many more.

Why do authors do this? I'm an author and I can't comprehend it. You have a thoroughly enjoyable (though not perfect) story, and you choose to throw in these words, these ten-dollar words that no one could possibly know, that utterly break the immersion of the novel! Far too many times I was pulled out of Dead Babies, quizzical look on my face, wondering what the hell Martin Amis was thinking when he thought these words were okay to use. No, Martin, they're not okay.

It just comes across as desperate, to be honest. Desperate to be seen as smarter than you actually are. That's the definition of pretension, folks.

“Actually, Martin,” Giles would say, “those words are kinda shit. What’s happening at the end of Dead Babies? Did you know how to end it? Why am I doing this, Martin? Martin, put the thesaurus down, actually!”

## Jean-marcel says

The subtitle for this one is "Dark Secrets". Doesn't that sound positively scandalous? Martin Amis is kind of a strange case: on the one hand he's incredibly witty, observant and has a style that could cut steel with its keen edge, but on the other reading his books sometimes feels like a guilty pleasure because he just loves to burrow deep into the minds of his characters and bring out the filth and degradation inside. Not only that, but he seems to revel in it: to delight in the fetishistic excess and gross misconducts and absurdities to the point where I feel I can rightly call him a sadist. I've read four of his books now and, while the short story collection *Einstein's Monsters* is pretty sparing on the excesses, the novels have been pretty redolent with it to varying degrees, and as this one's deliberately tasteless title (hey, what you reading? Oh, just Dead Babies) might suggest, this is probably the vilest one I've come across yet.

At first glance the book seems to be about a bunch of spoiled rich English twenty-somethings living in a house together and being slovenly, mean-spirited and raunchy in every way they can. As it turns out they're not all really well off, but circumstances seem to have conspired to bring them together to form this den of idleness and pigheadedness. All these people are absurd to the highest degree and mostly highly unlikeable, although the fat little dwarf Keith, who only wants to be tall and, he thinks, to get laid, inspires a sort of pity, even when Amis is going out of his way to describe his unbelievable gastric problems and other bodily mishaps. Then there's Gyles, traumatised by an incestuous relationship with his now institutionalised mother, a poor, harmless sod slowly drinking himself into oblivion. . Mostly this is the story of a single weekend in the lives of the denizens of Appleseed Rectory, tempered with flashbacks for each of the principal characters detailing how they got to their present state and attempting to flesh out their characters. It's a rather special weekend though, for three American visitors have shown up, friends of the self-appointed house lord Quentin. These Americans fancy themselves nihilistic decadents and whether that's true or not, certainly seem a bit of a handful for our roosting Englishmen and overwhelm with their overwhelming presence: Skip, the homosexual sadist who beats animals and goes berserk whenever somebody mentions his father, Roxy, the hedonist who will apparently fuck anything bipedal, and Marvell, the "drug doctor" who mixes potations and concoctions to heighten the sensory experiences of his disciples. Naturally, when these three are thrown into the fray, things start going a bit mad ... someone is leaving nasty presents for the housemates, presents of a very personal nature, and new narcotics seem to be wreaking havoc with everyone's perceptions.

I think on some level I did enjoy this book. If it were told in the bland and ridiculously dull style of a Brett Easton Ellis I'm sure I would have hated it, but Amis is so cuttingly ribald and hilarious at times and his wit so keen that it's hard not to find him engaging even at the worst of times. A lot of themes familiar from his other work show up here. he's got a definite fixation of some kind with sodomy as well as an obsession with all things nuclear and the possible aftermaths of nuclear destruction. His characters are always infuriating and sad and twisted, sometimes to an almost unbelievable degree, but then again I tend to believe that deep inside most people really are this fucked up .. Amis just shines a bright and garish light upon all their most cherished inner filth. Still though, the ending is pretty weak and abrupt and seems deliberately so, as though Amis had suddenly decided he'd had enough of all this ridiculous behaviour and wanted to throw a molotov cocktail through the window and then drive off in his fancy automobile. The end of *London Fields* had me a little incredulous too, but I could swallow that one, because there was so much buildup and it felt like he'd planned it this way from the beginning at least. This is nowhere near as good a novel as that other, later Amis book, because it doesn't really seem to say much in the end other than to expose the nonsensical depravity of human beings. The characters seem poorly drawn, and again, this may have been purposeful, especially as there are many references here to "false memory" and at least one of these people is definitely not what they seem to be. Still, it's sort of irritating to get a chapter going into detail about the life of such and such a person, only to have them not really developed beyond that point at all.

If you don't know Amis, you are missing out on one of the greatest and most sardonic modern stylists, but I certainly wouldn't recommend starting with this one. If you already enjoy being dragged through the mud by Mr. Amis, his usual flair for keeping the pages turning through his painful barbs and witticisms is much in tact here. I just find the whole thing a bit excessive and heavy-handed in its attempts to be shocking, and am

not convinced it really has much to say beneath its surface.

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### **Agnieszka says**

Overwhelming, complete, sick, scary, splendid. Everithing is perfect about this book.

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### **Sid Badguy says**

Great fun! A wonderful book to read aloud to the children!

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### **Brittany Kubes says**

The GROTESQUE! Satire can be so uncomfortable, especially when it details deformities, drugs, and sex. If you like Chuck Palahniuk, Irvine Welsh, or Marquis de Sade, all of which I do, read this book. Can't quite figure out the significance of the motto of "dead babies," except that it's crass & unfeeling, a la 'dead baby jokes' from grade school (What's funnier than a dead baby? A dead baby in a clown costume!).

Though likely published as a comment on the hippies/hedonists of the 1970s, it is completely analogous and characteristic of 2010 twenty-something generation (though there would be more video games or television). As the plot, we follow a group of neighbors through a rowdy weekend of overindulgence and insensitivity, with short contextual background details for each of the characters. I read this book blind (glazing over the Menippus satire quote in the beginning...oops), and my emotions went as follows: appalled at the debauchery, became aware I was reading satire, laughed/cried at satire, and finally, suffered heart palpitations because the end is unexpectedly terrifying and gave me a nightmare.

I still love the voice of Amis...a chubby dwarf saying something "fatly"; a bench, "patterned with the amorous graffiti of the local young...*Billy fks Jane, Susan Fs Emily...*"; the "familiar fat-thighed shuffle" of Mrs. Fry; and [on seeing something pleasing] a character flatlines: "I like this planet." And the definitive excerpt of the novel:

"Everyone is always blacking out at Appleseed Rectory, and they can't remember farther back than a few days. Everyone tends to be either drunk or stoned or hungover or sick at Appleseed Rectory, and they have learned to be empirical about all sense perceptions. Everything is out of whack at Appleseed Rectory; its rooms are without bearing and without certainty. The inhabitants suffer, too, from curious mental complaints brought on by prolonged use of drugs, complaints that can be alleviated only by drugs of different kinds. And so Appleseed Rectory is a place of shifting outlines and imploded vacuums; it is a place of lagging time and false memory, a place of street sadness, night fatigue, and canceled sex."

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### **Laurence says**

Het bibliotheekboek moest opgevraagd worden uit het depot. De bibliothecaresse belde onmiddellijk naar iemand die daar juist aanwezig was.

"Ja, ik heb nog een boek dat je zou moeten meenemen."

"..."

"Dead babies, van Martin Amis"

"..."

"Dead babies...Ja, dooie baby's."

Zowel zij als ik gaven geen krimp. Want uiteraard is het supernormaal om een boek over dode baby's op te vragen.

De titel van het boek spreekt tot de verbeelding, en er bestaat geen twijfel over dat dit een uiterst origineel boek is. De humor is zwart, en wordt steeds zwarter, tot het lachen je vergaat. Nu het uit is, heb ik geen idee wat ik ervan moet denken. Drie sterren omdat het zo schitterend geschreven is (echt, Martin Amis schrijft fan-tas-tisch), maar toch niet meer omdat ik de indruk heb dat de schrijver dit eerder voor zijn eigen plezier geschreven heeft dan voor dat van de lezer.

Maar ik lees zeker nog iets van Martin Amis, en termen als 'street sadness' en 'cancelled sex' blijven me zeker bij.

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### Alexander says

After enjoying *Dead Babies*, I can cheerfully take my chair at the Amis Cultist soiree with no inhibited glances or afterthoughts. Written in the vein of a Menippean satire, *Dead Babies* sees Martin delineating dishabile libertines of the Bowie-70s and exploring their savage exploits: casual terrorism, gleeful animal abuse, and rapacious drug intake constitute the menial; they exalt vapidty cloaked under the guise of counterculture, deliver glib vituperations upon perceived inferiors, and thoroughly incense all non-bourgeoisie who've matured past nihilistic stock responses to ennui. Not to be outdone by his other walkthroughs through depravity, Amis delectably evokes disgust in the genteel reader: one reviewer claims *Dead Babies* was the first novel to make her "phyiscally sick", which, like I've said elsewhere, proves Amis's effectiveness at engineering the id for comic design. As a precursor to *Success*, *Dead Babies* falls short on vivaciousness, but still sparkles with Amis's usual incendiary baritone and informs the cruelty of spiritual successors a la Will Self; overall, tis a worthy work in the Amis canon.

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### Jonfaith says

A number of the unimpressed noted recently that 2010's *The Pregnant Widow* is similar to Marty's earlier novel *Dead Babies*. This observation is grounds for drug testing in my book.

*Dead Babies* is a veering gonzo, assault on the senses. Screams from the asylum compete with boozy sadism and a taunt of the bedroom farce which Iris Murdoch was accomplishing at the time (1975). Amis even makes snort in the direction of Iris, for the sake of form, mind you. *Dead Babies* is Houellebecq on acid. The serrated sentences all draw blood and I was left in awe. It isn't so much a novel as an exercise, a Salo for the budding stylist

### **Clint says**

This is the kind of book that later gave birth to more modern dirty, cruel writers like Will Self and Tibor Fischer. Really weird, really disgusting, pure Amis.

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### **Mattox says**

Pissed myself laughing!!

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### **Lenore Beadsman64 says**

#### **la liberazione sessuale non equivale a liberazione psicologica...**

un fine settimana tra amici, un trio di ospiti americani, un guastatore segreto che intralazza nell'ombra, sesso e droga come se non ci potessero essere mai conseguenze, sbarellamenti vari, storia e preistoria di ciascuno, epilogo postmoderno...

questo vecchio libro di Amis, ripescato ora che lui è saldamente famoso e Einaudi non sa più come tirare su soldi dalla passione dei lettori spiazzati dall'eccessivo costo dei cartonati, nonostante l'ovvia datazione al periodo mesozoico, ha ancora un paio di cosette da dare al lettore: la fresca prosa compiaciuta e barocca, antenata di quella pur sempre compiaciuta ma assai più matura dell'Amis odierno, e un finale di una cattiveria abbagliante, come pochi nella produzione seppur non certo buonista di un autore che ancora oggi riesce a farci interessare al destino dei suoi personaggi più odiosi o semplicemente più inutili sul pianeta...

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### **mark monday says**

Amis at his most cutting and shallow. he's never been too big a fan of homo sapiens. this depiction of a weekend house party is populated by less-than sympathetic assholes who never quite reach the status of real people; it also includes a mysterious figure who visits various torments on these ridiculous little twits. do they deserve it? well, who really cares - they are basically insects at play, if such a thing could be possible. overall: pithy commentary, lots of sex & drugs & violence, despicable characters, hilarious & upsetting situations, a very fast pace...a moral vacuum illustrated with broad strokes and slashing wit. deadpan charred black. plus slaughter!

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### **Rachel says**

This book is so disgusting and unfunny, I could not read it.

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### **Jane Ostler says**

I find it very hard to review this book in any other way than to look at its moral credentials. If the school

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bully was to write a book it might be something like this. Starting with the title, this book "Dead Babies" asks us to consider the seamier side of life, the one well off the straight and narrow. We are slowly and meanderingly introduced to a group of people mainly living for no real purpose other than to experiment with recreational drugs and loveless sex.

"Dead babies" refers both to the child victims of the Vietnam war and also this lost generation. They are the dead generation, whose lives have been squandered by their dissolute parents. " But pity the dead babies. Now, before it starts. They couldn't know what was behind them, nor what was to come. The past? They had none. Like children after a long day's journey, their lives arranged themselves in a patchwork of vanished mornings, lost afternoons and probable yesterdays."

Amis wisely allows the reader to draw their own conclusions, as with any truly wicked sick joke, it is when the penny drops that the laugh kicks in, and this may come days after reading a particular passage.

I know Amis is a very clever writer, but I find that I have to look for the moral high ground in order to excuse the obscene language and scenarios in this book. I am put in mind of the bitter and twisted remarks made by sour and unhappy children stuck in boarding school. Amis's apparent dislike of his parent's generation seems to carry on in this book, from "The Rachel Papers".

Humour is distilled from the misfortunes of others. The funniest bits are when you are introduced to somebody: you are offered a potted version of their sex life, or the way they appear to their significant other, such as Celia and Andy's courtship in the Med. The most damning descriptions are of the parents, Amis lays the blame at their door for the moral decrepitude of their children. Some passages show Amis's poetic mastery of English, he seems well versed and passionate. This generation use drugs and anti-social behaviour (a cat is given drugs), and pornography (paedophilic/bestiality film which fails to impress our crowd of jaded party goers) to test their boundaries. Anyone who has ever wondered what "Free Love" is all about should read this book.

It left me feeling curious, puzzled, as the repercussions of bad behaviour do not just affect those immediately present but leave an echo in society as a whole. How did I feel after reading this book? As though I had seen a picture of Hell: the degradation meted out to some of the characters; the self inflicted nihilistic view of life; the sick society that created these individuals, eg. Andy one of the most dominant characters, who had been a baby of a druggy commune and pretty much left to bring himself up. Diane, a poor little rich girl, with no need to work. No strong moral compasses, how low can you go?

Amis toys with us, presenting moral turpitude, street sadness, the monologue of Celia's step father says it all: "our sexual natures were formed, so we could never suffer from anything worse than ennui. I think that's why we let you do this to yourselves. To liberate us. But you lot, lovey, you free-libbers ... You thought you'd get free. You didn't get free." Free of all moral questioning? I don't think so.

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## Freya says

I realise this came out in 1975 and I see what Amis was trying to do here. If conducted better; namely being subversive without being self conscious, shallow and having 'Be Offensive' on default setting, it could've been amazing but I'm afraid I was left disenfranchised by the vileness of absolutely every character. As the protagonist and underdog I feel 'Little Keith' was intended to create a mild feeling of humanity and even sympathy from the reader, but as a rapist with horrendous entitlement issues he doesn't deserve any. The way he's often represented as a 'victim' just stinks of subtle rape/misogyny apologism from Amis too, regardless of the difficulties Keith faces. Also some of the 'darker points' of it are painfully contrived for shock value and just aren't funny. These characters are all manner of minority bashing 'ists' too, we get it Martin.

The only thing that kept me going here was the enjoyable prose and unpredictability, the latter of which would've disappeared very fast should the book have been longer than 223 pages, other than that I'd say in a nutshell this is a novel about a bunch of hideously overprivileged, unhappy bigots getting shitfaced whilst manipulating and abusing each other without any real comeuppance or relatability. Just don't expect to root for any of the characters or care about them if you give this a go

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### **MJ Nicholls says**

A scurrilous, snot-nosed, bile-black, scabrous, swaggering novel showing Amis at the peak of his misanthropic powers, in control of a crazed comic tenor that would resurface in less vicious form in the onanistic opus *The Information*. This is Amis's *Hex Enduction Hour*.

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### **Sheri says**

So this is gonna be a shitty review and for that, dear readers I apologize. I wrote a review this afternoon and before I could hit submit, my window crashed and I lost my text. And of course, I was rushing to finish prior to leaving to pick kids up. Now, I have the chaos of kids and dinner and needing to leave for work in 45 mins (!), but I want to get this off my to-do for the day so I can embark on Spooner guilt-free later this evening.

And so, here are the highlights:

I liked it. I felt like it was a solid text that was a bit between Palahnuik and Agatha Christie. We have the country-house England mystery to solve, but the characters are rather "Fight Club". I also realized about 10 sentences into the book that I had read it years and years ago.

So, maybe I can't be quite praised for figuring out on pg 53 that "Johnny" was in fact the "least likely" character: "Watch Quentin closely. Everyone else does. Stunned by his good looks, proportionately taken aback by his friendliness and accessibility, flattered by his interest, struck by the intimacy of his manner and lulled by the hypnotic sonority of his voice--it is impossible to meet Quentin without falling a little bit in love".

Ultimately, though this book is fun. Yeah, I did just say that about a drug-filled haze in which most people die (not a spoiler there, it is called DEAD Babies).

I felt like (unlike in Lionel Asbo), Amis actually knew these people. He describes them and their indulgences well and he does make them likeable. We see the range of each individual (Quentin is the best and worst of them; Andy is the biggest jerk but he is orphaned and sad and lonely when Diana dumps him), as well as the haze through which they struggle. And, of course, there is the fun of "eavesdropping" on the spoiled rich. It kind of read like how I imagine some of Lindsay Lohan's parties must go (that is a joke by the way).

I think my favorite quote was: "'Sexual emotions'--fuck them. Sex is something your body does, like eating of shitting. Yeah, like shitting. Just something your body does."

Overall, it was compelling and humorous and a quick read.

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## Evan Brown says

Those books.

Martin Amis is a master of debauchery, depravity and douchebaggery. Amis' second novel, *Dead Babies*, is well-written, dark and hysterical at times. That being said, his novels often contain characters that though wildly entertaining, elicit little or no sympathy from the reader. *Dead Babies* is no exception.

Perhaps Lucy Littlejohn, the "golden-hearted whore" as we are told even before the novel starts, is sympathetic. She at least has a heart as evidenced by her staying with Keith at the novel's end. One could also make the argument that Keith is a sympathetic character because of how hideous and pathetic he is, but then he treats the Tuckles terribly (albeit not as bad as awful Andy and Quentin). The Tuckles, who happen to be the most incidental characters in the story, may be the only characters to really sympathize with—what with their being subjected to frequent death threats, sprays of bullets on the front door, point blank fire-hose showers and drugged-up jailers.

Amis' treatment of relative youth (i.e. 20 somethings) is both hilarious and terrifying. *Dead Babies* follows a non-stop, almost apocalyptic party weekend in a house full of jerks. The novel is chockfull of drugs, sex and violence. The drug use far surpasses severe; these characters are drinking by the liter, smoking nine-paper joints, gobbling heroic amounts of pills, shooting in two arms. The sex, though omnipresent, is tragic. Outside of Quentin and Celia, nobody enjoys the act. Nearly all of the men are literally and/or emotionally flaccid. The girls are oversexed and detached. The violence between characters, often with Keith on the receiving end (or those poor Tuckles), is astounding. These characters are dangerous, antisocial and morally AWOL. Amis shows that this kind of "living" ultimately leads to street sadness, false memories and suicide.

As much as the novel is very funny and sometimes poignant in its vivid descriptions, the fact that these characters are such a- -holes is ultimately a turn off. Whereas Amis' *London Fields* was able to find a bit of balance in its 3:1 a- -hole to sympathetic character ratio (thanks, Guy Clinch!). Four main characters in *London Fields* was also a lot more palatable than the over-ambitious ten Appleseeders presented in *Dead Babies*.

I would recommend this book, but only for those who have read at least a handful of Amis' other works and enjoyed them. It certainly has its merits, but it is not his best work.

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