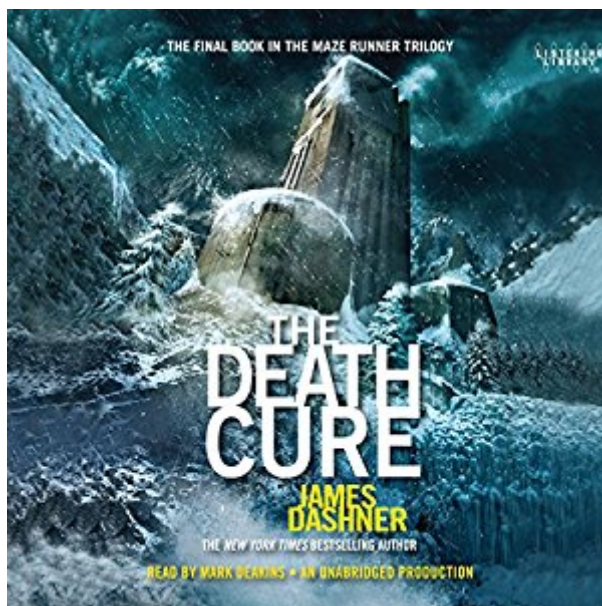


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The Death Cure: Maze Runner, Book 3



Synopsis

Thomas knows that Wicked can't be trusted, but they say the time for lies is over, that they've collected all they can from the Trials and now must rely on the Gladers, with full memories restored, to help them with their ultimate mission. It's up to the Gladers to complete the blueprint for the cure to the Flare with a final voluntary test. What Wicked doesn't know is that something's happened that no Trial or Variable could have foreseen. Thomas has remembered far more than they think. And he knows that he can't believe a word of what Wicked says. The time for lies is over. But the truth is more dangerous than Thomas could ever imagine. Will anyone survive the Death Cure?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I say this at the end, but I want to iterate it here, prior to spoilers: If you're considering this series my recommendation is to read the first book and stop. I have no problem with a series in the teen-dystopian genre borrowing from other stories or some of the other criticisms lobbied at the book by others. I can suspend belief when Thomas and Minho routinely take more stabs, punches, cuts, falls, and abuse than Bruce Willis in all the Diehard movies combined, only to recover hours later to run for miles and fight again. What this book fails to do is far more basic. Warning: there are spoilers in the following parts for this book and those in the series that precede it. First, as is a problem in all three books, the dialogue is absolutely awfully rendered in this novel. It is unbelievable, stiff, and terribly cliché in many, many instances. Even if it didn't seem like it was written by an online protagonist phrase generator, a reader can only be subjected to so many uses

of "shuckface", "slinkhead", and "good that" before they wear out. Also, apparently Dashner believed his readers can't tell that Jorge is supposed to be Hispanic, which is the only explanation for him ending every sentence he says with "muchachos". The conversations between characters feel mechanical and predictable, and would lack authenticity--except that the characters don't feel authentic to begin with, so it would be difficult to have authentic dialogue from inauthentic characters. Second, the characters--already predictable and flat--actually become more predictable and less dynamic in this story. Will Minho overreact angrily to something and punch a person multiple times in this book? How many times will he respond to Teresa with spiteful, sarcastic remarks? Will Thomas make irrational decisions for his "friends" (who, like the readers, he knows nothing about other than their stereotypical behavior)? How many times will Brenda act affectionate toward Thomas for an undetermined reason? Will Thomas's veins fill with hatred every time Rat Man speaks? There are dozens and dozens of questions like this that a reader can answer without ever picking up this book, because the characters were cast in their mold hundreds of pages ago and not only fail to evolve, but repeat their stereotypes multiple times (in some cases, dozens and dozens of times) in this book. The most dynamic character, and the only one who truly evolves, isn't even an active character in the story. It's the Chancellor. Aside from her deus ex machine moment when she saves Thomas from surgery (the how and why of that is skipped by expositioning a surgical blackout) she makes no appearances until the epilogue. In her memo she laments the failure of WICKED, while still acknowledging their noble, original goal. The fact that she evidences this duality of understanding, and her ability to also transition to an alternate plan--demonstrate a change in a character not present anywhere else. Thomas pays lip service to moral dilemmas, but never considers them for more than a paragraph or two. He's too busy being irrational and acting through the linear plot line he's been tracking since the beginning. Third, the exposition is very lazy. As an example, consider when Thomas is being told to plant the device in WICKED's headquarters. "Planting" a device is a pretty cliché thing to do, except in this case an advanced weapons expert has to instruct him on how to "plant" it; only we discover that planting it involves nothing more than pressing a button and putting it somewhere. Anywhere, it seems. So Thomas's instructions, which required an advanced engineer to explain, would have been no more than "press this button and put it anywhere in any of the buildings". This of course means that Thomas wasn't necessary to plant the device. Any one of the immunes could have pressed the button and put the device somewhere at any point. In fact, they apparently didn't need to put it anywhere specific. It didn't actually even need to be planted. It just needed to be there. Even "though that's going to be our hardest task" according to Vince. Apparently not. Thomas strolls in, leaves it in the bathroom, and voila: the

world's strongest organization is overthrown by a couple hundred rebels. That's just one example, and there is no need to itemize them all at length. Mostly though, this story lacks the compelling elements of the first book. The poor dialogue and stereotypical, flat characters are still present as early as *The Maze Runner*, but we're distracted by a dynamic, unique environment in the maze. Dashner is able to deliver intrigue with an imaginative setting that he does a good job of creating. The maze itself, and the uncertainty about why it exists, stands as a sort of character unto itself. Once that evolving, interesting, and dynamic pseudo-character is gone we're left with little other than the flaws: below-average exposition, scant and repeating imagery, terrible dialogue, and characters who don't grow enough to sustain interest. I was glad to finish the book to know how it actually ended, though despite all *WICKED*'s lies and tricks and the duration of the trials and variables, and the late-introduced characters and organizations there was almost no satisfaction in its conclusion--other than relief. I'd recommend reading the first book and stopping when the characters press the PUSH button. That's the high point of the entire trilogy, and the last moment when there truly is a compelling reason to wonder what is going to happen next.

The biggest theme in the third book of this series is trust. Who to trust... Brenda? Theresa? *WICKED*? Is anything real? I love how this series gets me questioning every single thing I read. I got to the point where I thought, if it's written down, it must be a trick. I had to remind myself that not everything could be a trick, and that some things had to be real. But which things? It was perpetual. Something like I imagine was happening in the minds of the characters. Memories are being returned to the survivors so they can finish the trials and find the cure. Thomas is terrified of what else he might remember. He didn't want to know what he had done before the start of the trials. He already knew that *WICKED* shouldn't be trusted. Finally, he escapes *WICKED* with a small band of other munies and they flee to the city of Denver, which has resisted the spread of the Flare. They believe that the other survivors, including Theresa, have also escaped and found their way to the city. In Denver, munies (those immune to the Flare) held jobs that others couldn't do, but they were deeply resented by most of the population who weren't immune. After their arrival, Thomas is approached and offered a lifeline by an underground operation called The Right Arm. It's an operation that includes a blast from his past, Gally from *The Glade*. We also learn that Denver is the one place where there is someone who can remove the tracking device that has been implanted into Thomas's head. Of course, in the meantime, the crazy Ratman can track him, and tries to convince him to return to *WICKED* and complete the final stage of the trials. Naturally, Thomas resists. As the story unfolds Thomas and his fellow munies join

forces with The Right Arm and set plans in place to defeat WICKED once and for all. Then, on February 13, 2015, I was on about page 200, when a post from James Dashner landed in my Facebook feed. It mentioned something about page 250. The post was littered with comments from readers that spilled forth information that I didn't need to know. The timing was dreadful, so I replied to Mr Dashner with my feelings. I got no reply, of course, but at least I got to vent my disapproval. What a spoiler at the worst possible time! WICKED may have started off with the good of the world in its sights. But over time it morphed into something that was just as damaging as the problem it tried to solve. The lesson here is that good intentions aren't a license to do whatever you want. WICKED's driving ambition had been running blind and it failed to stop and take a sanity check. Janson (Ratman) had lost all sense of right and wrong. But luckily there was a light in the darkness that left a thread of hope for a future. Finally, there was an escape, but not a cure. The world was left to self destruct while the lucky few could start afresh. It was hardly a happy ending, but perhaps the only one that was plausible. In a Nutshell I can see why this series has a huge and faithful fan base, and I'm glad to call myself one of them. Recommended for readers who enjoy action filled with twists, tricks and lies, and relish the uncertainty of not knowing what to believe as they read.

Oh the writing. It was so poor. My eyes just glazed over in most places to protect me from the stilted, unbelievable dialogue, and horribly contrived plot choices. One of the better characters died and I didn't even care, I'm sad to say. It's a shame because the ideas were there - the execution was not. In better hands I feel like this could have been a rather compelling series. It makes me wonder how it ever got past an editor in the first place. I felt like there were so many places that Dashner wrote himself into a corner and that we as readers were cheated when he chose coincidences as the easy way out. The ending was atrocious as well. A character was killed for convenience really and that was the only part of the book that upset me. Not that the character died, but that it was convenient for the character to do so. I was happy when it was over. Despite my neurotic tendencies to finish things I've started, I have decided not to read the prequel The Kill Order or the other prequel I heard was in the works. Hopefully the movies will be one of those rare, redeeming instances where they are better than the books.

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