

Hi, my name's Steven Starry and in today's MadridTeacher podcast cohost William Christison and I will be talking about post-apocalyptic fiction. So, without further ado William will talk about the first book on our list, The Road.

Ah, The Road.

Hi William.

Yeah, hi Steven. How you doing? The Road. Yeah, this is possibly one of my favorites, but the road is a 2006 novel by the American writer Cormac McCarthy and it's a post-apocalyptic tale of a journey of a father and his young son over a period of several months and they're just crossing over a destroyed landscape blasted away by some unknown unspecified cataclysm and they're traveling south across the United States and well they set out originally because they realize they can no longer stay where they are somewhere in the Midwest. They have to get out of this area and head south to the sea and so they set out just with a shopping cart going down abandoned highways and the father, he's got a bad cough and he knows he's dying, but they keep heading south and they have to avoid these marauders and survive as well as they can looking for canned goods or petrified apples or whatever and the thing of it is they don't have there is there are, there's no plant life, there is no animal life, so they just have to survive on the remains of civilization that's long gone and yeah interesting plot. What did you think about it Steve?

Well I I thought it I'm I'm on the first reading I liked it pretty much. It's a little depressing.

Yes.

I think it came out or I read it not too long after the crisis of 2008 when the stock market crash of 2008 so it was little depressing, and well get the idea that Cormac McCarthy was depressed. The characters are depressed. I mean they don't find much positive. Of course, there isn't much positive in this world, but I think even you know survivors of the Holocaust found moments when they found something positive or something beautiful.

Right.

I just read a couple of books about the Holocaust, a couple of survivors of that. So, I don't know. I think the character the lead character played by Viggo Mortensen in the film, I think he would've committed suicide if it hadn't been for his son. That's the idea I get, if he hadn't, because his wife actually commits suicide, right?

That's right. In the beginning, right at the very beginning, yeah.

And so there's something about that, I mean that I think you can also point I mean besides being marauders these villains or the bad guys of the book are also cannibals. There's no food left so people are just eating each other just like soylent green, right?

That's right.

In the movie with Charlton Heston, you know. So, yeah, I liked it a lot, but on you know the second time I read the book or what I found some plot holes. You know, when you when you read a book again and you look at it more objectively and more I don't know, I guess you're looking for problems with the book, and there are couple of things there that I didn't like on the second reading. One was the, you remember the bunker? They found this bunker and there's food in the bunker.

Right yeah. Well it's basically I don't know if it's a bunker or maybe it's just like a storm shelter or something like that. Yeah.

It's full of food and they go down and decide, I mean they spend the night there and decide to leave all this food behind because somebody's going to come across them and try to take away the food. You decide to move on. I thought this was the most absurd thing ever.

Yeah, when you, yeah I guess I think there's a lot less chance of somebody finding them in this frigg'in' bunker than there is of you know them coming across somebody on the road.

Oh, yeah, which indeed they do.

In fact, yeah there are people that set traps along the road, marauders or cannibals or whatever and so that was one of the big problems I had with the book and the other one was with a boy is always scared of everything but he runs after the first kid he comes across, right?

Yeah.

...which is dangerous and and then okay the other thing was at the end of the book the father dies and like two or three days later right some guy comes up and these people been following them and there's a family and they rescue the kid.

Right yeah.

I mean there's not you know the way the rest the book went, you would think that the kid would die too because well

Yeah yeah exactly yeah, well it was the was a happy ending I guess, a bright spot in the novel, a very dark novel, yeah.

yeah but still I was with the writing though, I really liked it just with the sparse dialogue the father and the son and in any case, of course Cormac McCarthy the prose, it's really intense but it's poetic as well and with hardly an extraneous word, very very measured dialogue, well the dialogue with father and son not much of a dialogue but just with what you hear they you can sort of, I certainly felt the love that that that they felt for one another and indeed the father would have probably killed himself if it hadn't been for the son and it's that's the only thing that keeps him going and of course it's really again a dark novel with all this cannibalism and all the dangers and everything but the it's again it seems a bit of it is a novel of hope and I mean when other, there's one part where the man tells the the son, well you know you have to carry the fire and the son says, I don't know how to, and the man says, yes you do, and is the fire real, the fire, yes, it is, where is it, I don't know where it is, yes, you do, it's inside you, it was always there, I can see it... You know, it's like this, well, there's hope, this flame they're carrying with them, and it's going to keep them going to the end and it's in the end it's, I think it's a novel of hope, but it's also again going back to the prose, it's just a delight, just page after page, I mean they've got, it's just you know . . .

Yeah, I said I have to admit I enjoyed it on the first reading, definitely.

Here's an example, by day the banished sun circles the Earth like a grieving mother with a lamp, I mean, yeah or when he's talking to his son, the other one of these dialogues, son, you wanted to know what the bad guys look like? Now you know. It may happen again. My job is to take care of you. I was appointed to do that by God and I will kill anyone who touches you. Do you understand? There is some good moments but particularly, like you say, maybe the first reading even more so, right?

Yeah, but I have to add here too that the the audiobook, I mean the book itself is lovely, but I've heard also the reading by Tom Stechschulte reading it and he's just got a voice that I don't care what book he'd be reading, if I saw he's the narrator I'd snatch it up. He's just very very good.

Yeah, I liked it too. Yeah, all of these books that I've read that we're talking about today, I've read the audiobook version which means I've listened to it. Of course, that adds another dimension (it does) to the books and often it improves the books, in my opinion.

Yes, indeed yeah absolutely.

I usually have a higher rating of the books, I think because of reading the audiobook version, which is something I would recommend to most people.

Yeah, a lot of people don't get it, well in the in the States or in English-speaking countries it's pretty clear it's more and more popular every year but they sell more and more audiobooks but in other countries non-English-speaking countries it's, they look at you a little weird when you when you say, no I read it on an audiobook, but that's not the same, but I say, well try it, you might like it.

Yeah, some narrators are better than others.

Yeah, and I just absolutely love them.

Right.

The last point I'd like to say about this, the last problem I had with it was the fact that there, the guy's only got one bullet half, through half the book.

Oh, yeah, right.

He's got the gun and he's got one bullet and they are looking through all kinds of houses, they're looking everywhere. What has there been here? Has there been some sort of war because okay there are basically, in the States right now there are an estimated 300 million guns (oh yeah) owned privately, ok.

Right, that's a good point, yeah.

And the military has their own collection, right?

Yeah, and besides this, there are an estimated 12 billion rounds, billion rounds of ammunition sold each year in the USA, ok?

Right yeah.

People have bunkers everywhere. There's a big survivalist community in United States.

That's true, yea.

You would literally have an entirely different situation, I mean you can't even find a knife? I think you'd find plenty of knives.

Yeah yeah, those are certain points.

So there is, and then the other thing is what the heck happened nuclear war, (well yeah) asteroid strikes?

Yeah, it could've been . . .

I can't believe it's nuclear war, but then there's like different times because well there would've been fallout, right? And radiation, we would've seen other evidence, you know, I don't know, but, so that part is. . .

Maybe an asteroid, that would possibly, a huge one smashed into Earth, with all the ash and everything, I mean it's anybody's guess, really, but I don't think it was nuclear.

Okay, so yeah anyway I like the book but you know it's like you can find problems with anything, I suppose when you look at it closely. Shall we move on to the next book?

Right, yes, let's do that.

Well, the next book is this post-apocalyptic zombie vampire book, "I am legend" by Richard Matheson, who is by the way, Stephen King's favorite writer, I don't know, the writer who most influenced him according to him, and I again read the book narrated by Robertson Dean. I thought it was okay, the readings okay.

I think that's it, yeah.

And I watched the film, I've watched both "I am legend" with Will Smith and the earlier Omega Man with Charlton Heston. Did you see that one?

Yeah, I did, yeah.

That that was years ago.

Yeah, it was years ago.

Yeah that was okay. It was good I liked the Will Smith one better. There's another one, the Vincent Price, is that Vincent Price.

Yeah, there's an earlier version too. I watched a little bit on YouTube, because it's on YouTube.

I haven't seen that. I think it's a low-budget Italian production (yeah) in 1964.

Yeah, I've seen bits of it but I couldn't be bothered to see the whole thing, really.

I loved Will Smith. Will Smith is Will Smith. (Right) Great film, I watched both endings. I don't know if you did.

There is two endings, yeah, right.

And I think well by far the better ending is the one that ends badly, right? Because the other one gets a little ridiculous.

Yeah, it does.

Because at that beginning of the movie, they blow up the bridges and at the end of the film they drive off across the bridge, you know.

Yeah where's the continuity guy on this there's something wrong here, yeah.

Yeah, and of course, in both versions this lady shows up to save him when he's going to go commit suicide, in a car (yeah) so either they didn't get all the bridges or something. Well, the the book, well, what did you think of the book.

I was surprised. I was, I don't know what I was expecting. Actually, I was expecting kind of like a vampire Walking Dead sort of story, which it was to a certain extent but after reading it for a while though it kind of, it changed, there were the elements of the vampires and the living dead, but okay he has these vampires outside of his house and their throwing rocks and tormenting him at night and but as you read on some of these vampires, one guy, his former friend Ben Cortman, he's actually a

vampire or zombie or zombie/vampire, he actually knows who Neville the character is and he keeps calling for him at night and it's almost like well he is not Walking Dead because he still has a mind so he's still partially human and so that was a little different and as you read on, Neville is looking through peephole's a peephole in his house in his front door and these vampire women or again vampire again/zombies are all dancing, making obscene gestures to try to lure him outside and that's a little different. I wasn't expecting that. And this poor Neville, he just, it disturbs him so much because they actually excite him because he's alone, you know he's I don't know, at the point of the story for a year or two.

Yeah, it's at least for several several years, I think.

Yeah yeah and you know and he's drawn to to them, I mean, he's repelled by them but but he's drawn to them and then you and then during the day he goes out in daylight and he goes from house to house finding these vampires in their beds or hiding and he kills them one after another driving stakes in their hearts or just pulling them out in the sunlight and watching them writhe in pain and die but it's strange because he's terrified of them but he has this attraction and so he turns to binge drinking, I didn't think I'd find a guy in a vampire story go binge drinking you know. It's but it's quite a harrowing study on human isolation. This guy is just going crazy.

Yeah, he's suffering from deep loneliness.

Yeah yeah.

And in the end he like develops a relationship with Cortman (right) and in the end Cortman dies and he's just traumatized by that (right yeah). He doesn't want him to die, so even though he's out looking for Cortman every day.

Yeah, that's right, he's going to miss him once he's gone, yeah.

Yeah, he's going to miss him, so like he's so alone, I guess that you know that's the sort of thing that would happen to people who are in isolation or quarantine or what's . . . solitary confinement (yeah) things like that prison, just psychological problems.

Yeah, yeah, and it was really well told too because just even emphasize more how lonely he was he finally finds a dog right? There's this poor dog and he tries to lure it and I was thinking again, thinking of the Will Smith movie, I mean wait a minute, this dog's missing part of an year and he's just raggedy looking and it's totally different, the dog has a totally different part in this the novel and in the end, he just ends up dying too, and then of course all the while the only thing that keeps him sane is his research apparently to find a cure for this disease this vampirism that has infected everybody through I don't know dust particles or something but he gives long-winded explanations about the scientific aspect of it which I read some people don't like but I thought it added to the story, it made it more real, convincing but, yeah, it's quite a story.

He says this vampirism or I guess that's what he calls it goes back hundreds of years, right? There've been vampires around for hundreds of years and somehow the illness has evolved and mutated and infected everyone and most people have either died or turned and there's different types of vampires too. There are some that are just stupid and there are some that are more intelligent, right? And they go on and create this new civilization (yes yeah) at night okay and there like intelligent and there are the others that are stupid that are just hanging around in front of his house and never bother to or never or sorry they're never able to break into the house and ...

Yeah they are not quite intelligent enough to set his house on fire for example.

...or anything like that, but the intelligent ones are angry with Robert Neville, right? (yeah) Because he's been going around killing their family members (exactly) okay, but this is the plot hole, okay, why the hell didn't they go and notify him, "please stop killing our family members or relatives or loved ones (right yeah). Because this goes on for months and finally they send a spy around, which is I mean why don't they just go and kill him? You know, he's going around killing the family members, so that was I mean I like the book, don't get me wrong, but there are some (yeah) plot holes here (right right). In the film, I think there's another one where, or a couple, one is gasoline goes flat after six months or something like that. I don't know how you can get it to work again. Maybe you can add some additive or something, but gasoline from what I understand goes flat. (Okay yeah) It wouldn't last for years and frozen food you know starts to go bad too after three months.

I mean he was eating pretty pretty healthily there, a nice steak and nice string beans, stuff like that. I mean the string beans in cans or something, but I think even like anything that's acidic doesn't do well in cans for a very long time. There is an expiration date on these things, and he's well-stocked. He runs around to different people's houses getting food, but why not go to the supermarkets, right? Why does he have to break into people's homes for food.

Because he figures well I've got to kill some of these guys off, I can just take their food too I guess, but I don't know.

So, that whole obsession with that and then of course he's trying to solve the whole mystery of this and maybe save these people, to turn them around, right? to cure them, the ones that have become vampires.

But, it was it was a good twist though in the end where he gets captured by this vampire society and then he turns out to be the outcast just as much as the vampires always have been in our society and of course he becomes the legend right? I mean that was a good twist there, a good ending.

Yeah that's yeah if you watch a film, you don't understand the title.

Yes that's right. Yeah, I never quite got it and then read this and absolutely.

He's legend for this new civilization of people who have to, well they can actually cover themselves up during the daytime and withstand the light by the end of the book.

Yeah that's right, yeah they take pills or something, they discovered something to help them with yeah.

But good, it was good, it was a pleasant surprise, a good read definitely.

Ok, shall we move on to the next book, is it your turn I think?

The next book on our list is *Blindness*, which is quite a surprise also. This is *Blindness* it's called and it's written by the Portuguese writer or the late Portuguese writer José Saramago, I think this is 1994, and is one of his most famous novels and he got a Nobel Prize I think in 1998 probably largely because of the novel.

Yeah, I think it was partly because of the book.

Curiously, the original Portuguese novel as well as the Spanish version too, it's called an essay on blindness rather than just blindness which is probably a better title. It makes us think that oh, well there's something more than just blindness here. It's an essay and anyway the story takes place in an anonymous city which has been hit by a highly contagious what they call white blindness and no one is spared and in the early on the authorities they confine the blind to an empty mental hospital which is just overseen by the Army on the outside but inside it's there's a criminal element that eventually takes over and holds everyone captive, stealing food and rations and raping women and it's almost like a concentration camp tale except everyone is blind worse yet and there's only there's one eyewitness to this nightmare who later guides the seven strangers once they get out of there, among them there is a boy's, a squint eyed boy, of course you couldn't see anyway without a mother and there is a girl with dark glasses, they're all blind but dark glasses and a dog of tears that they find in the streets and they all are led by to temporary safety and then the rest is well the rest they do regain their sight but not after going through a lot of misery.

Well, the protagonist or the narrator or the person telling the story is actually not blind (yeah, that's right). She's a female. I heard the version narrated by Jonathan Davis. I think you heard one narrated by a woman, right?

Yeah I couldn't find her name anywhere, but she was very good, British woman, and I was going to say, of course, I'd love to to hear the one by this guy Jonathan because to me it seemed almost perfect, it had to be a woman narrating it or it should've been. It wasn't in my case, because she's talking about this and many times through the eyes of the the one cited woman in the story but it was very good so I'll have to listen to your version one of these days.

Yeah, I like the book, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the movie as well and a lot of people I talked to don't like it. And I think they think it's a bit rough, or hard they say. It's like, it's you know not very positive about people. (Yeah, in many cases, yeah) When people, when this sort of thing happens to people, people just turn on each other and start to rape each other and steal from each other, right? and so on. I mean we have situations in history like the Holocaust, I mean, you mentioned concentration camps

(right) and I had recently read Elie Wiesel's Night, which also won a Nobel Prize, and Victor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning and those two survived the Holocaust and wrote books about it, about their experience and then I read Blindness after that and I thought well this is rather tame by comparison.

(Yeah, I would imagine yeah) But these other folks who read the book or saw the movie were just a bit overwhelmed by it I guess.

Yeah, maybe turned off, I guess the rape scene.

Turned off by the rapes, yeah.

I have a difficult time thinking that these people would've put up with these others especially you know, well I mean there are a lot more prisoners or they're not prisoners but (their internees or whatever) yeah in this mental hospital than there are, I think there's only eight or 10 or 20 let's say villains, right? the bad guys (yeah in some ward yeah right exactly) right and they end up attacking them and going to war with them (right) but only after they've taken absolutely everything everybody else has and raped a lot of their women, right? Their forced to, you know I think that's unbelievable, I think you know people would've realized pretty quickly that this was not going to end well, and let's end it quickly.

Yeah yeah, you'd think they'd be more resourceful.

They let it go too far. I just don't believe . . . you know, we go to war for silly stuff really. In this life people get killed for you know insulting someone.

Exactly right.

I think that was a little bit unbelievable. It was a bit of a plot hole. So yeah otherwise I like the book I think you know I think it's trying to say something about, it's a metaphor for mankind's blindness towards the more unfortunate. I read that somewhere and I guess I didn't quite see it I didn't quite see a Nobel Prize here. Maybe if I had read it in the original Portuguese, it would've been different. I don't see the, and actually somebody told me or were telling me that they read the Spanish version and the sentence structure was different, the sentences were a lot longer. I don't remember the sentences being really long, do you?

This is a curious, no, not in the way it was read anyway. It was perfect, but I guess that's what I understand of the reading of it he is very idiosyncratic with with his punctuation or lack thereof in the sentences run on and on and on and I guess it does take some getting used to and I suppose to the Portuguese and the Spanish it must've been similar I would imagine. I've had a couple of my students have read the book, they liked it but one woman in particular she read the book she said I had to read it again but I just I skipped over the rape part, it was just, it was too harsh or too brutal but she says she loved the book, but yeah like you say there are some gaps there, it stretches credibility there how much they tolerated but yeah a metaphor yeah for people are blind anyway but when the really blind I guess the really vicious and I don't know yeah it's a yeah it's sort of a dark commentary on mankind certainly, but certainly unique anyway.

Okay, so shall we move onto the next book? Is it my turn?

I think you, I believe it is yeah you can take it, what was it?

The last last policeman by Ben H Winters and this is the only book of the four that doesn't have a film but it could have. I would like to see this film actually. I think it would make a great film.

They were talking about it at one point a year or two ago, but I don't know when the project is? It could be a miniseries or who knows but it'd be great.

Well yeah, everybody's making films these days, Netflix and Amazon, so maybe they'll get around to this one. Well, anyway, this The Last Policeman was narrated by Peter Berkrot who I think it is just absolutely fantastic. So the book has a rating of 3.76 on Goodreads, but I actually rated it higher and I think maybe largely because of Peter Berkrot's reading (Yeah, it could be) because the character, the character's name and the lead character's a police detective by the name of Hank Palace, who is just absolutely obsessed with solving a murder mystery so this is a cross genre book of detective fiction and post-apocalyptic fiction because the post-apocalyptic part is that an asteroid is going to strike the earth in six months a little over six months and well civilization is already falling apart because why bother you know with carrying on with civilization you know things like insurance right? life insurance

everybody's going to die so things are already falling apart and yet this detective this police detective is trying to solve this murder mystery and nobody else seems to care much. It's a whodunit you know. I think why don't we talk about you know why you like it?

Yeah, well, it's certainly is a whodunit but it's, how am I going to say it here? It's a whodunit but it sort of asks more questions and is in and the character Hank, Hank Palace is just is a great vehicle just to see what would be happening if we all knew an asteroid was going to destroy Earth in six months I mean you get on the one hand you get a great whodunit story and it is a great whodunit story. This Hank's got a great narrative voice and the really hard-boiled detective you know dialogue jargon which is very convincing very good very funny at times and but at the same time you wonder okay why is Hank doing this? Is it just because he has to do something just to keep his sanity or is it a broader question, why do we do anything? I mean we all have our personal asteroid somewhere down the line, we just don't know when, but why do people do things you know?

That's a good way to put it I think.

What is life worth? I mean, beyond an entertaining whodunit, it's really an existential you know meditation on the purpose of life or it's really good yeah I think I enjoyed the characters I mean everyone reacted in a different way some people stayed on working in a hospital others went off, the bucket listers I think he called them, just went off looking for pleasure in the last six months of their lives, other people just sort of quietly went home to be with their loved ones, others were committing suicide in droves, I mean, interesting study of what . . .

And there's at least one guy there collecting material for the post-apocalypse. Yeah, he's got a nice little collection of stuff there, guns . . .

Yeah, that's kind of interesting because it's you don't really notice until halfway through the novel or well into the novel that that it's going to land in Indonesia they feared and there is a chance after maybe sort of many years of The Road type atmosphere you know with gray and no sun and that there is a chance that possibly someone could survive, not in Indonesia but maybe in the states or Canada or something, so yeah, that's when these guys are stockpiling preparing for the long winter I guess. But it's a fascinating story. The good thing if you don't really want to continue with it, I mean it's a trilogy but the first book is self-contained, you can read it and that's it. You don't have to run out to buy the other book but I did and the second one and the third one because they're all fine. They're all equally good, maybe the first is better because it's the first experience, but good right to the end. Well, I think it ends up being like a three book trilogy, but the first one is self-contained just like you said. If you just decide to end it at the first one, that's fine. But, there are enough loose strings hanging up there for him to follow up on in the following books, right?

Yeah yeah yeah absolutely.

And yeah so yeah I've read the other two books too and I thought they were fantastic as well so. The whole story was great. I don't remember as much about the other two. I think we read them like four years ago or something like that.

Yeah I mean I just read the first one again and I shamefully, I had forgotten a lot of stuff and but I just started reading the second one again and yeah it's good. It'll be just as enjoyable I think.

So, okay, so which book do you think you liked the most or least and why?

Gosh, yeah, enjoyed them all of course but possibly I think maybe The Last Policeman although I did like The Road very much because I just love Cormac McCarthy's writing and if you get a chance to read the, what is it called? The Red Meridian, Blood Meridian, excuse me, definitely very good based on a true story in the 1840s Southwest territory in Mexico and California very very good. I think maybe better than The Road or right up there, but again having said that, probably The Last Policeman I think, just because of the dialogue (yeah me too), the humor in and it's dark but it's funny too.

The reading, Peter Berkrot I think really made a huge difference this reading I think is better than the others, he expresses more emotion (yeah he does) it's really an emotional reading. He's excited or he's fascinated, he's obsessed, I mean he's got or when he finds out you know something important he's surprised, he's really really an excellent narrator I think he's by far in my opinion by far the best narrator of the group.

He made a huge difference to me and then like you said, he does address some of the questions some questions I think are of interest which is like you know what's a life worth, these are things I've seen in commentaries of the book you know. Is, if somebody goes and murders somebody else and there's just six months to go, should you go after this guy, right? And I think, I think so. In fact the guy murders the murderer murders several people, right?

Yes he does yeah right

... And he steals a lot of an awful lot of stuff from people maybe other people died and...

And he's a man of the cloth on top of that. He's a ritual advisor in the hospital or something like that, but will certainly because of the fact that halfway through you realize that well there may be a chance for a resurgence of society or something so maybe in the end old Hank is doing right by trying to keep law and order there. There is different ways of looking at it, you know.

Well, I would think that if there's any chance of people surviving people would survive. There is a bunker culture in the world. There's a survivalist culture. People have stockpiled stuff and I think bunkers around the world. The Swiss have a lot of bunkers, state-sponsored bunkers. I'm sure the United States government has bunkers. (Certainly yeah) With food and materials stockpiled so I get the idea you know a lot of people would you throw in the towel, go bucket list, go sit on the beach for six months or whatever because maybe they don't like their job, I can understand that, so the idea that of civilization coming to a stop just because there's going to be an apocalypse of some kind in six months. Well, I can understand that but you know if you look through history, there is plenty of examples of you know like or how about the London or when Hitler bombed London in the second world war, those people came together. So, I don't know what it is about post-apocalyptic fiction which, in which you know everybody just immediately turns on each other. And all of these or do themselves in

Yeah it's like nobody works together, nobody collaborates, the government turns on everybody, well you can understand that in the States, but I think a lot of countries, like in Switzerland it's not like that at all, so I am not sure the end would be that negative, you know, that . . .

That's an excellent example of the Blitz in London yeah just how people held together and just no way they're going to give up, maybe it's something in the British culture just a very matter-of-factly well we just carry on you know just the muddle along and get through it.

Yeah, if you listen to Churchill's speech and how "we shall fight on the beaches", they shall fight everywhere, right? Here, there, everywhere I mean that's pretty much like hey, we're done, right?

They're going to kick our butts and but we're going to fight them.

That's right, yeah.

And in the end they survived, I mean, I think you have to hang on to that hope.

That's right.

Maybe a lot of people are going to die, but you gotta fight and I get the idea in these books even in The Last Policeman, everybody's throwing in the towel.

It's pretty noticeable.

In all these books it's the same the but I like them nonetheless.

This is the most enjoyable.

So why do you think we like a post-apocalyptic books, I mean, is there anything psychological in that? Because in general it's interesting.

Yeah, I don't know, I guess there's certainly a lot we mean the reasons for reading them?

Is there something that's attracting to them in particular? Because I would think for myself I mean I think I have this feeling that were that I'm interested in these books because I suspect that ultimately we're going to either have one of these sort of post-apocalyptic experiences, you know, or we're going do something great, right? But the chances are we're not going to survive you know, like Stephen Hawking was saying, if we don't get out or off this planet within another 100 years, we're finished.

Yeah yeah, the way the climate and just the pollution and everything and then the lack of will to do anything and certain people are certainly doing.

The Cold War, okay, just this last couple of days I've read okay the UN secretary saying the Cold War is back with a vengeance (right) or so we're still like you know we could still have a nuclear war. Oh certainly yeah, if that doesn't get us, we'll have these huge floating continents of plastic that will gradually suffocate the ocean and I mean there's just so many disasters to choose from out there.

Okay this other story was that Gulf stream has slowed down by 15%. Now that's pretty friggin' serious so you can see various scenarios because I mean we've touched on like four different you now the asteroid strike you know people turning on each other like cannibals and some kind of pandemic, you not necessarily causing blindness but there could be all sorts of pandemics, plagues . . .

Certainly yeah, that's something that's waiting to happen too. It could be bird flu or anything that is just something we don't have a cure for and . . . 'cause certainly even just in world war one in that period there where you had the what do you call the Spanish flu I guess it was because it was first recognized in Spain or and that killed I don't know what percent well millions and millions and that was ...

And well the plague in the 1340s or something it took out like I remember maybe 50% of the population?

Yeah 40% or something like that yeah.

40% is just enormous and changed everything. It was a turning point if there ever was one and so I get the feeling that something like that could happen. I think people do a lot of people cannot you look at just the global warming thing yes and kind of shrug their shoulders and say oops maybe something bad is going to happen with that.

Yeah yeah it's just yeah it's all there it's all glaringly apparent, so reading just an entertainment there is level just for the pure escapism of it it's always nice to read through these dark novels and then in the end you finish it and it hasn't happened but it's it does make you think it gives you a better appreciation.

It's tame by comparison with reality as Stephen King said what did he say? He said something about they're a cure for stark raving reality or something like that. I don't remember his exact words. And I think that's true I think it's a break from reality.

Yeah definitely.

The real monsters are around us, yeah the other one of the message messages here.

I think yeah I guess of course the other, I think another attraction to these sorts of novels in it you can see it certainly in the Walking Dead or stories like that where you know it's a flip in the social hierarchy you know you get Glen the pizza delivery boy becomes one of the key elements of making their little society survive right? You know.

It's certainly simplifies life, doesn't it? Yeah, it reverses the social order.

The people on the bottom yeah they come to they get to the top and they show what they're really worth and all this kind of stuff. But yeah it's entertainment all right.

Yeah, that was a shame about Glen. You can spoil that too, poor guy. That's about when I stopped watching when . . .

I think that's me too. I could only, what really annoyed me about Walking Dead that I may have even carried on with it but it never got to be winter, it was always like September 5 or something in Georgia.

That's a good point.

I mean it would've been interesting more survival, how we going to survive in this cold and and everything.

Yeah what happens to zombies?

Yeah how do those zombies fare in cold weather? Do they just freeze like fenceposts out in the field or what you know? I gave up. It was it was fun while it lasted. I went five seasons I think or something and I just, that was good.

I get I gave up with Megan, Megan was just like the governor. It's like what, the governor's back? They've resurrected him and gave him a baseball bat. So . . .

You want to kiss Lucille, bomb!

Yeah, ok, I was like "come on!" I want some new stories, really it's a zombie story, you know, it's supposed to be more about the zombies. They kind of go off into the human relations right? And becoming a soap opera of sorts.

Yeah . . .

Well, that about wraps it up for our post-apocalyptic talk on the best literature out there and we hope to get back with you and talk to you about something else and we'd like to hear from you to. What are your favorite books? What are your favorite movies apocalyptic or otherwise? Take care for now and we'll be seeing and talking to you soon. Bye.