

Ents

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## Entertainment

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## Zom-B rage

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**Limerick million  
selling author  
Darren Shan spoke  
to Limerick Post  
about his new series  
Zom-B, a rip  
roaring zombie tale  
with a focus on  
racism and bullying**

"It was the darkest, most wretched hour of the night when the dead came back to life and spread like a plague of monstrous locusts through the village of Pallaskenry. The luckier victims were slaughtered in their sleep, their skulls ripped open, their brains devoured. The others suffered a far more terrible fate....."

And thus begins Zom-B, the horrific tale of a zombie apocalypse as experienced by B Smith, one of its unlucky victims. The 12 book series is the work of multi-million selling author Darren Shan (O'Shaughnessy to his relatives) who these days splits his time between homes in London and Pallaskenry, Limerick. Limerick Post talked to Darren Shan about the Zom-B series.

The third book in the series Zom-B City, just released, sits at No.1 in Amazon's Children's Horror Book chart. The book has also broken into the Top 100 on Amazon's overall sales chart.

Zom-B tells the story of B Smith, caught up in a zombie invasion at school. But much more than just a romp about kids running from flesh eating monsters, B Smith is a complex character that has to deal with a racist father and nightmares of killer babies.

While there is plenty gore and horror in Zom-B, issues of racism and bullying are ever present for central character who falls under the influence of a father that is a wife-beating racist thug.

Darren says, "Racism is very much to the forefront at the moment, people are being told to be afraid of anyone who is different and be afraid of Muslims. I spent a lot of time in London and racism was very apparent there. There was a lot of tension in the air especially after the London bombings, that is when the book started to come into place. Zom-B was my way of doing that in an exciting way. I wanted the readers to think about racism while at the same time having a good rip roaring story."

Darren writes mainly for a teenage audience and even though the clothes, the gadgets and the music has changed for today's teenagers, the issues that mattered to teenagers when he himself was in school haven't changed that much.

"Teenage years can be hard, we are much more callous when we are teenagers, we haven't yet learnt to be diplomatic, it's all part of everyday life. We should be saying to kids and teenagers, You need to think about what you are doing. You need to think about other

people's feelings. You need to think about where that may lead."

Darren adds that he is not trying to ram a message down anyone's throat but through his storytelling he wants to say, "Look at what you are doing, look at what other people are doing, think about it, Don't accept truths, don't accept the state of play of things just because it is deemed to be natural. It can turn you into one of these people on the news, who are waving flags and burning other flags, marching and trying to get people thrown out of the country."

In everyday life people come across some form of bullying. Darren adds it can be, "something that might seem perfectly acceptable to you, perfectly safe and self contained but it can have a snowball effect. A bit of harmless bullying in the schoolyards, that is all part of teenage life, but if that is happening every day, if it becomes more concentrated, that is how very negative thoughts that can lead you to do something terrible."

"I'm always saying to readers of my books, don't go down the road of hate. The main message that comes through in Zom-B, is to just pay attention to what you are doing."

With the Internet and the possibility of being abusive online while preserving anonymity, cyberbullying has taken these issues to a whole new level. "When it is face to face, it can be horrible, but there is, at least, that personal element to it. It is something you can react to and you can square up to the person or you can try and deal with it. Whereas if it done through the Internet it is more clinical, it is more thought through."

In Zom-B the main character comes from a hard background, with a father who is a bully, a wife beater, a child beater and a racist. "If you come from that sort of background it can be hard not to replicate what you see going on. If you put teens into a group together, you are acting this way because of what is going on around you and it's hard to change, but to go onto a computer by yourself to target someone, there is no excuse for it in my eyes."

Darren's new series is a zombie story about finding redemption. It tells the reader that there is always a good fight to be fought: "I always like to think that whatever background we come from, whatever we might do, there is always this hope for change. B Smith does a monstrous act, so I wanted to explore how that character can make amends and put right the wrong that has been done."

Zom-B was shortlisted for the Children's Book Of The Year in the Irish Book Awards. The first three books in the Zom-B series are now available in bookshops worldwide.

**COBBLESTONE  
JOE'S**

ELLEN STREET, LIMERICK

Thursday 21st March

**CHA'S BAND**

Friday 22nd March

**MRS. HENRY**

Saturday 23rd March

**TREES FALL DOWN**

Sunday 24th March

**TUMBLEDOWN**

Monday 25th March

**RUNNING ON EMPTY**

Tuesday 26th March

**SHOBHAN O'BRIEN**

Wednesday 27th March

**MO CINEMA**

## SHAN IN NUMBERS...

**25 million**  
book sold

**44**  
books published

TRANSLATED INTO  
**31** LANGUAGES

## PRODUCT

Limerick's Best Sellers / New Releases

## SINGLES

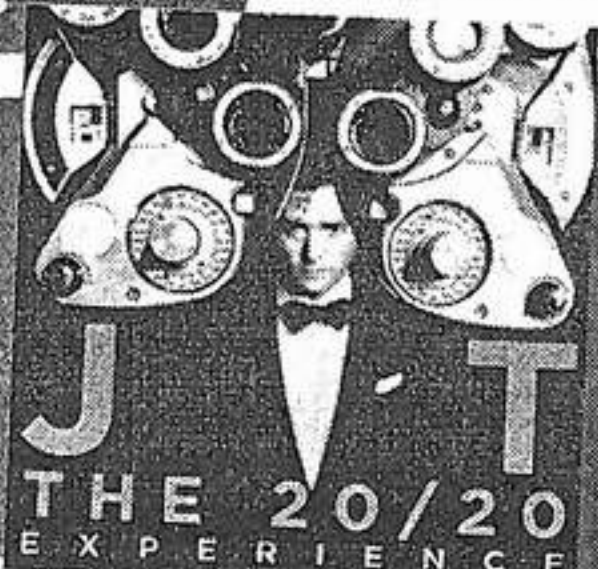
1. Let Her Go - Passenger
2. High Hopes - Kodaline
3. Pompeii - Bastille
4. Mirrors - Justin Timberlake
5. Thrift Shop - Macklemore & Ryan Lewis

## ALBUMS

1. The 20/20 Experience - Justin Timberlake
2. The high Hopes - Kodaline
3. All The Lights - Passenger
4. The Next Day - David Bowie
5. Our Version of Events - Emeil Sandé

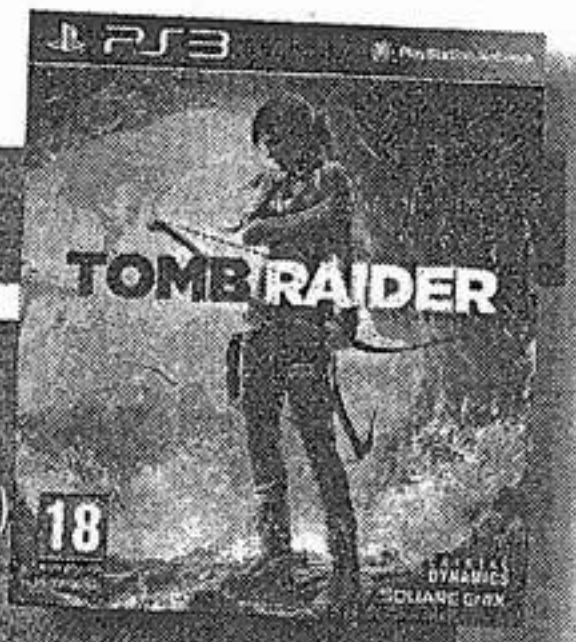


Passenger is this week's No.1 Download



## GAMES

1. Tomb Raider (PS3)
2. Starcraft II: Heart of the Swarm (PC/Mac)
3. God of War: Ascension (PS3)
4. Simcity (PC/Mac)
5. The Sims 3: University Life (PC)



## NEW RELEASE

## TIERANNIESAUR 'DIYSCO'

TIERANNIESAUR'S new single is the 70's disco inspired DIYSCO. It was the standout track at their gig in Dolan's in 2012 and is the title track of their upcoming album. The combo's debut was nominated for The Choice Music Prize in 2011.

