



Afterworlds

By Scott Westerfeld

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From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Scott Westerfeld comes a “masterful” (Cory Doctorow) novel-within-a-novel that you won’t be able to put down.

Darcy Patel has put college on hold to publish her teen novel, *Afterworlds*. With a contract in hand, she arrives in New York City with no apartment, no friends, and all the wrong clothes. But lucky for Darcy, she’s taken under the wings of other seasoned and fledgling writers who help her navigate the city and the world of writing and publishing. Over the course of a year, Darcy finishes her book, faces critique, and falls in love.

Woven into Darcy’s personal story is her novel, *Afterworlds*, a suspenseful thriller about a teen who slips into the “Afterworld” to survive a terrorist attack. The Afterworld is a place between the living and the dead, and where many unsolved—and terrifying—stories need to be reconciled. Like Darcy, Lizzie too falls in love...until a new threat resurfaces, and her special gifts may not be enough to protect those she cares about most.

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Afterworlds By Scott Westerfeld Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #151539 in eBooks
- Published on: 2014-09-23
- Released on: 2014-09-23
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Eighteen-year-old Darcy Patel's dream has come true. A publisher has accepted the novel she wrote, and she has received a significant advance for it and the unwritten sequel. Deferring her college plans, Darcy moves to New York City and joins the YA publishing world. Amidst parties with other authors, exploring the city, and endless rewrites, Darcy meets and falls for fellow author Imogen Gray. Unfolding in alternate chapters is Darcy's novel, *Afterworlds*, in which teenage Lizzie survives a terrorist attack at an airport by crossing over to the realm between the living and the dead. There she meets Yama, the Hindu death god in the body of a 17-year-old boy, and the two feel an instant attraction. Lizzie now has the power to interact with ghosts in both worlds, which leads her down a dangerous path. Dual readers Sheetal Sheth and Heather Lind solidly narrate the two stories. Sheetal effectively portrays Darcy's youth as she navigates the new worlds of publishing and romantic relationships. Lind captures Lizzie's struggles with moral decisions and provides an appropriately calm, accented voice for the death god Yama. The dynamic of the two separate story lines proves fascinating as if the plot of *Afterworlds* changes and evolves as Darcy edits her draft.—Amanda Raklovits, Champaign Public Library, IL

Review

STARRED REVIEW Eighteen-year-old Darcy drops her college plans and moves to New York to revise her soon-to-be-published novel and start the second one. Meanwhile, in chapters that alternate with Darcy's NYC adventures, her fictional protagonist, Lizzie, survives a near-death experience to find she has become a psychopomp, responsible for guiding souls to the afterlife. Westerfeld masterfully creates two divergent reading experiences (YA romance and fantasy horror) with two distinct yet believable voices in Darcy and Lizzie—and, somehow, makes them mesh into one cohesive novel. In addition to the details of the fully realized story worlds—and that's worlds plural, as this is a busy book, with content drawn from Gujarati culture and Indian religion—this book includes romantic entanglements, a charming lesbian love story, terrorism and justice, and insider references to the YA publishing and literature scene (including several references to the Michael L. Printz Award) that will have librarians grinning in delight. Westerfeld deftly and subtly captures Darcy's immature authorial voice, even including a few underdeveloped plot points that differentiate it from his own polished prose. There are no notes about cultural sources, but an extended conversation between (fictional) YA authors explores these issues, offering a few perspectives on respect and appropriateness. Get plenty; this one won't stay on the shelves. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Westerfeld, author of the hugely popular *Uglies* and *Leviathan* series, goes meta in a big way (this thing is the size of an anvil). Expect tons of YA-world gabbing and gushing. (July 2014 *Booklist*)

During National Novel Writing Month, Darcy Patel, 18, pounds out a “Hindu paranormal romance” that earns her an advance hefty enough to fund a college education. Alas, Darcy has other ideas, moving to Manhattan to do rewrites and deferring admission to Oberlin. What follows are two stories, told in alternating chapters: Darcy’s path to publication, and the final draft of the book she wrote, also titled *Afterworlds*. Darcy’s new experiences inform her revision: falling in love for the first time makes her rethink the romance in her book. Her protagonist Lizzie’s story is more explosive, beginning with a terrorist attack that she survives by so thoroughly pretending to be dead that she slips into a ghost world, where she meets Yamaraj, a hunky “soul guide.” The back-and-forth between Darcy’s story and her thriller is dizzying, but “Reading Zealots” like the kids Darcy hung with in high school will love the insider details about the YA writer’s life—the intimidating editorial letter, attending BEA (Darcy naively brings her own canvas tote). An ambitious concept, well executed. Ages 14–up. Agent: Jill Grinberg, Jill Grinberg Literary Management. (Sept.) (Publishers Weekly, 6/30/14 *STARRED)

“A masterful accomplishment . . . unmistakably Westerfeld, in full command of a prodigious talent, doing something complicated and difficult and making it look easy, even as it grabs you and drags you through its dark streets, laughing and crying along with both Darcy and Lizzie.” (Cory Doctorow *boingboing.net*)

About the Author

Scott Westerfeld is the author of the Leviathan series, the first book of which was the winner of the 2010 Locus Award for Best Young Adult Fiction. His other novels include the *New York Times* bestseller *Afterworlds*, the worldwide bestselling Uglies series, *The Last Days, Peeps, So Yesterday*, and the *Midnighters* trilogy. Visit him at ScottWesterfeld.com or follow him on Twitter at @ScottWesterfeld.

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Craig Chivers:

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