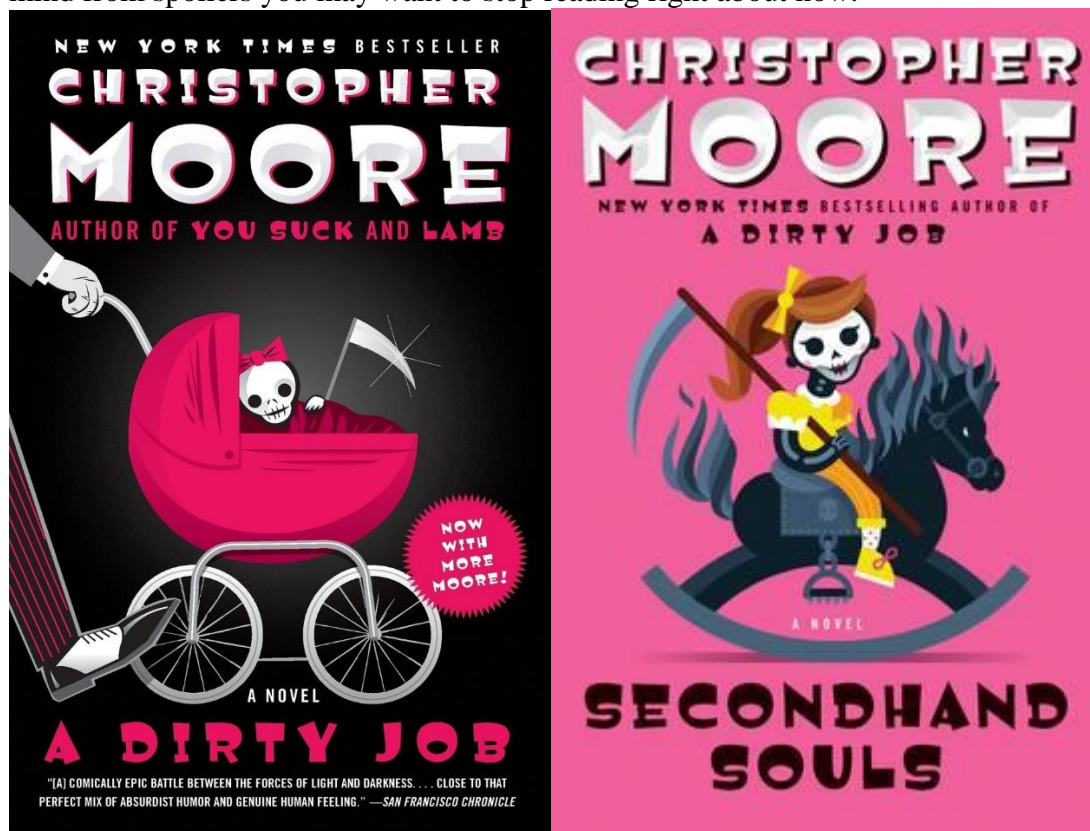


Secondhand Souls Makes a Close Second as a Sequel

I will be the first one to say it, I am a Christopher Moore addict. When I was thirteen my mother had a copy of *A Dirty Job* that she borrowed from a friend. I picked it up because I liked the cover, and read an amazingly vulgar, hilarious, and heartwarming book. In the almost ten years since I read *A Dirty Job* for the first time I've read a multitude of Moore's other books. I've been to the time of Christ with *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal*, the town of Pine Cove with *The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove* and back to San Francisco with the *You Suck* series. However, you can't forget your first, *A Dirty Job* was my favorite. So when I found out that there was going to be a sequel I was so excited to hang out with my favorite characters again that I preordered my copy on audible.

If you have never read *A Dirty Job* before and you'd like to leave it untainted in your mind from spoilers you may want to stop reading right about now.



Secondhand Souls, published by Harper Collins, released on August 25th, 2015 picks up a year after *A Dirty Job* finished. Former shop keeper and Death merchant, Charlie's soul is trapped in the body of a tiny well-dressed reptile with a giant penis that his Buddhist nun girlfriend, Audrey put him in to save his life after he is tragically killed at the end of the first book. Sophie, Charlie's daughter who is now in second grade has lost her powers as the great death or the Luminatis, and is living with Charlie's sister, Jane, and Jane's wife, Cassie. The secondhand store that brought Charlie his livelihood is now a defunct abandoned space after Minty Fresh, a tall black man who only dresses in the color he was named for, and Lily, an angsty goth teen in *A Dirty Job* with a bad mouth, now an angsty goth adult with a bad mouth tried to make it into a pizza and jazz themed restaurant. Lily now works for a suicide hotline and

Detective Alphonse Rivera, the detective assigned to Charlie's original case has been made into a soul collector himself. However, things in San Francisco are starting to go a little haywire. The new death merchants have been slacking on their responsibilities of collecting souls, a new order is about to be created in the world of the living and the dying, and Charlie Asher has to find a body to get back to his daughter, his girlfriend, and his normal life.

“‘Their names are Death, Disease, War, and Sparkle-Darkle Glitter-tits,’ Sophie said. ‘They’re the four little ponies of the Apocalypse.’” –Christopher Moore, *Secondhand Souls*

All of these elements make for a complex, dramatic story, and because Christopher Moore is behind these characters it is vulgar, hilarious, and ultimately very touching. Though *Secondhand Souls* doesn't quite capture all of the fresh, new, untapped fun that was so easily created by *A Dirty Job*, the return of beloved characters in new settings, particularly the relationship between Lily and Minty Fresh is compelling to read.

“You should never pass up an opportunity to be kind. You should never not thank someone. You should never not say something nice when you think it.” Christopher Moore,
Secondhand Souls

You may be wondering if you can read *Secondhand Souls* before you read *A Dirty Job*, the answer to that question is a quick and simple “no.” A major part of what makes the second book so much fun to read, and read again is because some of your favorite characters get brand new stories to tell.

Page count: 352

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http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0061779784/ref=olp_product_details?ie=U

In terms of listening to the book instead of reading it goes it makes it a little easier to notice where Moore may have tripped up. For example, Lemon Fresh, a character who dresses entirely in yellow refers to himself as the “magical negro” though Moore tries to make a point here it gets a little lost, particularly when he has scenes of Minty and Lemon talking to each other. The power of Minty as a character is slightly lessened when Moore and inevitably Fisher Stevens, the narrator of the audio book, tries to mimic the way that black men speak with one another.



Moore had a major challenge when he wrote this novel, it had to appeal to his wide fan base that knows that the first half of the saga is by far one of his greatest novels to date. Moore meets that challenge in new and exciting ways. He is consistent with the plot of the book, stays true to his characters, and adds new and interesting characters into the sequel. Moore shows his consistent ability to mix heartwarming plotlines with pop culture references, complex story lines, laugh out loud humor, and extreme vulgarity. We are brought back to one of Moore's greatest group of characters. While *Secondhand Souls* is not the place to start with Christopher Moore, it is certainly a place that avid fans will pick up and love.

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