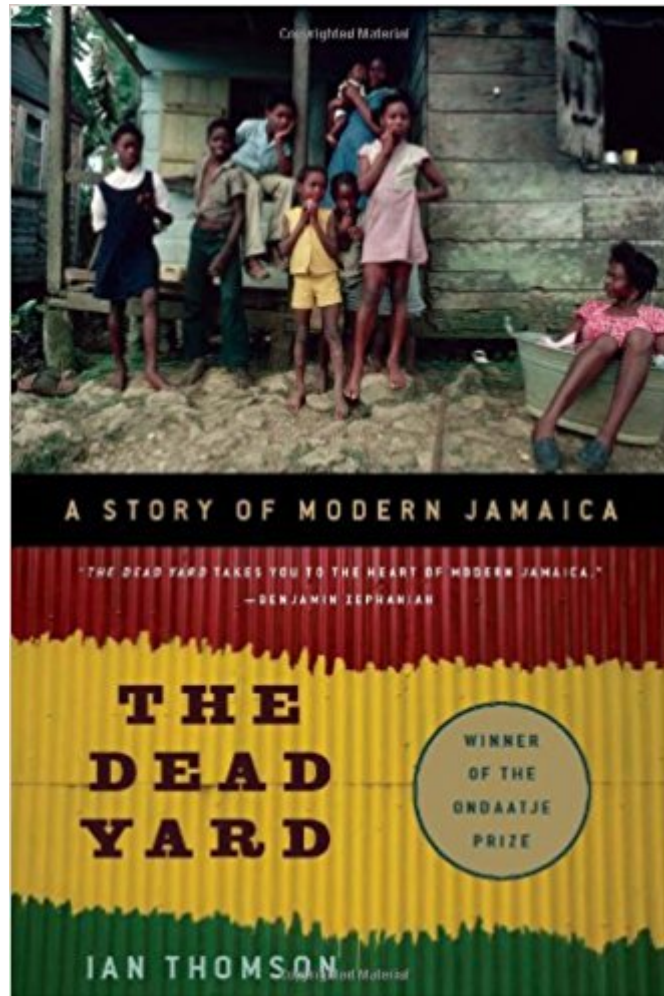




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The Dead Yard: A Story Of Modern Jamaica



Synopsis

Named the Dolman Travel Book of the Year, *The Dead Yard* paints an unforgettable portrait of modern Jamaica. Since independence, Jamaica has gradually become associated with twin images--a resort-style travel Eden for foreigners and a new kind of hell for Jamaicans, a society where gangs control the areas where most Jamaicans live and drug lords like Christopher Coke rule elites and the poor alike. Ian Thomson's brave book explores a country of lost promise, where America's hunger for drugs fuels a dependent economy and shadowy politics. The lauded birthplace of reggae and Bob Marley, Jamaica is now sunk in corruption and hopelessness. A synthesis of vital history and unflinching reportage, *The Dead Yard* is "a fascinating account of a beautiful, treacherous country" (Irish Times).

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (41 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I'm not sure what the point of this book was, nor why it won some awards. Was to tell the story of life in modern Jamaica? Then why so many detours to talk to Jamaicans who live in England? Was it to talk about the evils of colonialism? Then why so much decrying of Jamaica adopting the ways of America and leaving the British ones aside? As a Jamaican, I cannot say he lied when he talked about the pervasiveness of violence or the fact that 80 percent of babies are born out of wedlock. But the picture is one-sided. It would be like going to the inner-city in the US and writing about crime and unemployment and thinking you'd done a good job of capturing America. A lot of the people he interviews are white Jamaicans, who are only a very tiny minority of the population. The reason he

says, is that "white Jamaicans still wield huge (if not uncontested) power." Then, why not interview more successful ones? He seems to have a fascination with descendants of the planter class who now live in run-down crumbling houses and complain how Jamaica is a hell-hole. He interviews Blanche Blackwell, 95, who now lives in the UK and will never return. Why not her son Chris, who is a successful music producer and hotelier who still lives on the island? And many people who were kind enough to give him a place to stay come in for a scowering. From my memory, only 2 people he talks with have anything positive to say about Jamaica: jazz musician Ernie Ranglin and the former GG Howard Cooke. People who might have said something positive like Prof. Rex Nettleford are not given the chance -- or if they did it is not recorded in the book.

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