



## Maylene and the Sons of Disaster: IV



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### [Maylene and the Sons of Disaster](#)

IV

(Ferret; US: 27 Sep 2011; UK: 27 Sep 2011)

The crunch and grime of Southern metal is attempted by many and mastered by few. The few that have made it their constant trade, like Clutch, Melvins, and Black Label Society, are responsible for inspiring a generation of new artists that have begun to make Southern metal a more popular genre again. Of greater interest, though, are the groups that have taken Southern metal and fused it with other styles to generate wholly new subgenres in the past decade. Groups such as Every Time I Die, He is Legend and the Showdown have dared to tread where few others would even imagine possible, and they've done so with great success.



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Another group deserving of praise in this category is **Maylene and the Sons of Disaster**, whose fusion of metalcore and Southern metal was considered innovative and unique on their very first album. Now on their fourth full-length, the Georgia-based group has cemented that reputation, and is now focused on expanding their horizons via some intriguing experimentation.

The first few chords of opening track "In Dead We Dream" immediately confirm that the Southern metal heart of the band is still intact, and any lingering doubts are erased by the first raspy screams of vocalist **Dallas Taylor**. **IV** doesn't have quite the same thickly layered sound as its predecessor, *III*, but that can easily be attributed to the group cutting down from three guitarists to two last year. And despite the loss of a guitarist, most of this album is still crushingly heavy, with ripping guitar solos marking intense breakdowns, while meaty Southern metal riffs flow together to weave a complicated audio tapestry. Most songs on this album will have longtime fans of the band feeling very excited for the continuation of the style that helped make **Maylene and the Sons of Disaster** known to the public.

That being said, **IV** is not without its attempts at progression, some of which may not be well-received by fans. This album features a lot of melodic clean vocals from **Taylor**, which is not new for the band. However, the clean vocals have never been featured in such abundance before, dominating the vast majority of the album. On some songs, it works very well, such as the soft-sung ballad "Taking on Water" or the atmospheric acoustic track "Drought of '85". On others, though, the clean singing misses the mark because it doesn't mesh well with the thick guitar riffs and driving bass. Lead single "Open Your Eyes" is a perfect example, with a chorus that would fit better on a Skillet song forced into a downtuned lead riff that begs for a passionate screaming chorus. It's not an awful mismatch, and it does its job of keeping the song together, but it's not as energetic as many would want to hear.

**IV** is a difficult album to categorize for a band that seems to be going in two directions. The continuation of the group's older musical style is a welcome change that many fans have been waiting for, and they will praise the album for it repeatedly. However, those same veteran fans will likely have plenty of criticism to levy against the changes in the vocals, even as those very changes help bring undecided listeners into the fold. For **Maylene and the Sons of Disaster**, **IV** could be the biggest album of their careers, or it could leave them in exactly the same place they were in prior to its release. There's no way to tell. This album is good overall, but it's also too ambiguous to have any true defining moments until fans have had time to listen to it repeatedly and make their own decisions.

