



Demise of the Living

Iain McKinnon

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The world is infected. The dead are reanimating and attacking the living. In a city being overrun with ravenous corpses people find safety where they can. A disparate group of strangers drawn together by chance seek sanctuary from the carnage outside in an empty office block. Besieged by an army of walking dead and with little hope of rescue the group must learn to work together if they are going to survive. But for how long can the barricades hold back the ever increasing hordes of undead? How long before the food runs out? How long before those who were bitten succumb to the infection? And how long before they realise that the dead outside are the least of their fears?

Demise of the Living Details

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From Reader Review Demise of the Living for online ebook

David McDonald says

Yet another zombie book, I here you say? Agreed, there certainly is plenty to choose from in this particular horror sub-genre... but few that distinguish themselves.

Step forward Scottish author Iain McKinnon and the latest in his 'Dead' series, Demise of the Living.

McKinnon's previous zombie novels, Domain of the Dead and Remains of the Dead, have proven to be incredibly popular with horror fans and I was especially impressed with his short story 'Jennifer', a striking, unique and memorable tale indeed.

Although set in the same world as DOTD and ROTD, the events in this book take place years before those seen in the preceding titles. 'Demise' takes place during the initial stages of the ascendance of the undead and follows a disparate group of survivors as they contend not only with the hordes of walking dead that hunger for their flesh but with rising tensions amidst their own number.

'Demise' functions perfectly well as a standalone title and I'd suggest that the casual reader won't have lost out by not reading DOTD or ROTD first. With hindsight, I'd suggest that all three of these books could be read quite comfortably independently of each other, or indeed in any order that the reader saw fit.

In contrast to the previous titles, there isn't much in the way of gunplay in 'Demise'. This, I would suggest, is to the story's benefit. Instead of a largely action-driven narrative, McKinnon's latest tale is fuelled by its characters. This is no crack team of battle-hardened soldiers but very ordinary people attempting to do their best in an extraordinary situation. McKinnon explores their own personal motivations, pushes his key players to the edge and as is his particular style, isn't afraid to bump off characters when the plot calls for it. For me, one of the key strengths of 'Demise' is how the characters time is spent dealing with the things that a mere matter of days before these events, they took for granted: running water, food, power, etc... and that's all while contending with the ever-present threat of the undead.

However, 'Demise' really came into its own in the last third or so of the book where McKinnon really decides to explore the darker side of human nature and the lengths that people are prepared to go to in desperate situations.

My sole criticism of 'Demise' is a technical one: this title really could have used a more thorough proof-reader prior to publishing. There are some errors and typos that interrupted the flow of reading and subsequent enjoyment of the story but I would suggest that in the grand scheme of things, this is a trivial concern.

As is clear from the title of this review, Demise of the Living is by far and away my favourite of McKinnon's 'Dead' series so far. If you're looking to start with one of this author's books but can't make your mind up, let me help you... this is it!

Dave Lightfoot says

I've been a fan of Iain's writing for many years now and I'm always excited when he has a new book out.

And this particular book is the one I've been waiting for, for a long time. His previous two Zombie Novels take place many years after the initial outbreak. I thoroughly enjoyed them but I always wanted to see how he would of dealt with the start of the Z-Poc and with Demise of the Living he delivers with blood curdling horror and a tense storyline. I was not disappointed. I loved this book from start to finish and I would highly recommend it to any fan of the genre.

Ebony Irby says

This book was just Ok. I'd give it 2.5 Stars if that was an option. I love zombie books where you have regular people trying to survive as opposed to combat ready soldiers, and survivalist who seem to have all the answers. With that being said, this group of survivors was just annoying. Why was Sharon still giving orders as if she was still in charge? Why was Liz allowed to keep her dead son? Why were there no night guards to keep everyone safe? These were just people, staying in an office building, living day by day. Nothing more, nothing less. Now, besides the characters, there were so many grammatical errors in this book.

At times, when two people were having a conversation, instead as saying one person asked, and another answered, it would read as if the person was answering themselves. Example:

John and Billy Talking

Hey Billy, how much water is left in the tank, asked John

There's 12 gallons left, said John (instead of "said Billy")

This type of error happened multiple times in the book. ALSO, and this was a huge pet peeve of mine. The author used the word "said" so many times, it made the story unbearable. Example

I'm hungry, said Liz

Me too, said John

Here's some food, said Collin

Thank you, said Thomas

I want water, said Sophia

And so on, and so on. This is NO exaggeration. There a paragraphs that read like this all throughout the story. I just wish the story went more indebt with character development and had a better story line than people just waiting in a building to get rescued. The only plot twist was at the end when it was realized that the zombie weren't the only killers to be weary of.

Shana Festa says

Demise of the Living, book 3 of The Dead series is a outstanding tale of horror and survival. I couldn't put this page turner down, and am still chomping at the bit for more. While part of a series, Demise of the Living is a stand alone book linked to the others by an outbreak of zombies. Creating a sanctuary for themselves in an office building, survivors must face impending death from both inside and outside their walls.

This is the perfect zombie book for my sick and twisted mind. More than once I caught myself jumping at little noises and peeking into the dark to make sure nothing was there. I have read and reviewed ten books in the past two weeks, and while I loved several of them, I absolutely lusted after Demise of the Living the minute I began reading. Iain McKinnon puts his Psych degree to good use in his latest release.

A unique, refreshing story for zombie fans, Demise of the Living is a skillfully crafted piece of art with the perfect balance of gore, violence, and primitive human nature. A schoolteacher struggling to do right by everyone, a mother who will ensure the safety of her children at all costs, a maintenance worker who will stop at nothing to save his own skin; these are just a handful of the compelling survivors to grace the pages of Demise of the Living.

At one point, I was so floored by the read, that I had to stop and tweet a demand that all my followers go buy the book. I won't spoil the ending for readers, but let me just say I DID NOT SEE THAT COMING! I implore you, do not pass on this book. Demise of the Living is a must have book for your shelves.

David Redding says

I have been waiting a while to find out what happened after the cliffhangers of Domain of the Dead and Remains of the Dead, so I was excited when I saw Demise of the Living had come out. Then I found out that it's actually a prequel to the first two books coving the initial outbreak (the first two books take place 5 years after the fall of society)....I was pissed.

If you're like me, you're getting sick of the standard run and gun outbreak zombie novels...luckily Demise of the Dead isn't one of them. This book is more of a study of how a group might handle the end of the world. So even though I'm still ticked that I don't get to find out what happens to the characters from the first two books, I get an interesting read in Demise of the Living.

As I was reading I did get annoyed at some of the characters and their idiotic behaviour and I'd had about enough of the "let's vote on this" meeting BS and all the bickering. However, just as I was about to call it quits the author throws in a curve ball in the last quarter of the book. If that wasn't enough, the ending has a special "oh damn!" quality to it that makes all the annoying parts just slip away.

In conclusion, if you are a fan of run and gun, special ops, thunderous fire power zombie books then this one is not for you. If you like the human drama of a bunch of strangers being trapped together while society dies around them...this book is for you.

Side note: you really don't have to ready the first two books Domain of the Dead or Remains of the Dead. This book is pretty much a stand alone book.

Psy says

Excellent book, I really enjoyed it. The story focuses more on the relationship between a band of survivors trapped together than an all machetes blazing zombie novel , but don't let this put you off as there's plenty of action with interesting characters and a good plot.

Highly recommended.

Wulfwyn says

Interesting twist though I thought the ending unraveled a bit, which is how I gave it 4 stars instead of five.

This is the first book I read by this author but is, (I believe), the third book in a series. Even though I thought the ending unraveled I enjoyed enough of the book to definitely get the first two books. Lots of zombie action though there is a very interesting twist among the living. I just wish the ending hadn't felt rushed.

Katie says

I really enjoy Iain McKinnon's writing style. It is well paced and not overly complicated or simplistic but hits a very nice medium which keeps you somewhat involved with the story.

After having read the first two books in this series, I was really looking forward to this next book. Unfortunately it didn't quite hit all the marks with me. Firstly I was really hoping for a continuation of the major cliff hangers left in the first two books which both seemed to really begin to kick off when they ended rather abruptly - this was not so. I also found that the story near to the end of the book became more of a murder mystery 'Who dunnit?' rather than the zombie fiction I wanted to read. The twist ending did surprise me but more because it was a little ridiculous. The reasons for the murderer, (I won't reveal who), to have knocked off the others was a little thinly placed and unrealistic - there didn't seem to be any genuine emotion at the end so perhaps a little rushed?

Also a big part that was ruined for me was that certain mysteries didn't seem to have been resolved. Karen was attacked by a zombie who's face was 'buried in her neck' but not much is said about whether she was actually bitten or not. Her shoulder was injured and biker Billy was heard saying that the injury didn't look like road rash to him as the girl claimed. If she was bitten, why didn't she get infected? Where did her friend Shan go to and what happened to the cleaning ladies exactly? We are lead to believe that the murderer pushed at least one of the two off the building but the other, Magda is never found. And finally, the security guard, Mo, is seen sneaking off to the third floor for something private that he doesn't want anyone to know about. This also is not revealed.

I feel that the story was severely lacking in some places towards the end and could have had so much more excitement. The only major zombie-related incident was when the lobby windows were breached but the zombies never managed to make it upstairs and the humans did not seem worried about them. No one was put on watch duty either.

I would say that this is a good stand-alone book and should not be considered part of the series, but perhaps an off-shoot of it. I did enjoy the book but I feel it could have been so much better!

Jackie says

This is how the world ends... with a bunch of dead eating the living. Sucks, huh. This is the beginning of the end of the world. This takes place in the same world as Domain of the Dead and Remains of the Dead but it involves none of the same characters. It's about a group of mostly strangers who get trapped in an office building together as the world falls apart around them. Things begin to fall apart inside as well. It's a great story.

Heather Faville says

Here we are again, in the world of the undead. In Iain McKinnon's world of the undead to be exact. Demise of the Living is the third book set in the beginning of the outbreak in the same world as Domain of the Dead and Remains of the Dead but it does not share any of the characters that we will eventually meet in the other two books. We start out hopping from small group/individual people as we begin to learn about what is happening and how each person is handling themselves. Eventually most of the people we have learned about wind up being forced to hold up in the same office building either by already being in the building, being forced into the building because there is nowhere to go or because a small group went scavenging and brought back more than just supplies. As the story progresses, we have less of an active threat from the undead themselves, but, as with most zombie stories, the biggest threat isn't always from the creatures outside trying to dine on your flesh.

Our group of strangers begin realizing that they may not be leaving the office anytime soon so they start looking into what supplies they have and calculating how much they need per day to survive. Lucky for them they seem to have a decently mixed group of skill sets and things go fairly smoothly at first, but you know that can't last long or this would be a really boring book. People die, tempers flair and strange things (NOT zombie related) start happening at the office.

Demise of the Living had a nice well-rounded "cast" of characters. Admittedly, I would have had no problem with all of them dying as I didn't really "like" any of them. Not due to poor characterization by the author, but simply because I have dealt with many of the type of people who were in the group and most tend to rub the wrong way over time. Their dialogue was nicely done giving each character the best fitting responses to the personalities we have observed. Settings are limited due to the story primarily being set in one location, the office building. But we get to wander around the various levels and offices within the building getting a nice feeling of how small even a multilevel office building can get for a group that has nowhere else to go.

Kristi says

This book is the prequel to Domain of the Dead and Remains of the Dead. It features a set of characters each awaking to a typical workday that gradually goes horribly wrong. Dead walk the streets, attacking & feeding on the living, and their numbers swell rapidly as victims join their ranks. As most of the original characters flee, they come together in an office building and begin the desparate struggle for survival. The book does a great job of dealing with the realities of a dying society - power loss, food scavenging, mass chaos, and survivors turning on each other. Like the previous books, no character is sacred and reality triumphs in the survival of the fittest. A nice locked room mystery is added into the mix as well. A great entry into the genre.

Darren Dilnott says

Absolutely stunningly book. Brilliantly written. A ZA book needs to tell a story that id believe. People, situations, and reactions have got to be realistic for me to enjoy it fully. I'm easily bored when something doesn't sit right, hence i have many unfinished books. A book has to want me thinking about it all day, and excited of the prospect of continuing it. Iain McKinnon delivers a masterclass in everything i appreciate in a ZA book. There are a bunch of different characters and each has a distinctive personalty and they never react in a way you'd expect them not to. The author cleverly shows the mental deterioration of each. Very brutal in

places which makes for an exciting read.

Jeremy Dyson says

Demise of the Living starts off as the zombie apocalypse hits and follows the stories a variety of separate characters who must come together in an office building in order to survive.

There are a number of things McKinnon does that work well in this novel. Firstly, it is well-written. The characters are also remarkably different and the story manages to eventually bring the characters together into one setting in a way that seems pretty random but natural. At a certain point late in the novel, Domain of the Dead spins off into a murder mystery. This twist builds the events up to a narrative climax that works well and keeps the pages turning.

The conflict between the characters keeps the story interesting. Thomas, the building maintenance worker, goes a long way to keeping the stirring the conflicting personalities, as does John, the fat, whiny office worker. While some of the others fail to quite come to life as much, the conflict in their interactions makes for some entertaining stuff.

Unfortunately, for reasons I won't disclose, the big reveal of the murder mystery will not likely take anyone by surprise. Based on what the reader knows of the characters from the narrator, it also comes across as a pretty forced attempt by the author to shock the reader with a surprise ending. As the end of the novel approached, I sort of feared this was where the story would end up. I was hoping I'd be wrong, because it would have been a much better story if I was wrong.

Overall it was enjoyable. Fans of post-apocalyptic fiction will appreciate the intensity of the scenes. And if you somehow don't see the ending coming, you will likely enjoy the book a little more than me.

RJ says

I'll go 3-1/2 on this one because it was a decent story with good characters and a surprise mystery-thriller twist to an otherwise common zombie tale. Sort of an A for effort recommendation. McKinnon's other zombie novels are basically of the same caliber. A decent read, but "leave much to be desired" as they say.

Sarah says

I read this after reading the first two and assumed it would carry on from those concurrent stories. Once I'd gotten over my initial disappointment that this wasn't the case I literally couldn't put it down. Tense, graphic, desperate, plenty of action and colourful characters. I was saddened when some of favourite characters were killed in the last chapters, and didn't guess who the killer was. A great read... But I STILL want to know what happens after the first two novels!!
