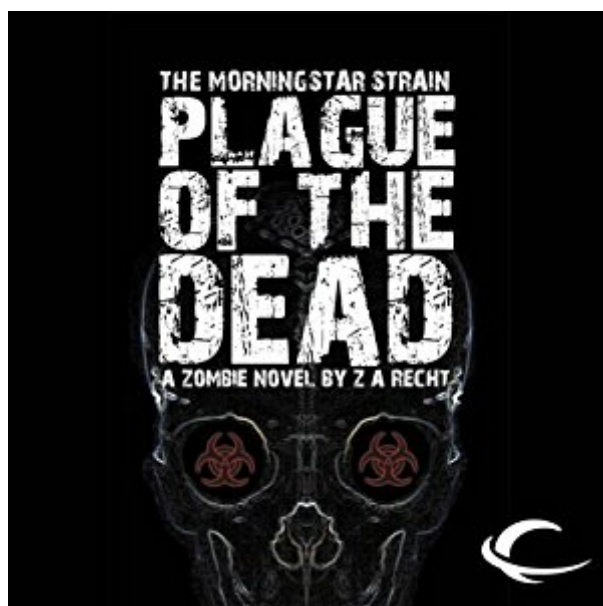


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Plague Of The Dead: The Morningstar Strain, Book 1



Synopsis

The end begins with an unprecedented viral outbreak: Morningstar. The infected are subject to delirium, fever, violent behavior . . . and a one hundred percent mortality rate. But the end is only the beginning: The victims return from death to walk the earth. When a massive military operation fails to contain the plague of the living dead, it escalates into a worldwide pandemic. Now, a single law of nature dominates the global landscape: Live or die, kill or be killed. On one side of the world, thousands of miles from home, a battle-hardened general surveys the remnants of his command: a young medic, a veteran photographer, a brash private, and dozens of refugees • all are his responsibility. While in the United States, an army colonel discovers the darker side of Morningstar and collaborates with a well-known journalist to leak the information to the public. . . .

• HYPNOTICALLY READABLE. • R. Thomas Riley, author of *Through the Glass Darkly*
• AN ACTION-PACKED ZOMBIE EXTRAVAGANZA. • Ryan C. Thomas, author of *The Summer I Died*
• A LITERAL, INTELLIGENT THRILLER. • David Moody, author of *Hater* and the acclaimed *Autumn* series --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 56 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: August 25, 2009

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B002MVI0P2

Best Sellers Rank: #230 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Horror #739 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science Fiction #2147 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror

Customer Reviews

If the Z in Z.A. Recht doesn't stand for Zombie, it ought to because the man has given the world a great zombie novel in *Plague of the Dead* (actually, I think the Z stands for Zach, but maybe he can go about getting that changed). Usually, when I start reviewing a zombie novel or movie, I start by pointing out that this horror fan has never been a huge fan of zombies, but I'm not going to do that

this time around. Thanks to the one-two punch of David Wellington and now Z.A. Recht, I now consider myself a true fan of the zombie genre. Today's new crop of post-apocalyptic horror writers have created something far more interesting than a braindead, animated corpse wandering the countryside looking for revenge on behalf of some voodoo queen. Out of the remote regions of Africa it arose, a virus that made Ebola look like a case of the sniffles. The Morningstar Strain, as it was dubbed, doesn't just kill you (and thus itself); it reanimates your sorry ass and sends you out looking for sustenance in the form of human flesh. Yep, you can't blame any black ops government operation for the epidemic that threatens to exterminate human life on this planet this time around. This virus is completely natural - and beyond deadly. Lt. Colonel Anna Demilio of the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease (USAMRIID) actually goes out of her way to warn the powers that be of the threat early on, but the bureaucracy as well as international opposition doesn't even allow for any travel restrictions to be put in place until it's far too late. By the time U.S. leaders realize the extent of the threat, carriers escaping the troubled regions have transported the virus to various places all over the world.

The End of the World has begun. It is called Morning Star. A virus of unknown origin and is unlike anything the world has ever seen. Those who are infected are subject to fever, chills, and very violent behavior. As the virus further takes hold those who are infected become incoherent and insanely violent. Their only will in life is to destroy any human that isn't a carrier of the virus. Those who are infected will eventually die but the virus isn't done. It reanimates the carrier who then rises and walks the earth seeking warm human flesh. Destruction of the Brain is the only way to bring the carrier down for good. Anna DeMilio of the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases has studied the virus. She knows it has the power to destroy mankind, and she is trying to warn the world. She knows that if it isn't quarantined to Africa the whole world will soon be overrun. Her warnings aren't heeded in time, and after a military operation in North Africa fails to contain the virus soon the entire world finds itself in the middle of a massive pandemic that can't be stopped. All the major nations of the world start falling into chaos. The carriers are roaming the streets of all the major cities, and there is nothing that can be done to stop it. Anna with the help of a reporter and a rogue NSA agent escapes a burning Washington DC in hopes of meeting up with a rag tag military unit. She hopes to find a safe place to continue her research. She is on a mission to find a cure before all is lost. America is in chaos now and they all know that the journey ahead will be pure Hell. I have said it time and time before, but I will say it one more time. I am a sucker for a good zombie story. I have also come to expect nothing but the best from Permuted Press releases.

One of Recht novel's biggest merits is to bring the light back onto this old -though fascinating- Zombie theme. Looks like it is the latest trend in horror books, given the number of new publications on the subject as of late...Anyway, I have enjoyed the "international" coverage of the theme: for once, the action is not strictly limited to the US and not solely focused on US internal affairs -as opposed to global ones. Recht's novel covers the whole world, and the author seems to have been willing to involve a fair panel of foreigners as part of the group of heroes, with characters of such diverse backgrounds as Japanese, Arabic, Black African. Good and realistic stuff, as a viral epidemics of the nature of what Recht identifies would in no way be contained to a single nation in the world. Beyond these comments, I have been a little taken aback by a number of flaws in the novel architecture and hypothesis used in it. For one, there is no clear definition of the number of soldiers that participate to the Suez conflict. One would only hypothesize that such a threat would be dealt with dozens, if not hundreds of thousands of soldiers, from various countries and not only from the US, not by a limited-scale force as featured in Recht's book. Also, there is a lack of overall cohesion in how the US military behaves: after the Suez debacle, it looks as if the General is simply cut loose from his own commanders. He does not try hard -as he would be supposed to do in real life- to reestablish the connection with his "back-office" supervisors to get their instructions on how to further conduct the war against the enemy. It is as if the head of the US army, back on the East Coast, had completely vanished.

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