



MARCH 3, 2020 BY IVAN KARHOFF

*Never-DEAD* has a very interesting origin. Typically, a book will inspire a film or TV program, but here the reverse is true. *Never-DEAD* was inspired by a short television program screened at the 2016 MystiCon Independent Film Festival.

Furthermore, *Never-DEAD* Author Ann Greyson was a leading actor in the program portraying the character of Hannah Winter.

The *Never-DEAD* story takes place during the prophetic frightful times ending of the Mayan calendar. At this time a pandemic disease is triggered which has the ability to turn people into a zombie state.

Julie Mehta is one of the key individuals who can help develop a vaccine. Julie and Hannah Winter are safely positioned inside a bunker based in New Mexico. However, Hannah Winter is greatly distracted because her younger sister, Jenna, is miles away in Texas, where the disease has already taken more than enough souls.

With the disease getting out of control and the distance putting pressure on both Julie and Hannah, the race for survival does not show signs of easing up. Instead, it takes them on an emotional roller coaster that has the power to scar them for life.

Right from the start, Greyson sets the horrific scene for the apocalypse. She maintains a consistent pace that helps keep the reader invested. In fact, the balance between pacing and plot is an element of the novel that really shines through. As for the characters that fill this dark fantasy world, they fit perfectly inside their roles. Readers will quickly recognize or even relate to the sisterly-bond between Hannah and Jenna. And the other well-rounded characters provide colorful support as well.

Throughout the novel, Greyson switches between first and third-person perspectives. Personally, I love this rather daring and interesting choice of style. While the execution of different perspectives disrupts the rule for easy-reading, especially in the particular way the author chooses to use them, it makes for an interesting reading experience.



For those that love a strong build-up to a nail-biting climax, *Never-DEAD* is that type of horror story. Of course, more than enough zombies are created along the way and some good characters are sacrificed. But do not expect too many gory details. This could be a downside for hardcore horror fans, although Greyson makes up for the lack of gore via the “thrill” factor. Much like the pacing, there is a good balance between the destruction and the slow progress of hope towards finding a vaccine.

Provided the limited scenarios allowed by zombies and virus outbreaks, it can be very challenging to come up with a truly unique plot. And while *Never-DEAD* does not reshape or re-create the zombie genre, it still provides a very entertaining ride with a good measure of emotion to drive the story home.

Overall, I consider the novel to be a worthy read. While I cannot say it is a perfect story given some of the plot and writing aspects, the raw passion from the author is evident from the first page to the last one. Thus I believe Greyson has more talent waiting to surface. I believe she has the ability to hone her skills as a horror writer and turn out some very good horror stories that I look forward to reading!



***Reviewed by Damnetha Jules***

*Damnetha is a staff writer, horror book and movie critic.*