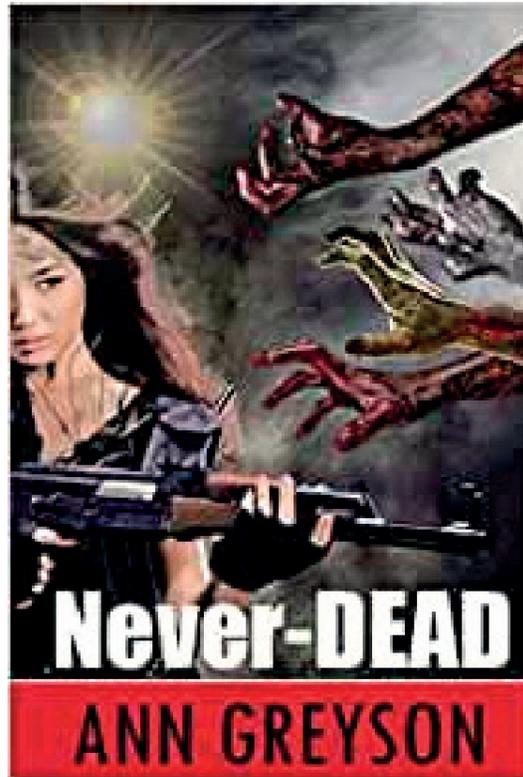
A close-up photograph of a stack of several books. The books have various colored covers, including green, red, and white. The pages are mostly white and yellowed with age. The text is overlaid on the top portion of the stack.

THE PRAIRIES BOOK REVIEW

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Never-DEAD by Ann Greyson

Fast-paced and engrossing...

In Greyson's intriguing debut, a young woman struggles to stay alive while navigating through a zombie-like pandemic and learning about her own strength. It is 2012. The Mayas calendar has ended with a contagious disease that brings the dead back to life. When the boundaries are breached and the cities overrun, 19-year-old Jenna Winter escapes to travel from San Antonio, Texas to New Mexico to be with her sister Hannah who is the head of Information technology at Biogenetics & Disease Control, a medical research company located deep beneath the city of Dulce, New Mexico. At the same time, Julie Mehta, a staff virologist, works diligently to develop a vaccine to prevent the humanity from contracting the infection. Greyson's cinematic narrative easily pulls readers into this bleak but enthralling story of survival. Through Jenna's ability to maintain an emotional distance from the horrors around her as her survival instinct kicks in, Greyson explores the boundless capacity of perseverance in human race. Greyson's prose is simple and accessible, plotting tight, and characterization thoroughly done. The biological research details are intriguing without being over-the-top. Jenna who starts as a naïve 19-year-old college dropout, realizes maturity and strength while trying to survive through months of pandemic, and it's her character that stays at the heart of the story. Dr. Julie Mehta's determination and Hannah's calm demeanor make them thoroughly likable characters. Greyson poignantly portrays people's fear, insecurities, fickleness, and bitter rage through Jenna and her other characters. Lovers of apocalyptic fiction will be delighted.



Tales of the Starmen: Volume 1 by Nathan Burton

Thoroughly entertaining... a page turner!

In his action-packed debut, Burton imagines the world in a far-future where all the planets in the universe are governed by a single powerful empire. The Solarium Empire has ruled the universe for centuries under the rule of The Zion, the powerful warrior. Sensing the arrival of his twilight years, Zion sends for his younger son Helion from Earth. Ruthless and cold Eckron, the military leader and Zion's older son, is wary of Helion's newfound presence in his father's life, but the rebellion from people of planet Chegonia forces him to forget his grudge and join hands with Helion. Will the brothers be able to stop the threat before the time runs out? Through crisp prose, Burton completely immerses the reader into his characters' lives: through Helion's perspective who is trying to adjust in his new role, Burton reveals the intriguing details of the far-future community, and by bestowing his characters' personas with human vulnerabilities and passions, he transforms this thrilling dystopian story into a thoughtful reflection of power and oppression. The narrative is swift, the plot tightly constructed, and the brothers, powerful and intuitive, have enough substance to sustain a long series. The combination of action and adventure with science fiction, well-drawn scenes of space action and surprising revelations make it a strong start for what promises to be a highly enjoyable series. Fast-paced and original, Burton succeeds in crafting a thoroughly absorbing dystopian read. The lovers of fast-paced, action-packed dystopian will be highly rewarded.