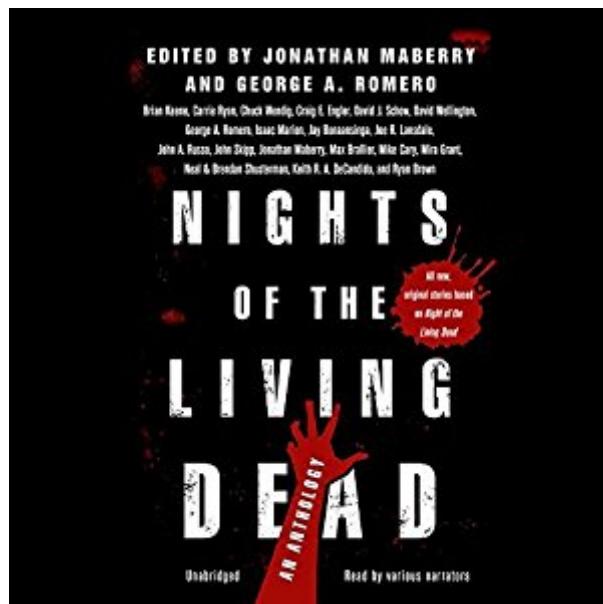


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# Nights Of The Living Dead: An Anthology



## Synopsis

In 1968 the world experienced a brand-new kind of terror with the debut of George A. Romero's landmark film *Night of the Living Dead*. This was something new...and terrifying. Since then, zombies have invaded every aspect of popular culture. But it all started on that dreadful night in a remote farmhouse. *Nights of the Living Dead* returns to that night, to the outbreak, to where it all began. New York Times best-selling author Jonathan Maberry teams up with the godfather of the living dead himself, George A. Romero, to present a collection of all-new tales set during the 48 hours of that legendary outbreak. *Nights of the Living Dead* includes stories by some of today's most important writers: Brian Keene, Carrie Ryan, Chuck Wendig, Craig Engler, David J. Schow, David Wellington, Isaac Marion, Jay Bonansinga, Joe R. Lansdale, Joe McKinney, John Russo, John Skipp, Keith RA DeCandido, Max Brallier, Mike Carey, Mira Grant, Neal and Brendan Shusterman, and Sandra and Ryan Brown, plus original stories by Romero and Maberry. Narrators include: Ray Porter, Stefan Rudnicki, Jonathan Maberry, Kasey Lansdale, Kristoffer Tabori, Rex Linn, Gabrielle de Cuir, Adenrele Ojo, Richard Gilliland, and Nicholas Guy Smith.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If I'm not mistaken this book came out less than a week before George Romero's passing. There's some really good stories in this collection. Romero is listed as one of the editors of the book but he's also the author of one of the stories. It wasn't my favorite but it was good. Most of the stories were really good though there were a couple that were not so good. Overall I'd say it was a really good

book. Finally, I'd like to say Rest In Peace, George. Little did you know back in 1968 when you directed the original "Night of the Living Dead" that you were creating a whole new sub genre of horror. A whole new type of monster was born. Thanks!

As editor Jonathan Maberry points out in his introduction to the new anthology, *Nights of the Living Dead* (St. Martin's Griffin; Trade; ISBN 1250112249), George A Romero's groundbreaking 1968 film was a shock to people who had never seen anything quite like the unnamed monsters laying siege to an Evans City farmhouse. These creatures would go on to be called Zombies (Romero called them Ghouls) and start a trend that saturates media to this day. Books on the folklore and psychology of the living dead are everywhere. The monster fascinates us. Our culture revels in the "What if..?" of finding ourselves in the middle of such an outbreak. Like any monster, however, over-exposure tends to diminish their fear factor. We all know by now that zombies are (or should be) slow and can be put down with a shot to the head (unless they are the Russo zombies from the *Return* series or *World War Z* (wait, I digress) and if we're fans of the genre, we've already planned our escape and worked out our home defense strategy. Brilliant storytellers have taken the genre into new realms of possibility, putting us in every possible peril against the zombie menace. The story of our survival drives the narrative. People, usually, are the focus of the zombie story, not the monsters (I know there are exceptions). When zombie movies and stories fail, it is because they rely on the gore of the monsters and the gruesome kills to drive interest, reducing the cast of living characters to a one-dimensional menu of inevitable victims. Even when the narrative POV is the zombie itself, there is an emotional arc as we find in *Dead of Night* (by Maberry) and *Warm Bodies* by *NOTLD* contributor Isaac Marion. With so many stories and takes on the monster and the genre, it is difficult to make zombies terrifying and fresh (so to speak) in the way they seemed so long ago when *NOTLD* bowed in theaters. This anthology, I am thrilled to write, succeeds. Maberry has assembled an all-star team of genre veterans and horror masters, each presenting a master class to writers and literary nerds like me in how to tell a truly frightening tale. Even if you read or write a lot of zombie fiction as I do, this collection will give you chills. As a longtime reader in the genre, producer of a zombie horror audio series, and fan of both Maberry's fiction and Romero's movies, I was thrilled to learn that this collection would be set, specifically in the world of Romero's films. It's also a bit strange to consider the specificity of that world because the films span four decades, set in the "modern day", but treated as direct sequels pretending the previous film took place shortly before or concurrent to the first.

However, this provides authors more room to play in Romero's universe (or multiverse, however you want to see it.) It is a thrill to look back at those original characters and situations from different perspectives as we do with "The Girl on the Table" by Marion and "The Day After" by John A. Russo. But it is also exciting to move to other locations and encounter different characters dealing with their end of the world propositions. These stories reflect many of the reasons why people fear zombie stories. Our fear transcends the horrible notion of being eaten alive or becoming a flesh-craving monster. Zombies represent our deeper dread about change in our lives, our relationships, our health, our world, and that ultimate change at our personal end of days — death. In this way, zombies are very real because one day we will all look up and see the world has changed irrevocably, turned ugly and hostile and we fight the rest of our lives to avoid being consumed or absorbed into their ranks. That's a feeling that applies if you're young and resisting the call of adulthood conformity or an adult resisting the onset of physical and intellectual obsolescence. One of the best of these stories is Keith R.A. DeCandido's "Live and on the Scene" which offers both the media's witness account of the initial spread of the dead and a simple, yet heart-breaking tale about of death, family, heritage, and loyalty. These stories are about how we struggle to survive while preserving bits of the world that is dying. They also speak to how we cope with death and change. Zombies, themselves, are a rather dull adversary. *Nights of the Living Dead* recognizes this and drives conflict through realistic, intriguing character stories. Introspective stories like "Fast Entry" by Jay Bonansinga and broader ensemble tales like "Williamson's Folly" by David J Schow rely on fascinating, different, and well-rendered characters orbiting a personal or interpersonal conflict while making the best use of the Romero mythos. Each story approaches the Romero brand of zombie monster (not to be confused with the John A. Russo spin-off series which uses different rules) and weaves it into the author's own brand of horror with generally breathtaking results. Stories range from the full-throttle bad-ass Texas horror of Joe R. Lansdale's "Dead Man's Curve" to the Byronesque poetry of Mike Carey's tale "In that Quiet Earth." Between there are fresh and inventive tales of madness, intrigue, and adventure that rarely stray into the familiar tropes or overdo the familiar pattern of survival horror tales. We are not, I'm pleased to say, stuck moving from one fortress to another engaging in the interpersonal intrigue while the monsters close in. So many zombie short stories start with running and end up somewhere the characters can engage in some tired tale of revenge or madness. Carrie Ryan's "The Burning Days" comes close to

this, but the setting is handled in an inventive way. This brings me to my only, significant disappointment with the collection because it uses that trope poorly and has other issues: If there is any story that feels out of place it is Russo’s “The Day After” which is an adaptation of a screenplay excerpt co-written by Romero continuing the events of the original film into the direct sequel. It is, to me, the weakest entry of the lot. While an interesting extension of the original tale, it reads like a script summary, often in passive voice, and devoid of any of the passion or tension that is consistent throughout the rest of the stories. It has the feeling of a story stuck in an early draft, an artifact from a late author’s estate with a commentary on the greatness to which it aspired but would never be realized. That is the only excuse I can think of to present such a tale among so many great entries. Of course, Russo was there at the beginning and he is royalty in the Kingdom of the Zombies so I understand why he appears in the anthology. Having read both the book and listened to the audio, I have a profound respect for the quality of the work performed and produced by Skyboat Media. The voice talent is excellent and the production values are particularly in the fullcast-style digital-epistolary tale “Orbital Decay” by David Wellington are outstanding. I highly recommend buying the book AND downloading the unabridged audio.

I’ve been on a horror anthology kick as of late. This is one of the best collections I’ve read in the past year. It’s a magnificent tribute to George Romero, and it’s worth buying simply for his heartfelt introduction, which pays tribute to all the zombie obsessed writers who came after him. I’d have to say that my favorite story was by Mike Carey (also known, pseudonymously, as MR Carey, author of *The Girl With All The Gifts*.) His story is not so much a horror story as it is a tale of lost, and regained love. How that love is regained (by what some may call a cold and calculating, but loving scientist) is a remarkable story. And the writing is impeccable. I really can’t recommend it highly enough. “A Dead Girl Named Sue” is another winner. As you can tell, I have not quite read all the stories, but I’m getting there. I will update as I go along; however, I’m confident that this will continue to be a solid collection of stories.

Bought this after hearing of George Romero’s passing. Well worth the read for any zombie aficionado. There were only a couple stories not worthy of the full five stars, but the weren’t enough to pull my overall rating down.

Most of the stories were great while others varied from good to bad. Worth reading if you like zombies. Recommended.

I preordered *Nights of the Living Dead*, so it arrived on its release date, June 11, and was still sitting on my desk 5 days later when I saw the sad news of George Romero's passing. Reading the intro and short story that George provided for this anthology was a nice way to remember his contributions to pop culture and the horror genre. Having finished the entire volume now, I can attest that all of the stories within are good and well worth reading. Some of the standouts include David Wellington's "Orbital Decay," set aboard the International Space Station; David J. Schow's "Williamson's Folly," about the town where the satellite fell in *Night of the Living Dead*; Mira Grant's "You Can Stay All Day," which describes the zombie apocalypse from the POV of a conscientious zookeeper; and one that I found especially timely, "Jimmy Jay Baxter's Last, Best Day on Earth," in which John Skipp depicts a white supremacist's horrifying response to realizing the world is coming to an end -- truly following in Romero's footsteps by using the zombie genre for social commentary. Like any good short story collection should, this one left me with a list of new favorite writers whose work I want to seek out. Highly recommended.

Great book! Have been listening to the audiobook as well. A fitting final tribute to the recently departed Godfather of the Zombies.

I have a thing for what happens when the zombie apocalypse starts, so this is a dream book for me and does not disappoint. RIP George Romero, but Mr. Mayberry, if you could put another anthology like this, I'd buy it in a heartbeat.

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