



State of Decay

James Knapp

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View our feature on James Knapp's *State of Decay*. Just because you're dead doesn't mean you're useless...

A thrilling debut novel of a dystopian future populated by a new breed of zombie

They call them revivors-technologically reanimated corpses-and away from the public eye they do humanity's dirtiest work. But FBI agent Nico Wachalowski has stumbled upon a conspiracy involving revivors being custom made to kill-and a startling truth about the existence of these undead slaves.

State of Decay Details

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Author : James Knapp

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From Reader Review State of Decay for online ebook

Alicia says

I am going to recommend this one with reservations. On the plus side, it was fresh, innovative and exciting until.... they introduced the psychic which marred the believability of the plot a bit. It was still a very unusual premise and the writing style sucked you in. Worth reading and an author to watch.

Amy says

So this was an interesting read. There was a lot of interesting things, but some things were confusing.

First of all, this was a fascinating take on the whole zombies thing. It talks about these things called "revivors", which are reanimated people (aka zombies) but they are more like trained zombies. They don't go around eating human flesh. No, in this almost dystopian world, the government uses these revivors for all sorts of things, from war soldiers to hookers (yea that part was a little awkward but I guess whatever floats your boat). They have these devices in them that make them almost like AI robots that keep them from eating people. They also have memories and can talk and are pretty much like stronger, fast humans that can't really die easily.

Going off that, this futuristic world has some awesome technology! The bioelectronics they talk about technology where you can see text in your vision and record and take pictures of what you see! It's like having a smart phone in your head! (minus the phone calls... they still have phones for that.)

I also liked the writing style. The book focuses on 4 characters and there are sections for each of them where they talk in the first person. I haven't really seen this kind of style before so it was pretty interesting.

However cool this book was it was pretty confusing for some parts. The writing style made it a little hard to keep track of the story since you had to keep track of it from multiple perspectives. One perspective apparently had nothing to do with the others for a while. It comes together in the end, which was interesting but up until that point, it's a little out there.

I also had to figure out exactly what the revivors were and it took me a while. Since I thought "Oh revivors are just zombies" I wasn't expecting them to be actually used by the government for purposes like war. Plus, didn't expect them to have the ability to talk... that through me off for some reason. Like I said before, it's an interesting concept and twist to the zombie theme, but took me a bit to figure out that they are like AI zombies.

A downfall to the technology use is the author really didn't explain how it worked a lot. Characters would say they used one of these bioelectronic things but not really explain what it does so you sometimes have to kind of figure it out. This didn't happen often (maybe like once or twice) but still was annoying since I'm trying to figure out the story, I don't really want to have to figure out what this bioelectronic doo-hikey does.

Finally, I didn't know this book was part of a series when I bought it, but it is a good opening to the other books. It was a good book overall, but the confusion in it brought this book down to 3 stars. It's an interesting Sci-Fi plot, with a great twist in the zombies (and also another element I won't spoil, which connects all the perspectives in the end) but it didn't leave me craving for the next book sadly. I think this is mostly due to the confusion in the book.

Brad Clarkston says

This a great zombie book with a modern twist. It's as much a thriller as SciFi with just a dash of dystopia thrown in for good measure.

It's well written and fast paced and doesn't start to drag until the end which is understandable since there isn't a happy ending in site.

Well worth the read especially at \$6.39 on the Kindle.

Leslee says

I am not a big sci-fi fan but I really enjoyed this one. I loved the mystery and felt that the resolution was actually a good pay off. The characters were also fairly interesting to me and I'm looking forward to reading more of the series.

Angela says

Oh, this was a fun one. James Knapp's *State of Decay*, the first of his Revivors series, put forth a nice take on zombies: a futuristic society where people can be reanimated via technological means. Volunteering to have yourself reanimated upon your death comes with the temptation of improvement of your citizenship ranking, and many unknowing citizens go for it. But there is, of course, the obligatory Dirty Secret.

The so-called "revivors" are kept out of the public eye, serving as mercenaries in the brutal wars being fought in Asia. But our hero, FBI agent Nico Wachalowski, finds out someone is customizing revivors to kill local targets--and that, furthermore, the conception that a revivor does not remember his or her former life may be disturbingly wrong.

Be warned though that we have not one, not two, not three, but four POV characters here. Chapters cycle regularly between Nico's storyline and those of police officer (and Nico's former girlfriend) Faye Dasalia, ring fighter Calliope Flax, and Zoe Ott, a young woman shattered by visions of the dead. Each character is, however, critical to the plot and to Nico's eventual discovery of the conspiracy behind what's going on with the revivors. Points as well for the fact that three out of the four POV characters in this book are in fact female, even if it's Nico who gets the attention in the blurb. Everything moves along quickly enough, at a suitably gripping intensity, that you never stop in one character's point of view for long. I didn't find this too difficult to follow, though a reader who takes better to one character over the others may get impatient for the camera to cycle back around again.

And yeah, this is a book that moves along at a thriller's pace, and which furthermore doesn't pull any punches when it comes to what our lead characters have to go through. Four stars.

Nicole Bates says

Intense and gritty, this hard sci-fi thriller is a must read for any fans of the darker places that speculative fiction can take you. James Knapp has blended the best elements of the first and third person perspectives in order to allow the reader to see the story from several different angles, yet still feel a near-visceral connection with each of the main characters. Initially this made it difficult to decide who to care the most about. I soon discovered that I cared for each of the characters equally.

Mr. Knapp's style of writing is vivid and clear. I was able to visualize the entire story in all of its grisly detail. I loved the various technological advancements and enhancements that the author created and described so well. The plot is complex and intricate. It is very important to pay attention to the small details right from the start. As the pieces of the story unfold and the lives of the separate characters begin to merge, some surprising and fascinating twists are revealed, but never too soon.

Throughout the final third of the book I was completely absorbed and I *had* to know how it ended. Since this book is the first in a series it did leave some questions unanswered, which means that I still need to know how it will end. I'll definitely be adding the next book in the series, *The Silent Army*, to my reading list.

If you're a fan of hard science fiction, you should add *State of Decay* to yours!

Alex says

When I first found this book (here on Goodreads) I was really intrigued by the story concept. It turns out I was on the mark as *State of Decay* was a book I really liked.

The book is a mixture of horror and science fiction with a mystery developing throughout and is written from the alternating perspective of some of the main characters. This was to the advantage of keeping suspense up as you are often dropped into another character at cliffhanger moments.

My only real problem with the book was the lack of explanation for the very interesting world the author has created. Concepts such as the complex social dynamic based around who gets reanimated and the large-scale war that apparently is taking place somewhere are left up to you to infer.

One last thing I should mention is how much I loved the last part of this book. I wasn't aware while I was reading that the book was a series but when I got to the ending I was totally psyched for the next installment.

Overall I definitely recommend this book and I'm looking forward to the next one, "*Silent Army*".

Disclaimer: I got this book through First Reads

Megan E. McCarthy says

I just re-read this for the... 3rd time, I think. I unabashedly love this book, even though I admit I fell slightly less in love with the series as it went on. Fine literature perhaps it ain't, but I think it's a really fascinating and well-fleshed-out interpretation of the zombie theme. I love that it explores the commodification of conscious, thinking, semi-human beings in a way that feels completely plausible (and therefore extra creepy) to me.

It's interesting to me to read other people's reviews of *State of Decay*, especially the ones that love Zoe (who, of the 4 main POV characters, I think of as the anti-hero and find absolutely repugnant) but hate Calliope Flax (who I completely, utterly adore).

One of the greatest strengths of this book was the way the world-building is handled. I can't stand books that interrupt the narrative flow to over-explain some sort of fancy technology or the societal structure. There's a lot of things providing structural support for this story: an institutionalized caste system; military-grade cybernetic implants; the whole technological and economic infrastructure of the revivor system itself... and I came away from the book feeling like I was mostly able to piece together everything that was going on, but without ever feeling like I'd been lectured at. I really dig that.

I recommend this book for people who like a combination of action, mystery, and interesting characters. The back of the book has an advertisement for the Dresden Files series, which I think is pretty legit-- they both have a similar sort of appeal, though this series is less overtly goofy. If you like kick-ass female protagonists, so much the better. (Snaps to Knapp, btw, for his books passing the Bechdel test. Some protagonists-of-color would be nice, too, but hey, you can't have everything, right?)

Sara says

Plot: 3.5 Stars

The zombies in this novel were very interesting and original. And so were the regular citizens. There were different tier to citizenship, depending on your job and whether or not you decided to allow yourself to become a revivor, or zombie. It was an interesting play on the normal class structure. Some parts of the novel were a touch confusing or glossed over, but I love a good government conspiracy theory. Something plot points left me scratching my head for chapters on end, but most came together at the end, and the rest will hopefully play into the next novel.

Pace: 3.5 Stars

The multiples points of view really helped bring all the events of the novel together. I really enjoyed how the string of events throughout the novel really wove these four lives together. The pace of this novel was a bit weird. The beginning took a bit to grab me, but the middle was action-packed, and then the ending seemed to drag on a little too long. Not the normal pacing for me; the middle of a novel is where I tend to drag in my reading.

Characters: 4 Stars

Niko was an interesting main character. I haven't read too many Urban Fantasy novels with male main characters, so it was a nice change of pace. I didn't have trouble relating to him (but I'm not the girliest in the world). He has a troubled past that I hope we get more than a glimpse of in future novels, and it gave him a slight vulnerability that many male characters don't have. The three women whose stories intertwined with Niko's were each intriguing in their own way, and essential to the plot. They each had their ups and downs, and really made the novel for me.

Cover: 3.5 Stars

I like the overall feel of the cover. It really fits, even though it's not depicting a certain scene. The cover model is as good a choice as any considering Niko was never described in too much detail. The hand streaking down the window is a nice touch. It makes me think of zombies, rather than vampires or werewolves, without having to actually picture the zombies. I just wish there had been a woman or two on

the cover considering three of the four points of view were women. Niko was the main character and the link between the three women, but they played pretty big parts nonetheless.

Overall: 3.5 Stars

Disclosure: I borrowed this book from my local library for my own enjoyment.

Cristy says

STATE OF DECAY (Revivors #1) is a read I'd picked up solely because I was fortunate enough to win a copy of ELEMENT ZERO (Revivors #3) from the author James Knapp on goodreads. Not yet being familiar with the trilogy, I thought I'd better check the first two books before diving into my prize. To be honest, this is a series that probably would never have hit my radar had it not been for the giveaway. I do enjoy sci-fi, which is why I threw my name into the hat when EZ came up on the giveaway list, but on majority I tend to lean more towards the YA and paranormal reads. But I have to say, Mr. Knapp has a new fan in me.

Although undeniably graphic and dark and set in a thoroughly grungy environment; I really enjoyed this sci-fi urban fantasy world Knapp has created with its layer upon layer of plot twists and turns. I have to say the cyberpunk spin on zombies (known as Revivors) was a new one for me and a completely welcomed one at that.

Now there is a lot going on in STATE OF DECAY and a ton of sub plots to keep track of, but to Knapp's credit, he does an expert job of keeping the reader on track and the story moving forward with lots of heart pounding action. Even with the multitude of characters, each with their own agenda, surprisingly none of them felt like filler or unnecessary; to the contrary each was well thought out with a sub story line that was easy to follow and in the end held an important thread in the overall plot.

Even though I have only just read the first of the Revivors Trilogy, I could easily see this series being turned into a movie or TV series. STATE OF DECAY's plot is unique and thrilling with lots of techy-bits and characters that are all well developed and interesting. I'm looking forward to working my way through the next two installments.

Michael says

This was a surprisingly good read. I picked this one up for some lite faire to read while waiting at Mayo Clinic for my annual workups. I was looking for something Matthew Reilly'esque and the cover and back-copy on this one fit the bill.

Knapp's State of Decay is a fun and intriguing dystopian novel. It's billed as a zombie novel, but that's incorrect. Sure, it uses reanimated corpses. But unlike a true zombie novel (Moody comes to mind), there is no apocalypse of man-eating undead. Instead it's a cyberpunk take on how future technology could go wrong. The corpses are animated on purpose and retain much of their humanity, even if they are 'over-ridden'. Knapp's revivors are really more like cyborgs than demon or virus spawned undead.

The book reads like a mix of a good detective novel and a simplistic cyberpunk future. Knapp has some knowledge of technology and potential cybernetics, even if it's simplified. My personal opinion has always

been that cybernetics over-promises and that humanity is going to find the mind-machine interface as a lot harder to achieve than sci-fi thinks it will be; but I've been wrong on my futurist opinions from time to time, so we'll see.

Knapp uses a very strong what-happens-next technique to keep the pages turning. His bio at the end is really short, but the book feels like it's written by an expert journalist or more likely a team of writers. However a lot of first-books do show this level of mastery, Wizard's First Rule being an excellent example of a first-novel that nails it better than seasoned writers can. State of Decay doesn't rise to the level of Goodkind's first and best book, but it's a well written read that is hard to put down.

Virginia says

I have to be honest - I would have NEVER picked up or even looked at this book had it not won the Compton Crook award. I think this is mostly due to the cover - it's okay, but I think it does a disservice to the book - I was under the distinct impression that this was a military action book (with zombies) while it was MUCH more like a murder mystery (with zombies). I am a big fan of mysteries, and have read a lot of them, and I am ALSO a fan of scifi/fantasy - these two genres rarely meet. (Or rarely meet well.) I am not a fan of military action books - I think they tend to be monofocused and boring. (Action scene, action scene, action scene, BIG action scene, end.) I guess you could classify this as Urban Scifi?

It is unclear whether the events in this book take place in an alternate reality or a far future scenario - characters use things like iphones and ipads pretty much like people do now, but the possibility of nanotechnological and biotechnological enhancements are possible on a personal level. The society depicted utilizes a caste system - also just like now, but with numbered levels. The main characters, as far as I can tell (there are several perspectives presented) are a FBI agent and a police detective. (Also there are zombies.) Other perspectives feature a psychic and a prizefighter, although the FBI agent is by FAR the most interesting character.

I really appreciate, as a forgetful reader, that every time the viewpoint shifts to another character this is noted, with the current location.

The ending was a little bit of a copout, setting up the sequel, but the mystery was interesting.

Beatrice says

This is one of the scariest books that I've read in a long time. The whole premise of the book gives me shudders.

In the future, there are distinct classes of citizens. 1st Class citizens either have a lot of money or have chosen to serve in the military. 2nd Class citizens either have money as well or have agreed to give their bodies over to become Revivors after their death.

Revivors are corpses that have been reanimated, but have only the purpose set for them in their programming. Everyone believes they have no thoughts, no memories of their lives. People involved with designing the technology start turning up dead, and FBI Agent Nico Wachalowski starts looking into the darker side of Revivors and their technology.

Whitney says

This book ended up being completely different from what I expected going in, which was a very good thing! Not your typical zombie narrative, *State of Decay* involves a lot of technological science fiction, futuristic dystopian cities, combined with a healthy dosing of an old fashioned mystery novel. I would honestly have tried to market this book as Cyberpunk instead of a zombie horror novel.

I'm loving the characters I met in this story. They are a nice blend of realistic and gritty, which ties into the dystopian and crime noir aspects of the narrative. I'm also really curious about the "grinder" that keeps being referred to, I'm assuming it's a slang term for this war that's going on. It's interesting that the war holds so little weight (currently) in the story, seeing as so many people's lives are connected to it (Nico fought in it, and Cal signs up for it at the end). Seeing as your choices are "fight in the grinder" or "sign up for revival duty once you die" it is actually a big deal.

Definitely something for everyone (unless you enjoy reading about unicorns, look elsewhere for that) and I really enjoyed the hints at bigger things to come later in the series. Jumping right into the next one!

Theresa says

Vampires and werewolves have been all the rage for awhile but zombies are rapidly becoming the "it" thing in paranormal fiction. Most zombie fiction is typically envisioned in the style of *Night of the Living Dead*, in which the shambling undead attack the living in an attempt to assuage their insatiable hunger. James Knapp's new book, *State of Decay*, takes all the familiar tropes of zombie fiction and gives them a real world spin that is both convincing and plausible.

Nico Wachalowski is an FBI agent; a first tier citizen who has gained his status by both his military service and his continued work for the government. While investigating a revivor sex ring, Nico stumbles across a much larger conspiracy and discovers that military grade revivors are being smuggled into the country. Revivors are zombies in the sense that they are the reanimated dead. In "*State of Decay*" becoming a zombie is voluntary and a frequent means for a person to move up in caste. Legal revivors are generally used as soldiers, but their use is controversial and they are kept away from general populace. But someone is smuggling illegal revivors and using them commit a bizarre series of murders.

"*State of Decay*" moves very quickly and introduces the main characters in separate chapters in which each character is presented in the first person viewpoint-- with Nico as the common thread. There are many strong points to Knapp's story; my favorite being his re-imagining of the zombie tale. It's not hard to envision a society where the dead could be brought back to life to use as cannon fodder. The ethical dilemmas could be pushed aside as long as the living person volunteers to give up their body in exchange for higher status in a caste oriented society. Simple idea that has more depth than you'd think at first.

Naturally the next progression is the black-market use of the revivors in the sex trade. Technology has made sure that the natural hunger of the revivors can be controlled and since revivors can't feel-- no harm done. Unless, of course, the revivors *can* feel human emotion. Something we get to find out as Knapp gives us the first person perspective of a revivor-- pure genius that.

"*State of Decay*" isn't perfect though. The plot tends to be somewhat convoluted and not enough time is spent

on exploring the tier system. The characters are terrific but they're written as if they were characters in a movie and not given a lot of background. In fact, the whole book reads like a well developed screenplay and I could envision it as a really good movie. But when I read a book I like to see more depth. Knapp's writing style *is* really interesting. He manages to pull you into the story very easily and manages to convey a lot of ideas very quickly.

But when I finished the book I still had some nagging questions. I want to know more, I want to understand more about this world he has created. I'm genuinely intrigued and vaguely dissatisfied. So the dilemma is whether to recommend the book or not...I'm going with a thumbs up because I was really drawn to the world Knapp created. Yeah, there might be plot holes, but as I was reading I kept thinking *this book is cool*. Not a deep reason for a recommendation, but a valid one nonetheless. There's just something here, stylistically and story-wise, that I find appealing. I do hope that Knapp fills in the gaps in the sequel that's sure to come because I'd like to visit this story again.

Michelle says

State of Decay is the first book in the Revivors series by James Knapp and a ROC Fantasy.

Book Blurb:

They call them revivors - technologically reanimated corpses - and away from the public eye, they do humanity's dirtiest work. In the near future, where a never-ending war drones on, they are the infantry. Back home, they sustain a black-market trade in labor and pleasure models.

If Nico Wachalowski never sees another revivor, it will be too soon. He chose to fight alongside - and against - them rather than allowing his corpse to later be revived for military service. But now, back home and working as a field agent for the FBI, he's sent to bust a smuggling ring trafficking revivors for the sex trade. What he finds is not pleasure models, but revivors that are custom-made to kill, and a massive stockpile of weapons.

Someone is taking a war to the streets. Nico soon realizes that the twisted roots of this conspiracy go unfathomably deep - and that there may be more to revivors than he ever knew.

My thoughts:

State of Decay is set in a futuristic war torn world where people are divided into tiers - first tier being the most financially well off, second tier the working class and third tier considered little better than garbage.

Everyone who dies is revived and sent to fight in the war - unless you choose to fight while still alive. Then you have the option to not be revived once dead.

It does seem a bit complicated on the surface - and the war is not really explained. What it is about and who it is with - or where for that matter. But I don't think that is the major point in the story anyway.

I was first drawn to this book because it is touted as a zombie book - and I am really on a zombie kick right now. But that is false.

State of Decay is not really a zombie book - not to me. The revivors remind me of the soldiers in the movie Universal Soldier. They are programmed and down loaded with information - controlled by someone else.

It is mentioned that if a part of the revivor is removed then they will begin to crave human flesh - but as long as that piece of equipment is in place - that does not happen - and it does not happen in State of Decay.

State of Decay turned out to be, for me, a fantasy murder mystery. Several bodies are turning up dead and the local PD and FBI are trying to find the killer before he or she strikes again.

And then FBI agent Wachalowski finds out that the revivor's are involved - and he wants to know how and why - and who is pushing the buttons on the reanimated.

I did enjoy State of Decay and look forward to reading the rest of this series - even if it's not about the typical 'zombie'. :)

I give State of Decay 3 out of 5 stars.

M

Stacy says

This book was interesting. It gives a different take on zombies, though in a way they didn't really seem like zombies; in the book, they're called "revivors," which are reanimated bodies with electronic parts that makes them obey commands. People in this dystopian society can volunteer to become revivors after their deaths in exchange for a better life. These are definitely not your "eat your brains" zombies.

I thought the writing was great. there are 4 POVs all told in first-person; there are about 3 POVs per chapter. I liked how the Knapp developed the characters, even though there were four vying for air-time in a novel that's less than 400 pages in paperback. I loved how all the plots converged and began to intertwine about 1/3 of the way through the book. Each POV character is handling their own plot and problems and nothing is rushed with any of the plots.

The problems I had was with the dialogue. It was hard to follow sometimes without proper attribution, so I became confused many times about who was talking.

Knapp did a good job with the climax and continuously raising the stakes for the main POV character, Nico. I think the author is great plotting and State of Decay has some of the best plotting I've read in a book. I liked the intricate plots and storylines and how they all came together.

My least favorite character was Calliope Flax and my favorite character was Zoe Ott. There was a weird bit of almost-romance between Nico and one of the other POV characters that would have made me vomit had it actually happened. I just can't see Nico with any of these characters except the one he actually had a relationship with.

But, despite all of this, I can't say that I'm tempted to read the sequel. I'd probably recommend this book to anyone who wants a different take on zombies. I might change my mind later about reading the sequel because something keeps gnawing at the back of mind about this book and what happens next, but I'm just not compelled at the moment to want to read more.

Jessica Strider says

Pros: well imagined world with a 3 tier citizenship system, interesting characters, extremely complex plot, lots of plot twists, keeps you on your toes and guessing about what will happen next

Pro/Con (depending on your point of view): everything that happens is important, so pay close attention when you read

Cons: redundant repetition

If you don't like the think when you read, you won't like State of Decay. So much happens all at once, and all of it is important. It took me about a hundred pages or so to really get into the story. There are 4 character POVs, and each one requires figuring out their place in society, their current actions and trying to understand how they'll fit into the main story. Around the hundred page mark the stories start to converge, and you're well into an awesome science fiction ride.

The main story focuses on Nico Wachalowski. When we meet him, the FBI agent is busting a revivor smuggling ring. Revivors are people reanimated after their deaths to serve in the military in return for second class citizenship while alive. Wachalowski quickly realizes that smuggling is only the most visible aspect of a deeper conspiracy.

Faye Dasalia is a detective investigating the murders of first class citizens who somehow managed to reach that status without serving in the military, the condition for that level of citizenship.

Zoe Ott is a clairvoyant. She has trouble distinguishing reality from her visions. While being an alcoholic doesn't bring the relief she's looking for, she keeps trying. She also has a peculiar way of getting people to do what she asks.

Calliope Flax is a boxer. She's brutal in the ring with a foul mouth and no expectations of a better life. She's third class, meaning she hasn't served in the military during her life and doesn't intend to dead.

Of the storylines, Cal's was the least interesting to me. Her story barely intersects the others, while theirs carry the plot forward. She does, however, mature the most, becoming, not a stronger person - she begins pretty strong - but one who can see a future for herself that didn't exist before the events of the book.

Knapp manages to keep the tension high throughout the story, with occasional down time. He made one 'newbie' writing mistake (which I probably only noticed because I read several books on writing recently and so am looking for this in my own work). He has the tendency to mention things twice. In some cases this is necessary (as when Dasalia talks to herself and then asks something out loud - which becomes an important plot point). Other times he's just belaboring the obvious. It's an 'error' that experience will fix.

He introduces some pretty cool technological advances, most notably the implant wired into Wachalowski's skull that allows him to record video feed of what he sees as well as communicate via thought patterns with his superiors.

The plot has twists you won't see coming, with an ending to match. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Marcus says

I just could not get into this book and ended up setting it down about a quarter of the way in.

Set in a dystopian future world where people are segregated into Tiers and the dead (Revivors) are converted for use as servants, workers, sex slaves, etc, State of Decay never really grabbed me. The story follows several people. One is a federal agent looking into some kind of illegal business involving revivors. Then you have a beat cop, a professional female fighter, and a girl with some kind of paranormal powers.

While I was expecting some kind of zombie novel, the fact that it wasn't (in the typically sense) wasn't the issue I had with it. Nothing in the story really grabbed me. The characters were kind of flat and didn't generate any real interest. And the plot didn't really do it for me either. While reading, I kept wondering how the Tier system worked (it went beyond wealth/power), what forced mankind to go down the road of reviving the dead, etc, etc. And the paranormal stuff just didn't fit in at all. I have to assume that at some point the author will tie all the characters in but at the point I quit, it looked like a standard govt. conspiracy story set in the future.

I think as a debut novel goes it's not horrible but I just didn't find myself drawn back to reading this book given that I have plenty of other ones that are waiting on my shelves.

Eleanor With Cats says

Whoa. Totally did not expect this book to be like this, or to have any of the cool surprises. Nico, Faye, and Zoe are awesome, and I love how Knapp made his third female main character a kickass professional fighter. I'm really impressed a guy made three of his four main characters female and totally cool.

I always seem to find the atypical zombie novels, even though I've never really been into zombies, and am not *looking* for zombie novels. They just sort of shamble into my way. But I've already read the blog reporters political conspiracy thriller trilogy with incidental zombies, and the philosophical treatise on the mind/body problem and survey of 20th century American subcultures with incidental zombies, so now I get the human consciousness exploration and political intrigue novel with what one of the other reviewers compared to replicants (Blade Runner) made from, uh, recycled materials. (Not quite the posthuman experience the reader was expecting.)

Note the author also has books out under the name James K. Decker.
