

Rot and Ruin

Jonathan Maberry

Reviewed by: Sierra Irvine, 19

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Benny Imura (15) may be a normal teenage boy, but the world he lives in is anything but normal. America has become infested with zombies ever since an outbreak years ago and with the rules of the land stating all teenagers must get a job by fifteen, Benny has to find one or else have his rations cut in half. With time running out, Benny has no choice but to work under his brother, Tom, as an apprentice zombie hunter. At first, Benny envisions a daily life of beating up zombies for cash, but what he actually gets is a new perspective on what it means to be alive.

Rot and Ruin is a great first dip into the zombie sub-genre of novels. The world building is incredible in this book and makes you feel as though you are in the middle of a movie. The book does a great job of balancing the dynamic action portions of the story with the more reserved story-telling aspects. You can clearly see how much work went into crafting these zombies into something unique to Rot and Ruin from their different capabilities to the different theories behind them. The relationship between Benny and Tom is what really grounds this story and brings it all together. Watching the two of them explore this different world made every tense scene that much more thrilling. The story is very character-oriented from the main characters to the villains and I think that is what makes it such a good gem of this sub-genre. There are so many places for this story to take us and I can't wait to see where that is.

While there isn't much I disliked about the book, one thing I found to be a weak link was the character dynamic between Benny and Nix. There were moments that I found myself wondering how their characters had reached certain points. I like the idea behind them, but I wish it would have been constructed a little differently in this book.

Overall, Rot and Ruin is a pretty good book and I enjoyed it a lot. Despite the few flaws here and there, nothing can take away from just how enthralling this book is. I would recommend this for a teen audience given the mature themes and the zombies that may be a bit too much for younger readers. This book is an amazing gift if you know someone who normally likes zombies or shows like The Walking Dead. I would certainly buy this book over renting it, as you will want to have it in your collection when you read the next one.

Recommended Titles:

Patient Zero by Jonathan Maberry

Enclave by Ann Aguirre

Not Even Bones by Rebecca Schaeffer

The Forest of Hands & Teeth by Carrie Ryan

The First Days by Rhiannon Frater