



Some Will Not Die

Algis Budrys

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The plague struck, and ninety percent of Earth's population died. Those who survived tried to maintain some sort of civilization...which meant more killing, as it turned out. But bit by bit, generation by generation, people began to succeed. With occasional setbacks.

Some Will Not Die Details

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From Reader Review Some Will Not Die for online ebook

Tim says

Hmm... what to say? First, a general comment. Algis Budrys was once considered an expert on novel writing. He still should be and reading his work has a LOT to offer the would-be novelist. Not only is it an entertaining read, it has a lot to be learned from the way it is written and executed. That the name Algis Budrys seems to be nearly forgotten is a shame.

As for this particular book. In general there isn't much more that I can add that others who like it haven't already said. It has a unique take on a post-apocalyptic future and after all the zombie-movies and other dystopian works produced in droves today, a refreshing one at that.

One thing I will say is that I don't know what Budrys political leanings were and I don't care. All too often I hear people ragging on past writers for that reason and it gets framed, not in the time of the writer, but in today's polarized views. I think for the myopic, there is room to get upset with Budrys - from left or right. he gives different characters different leanings, and most none or neutral. In the end, he doesn't make any sermons or judgments, except maybe that men have to live their lives in accordance with their (and society's) current state. And that state changes, often faster than people notice. Maybe those are good words for any time including now.

Bobby Jones says

But a whole lot will.

Bob Rust says

Some Will Not Die (1961) Post-Holocaust story is set in a plague-decimated USA and through the lives of a series of protagonists a half century or so of upheaval and recovery is described.

Melissa says

Disjointed flashes of a post apocalyptic future. Strange ending.

Karl says

If you don't normally like post-apocalyptic fiction, read this book: it will surprise you. If you love post-apocalyptic fiction, read this book: it will be a refreshing change to most other similar novels.

The premise is simple and has been used many times since: a mysterious plague wipes out ninety percent of

the Earth's population. With so many dead, the few who remain are unable to sustain a complex, modern society and civilization collapses.

So far, so familiar. But refreshingly, Budrys avoids all the usual clichés. There are no zombies, no mutants, no psychics, no "earth magic" - in fact, no mysticism of any kind (thank God).

Rather than a single plot, two stories intertwine. The first, is the story of the Garvins and Berendtsens. Starting with nineteen-year-old Matt Garvin, waking from his fever in a hollowed-out, echoing, empty Manhattan, we follow these two families as they found and lead, for a time, the Second Free American Republic (SFAR).

The other story, although interspersed with the first, takes place a generation after it ends. It concerns itself with mercenary armoured-car commander Joe Custis. Hired by the failing government of the city state of Chicago, Custis's mission is to make contact with Theodore Berendtsen, the former commander-in-chief of SFAR's armed forces, the feared and revered Army of Unification (AU).

Berendtsen, who used his army to unify what had been the eastern United States and Canada under SFAR's control, is a legendary figure. Before him, there were only straggling bands of survivors, small local organisations. In its wake his army left a functioning state, the first in North America since the plague (or so we assume, the book doesn't touch on the situation West of the Rockies).

Widely thought to have been killed by a New York mob in the wake of a successful coup, Berendtsen is now rumoured to be alive and hiding out in the Mid West. Officially, Custis's job is to find him and put the Chicago regime in touch with him. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that there are some in Chicago who have other ideas.

For a relatively short book, that's a lot of ground to cover. Necessarily, this doesn't allow the author to linger over characterisation. But with his terse, economical prose, Budrys manages, even in the passing and in broad brush strokes, to flesh out more believable, sympathetic protagonists than many lesser authors who spend whole chapters on their characters' dreary childhood traumas and supposed motivations. Whether it's the self-contained, even-tempered and thoughtful, but ruthless, Ted Berendtsen; his tense and nervous wife Mary - left behind in New York as the city turns against her husband; the simple, reliable Jim Garvin or his perfidious, scheming brother Robert; each character lives and breathes, even if their time on stage is only fleeting.

And fleeting is for many of them, particularly the women. This is a novel of its time (the late 50s and early 60s). Female characters, of whom there are only really three, play supporting roles. This may well annoy some readers. The novel's New York is also oddly WASPish, even for the 50s. But don't let this put you off. The real drama, and the delight of this book, lies in watching the flame of civilization, so nearly snuffed out at the story's beginning, gutter, splutter and then flicker back to life - tentatively at first, then over the course of the generations, ever brighter.

This book deserves to be better known than it is. It's not perfect, but if you like your science fiction original, thoughtful and well written, then "Some Will Not Die" by Algis Budrys will amply reward you for making the effort to hunt it down.

Kim says

ONE STAR

Rubbish.

Mathew says

Bit of a weird story this, especially towards the end of the book. A mysterious plague ravages the world, but we read mostly about the survivors of New York, forming small pockets of resistance to plague carriers and rival bands. When the story moves from the city many years later, it takes a bit of twist. Good if you like an 'end of the world' story, but as I say it's a bit confusing at the end of the book.

Laura says

personal note- UB

Jason Emo says

It seemed a little boring for a zombie novel.

Sharon Barrow Wilfong says

I read this book to my husband as we were traveling from Virginia Beach to Washington D.C. I think if I was not reading this to Josh I would have given up on it. However, I am glad I finished it because the story was not without merit. I will briefly describe the plot, what I liked and what I didn't like.

A plague has hit America and the country is plunged into a culture of barbarism. Everyone is out for themselves, pillaging and looting and killing or being killed.

In New York City, Matthew Garvin is one man who struggles to survive, even killing his best friend (which is understandable because his friend wanted to eat him). He stumbles across a woman who is trying to steal medicine out of an abandoned pharmacy for her father. Garvin and the girl team up, cover each other for snipers on the roofs of buildings.

They finally reach the apartment but the father dies anyway. Garvin lives with the young woman and together they manage to scrape out a living.

One day, the encounter their neighbors and risk getting to know them. They team up and with the leadership

of his neighbor, Gustav Berendsten, they eventually unite with all the tenants of their building. This leads ultimately to uniting with other apartments, which inevitably leads to turf and power wars. Berendsten wants to unite all people and he ruthlessly attempts it after building a powerful army which fights other factions.

The story jumps back and forth between prologues which are in the future and the past. Each new section takes place with a different generation. We see that America develops from tribal warfare, to gentry that fights with other towns to people eventually learning to live civilly with each other.

I liked how Budrys kept the story growing and not stagnate. We see multiple generations and how they differ from their forefathers. Budrys writes convincing, powerful characters that are worth reading about.

I did not like the detailed information about war strategy. It was just too mundane for me. However, Josh did like that so hopefully I provided everyone with enough information to decided whether this book is for them.

Oscar Maquito says

*3.5/5
