



# Flu

*Wayne Simmons*

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## **Flu** Wayne Simmons

There's a nasty flu going round. An epidemic, they call it. The posters say to cover your mouth when you sneeze, and throw away the tissue.

But such simple measures won't help.

Because when you catch this flu, armed police come and lock you in your house to die alone.

When you catch this flu, it kills you in days.

And two hours after it's killed you, your eyelids snap open again...

FLU is a pacey, terrifying, frighteningly real zombie horror story.

## **Flu Details**

Date : Published April 2010 by Snowbooks Ltd

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Author : Wayne Simmons

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Genre : Horror, Zombies, Fiction, Science Fiction, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic

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# From Reader Review Flu for online ebook

## Jitka says

Nebylo to n?jak šílen? napsané, ale ta knížka m?la n?kolik významných mínus, pro která jsem jí nakonec ud?lila jen 1\*. P?eci jen n?které knihy v dvouhv?zdi?kov? poli?ce ji o n?co p?ed?í...a te? mluvím zejména o Lesu kostí a zub?, který se také zabývá zombie-tématikou...Navíc jsem si ?ekla, že bych mohla kone?n? za?ít brát v potaz ty popisky k jednotlivým hv?zdi?kám - a u téhle knihy platí: "didn't like it"

- 1) zoufale neoriginální p?íb?h - zajímavý byl jen nápad z ch?ipkou, pak nastalo jedno velké kliše
- 2) nulová atmosféra - tedy alespo? já z knihy necítila nic... a už v?bec ne n?jakou stísn?nost nebo zoufalství, což by ?lov?k u zombie-knihy tak trochu o?ekával
- 3) ploché postavy...bylo mi úpln? jedno, co se s nimi stane. Ob?as se chovaly trochu roboticky a ne vždycky m?lo jejich po?ínání dávalo smysl.
- 4) Nedomyšlenost...zombiek?m se rozpadly všechny smysly, takže jsou to jen bezcíln? se potulující schránky. N?kolikrát v knize zazn?lo n?co jako : "Vždy? nás nevidí, neslyší a jsou pomalí"...a pak, z ni?eho nic, vysko?ila zombie ze zálohy p?ímo na hlavní postavu. Nejspíš zakopla a cíl trefila náhodou, jinak mi to celé nedává smysl :)
- 5) Nudné pasáže - n?které ?ásti knihy m? nudily k smrti...dokonce tolik, že jsem p?eskakovala celé stránky. A hrozn? je, že i p?esko?ení cca dvou stran jsem p?esn? v?d?la, o co v p?íb?hu jde. Jako by se postavy v celém tom úseku v?bec nehnuly z místa.

Zkrátka - Flu není špatná oddychovka, ale pokud si chcete p?e?íst n?co na téma zombie nebo epidemie, na výb?r máte ze spousty lepších možností. M? tahle kniha nezaujala, mnohé další ur?it? zaujmout m?že...

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## Lainy says

Blurb from Goodreads

There's a nasty flu going round. An epidemic, they call it. The posters say to cover your mouth when you sneeze, and throw away the tissue. But such simple measures won't stop this flu. Because when you catch the flu, armed police come and lock you in your house to die alone. When you catch this flu, it kills you in days. And when you catch this flu, two hours after it's killed you, your eyelids snap open again..."Flu" is a pacey, terrifying, frighteningly real zombie horror story.

My review

Well it is a zombie book with a difference in that it starts off with a flu so you have your starting cause but not the how or why the flu came about. The story splits between 3 small gatherings of survivors, 2 cops, an ex IRA man and religious young woman and 2 men who had frequent brushes with the law. As well as them we dip in and out of the governments army men in command and divide between them with.

I didn't mind how the story started out but for me it got really silly with big inconsistencies and stupid behaviour. For example the virus is airborne yet when they are killing the zombies they are covered in gore and blood yet not getting the infection however if they bite you that's it. The army or soldiers turning on each other and the idiocy of one of them whilst carrying out his work was just insane. There are lots more but to

tell you would be spoiling it.

The ending, well as with most of these books you never really get complete closure but the way this ended was just pointless unless the author is planning another in the series which explains all of the things brought up but not addressed or explored in this book. As a stand alone it gets 2/5 however if another book came out and explained more about it I might re evaluate my scoring.

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### **Glenn Bowlan says**

This is the first new-wave zombie book I've read and I'm not impressed. A Zombie flu wipes out most of Belfast and a handful of survivors pass their days in abandoned buildings or scrounging for resources. There is no real mystery, suspense, action, comedy, horror, intrigue or plot. These are not fast-moving zombies or clever zombies - they are more like the slow, uncoordinated, shambling zombies of plants-vs-zombies. In short: not very scary or interesting. When these zombies attack, you need to walk a little faster to make sure they don't catch up. If you close a door or turn a corner, they forget about you and amble away.

The dust jacket calls the book "brutally realistic" and I guess it is realistic that survivors of this kind of zombie apocalypse would find themselves in a drab, dull world with nothing to do. Unfortunately, this doesn't make for interesting reading.

As for the survivors, character development mimics the pattern presented in the TV series Lost: there are curious little connections and back stories to each of the characters. The slow reveal of these back stories is one of the principal hooks of the novel. Unfortunately, this has now been done many times before and elsewhere many times better.

All told, the cover art is the most compelling part of this book.

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### **Victoria says**

I hate zombie novels. They make me groan and roll my eyes, perhaps a little unfairly and perhaps a little judgementally. I do try, however, to read a novel from each genre that irritates me, every now and then, in order to confirm my fears and give me an argument to back up my inward crying. So did this novel do as I expected? You know, I'm really not too sure.

I was a little worried that 'Wayne', my colleague, would colour my view of his book (having never read anything by anyone I know in real life before – who knew that writers have actual physical bodies and lives of their own? A small part of me always hoped that they were merely hobbits, holed up somewhere and living purely through their characters. Alas, the romance of it all is finally dead). Ahem, I appear to have digressed. Perhaps Wayne's lilting Irish accent would follow me through the pages, leaving me to lose 'Simmons' the writer and the tale he has to tell but my worry, it turns out, was entirely unfounded. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised at just how quickly Wayne left my side, as Simmons sucked me into his story (biting my hand and dragging me along infectiously maybe - or is that one just a little too obvious?) This very fact alone is a testament to his writing, for I do not forget easily (oh my, I can't decide if that makes me sound more like an elephant or gangster).

The story itself is a rather stereotypical zombie apocalypse novel (except, I'm sure, for those die-hard zombie connoisseurs who could detail each and every nuance of zombie literature but I am far from one of those and thus, it remains pretty much firmly in my one and only 'zombie novel' category – sorry zombie dudes). There is an epidemic, lots of people die but rise again to bite and infect others. There is lots of gore and blood and bits of brains – all the usual stuff to be expected (and perhaps a little too much to have any impact – 'desensitised' has become my word of the hour and I have fallen in love with subtlety all over again). The characters, too, are typical horror-novel types. Two dimensional, stereotypical, meaningless and sometimes hard to tell apart. Let's be honest though, when you pick up a zombie apocalypse novel, this is pretty much what you're looking for and it certainly isn't something you can complain about. After all, it's meant to be about the zombies, the gore and the at-times humorously ridiculous descriptions ("diseased lungs slapped against the wall like oily pancakes" could only possibly have been written to make the reader guffaw and then quote it to a bemused looking partner and an even more bemused looking dog).

There were other bits that irritated me too – gratuitous gore (the welding torch scene – ew!), repetitive phrases ('good God', 'dear God', 'but it was too late'), getting confused between Geri and Karen. But the one thing that irritated me the most (and this is me being brutally honest here, despite my usual disposition) is that I actually really enjoyed reading this book. I read it in two sittings alone – the pleasantly short chapters inducing that 'just one more...' culture that usually results in my falling asleep with a book on my face, wedged open, of course, by my subconsciously stiffened and determined thumb. This did, indeed happen with this novel, as it kept me reading way past my bed time. I just couldn't resist reading one more chapter, to see how this or that turned out or to follow the characters on the journey of survival.

The characters themselves, as I mentioned above, meant nothing to me and I doubt I will remember them. Their plight, however, and their drive to survive, enchanted me. I was (always am) curious about survival in bad times – epidemics, war, the apparently impending apocalypse and so on. Dystopian tales have always intrigued me and have always been a staple on my reading (and in fact viewing) list. Thus, *Flu* appealed to me in that sense. Simmons did this really well too – looking at different types of people, different sections of society, different mind sets and how each worked to survive in his or her own world. I was also fascinated by the question of whether people would band together (like Lark and the police) or pull apart (like the army dudes, or Paddy). I really like the fact that Simmons portrayed both in his novel, making it more realistic, more believable and far more interesting than the alternative. Simmons' ability to create such a good tale in this respect, furthermore, allowed me to skim over the zombie parts and as far as I am concerned, enriched the story to no end.

Another thing that I was surprised at was the amount of politics that Simmons introduced. Although I would have liked this to go a little deeper (I would definitely have liked to learn more about Irish politics – I accept that I could simply read history books but it wouldn't have quite the same charm or authenticity), it is definitely one aspect of the novel that enthralled me. I was pleased when the Pat or Jackson sections came along and it is these two characters (perhaps along with Gallagher) who are the ones that were the best-rounded and three dimensional – even if dislikeable. Perhaps because they had more of a history than the others or perhaps because their stories were steeped in something bigger than flippant drug use, lost loved ones and driving taxis. Either way, the political commentary that Simmons laces through his narrative is eye-catching, unusual and unexpected. A pleasant addition to the story.

Finally, the writing style itself was something to behold. Yes, it's a little repetitive. Yes, it is peppered with humorously bad descriptions (intentional, I think?). But on the whole, Simmons' has a lovely way words, creating beautiful descriptions and inventive simile. "[L]ike marbles in a tin", "crystal bread crumbs", "relative countryside calm of a post-apocalyptic hell" – rhythmic beacons shining through an otherwise gory and unpleasant land.

So did *Flu* change my mind about zombie novels? No, it certainly did not. But it did make me realise that sometimes, a good writer can enchant you, even *in spite* of the un-dead.

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## **Silver Thistle {adores JAFF & TEOTWAWKI. Oh, and accronyms :P} says**

Irish zombies? Bring it!

This is another good one! Nothing fancy with this one and there's no Hollywood treatment, just honest to goodness rotting foulness and the rising dead causing havoc.

I don't really know much about Irish politics, apart from what I've seen on the news over the years, usually referred to as 'The Troubles in Northern Ireland'. The news events were peppered with acronyms so I had a fair idea of what they were when they were mentioned in the book. The IRA (Irish Republican Army), the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary), the paramilitary, Catholic's, Protestants, ... the zombie virus doesn't care which side someone is on, they're all on the same side now...

The story is a layered plot (which I love) and each section is told from varying viewpoints. I love these types of stories where over time all the individual storylines start to converge.

There's George and Norman, the policemen (good cop./bad cop). Lark, a tattooed junkie and his new friend McFall, an enigma who refuses to take off his knitted balaclava are joined by redhead Geri who thinks on her feet. Pat is ex IRA and somewhere along the line has teamed up with Karen, a young woman who is possibly Catholic. Army personnel in the form of Major Jackson (retired) and Dr Gallagher the crazy mental army doctor/torturer. Lots and lots of little stories all linking up to make one big story.

The zombie flu was virulent and deadly and it's not 100% clear where it came from or why, but very quickly it's less about where it came from and more about where it's going. It whips round the population with lightning speed and before you know it the whole country has succumbed to it.

The thing that I found interesting about this one was that all the baggage that the characters carried from before the plague was still hindering them in the aftermath too. They were all in the same predicament now...survive by any means possible, but they all still held their grudges against the different factions, even when it was way beyond the point of mattering. Lark, the junkie troublemaker and Norman the policeman don't trust each other and Pat the ex IRA always assumes the worst about the military and vice versa. Old grudges and prejudices taint everything.

It's just a brilliant zombie book.. Survivors, zombies, just the usual fare but really well done. I cared a lot about what happened to everyone.

Some I liked and willed them to do well, some I hated and wished death upon them....Wayne Simmons doesn't mess about though and thinks nothing of killing his people off, just not always who you were rooting for to be killed. I liked that nobody was safe, just like it would be in a real zombie apocalypse. Just because they were a main character in a book was no obstacle to death finding them.

There's a follow on book so enough of them survived to carry on in the next one. I'm really looking forward to that one too as there are hints of perhaps a cure for the plague. Knowing how this one ended I'd say that it's not going to be easy, either way but I'm sure it'll be a great read.

\*said in my very poor Irish accent\* "Norn Irn zombies! Go read it noy!"

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## Lalinilla says

### NO ES OTRA MALDITA NOVELA DE ZOMBIS

**Pandemia** llegó a España hace relativamente poco, en pleno apogeo de la oleada de novelas de zombies que han salido a la luz en los últimos años. Quizás por eso no ha recibido todo el éxito que en realidad se merece.

Y es que **Pandemia** no es otra maldita novela de zombies. Además de una trama ágil, rica en personajes (es una novela coral con diferentes líneas argumentales que se cruzan y que recuerdan lejanamente a **Descansa en paz**, de Lindqvist, pero con mucha más acción y con zombies más agresivos que en la, por otra parte brillante, novela del sueco) y que no da lugar al aburrimiento, brilla por su estilo: léxico rico y oraciones muy elaboradas que agilizan su lectura y la convierte en un verdadero placer. ¡Aquí hay literatura!

Leyendo esta novela no podía dejar de reflexionar acerca de la importancia del *cómo*, que muchas veces se olvida cuando los autores se centran en el *qué*. ¿Puede una novela sobre zombies entretener y además estar bien escrita? Aquí tenemos ambas cosas: Wayne Simmons nos cuenta una historia interesante, que nos dejará sin respiración y que llegados a cierto punto, nos impedirá parar de leer. La clave, insisto, reside en el estilo del autor, así como en una brillante traducción de Joe Alamo.

Visto esto, yo me pregunto: ¿por qué no es más conocido Wayne Simmons en España? He leído y releído muchos libros de terror, especialmente de zombies, y todavía no logro responder a esta pregunta, así de injusto me parece.

Wayne Simmons nació, creció y vive en Irlanda del Norte, y su novela está ambientada en Belfast. Quizás, y esta es la única respuesta que he logrado encontrar, Simmons sería un súper ventas en nuestras librerías si hubiera nacido, crecido y estuviese afincado en Suecia.

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## Carolyn Storer says

### 2.5 Stars

I am a huge zombie fan. I love watching movies about them, reading books about them, basically I can't get enough of them. So when I saw this beauty, with the pretty awesome cover, a while back, I knew I had to have it. Unfortunately, Flu just didn't hit the mark for me and I found it rather disappointing.

Flu is not a particularly original novel, although it does try to be, but where it tries it falls flat due to the lack of explanation. People are dying after catching a new strain of flu virus only to rise again as the undead. There's no explanation about how the virus works and why people are coming back from the dead. The author even goes to the lengths of including a doctor/scientist but never allows them to discover anything.

We are also told that the zombies secrete a mucus that toughens like a hard shell to protect them, possibly preserving them, but goes no further into detail or gives a reason for it. The zombies even love the sun and

seem to be drawn to fire but nothing is explained and so I found myself becoming increasingly frustrated.

The other aspect I found odd was the fact that throughout the novel the characters seemed to believe that the zombies couldn't hear due to the mucus and could barely see, and yet the zombies seem to know where everybody was. But if they couldn't hear or see, then surely the zombies would just be wandering around aimlessly with no purpose. But the characters are bombarded with zombies at every turn, which I found most peculiar.

The characters are pretty well rounded although some of the interactions between them are a bit unrealistic and I thought some of the feelings between them happened too quickly. I realise that being in such an intense situation as a zombie ridden world would create emotions that may not have arisen otherwise, but certain passages of dialogue were a little jarring at times and just didn't ring true.

I also found the ending to be a bit vague, so I'm not sure if the author is planning a sequel, but either way I am not a fan of ambiguity. The ending wasn't a cliffhanger or a happy ever after, so I was left feeling a bit duped.

Verdict:

I found Flu to be a fast-paced read, once I got going, however every time I put it down, I didn't have the killer urge to pick it up again. It was engaging enough while I was reading it but I've read better within the zombie genre, however, if you're a die-hard zombie fan then you may very well like it. Although it wasn't awful, it certainly wasn't great, so sadly, for me it was just a bit, meh...

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## **Rhiannon says**

People in Ireland are getting the flu. But this isn't any normal kind of flu.

The flu has mutated into something worse. first theres the sneezing and coughing, then the throwing up and dizziness, then your dead. But two hous later your back up, back from the dead. Hungry, only hungry for the taste of human flesh.

Wayne Simmons writes about three stories going on, Jackson is at the quearentine with some scientist trying to find a cure while Pat and Karen are only just figuring out how to kill the dead and how to survive while Geri, Lark, Mcfall, George and Norman are stuck in a small town surrounded by the rotting hungry dead.

5.5 Stars! Super good! Brilliantly written! Sooo creepy, so detailed! I loveed it! fever here i come!

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## **Katrin says**

2.5 Sterne

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## **Sam says**

Oooo I liked this one, it is very fast paced and with the familiarity that Belfast holds it made it just that bit more 'poignant' and real and the use of a very well known and common virus such as the flu really added a



real-world edge to the story that lacks in some zombie stories that use the ever elusive mystery virus. I found the characters well written and enjoyed the gradual build up of their stories through flashbacks, dreams and conversations added a human angle to the story without losing any of its great zombie goodness. The story's ending doesn't really finish things off but personally I kind of liked that as in reality who really knows how things end, and it does leave it open for a sequel or two, which I would happily read. The only little niggle I had about it was how some things were a little contradictory, such as how it was thought that the zombies couldn't see or hear very well yet managed to find the survivors rather quickly. This seemed to niggle at me more and more but many readers may not have any problem with this as it doesn't really detract from the story (it's just my OCD-ness being a pain again). Overall a damn good read that I would have loved to have a lot more of.

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## **Timothy Ward says**

REVIEW SUMMARY: A character-focused zombie story whose characters you'd rather ignore.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS: A flu outbreak in Northern Ireland overcomes quarantine efforts as the dead rise and survival efforts bring out the worst in most people.

MY RATING: 2.5 stars

### **MY REVIEW**

PROS: A few memorable scenes; Irish accent in narration added to immersive experience.

CONS: Characters mostly unlikable; rambling plot; obtrusive prose.

BOTTOM LINE: The story is dominated by people being jerks, mixed in with some zombies, and ends up with more head-scratching than nail-biting moments, leaving this reader uninterested in any sequels.

Full review at SF Signal <http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2013...>

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## **Josephine (Jo) says**

This was not a book for the faint hearted!

It was violent and gruesome in places, the description of the 'zombies' who had succumbed to the deadly flu virus was absolutely horrid. It is strange that I wanted to keep reading, but I did. Most of the characters were already flawed prior to the outbreak of the virus. For some of them it is the opportunity to play out their natural tendency to violence, for some it was the reverse and they eventually began to feel some empathy for the beings that had once been human beings and also to care for their fellow survivors.

I did feel that the continual use of bad language detracted from a good read, I understand that the characters were not saints but it could have been toned down a little.

I finished the novel still needing answers and shall, I am sure, read the sequel just to find out the fate of the population still left alive.

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## Jason says

2 Stars

I love all things post apocalypse and for that reason I was able to read through this book easily. This is a fast paced, completely been done before 1000 times type zombie thriller. There is a tiny backstory and explanation. The world building is also extremely limited in its scope. The ending only reads as one due to the fact that there simply are no more pages to turn.

I liked quite a few of the characters. Simmons gives us a diverse cast to like and to hate. There are aspects to this story that could have been great had they been explored more: One, the Flu virus itself. Two, The mucus secreted over the recently dead. Finally, The evolution of the behaviors demonstrated by the zombies....

This is an ok afternoon read that will be finished by only die hard lovers of the genre.

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## Patrick D'Orazio says

Wayne Simmons has returned with another tale of the apocalypse that transports the reader back to the streets of Belfast, Northern Ireland, much like he did with Drop Dead Gorgeous, although this tale is very much distinctly different in its approach to the dead who rise up in the story. IN DDG, the undead are VERY unique and take most of the story to appear-perhaps they are not even undead, as it were, given how they act and react. Much will be revealed in the sequel to that tale, I would gather, as the reader is left with something of a mystery on their hands after book one as to what to expect from them...a good, intriguing mystery, mind you.

Flu is, in many ways, a more 'traditional' tale of the dead rising. The premise here is a flu that rips through the populace, putting down almost everyone as it goes airborne. The police cannot handle it, nor the army, but they are doing their grim best to quarantine the initial victims of the outbreak in a way that I found to be quite disturbing. Those afflicted by the flu don't rise immediately-at least not at the beginning of the story, but it does not take long for it to be clear that we are dealing with a zombie outbreak as we see one body rise in a tenement where the police can barely contain the rioting citizens. After that, we skip ahead six weeks and discover that the city of Belfast is a wasteland, with few survivors and undead numbers growing exponentially.

Wayne brings the reader back to his little corner of the world and makes it as detailed and vital as he did in DDG. We again are introduced to characters who were immersed in the 'troubles' of that area-police, the military, and a member of the IRA, whose past existences haunt them and impact how they try to survive through this horrible reality they find themselves in. They are not the only characters, as Wayne doesn't scrimp on the introduction or development of others, including a heavily tattooed and pierced character named Lark and his buddy McCall, who inject some color into this new world of death and mayhem, alongside the beautiful Geri, who share time with cops George and Norman and Pat, an IRA operative who has taken it upon himself to protect a naive girl he's found in the aftermath of the apocalypse, Karen. We also get to see some things going on behind the scenes with the military, although our time with Major Connor Jackson and Dr. Miles Gallagher, two men at crossed purposes, is limited in this book-just enough for us to guess at what grim possibilities await the other survivors in a sequel to this novel.

The bottom line is that this is a richly developed story with characters that you can love or hate based on the depth with which they are developed. My criticism, which is minor, has to do with the fact that the action is limited because of the detail with which all the characters are given. Don't get me wrong, the story moves forward, it is just not at a lightning pace. I am guessing that the author is setting the reader up for a thrill ride of a sequel that is less heavy on character development and more on action, as is often the case with sagas such as this. Honestly, I can't say it is really a criticism that is heavy, because I think when this tale is complete, after two or three books, we will see something that is vibrant with characters that fascinate as well as action that resonates. Good stuff, and again, Wayne Simmons does not disappoint.

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## Greg at 2 Book Lovers Reviews says

\*4.5 Stars

I've been having quite a bit of luck lately with my zombie/post-apocalyptic books. I've had *Flu* for a while now, so I thought, let's keep the good times rolling.

With *Flu*, Wayne Simmons has given his readers a good old fashioned zombie book; it has the spirit of *Dawn of the Dead* with all of the feelings of *28 Days Later*. I found myself going through a bit of internal turmoil as I read. I like to think that I've read a considerable number of books in this genre, so when I pick up a new one I want the author to give me something new, different and unique. Wayne Simmons went back to the basics with *Flu*, people got sick, they died, they came back, you shot them in the head and they died again. But the story was so damn good, I couldn't put it down.

Wayne Simmons has proven himself to be a master of characters. He has created a diverse cast – rich/poor, criminal/law enforcement, innocent/guilty; there is no good/evil character (wait, there is an evil character). He has painted a vivid image of nearly every aspect of human nature and revealed how each would need to adapt in order to survive the end of the world as we know it. I was pulled into the characters' lives, I cheered them on, I cursed their actions and some of them... I just wanted them to catch the freaking flu.

*Flu* is a fantastic addition to the zombie genre. It pays homage to the traditions, it is a dark story about survival, adaptation and sacrifice. It begs the question, what would you do to survive?

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