



## City of the Dead

*Brian Keene*

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The sequel to one of those most popular zombies of all time!

In this sequel to THE RISING, cities are overrun with legions of the undead, intent on destroying what's left of the living. Trapped inside a fortified skyscraper, a handful of survivors prepare to make their last stand against an unstoppable, merciless enemy. With every hour their chances diminish and their numbers dwindle, while the ranks of the dead continue to rise. Because sooner or later, everything dies. And then it comes back, ready to kill.

## City of the Dead Details

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Author : Brian Keene

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# From Reader Review City of the Dead for online ebook

## Dan C. says

City of the Dead is the sequel to Brian Keene's Bram Stoker Award winning novel The Rising. I read The Rising a couple of years back after I picked it up at a used bookstore here in town. I knew that it was a zombie book, but I was hesitant. Zombie fiction is a notoriously tough nut to crack. Most of what little I have bothered to read has been dreadfully boring. Even World War Z didn't really do it for me, which is really saying something. But The Rising, simply put, rocked. It was gory and scary and intriguing and had a killer opening scene. It had zombified animals as well as humans. And these zombies were not your typical slow, lumbering Romero zombies, but they also weren't the Danny Boyle 28 Days Later fast zombies either. These zombies were smart. They could talk. They could drive cars. They could shoot guns. They broke ALL the cardinal zombie rules according to Dan. It was a recipe for failure that instead, served up something so delectable that I could hardly believe it.

City of the Dead picks up right where The Rising left off, and because it had been so long since I had read The Rising, I had to go read the plot recap at Wikipedia. With it all coming back to me now, I dove into City of the Dead. A group of survivors of the zombie apocalypse has made their way from West Virginia to New Jersey in search of Jim Thurmond's young son. By the time City of the Dead opens, the undead population outnumbers the living by a staggering proportion. However, these zombies are not what they seem. As it turns out, a particle acceleration experiment has ripped an interdimensional hole in the universe which has allowed a demon race known as the Siqqusim to enter our world and possess the dead. The fact that the reanimated dead are possessed by demons is a cool idea and goes a long way toward explaining the intelligence that the zombie hordes possess.

Surrounded on all sides in the suburban New Jersey home where they find Thurmond's son, Danny, they make a narrow escape (an absolutely thrilling series of scenes) that eventually leads them to lower Manhattan and Ramsey Tower. It's designer, billionaire Darren Ramsey, declares it to be completely impregnable and therefore, the perfect fortress against the 99.9% of the Big Apple that is now rotting and possessed by Siqqusim. Clearly, Ramsey has never heard of the unsinkable Titanic because the building is not quite as sealed off as it might appear, especially once the leader of the Siqqusim, Ob, starts rallying heavy artillery and tanks.

The chain of events in a novel like City of the Dead is completely predictable, but you're not there to be surprised by the plot. In the hands of a lesser writer, it'd be a tosser. But Keene has mastered this kind of writing. Instead of being bored by the predictable plot and characters that veer a little too hard into cliché at times, I was intrigued not so much by what-happens-next as by how what-happens-next happens. The smart zombies really work even though for me, they really shouldn't. Their intentions are clear (kill all humans by whatever means possible) and they really are pure and unadulterated evil. The writing is graphic and bloody and gory. So vivid are the descriptions of what's taking place in the novel that what's usually necessary to really seal the deal with zombies - the visuals - are rendered superfluous. You can see it in your head. And that is why good zombie fiction is so hard to find. Usually, you need the visuals. With Keene's zombie novels, you simply don't.

It's been a long time since I read a book this quickly - it really held my attention and interest. It's not great literature or anything, but who says a good book has to be? Fans of zombies and horror fiction in general will certainly enjoy both The Rising and City of the Dead. They are leaps and bounds better than some of the other mid-level horror fiction I've read and the best zombie fiction I've read. Of note, Keene has also written

another unrelated zombie novel, Dead Sea, which features more traditional slow zombies which is a hell of a read as well.

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### **Bandit says**

This books picks up immediately where The Rising leaves off, matter of fact the first chapter of this book is pretty much the last chapter of The Rising. I would recommend reading the books in order, unless you're just reading them for the sake of gory action. I'm not giving these books 5 stars, because, although I really appreciate Keene's spin on the zombie story, this is just not how I like my zombies. I like my zombies like I like my mornings, slow moving and quiet...these talking, thinking, driving, armed and dangerous ones are just too freaking unfair, how can anyone survive that? Still good book, I definitely recommend it.

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### **Jonathan Janz says**

I'll write a longer review at some point maybe, but for now I'll just say this: There's hope in this book, but COTD isn't going to clobber you over the head with it. No, it's a novel with integrity. Keene follows the story to the conclusion that fits best, and that means you'll need to steel yourself for some rough, disquieting stuff.

But it's scary, it's harrowing, and as you'd expect, it's exceedingly well-written.

A worthy sequel to one of the best zombie novels ever written, and a great standalone tale as well. Five stars.

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### **Jorge Soto says**

Bien, desde hace unas cuantas páginas antes de terminarlo tenía una idea loca de cómo podía terminar el libro... pero la deseche por no considerarla usual, ¿quién diría que no me equivocaba? O.o de cierta manera me agrada y a la vez no, es decir, ¿tanto para nada? O ¿realmente no me esperaba un final tan turbio? En fin, no deja de ser un gran libro, siempre te mantiene al filo del suspenso y nunca hay un respiro, la narrativa es ágil y fluida por lo cual no puedes parar de leer. Lo único por lo cual no le pongo 5 estrellas (y esto es una cuestión muy personal) es que en las narrativas de zombis por lo general los personajes de la noche a la mañana se vuelven unos guerreros expertos en todo para poder aniquilar todo lo que se les ponga en frente, en fin :p cada quien.

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### **Bill says**

Several of our old friends from The Rising are back for more fast talking and speedy moving zombie killing action. Sh\*t, these zombies fly, crawl and drive military assault vehicles. Damn. That's f'd up. If only Jim and company can get to the sanctuary at Ramsey Towers everything would be peachy. Well...until Ob and his horde of nasties show up to spoil the party.

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## **Meghan says**

Oh dear gawd, how did I accidentally download this audiobook?

At any rate, I'm going to try to avoid a real review of this because I got through maybe 45minutes before I knew it was going to be a serious mismatch for me. And I'm not giving it a star rating so I don't weigh in one way or another.

I'll give space for 'intelligent' zombies (how?? Anyway). I'll give some space for lingering memories or.. something.

But the monologue by the Preacher was the tip-off: this is not a zombie tale. This is a God vs. Satan tale (the zombies are actually demons that took over bodies or... something). The 'head' zombie, too, gives a lovely monologue. \*sigh\*

That doesn't work for me. I wish it had been in the blurb that prompted this one.

(btw, zombie mechanics? Really???)

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## **BookLoversLife says**

So book 2 starts straight after the ending of The Rising. We see the group trapped in the house with zombies appearing everywhere. After struggling to escape, they head towards New Jersey. On their journey they see something they haven't seen for a long time, a skyscraper lit up. They decide to avoid that because it's both a beacon for humans and zombies. But things don't work out like that and they find themselves rescued and brought to this skyscraper. This skyscraper was built to withstand basically everything that can be thrown at it. It has become a place for humanity to make their stand. But with the owner of the sky scraper losing his mind and thinking he is God and with Ob taking control of the zombies, this might just be the end.

I have to say, this was a lot better than the first book, The Rising. There is a lot more character development and a lot more action in this one. I was also able to connect more with the characters, even the newer ones we were introduced. I feel like the story really came together, which was awesome.

I absolutely love the zombies in this series. The way they came to be and how they are sentient and able to do everything was truly scary, plus the author doesn't hold back on the gore and horror, which just makes them terrifying. Zombies are bad enough, but when you think of zombie rats and birds, well it just made me shudder!!

In all, this was a fast paced and thrilling read. This book holds nothing back, it is pretty much non stop with the action and I flew through it. The author wraps up everything nicely and I'm glad I read this series.

Joe Hempel is a narrator I know will always deliver a brilliant performance. His tone and cadences always make for effortless listening, because he brings the story to life. I always find that he is able to draw me in to the book and this one is no different. I loved his tone for Ob!! Great performance from an equally great narrator.

I was given this free audiobook at my request and have voluntarily left this review. This in no way affected nor influenced my thoughts.

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### **Beatriz says**

El libro me gustó mucho, salvo por el desenlace. A pesar de que durante la narración se deslizan una serie de pistas e indicios que prometen uno que otro giro, al final éstos no se producen y me quedo con la sensación que el autor cerró la historia de la manera que encontró más fácil. Eso, o lo otro es darle una interpretación con toques religiosos que, la verdad, me gustaría menos.

Independiente de lo anterior, la lectura se disfruta mucho, aunque no es para estómagos muy sensibles. La habilidad de Keene para describir escenas de acción es una de las mejores con las que me he encontrado.

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### **Rhianna Schoonover says**

Absolute CRAP. Forced writing, a horrible use of the genre & the reader. Again with the standard, old boring jackbooted military thugs wanting to rape & murder & torture the poor, innocent little survivors who just want to survive. A disturbing look into the distrusting & twisted mind of the author. GARBAGE!!!! I'm not for book burning, but burning this wouldn't be a loss to humanity! Sadly bought this POS at Naples & found out it was book 2. Had high hopes for it, I love Zombie fiction. This is TRASH! An utter travesty to the reader, to the sensible, to the entire horror survival zombie genre. You'd think they'd be able to come up with some new, interesting view rather than spewing a garbled, trashed version of Romero.

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### **Ashley Lovett anderson says**

Now that was a different kind of zombies. This book was disgusting lol but a really good read. Didn't know it was the second book in a series so now I got to get the first one.

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### **Michael Hicks says**

**My original City of the Dead: Author's Preferred Edition audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.**

Set immediately following the final moments of Brian Keene's Bram Stoker Award-winning *The Rising*, a small band of survivors manage to flee the zombie-infested suburbs of New Jersey. Their escape is not exactly scot-free, however, and Jim, Frankie, Martin, and Danny are hounded by a pursuing band of the

undead who quite nearly finish them off. They're rescued, though, and spirited away to Ramsey Tower, an impenetrable New York City skyscraper at the heart of the city where scores of survivors have found shelter and a chance at survival. Unfortunately for them, this rescue puts the survivors out of the frying pan and straight into the fire. Ramsey, an old, perverted, wealthy old tycoon with a reality TV show and dementia (hmm...I wonder what other old, perverted, wealthy real estate tycoon with a crappy TV show and dementia Keene could have based Ramsey on?) will do anything to survive. Anything. And Ob, the undead leader of the zombie hordes, has set its eyes on Ramsey Tower and the death of everyone hiding within.

With the ground-rules of Keene's zombie apocalypse well-established in *The Rising*, this Author's Preferred Edition of *City of the Dead* ups the ante a fair deal and provides a wealth of gore, dismemberment, and mayhem. New York has become a necropolis, and in between all the flesh-chomping and headshots, Keene expounds on the goals of Ob and the demonic Siquissim. One of the things I've grown to appreciate about Keene's *The Rising* series is the way the author infuses traditional zombie apocalypse tropes with a welcome dose of cosmic horror. Anybody looking for solid, edgy Romero-esque carnage will feel right at home with these two novels, and will likely appreciate the spark of originality Keene injects.

*The Rising's* narrator, Joe Hempel, returns to the microphone for *City of the Dead* to deliver a lively reading. Having narrated more than 150 books, Hempel has a comfortable, familiar reading style that makes for a companionable listen, one that's smooth all the way through. His production skills are top-notch, as well, and you won't find any blips or aberrations in the recording to yank you out of the story.

Readers who bemoaned the ending to *The Rising* can rest assured that Keene delivers a definitive finale to *City of the Dead*. Personally, I found the ending to *The Rising* to be very well-done, but I know there's also a surprising number of readers out there who need every single thing spelled out for them and who are unable to infer details unless they're beat over the head with them. Well, fear not – *City of the Dead* has an ending and nobody need fear the mistaken appearance of a cliffhanger!

*City of the Dead* takes all the best aspects of *The Rising* and plumbs its cosmic mythological depths a bit more. In some ways, it's a nastier, darker, dirtier work than the prior story, but don't say I didn't warn you. Ramsey in particular is a real piece of work, and Keene gives his living characters enough warmth and humanity to stab you in the heart when you least expect it. Thankfully, Keene softens some of the considerable tension and long, violent action set-pieces with moments of dark humor, usually thanks to a cat named God, as well as a few scenes of heartwarming familial repartee. *City of the Dead* is definitely worth a visit, but I wouldn't want to live there.

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## **Gatorman says**

Highly enjoyable sequel to *The Rising* that continues the story of the band of survivors trying to fend off the zombie apocalypse. Well-written with lots of action and a satisfying ending. If you liked *The Rising* then you should like this one. Zombies have never been so entertaining.

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## **Bill says**

I finally got to *City of the Dead*, Brian Keene's sequel to the relentless *The Rising*.

I had rated *The Rising* four stars, but I think this one will have to hit five.

Keene can move a story along with the best of them. There is no time for flowery prose, so buckle in and hold on tight.

*City of the Dead* picks up right where *The Rising* left off. Actually, it overlaps that ending. Like *The Rising*, the pacing is relentless, and you are burning through the novel like gangbusters.

And man, I love his zombie concept. These zombies are bad-ass and scary as hell.

Read *The Rising*, and then read this. And make some popcorn.

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### **Kristen says**

Before we begin - This is the Sequel to "*The Rising*" and should be read in that order. If you have yet to read "*The Rising*" stop reading now because what is in these reviews will be spoilers when reading the first in the series.

Now for the Summary - Keene rewinds a bit in the opening of this book, recapping the final chapter of "*The Rising*" where we were all left in that upsetting cliffhanger. He then continues on from there with an ever growing and shrinking group of scrappy survivors. At this point they have now crossed 5 states, escaped the psychotic military troupes, run from the Zombie leader "Ob" and continued on into New Jersey. In this installment (the final installment at the point of my writing this), the group spends most of the first half of the book running like heck, then being rescued by another group of survivors holed up in a supposedly indestructible skyscraper. Shockingly enough, the man in charge of the skyscraper has lost his mind (sounds like something you've seen on the TV doesn't it... well you're right). To prevent what might be any spoilers, I won't go beyond there.

But odds are, if you are reading this book, you like Zombies... which would also imply that you like Zombie movies, which would then mean... you've already watched this book. The first 3rd of the book is standard run from the Zombie fare... the second 2/3 of the book is an almost exactly the same as George Romero's "*Land of the Dead*." Now as to who ripped off who... according to Amazon, both were released in 2005 so it's a toss up. All I'm saying is that the majority of the book is the same as the majority of that movie. I was really disappointed in that aspect. I had really been hoping for something new and inspired, unfortunately if you've seen the movie, it's not.

Does that mean this is a terrible book? By no means, it's a heart pounding thrill ride from beginning to end that never lets up for a second. I blazed through the 360 some pages in about 3 hours. I enjoyed the read; Keene is a very fast paced writer. I just know I would have enjoyed it more had I not seen such a similar film.

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### **Chris says**

This is my fourth Keene read, all of them recent. While the first three all fell into that "entertaining and gory



with the occasional chuckle but not hugely memorable" category, this one steps things up a notch. It's the sequel to *The Rising*, but it's much better than that first book. Intense.

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### **Eduardo says**

Great unplanned sequel to *The Rising*, Keene gets things going pretty fast and doesn't let go until the very end. There isn't a book by him I haven't enjoyed and this wasn't the exception.

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### **Char says**

3.5/5 stars!

*CITY OF THE DEAD* has been on my TBR pile for a year or two, (and on my physical bookshelf), so when I saw it listed on my Audiobook! email, I immediately requested it. I'm glad I did!

This book picks up right where *THE RISING* left off. Most of the group is now trapped in a house and you can't help but to root for them. The zombies they are fighting are not your normal zombie-they can be fast, use weapons, and drive cars. They are led by Ob, and in this book we learn more about him and his mission on earth.

Fast paced and filled with lots of fun action,(zombie crocs and birds anyone?), there isn't much time to rest here, and why would you want to? There are plenty of gross outs and characters to root for and not of lot of time for quiet moments, fancy prose, or reflection. If this is the type of book you're in the mood for, then *CITY OF THE DEAD* is the book for you!

I listened to the audio, narrated by Joe Hempel. It took me a while to get into his narrative style, but once I did, I ended up enjoying it quite a bit.

Recommended for those in the mood for bloody, smart-zombie fun!

Thanks to Audiobook! and Joe Hempel for this audio copy in exchange for my honest review. This is it!\*

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### **Rob says**

If you read my review of *'The Rising'*, the first book in this collection, well then you know exactly what I will think of *'City of the dead'*

Miraculously, *City of the Dead* manages to be even more cringeworthy than *'The Rising'*. Lashings upon lashings of depressingly bad dialogue between characters, stupidly over the top gory scenes and overall, a completely moronic plot with more unnecessary god references than the last book managed to squeeze in, which is quite an achievement.

Notable crapness:

A homeless person with a cat called God. This allows choice lines such as 'Let god lead the way' or 'God will save us' etc.

A dream scene with a zombie ejaculating maggots. Yes. Wow...

Don't get me wrong, this doesn't phase me itself, but the stupidity of writing about it sure does. 'Wow, I'll really shock the readers with this!!!' must have been the thoughts in the authors head when he put together that particular scene.

Sexual themes abound in this one too. The above mentioned maggot-member scene, then some homosexual references and even some necrophilia. None of it serves any purpose at all. I really think the author of this book is mentally stunted.

It's just the kind of crap I might have thought about writing when I was 11 or 12, thinking I was cool to describe over the top grossness after having read a few Stephen King novels.

I really struggled through these books since I had nothing to read and they truly are terrible.

I vow never again to read anything written by this author.

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### **Glynn James says**

I read this book without having read *The Rising*. When I got this I chose it because of a recommendation from a friend, without checking that it was the second in the series!

I'd meant to try something by Keene for a while, and this was his latest when I went looking.

Even though I'd not read the first book, this was enough for me to go out and buy pretty much everything I could get my hands on by this author.

I love that the zombie crisis has a background that isn't your typical out-of-control virus.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted reader, but definitely a recommendation for die-hard fans of horror and zombies.

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### **Neil Sinclair says**

So another Brian Keene book. um.. despite calling he undead zombies - they aren't - one of my biggest peeves with this series. The corpses are demon possessed. zombies in my opinion are not animated by the spirits of evil beings banished by God invading our dimension. Zombies don't sit around and chat, drive HumVee's and use rocket launchers (unless they are re-animated like in "Dead Eyes Open" ) then there is necrophilia, one castration "just because the zombies could" etc etc. near the end of the novel I simply got

pissed about continuity... one character uses the washroom, pulls up panties, walks out. and somehow in the space of a paragraph they are gone. Stuff like that is SLOPPY. I can see why Keen has so many books - he churns them out like Peirs Anthony. It was an okay read but I'm getting off this ride.

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