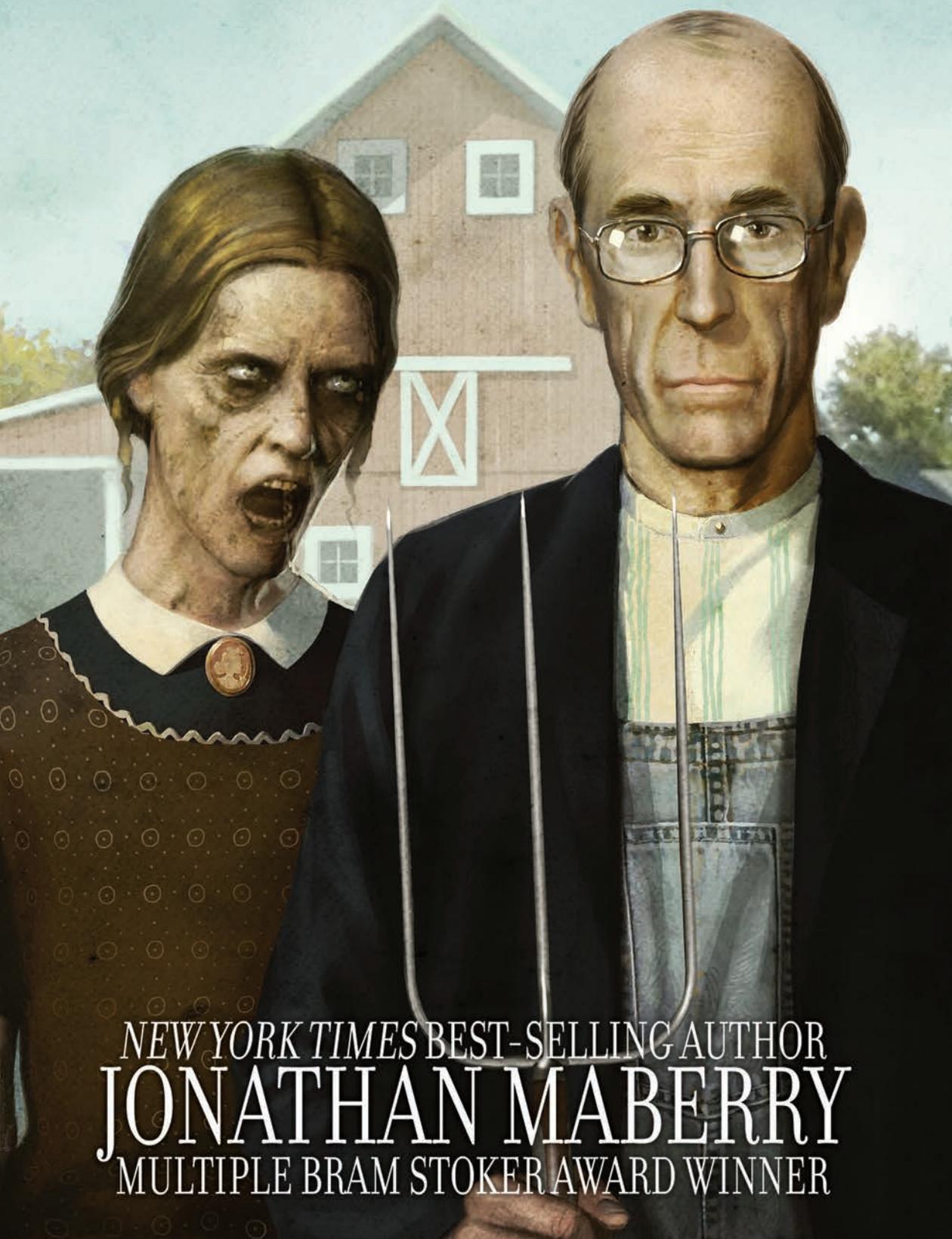


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JONATHAN MABERRY
ROT & RUIN



NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
JONATHAN MABERRY
MULTIPLE BRAM STOKER AWARD WINNER

ROT & RUIN

Warrior Smart Part 4: We Are the World

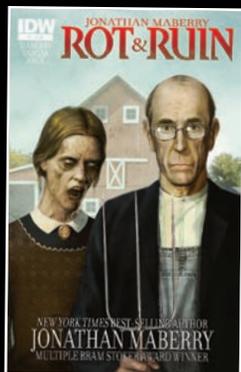


The zombie apocalypse was nearly fifteen years ago. The dead rose, we fell. No one knows why. Everyone who dies, for any reason, rises as a mindless, shambling, flesh-eating ghoul. There are seven billion zombies and thirty thousand humans. The survivors of this apocalypse live in nine small fenced-in towns along the Sierra Nevadas in central California.

Benny Imura is a fifteen-year-old who was a toddler during "First Night," the beginning of the end. His older half-brother, Tom, was a twenty-year-old police cadet. Tom rescued Benny after their parents were infected and, after many hardships, found other survivors and helped build other survivors and helped build Mountainside, the first of the nine towns. Everything beyond the fence line is the great Rot and Ruin.

At least, that's what Benny and his friends thought until they saw the Jumbo Jet fly across the sky. Now Benny, his girlfriend, Nix, his best friend, Chong, and the feral girl, Liah, have set out to find that Jet.

Finding shelter from the zombie hordes at Farmer John's compound, the young teens seem to have found a place for a brief respite in their travels but things aren't all what they seem and the teens once again find themselves trying to make a hasty retreat...



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A comic book panel featuring a character with a bloody mouth and a speech bubble. The character is shown in a close-up, with a wide, menacing grin and blood smeared on their lips and chin. They are wearing a red shirt. In the background, another character is visible, holding a knife. The scene is set outdoors with grass. The speech bubble contains the text: "IF YOU TOUCH MY FRIENDS I'LL KILL YOU." The words "KILL YOU." are in a larger, bold, red font.

IF YOU
TOUCH MY
FRIENDS I'LL
KILL YOU.



MEN HAVE TRIED TO DO BAD THINGS TO ME BEFORE.

WANT TO KNOW WHAT I DID TO THEM?



YOU'RE A VIOLENT SOCIOPATH. I CAN IMAGINE WHAT HAPPENED.

BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN HERE.



WHAT WILL HAPPEN IS THAT YOU KIDS ARE GOING TO ACCEPT SOME RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU'RE GOING TO REALIZE THAT WE—THE PEOPLE ON THIS FARM—ARE APPARENTLY THE ONLY ONES CAPABLE OF MAKING RATIONAL DECISIONS.

THAT WE'RE THE ONES WHO ARE GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD.



MAYBE YOU THINK YOU'RE BEING NOBLE AND HEROIC.

YOU'RE NOT.

AT MOST YOU'RE BEING CHILDISH AND SELFISH.

IT'S ALL SO DISAPPOINTING.



AND YOU GIRLS. MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT YOU DON'T GET IT.

THIS ISN'T RAPE. IT'S NOT SOME KIND OF SEX TRAFFICKING. THOSE ARE CONCEPTS BELONGING TO A DIFFERENT MORAL CODE FROM AN EXTINCT PHASE OF HISTORY.

WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE IS NOBLE WORK. IT'S NECESSARY WORK.



LIKE ALL WORK IT CAN BE A CHORE OR A JOY. THAT'S FOR YOU TO DECIDE.



LOOK AT ABBY HERE. LIKE MOST OF THE COWS IN OUR HERD SHE IS HAPPY TO HELP.

EVEN A GIRL OF LIMITED INTELLECTUAL RESOURCES AS SHE IS CAN GRASP THE CONCEPT OF EVERY PERSON DOING THEIR NECESSARY PART.

WE'RE CRAFTING A BETTER HUMAN RACE.



WE FOCUS ON NUTRITION AND EXCELLENT HEALTHCARE FOR THE COWS. WE LOOK FOR AND REMOVE GENETIC IMPURITIES. WE DON'T ALLOW FLAWS TO RE-ENTER THE GENE POOL. SELECTIVE BREEDING IS THE KEY.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? YOU MURDER BABIES WITH BIRTH DEFECTS?



MURDER? NO. ANOTHER OLD-WORLD CONCEPT.

YOU'VE SEEN THEM, I BELIEVE. AT THE HOSPITAL. ANY IMPERFECT HEIFERS ARE TAKEN THERE. THEY BELONG TO A DIFFERENT HERD.

THE ROTTERS. THEY AREN'T ANY PART OF OUR FUTURE.



