

Short Review: “The Omega Man” (1971) by Dr. John L. Flynn



The Omega Man (1971). Warner/Kinney, 104min. Director: Boris Sagal. Producer: Walter Seltzer. Screenwriters: John William Corrington and Joyce Hooper Corrington. Based on the novel I Am Legend by Richard Matheson. Cast: Charlton Heston, Anthony Zerbe, Rosalind Cash, and Paul Laslo.

The last man alive . . . is not alone! Robert Neville (Heston), the last human survivor of a bio-war between the Russians and Chinese in 1977, wages his own war against plague-afflicted zombies. Armed with an infra-red sniper's rifle and lots of high-tech gadgets, he fights for his own survival. Until one day, other survivors emerge, including a street smart African-American woman (Cash) and her sick brother. Neville attempts to save them with his unique blood, but he is hounded by Matthias (Zerbe) and his hooded cult of zombie mutations. They lure him into a trap with Cash's unwitting help, destroy his home and laboratory, and mortally wound him. As the last rays of the sun chase the zombies into hiding, Cash and the other survivors arrive too late to save Neville. But the blood serum, the key to their future, is safe. A very radical departure from Richard Matheson's classic science fiction novel, this thriller was one of Warner Brothers big hits for 1971, due in large part to Heston's bravura performance and Cash as a sexy, funky black sister with lots of soul. Sign us both up if she's to be the last woman on earth!

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