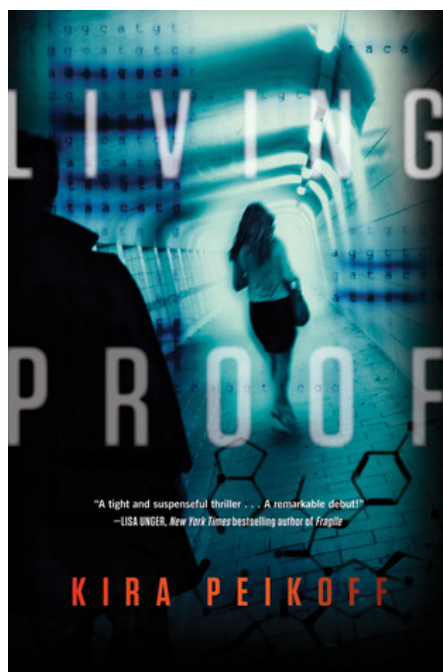




Living Proof

Kira Peikoff

Download now

Read Online ➔

Living Proof

Kira Peikoff

Living Proof Kira Peikoff

In 2027, destroying an embryo is considered first-degree murder. Fertility clinics still exist, giving hope and new life to thousands of infertile families, but they have to pass rigorous inspections by the United States Department of Embryo Preservation. Fail an inspection, and you will be prosecuted.

Brilliant young doctor Arianna Drake seems to be thriving in the spotlight: her small clinic surpasses every government requirement, and its popularity has spiked—a sudden, rapid growth that leaves the DEP chief mystified. When he discovers Arianna’s radical past as a supporter of an infamous scientist, he sends undercover agent Trent Rowe to investigate her for possible illegal activity.

As Trent is pulled into Arianna’s enigmatic world, his own begins to unravel. The secret he finally uncovers will deeply move him—and jeopardize them both. With the clock ticking her life away, he finds himself questioning everything he knows to be true, and then must summon the courage to take the greatest risk of all. Nothing less than human life—and a major scientific breakthrough—hang in the balance.

A thought-provoking thriller by debut author Kira Peikoff, *Living Proof* is a celebration of love and life that cuts to the core of a major cultural debate of our time.

Living Proof Details

Date : Published February 28th 2012 by Tor Books

ISBN : 9780765329301

Author : Kira Peikoff

Format : Hardcover 368 pages

Genre : Fiction, Science Fiction, Dystopia, Thriller

 [Download Living Proof ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Living Proof ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Living Proof Kira Peikoff

From Reader Review Living Proof for online ebook

Chip Joyce says

"Living Proof" presents a not-to-distant, and believable, world in which Christian fundamentalists have influenced government policy and created a new dark ages in science--specifically with respect to pregnancy and embryonic stem cell research. There are government agencies that subject each pregnant woman to rights-violating control in order to dictate what she does to her body, treating her like a slave because she is carrying a fetus that has more rights than she.

Fertility clinics are subjected to searches without warrant, and doctors face first degree murder charges if they fail to preserve embryos properly. There is a total ban on embryonic stem cell research, preventing the discovery of life saving procedures. The Christian notion of cell masses having a soul--the premise of the "right to life" movement--has created a terrifying police state.

The story creates a stark reality: this supposedly love-driven desire to be "pro-life" is actually a freedom and life-destroying movement, a modern day Inquisition, and the enforcers are just as evil. If you are sympathetic to this view, you'll really enjoy how this story concretizes what such a world would be like. If you are "pro-life" or sympathetic to that position, hopefully you'll have enough honesty to contemplate the logical implications presented in this story.

The novel has a tight plot: a life-and-death race against time, both as character Dr. Arianna Drake and colleagues try to save her from a terminal disease, and the police state hell-bent on imprisoning them. The conflict is with a man torn between his religious precepts and commitment to the law, versus his love and desire to help save the doctor's life.

Despite its serious subject matter and ideological ramifications, and it being steeped in reproductive and stem cell science, it's fast-paced and easy reading: it can definitely be enjoyed on the beach, as I did. It takes skill to pull off a balance between thought-provoking ideas and pleasure reading, and I think it's very impressive, especially considering this is Kira Peikoff's first novel. I look forward to her future works.

Shelley says

I am vacillating between 1 and 2 stars. I didn't hate the book. I felt like the Author has an agenda. The writing was OK, but I never really cared for any of the characters-very shallow. The story is really about the debate between science vs. religion and specifically focuses on stem cell research and throws in the abortion issue as well. It is obvious the author is pro stem cell research and anti religion. I was disappointed that the characters represented only the far, far left and far far right; there is a whole lot of distance between those two points of view and there really never was a good debate in the writing- just the obvious. The "religious" side was represented by a fanatical, immoral zealot, and portrayed all religious people as being brainwashed-not really accurate. I wouldn't recommend this for anyone except people that want to fuel their fire.

Harry says

As I am thoroughly familiar with the works of Ayn Rand (philosophical and fiction-wise), as well as Peikoff's writings on Objectivism I was more than eager to read this debut from Kira Peikoff, the daughter.

Ayn Rand is a tough act to follow: Period. I consider *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* two of the best if not the best novels ever written. Not just from a specific reading pleasure perspective, but the books' life changing aspects. The books engage the mind, fully, in a way no other books I've ever read do. The idea that Rand, in order to be a fiction writer (which is what she considers herself to be) would create an entire philosophy in order to fully understand her heroes she was to write about is simply mind boggling. Not to mention that the philosophy is objective, sound and to my mind indisputable (yes, I'm sure there are those that'll disagree).

So what about Ms. Peikoff's work? The subject is unique. The message clear, a warning to the consequences of today's political, ethical and medical practices if they are allowed to continue. Everything in the book is relevant to the story, no asides that have no relevance which I loved. Too many authors deviate from the plot in order to bring in irrelevant material (perhaps for the sake of their own writing pleasure).

The plot is clear-cut and engaging. Ms. Peikoff is a young author and perhaps the prose, stylistically, must mature (she is working on her second novel and some short stories). The dialogue is perhaps a bit stilted here and there...but still I read through the whole thing in a few sittings, very engaged in the book's plot-theme.

I look forward to Ms. Peikoff's next book...hopefully out soon.

Francis says

Living Proof is not only a book that will keep your attention and have you staying up half the night. It's also a very important and timely book, due to the ongoing debates on embryonic stem cell research. *Living Proof* makes the moral case for why this research is desperately needed, and why the government and religious communities have no right to stop it. Not only that, but it also presents the other side of the debate in a fair and accurate way. It gives a picture of what our world could be, in the near future, if we do not stand up for our right to have this important research done to save and improve millions of lives; because the people who would stop it in this book, are out there right now, doing everything they can to undermine it based on their religious convictions. But aside from having a great moral message, *Living Proof* also has engaging and interesting characters and a strong plot, and you'll always want to know what will happen next. Do yourself a favor and read this book, and then pass it along to relatives and friends (or buy them a copy). You won't be sorry.

Jeff Yoak says

Living Proof is one of the books I've enjoyed most in the last few years. I think the best way to understand it is as a modern and popularly consumable literary novel. It has well-constructed plot and theme. Characterization is pretty tight. Its form should be generally appealing to an American audience, and yet has a shining sense of life extremely rare to find in modern books. It is a fast-moving page-turner that makes you laugh and cry, and leaves you just a little in love with the heroine.

Trying to peg it as a modern genre novel is a challenge. It vaguely fits somewhere in the thriller / suspense genre, but that isn't really what makes it attractive. You can think of it as near-term hard sci fi, but good books in that genre typically push most aspects of life forward speculatively and focus on that, while *Living Proof* selects the narrow topic of stem cell research and tech emerging from it and stretches it just a little, and one societal trend, the growth of power of religious control and watches them clash in an interesting fashion. Otherwise, though set in 2027, everything stays startlingly static. For example, phones are identical today's

tech, and phone tapping, essential to the plot, moves backwards slightly. Despite the date, I read it as more "outside of time." In these respects, it strongly reminds me of Michael Crichton's formula where he picks one small thing to change by stretching modern tech just a little and then watches extreme situations emerge from it providing a backdrop for thrilling character interactions. That describes the vast majority of Crichton books and Living Proof as well.

Living Proof has everything that I'd want in a book. It was fun and easy to read. It has an inspiring character. It has a powerful theme. I would recommend it to anyone.

Cindy says

This is not a book I would pay for. Premise is interesting – set about 15 years in the future, there is a government ban on stem cell research and a police force to back it up. However, the promise of the premise is never fulfilled. A priest who left the church for love, cliché, is now the zealous head of that police force and trying to atone for leaving the church, cliché. The plucky brave researchers, cliché, defy the ban to save one of their own from MS, ad nauseum. The only interesting point, only hinted, is the pre-natal care mandated by the state to make sure each embryo becomes a full-term baby, leading to things like a fine for one glass of champagne. The story shows the danger of zealots but all in all, pretty formulaic. Pretty disappointed. Received free copy for review.

Amy Lignor says

This book of suspense cannot be classified only under that one category. In fact, while the setting of this novel is the year 2027, the author has taken serious cultural debates from our present-day society and blended them into a tale that's not very fantastical, since we're not far off from bringing this extremely frightening story to life.

In 2027, there is a clinic in New York City operated by Dr. Arianna Drake, Dr. Gavin Ericson, and his wife Emily. This is a fertility clinic that offers the wonderful dream of family to infertile couples. In this futuristic day and age, fertility clinics have to pass inspections made by the U.S. Department of Embryo Preservation (DEP). These inspections are 'surprise visits' and one of the most rigid rules is that it is considered first degree murder if any developed embryo is destroyed, and if the clinic fails an inspection they will be prosecuted.

The clinic has excelled and they are making a wonderful reputation for themselves. Unfortunately in Dr. Drake's past, she was an advocate of what the DEP considered to be a notorious scientist with a bad reputation who stated in print, that the DEP, "is dragging America back to the Middle Ages." So, the DEP Chief sends in an undercover agent, Trent Rowe, to investigate Dr. Drake.

As Rowe investigates, he starts questioning his own faith in the project and his investigation begins to fall apart. Between dealing with his own beliefs and the truth, Trent's life, loyalties, and love seem to be headed in three different directions, causing him to question everything that he once had faith in.

This is a story of love and life, although supremely scary in certain areas. For a debut novel this author has certainly chosen a 'touchy' subject to write about, and will find legions of fans that will admire her 'moxie' and look forward to her second novel. For anyone interested in a writer who cuts to the chase over a highly difficult subject, this is the book for you.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "Tallent & Lowery - 13" for Suspense Magazine

Richard Gazala says

After reading "Living Proof," it's clear debut author Kira Peikoff has no fear of jumping into controversy. Peikoff's book is a well-written and compelling thriller that boldly examines some of the most contentious medical, legal and philosophical issues confronting us today. Arianna Drake, a brilliant young doctor specializing in infertility treatment, runs a clinic that attracts unwanted and potentially catastrophic scrutiny from the U.S. Department of Embryo Preservation. Trent Rowe, the DEP agent tasked to gather evidence sufficient to shut down Drake's clinic and end her career with imprisonment, instead finds himself allured by Drake despite her past radicalism, and the illness that threatens to take her life very soon. The more Rowe learns about Drake's life and her illegal but miraculous work, the less sure he is of things he took for granted before meeting her. With lives and an unprecedented medical breakthrough on the line, Drake and Rowe find themselves racing time and facing danger, ruin and death against the backdrop of one of today's prevalent sociocultural conflicts. The story's set 15 years from now, but Peikoff's plot could spring from fiction to fact far sooner than that.

Erin says

I went in to this book hoping for a good story - the set up sounds great, and I love dystopian-type novels. I wanted to like this book...but I just couldn't look past the blatant agenda of Kira Peikoff. Peikoff is clearly in favor of a woman's right to chose and stem cell research, and I am with her there, but then she juxtaposes science with religion in a way that argues they are incompatible. As a religious person who also supports a woman's right to chose what to do with her body and scientific research, I was incredibly put off by the reductionist approach of Peikoff. It was a shame, because I appreciated the way Peikoff wrote her characters, particularly Trent, until he too became a pawn in the larger argument against religion.

Not recommended, but if you do choose to read it be warned.

Amy says

Fifteen years from now, in Kira Peikoff's vision, the United States is under siege. Religious conservatives have banned not only stem cell testing, but the destruction of all in vitro embryos. Those embryos, the conservatives believe, are human beings who deserve the opportunity to exist, whether in continued embryonic form or not. Destroying them is akin to murder.

But what if you had a debilitating, life threatening disease, such as multiple sclerosis? What if the only path by which you could be cured was through stem cell research and testing? What happens then?

Such is the quandary in Peikoff's *Living Proof*, a fairly well balanced suspense and romance focused on the battle between religion and science.

Arianna Drake is an OB-GYN with her own fertility practice. She also has MS and desperately wants a cure.

Toward that end, she is cloning embryos in an attempt to outwit the DEP - Department of Embryo Preservation, a fierce watchdog organization run by Gideon Dopp, a former priest. Arianna believes that Dopp and his colleagues are religious zealots determined to shove their faith down the throats of people such as herself, those who believe that saving lives is just as important as saving embryos. Dopp is convinced that Arianna is breaking the law, so he enlists Trent Rowe to go undercover. Get to know Arianna, Dopp commands, and see if you can figure out what she's hiding.

Trent goes undercover, all right, and the man who believes that the DEP is doing the right thing quickly has all of his beliefs questioned. Is Dopp right? Is the DEP doing God's will? Are they on the side of righteousness and goodness? Or does Arianna have a point? Isn't saving lives just as important?

What Peikoff gets right in *Living Proof* is presenting a reasonably balanced discussion of science versus faith. As Trent tries to make sense of the struggle, he goes to talk to his family priest, Father Paul:

"You're right, the Church isn't perfect, but that's because it's run by men. Remember the whole idea of faith, Trent: Let go of reason and give in to God's higher plan. We can't question Him, we can only follow."

"I guess so. It's just hard when I'm so torn."

"No wonder you're miserable, Trent. If you think about yourself and your problems all the time, it only depresses you because deep down you know how selfish you're being. Think of Jesus. You need to learn to sacrifice your own desires in order to do something that will help others. That's the only way to come out of this. Let the Lord guide you back to grace."

Trent remains somewhat confused. Isn't using stem cells a way of doing something that will help others? Gideon Dopp agrees with Father Paul, and, unlike Trent, Gideon has experience with fertility clinics. A former priest himself, Gideon fell in love with his wife when she was his parishioner, and the two resorted to in vitro fertilization after four years of failed attempts. He believes that their "suffering was God's punishment for Dopp's abandonment of the priesthood," and after giving up on in vitro, they were blessed with not one but two pregnancies. Dopp is self-righteous, but Peikoff does an excellent job of not making him a caricature. His motives are pure, if not narrow minded.

Arianna presents the opposing point of view, as it were. As she says to Trent:

"I believe that following your own happiness is what life is all about. What makes religion so bad is that it condemns you for caring about exactly that."

"But they say you should devote your life to others."

"... Why are you doubting your own doubt? When you abandon your reason for faith in God, you succumb to the notion that you're a pawn of some higher being. But you are the only one in control of your life - of what you love and who you love."

Arianna despises what she views as religious manipulation, and decries the fact that the faithful give good lip service to having faith over proof, yet they deny evidence of the help that stem cells provide.

The suspense comes when Arianna's pals come oh so close to a cure. Will she be saved before she gets caught? And what about Trent? Whose side will he choose?

Living Proof will give you a lot to think about. If you believe that stem cell research is evil, you might find yourself admitting that it can lead to some good things. If you believe that fundamentalists are freaks and kooks, you may come to see that it is not so simple.

While not perfect - *Living Proof* has moments where it drags, and drags badly - this nonetheless is an engrossing book that is sure to stir discussion. It would be a good book club choice, because it certainly offers a lot to talk about and debate.

This gets 3.5 stars, if possible.

Tez says

In the mid-to-late 2020s, religion and US government are almost inseparable. In this right-wing conservative Christian society, the Department of Embryonic Preservation ensures that all embryos are accounted for. Dr Arianna Drake's practice consistently records a high number of embryos, and the DEP head is suspicious. Thus he enlists underling Trent Rowe to worm self into Arianna's good books to learn her secrets.

Turns out the embryos are being cloned for their stem cells to create a cure for Arianna's multiple sclerosis. Or something like that. Trent was already having a crisis of faith, but now he's sure that science is the real truth and should not be hindered.

The science is interesting, of course, though the hiding-from-the-government aspect is nothing fresh. Still, the East Village is a great setting. Other parts of New York are way overused in fiction, but I previously only knew Washington Square Park and its surroundings via Francine Pascal's Fearless series. (Aye, I'm showing my age.)

Basically, *Living Proof* favours plot over character. No one seems to have a sense of humour. Yeah, it's serious business, but finding the funny keeps you from going off and makes you more likable. And Arianna's a bit of a Special Snowflake with her "unusual" blue eyes.

However, Dr Sam Lisio is the one character who really works well. He's been in love with Arianna for years, and finally summons up the courage to tell her, only to discover that she's already in love with someone else - someone whose job assignment is for Arianna to trust him. Nice guys finish last? Nice guys finish dead.

To quote a favourite TV character, this novel is "okay, not great".

Nora says

Living Proof has an intriguing premise and could have been very good, but was dragged down by a weak story structure. In 2027, fertility clinics have to pass inspections by the US Department of Embryo Preservation; if they are missing any eggs, they can be fined or imprisoned. Trent Rowe is assigned to Arianna Drake's case when his supervisors note a startling upsurge in her clinic's popularity. The department is suspicious of Arianna because of her radical background; for this reason, Trent is told to go undercover as a possible suitor. As Arianna begins to trust him, Trent discovers more about her life and experiments while

falling for her. In the end, Trent must make the choice to uphold his oath as an Embryo Preservation agent or go with Arianna.

The premise of this story held a lot of potential, but the execution didn't play out. Because the reader is continually told why something happened rather than shown the effects, the impact of those actions is lessened. For example, we're told that Trent has a crisis of faith during his pre-Embryo Preservation career as a reporter, and we're told why, but the explanation seems more like exposition than a natural extension of Trent's thoughts. Occasionally the author does do a great job with exposition. For example, there's no explanation about why this world is so against stem cells until Trent goes into the NIH files and finds articles about it. That section flowed naturally, and was a good example of how to show information. In contrast, other sections seemed choppy.

Besides the exposition, the major problem with the story is Arianna. We're told that she is smart, and that she has kept this secret for years. She is supposedly a very good doctor and researcher. So why does she trust Trent immediately, especially when she knows strangers have been sniffing around her clinic? This is not the action of someone who's aware of danger. Arianna seems much too trusting to be what she is described as. The secondary characters are more realistic, from the bitter scientist with a personal vendetta to Trent's boss, whose reasons for supporting the department are personal.

What I didn't realize until I finished the book (and what colored my reactions after) was that this is the author's debut novel. I think that Peikoff is a writer to watch, as her future works will likely be stronger. I really enjoyed the premise and I did keep reading until the end. Final grade: B-

Dkattean says

Dr. Arianna Drake, a fertility specialist, is researching a cure for her own debilitating and progressive multiple sclerosis using fetal stem cells. The year is 2027 and stem cell research is a felony. Dr. Drake's nemesis appears in the form of Gideon Dopp, Director of the Department of Embryonic Preservation and former Catholic priest. Dopp appoints junior agent Trent to pose as an admiring suitor and woo Dr. Drake into trusting him so she will spill the secrets of her lawbreaking research, ensuring Dopp a high-profile prosecution and conviction.

As intriguing as the premise sounded when I picked up this debut novel, for this reader it did not live up to expectations. Nearly all of the characters are one dimensional hardliners, whether adhering to the tenets of science or religion. Dopp reflect the worst stereotypes of dedicated Christians, and Dr. Drake's smug intellectualism leaves little room for spiritual reflection. Let's face it - very few human beings are quite so black-and-white in their thinking. The only character with a hint of self-doubt and introspection is Trent, but, sadly, he is too quick to give up his long-standing religious beliefs in the face of Dr. Drake's sophistry.

I gave the book three stars because, despite its flaws, it really was an entertaining story. The suspense and climax were well-rendered. Maybe I'm just not accustomed to my sci fi (published by Tor, no less!) being peppered with scripture.

Deborah says

This story is extraordinarily engaging and compelling. It takes an issue (embryonic stem cell research &

treatments) that is often the subject of theoretical political debate, and brings the issue to life with a dramatic plot that expands in detail on the dictatorial government actions that would follow in practice from a formal, legal codification of the principle that life begins at conception. The political system of the year 2027 is a kind of theocratic fascism, in which the events of the plot unfold.

One sees the senseless persecution of characters who are subject to the cruel oppression of government agencies such as the Department of Embryo Protection (DEP) and the Department of Embryo and Fetus Protection (DEFP). The reader becomes enraged upon seeing the blind fanaticism of the devout government agents who act to protect embryos -- five day old clusters of undifferentiated cells that merely have the *potential* to become people -- at the expense of threatening to destroy the lives of *actual* people such as the heroine, Arianna Drake, who desperately fights to save her own life as the villainous Agent Dopp of the DEP fights with equal fervor to prevent her from doing so.

Ms. Peikoff shows us, through the logical unfolding of events, the deadly senselessness of an irrational mystic creed imposed by force on man, who by his nature must depend on reason to survive. She also shows us an inspiring picture of the heroism and unyielding pursuit of values that rational men (and women) are capable of. And she does this while telling a damn good story with a well integrated plot and interesting characters. I'm now a Kira Peikoff fan and I can't wait to read her next book.

Nicole says

Disappointing. After reading the blurb, I thought this was going to be a fast paced medical thriller. Instead it was an entire book devoted to the debate over abortion rights and embryonic stem cell research. Religion vs. science.
