



Year of the Dead

by Jack J. Lee

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An advanced alien civilization sends out probes to study and preserve different planetary cultures and biospheres. A probe evaluates Earth and determines that humanity is headed toward extinction due to self-inflicted environmental degradation. In order to make Earth sustainable and to save humanity, the probe decides that Earth's population must be radically reduced.

The probe is programmed with prime directives that force it to make all interventions culturally appropriate. Since pop culture is full of movies describing the end of the world by zombies and vampires, the probe manufactures viruses that create an outbreak of these creatures. Ninety-eight percent of humanity is wiped out by culturally-sensitive environmentalist aliens who are here to save us.

This is a story of people living in Salt Lake City, Utah when the alien probe destroys the world. The unlucky, slow, and foolish die quickly. This isn't a typical zombie apocalypse story about a bunch of victims wandering the world slowly getting picked off one-by-one. This novel is about people, who refuse to be victims. They understand that the only way to survive is to band together and to control their environment. The aliens, zombies, and vampires need to be taught that on Earth the top predator will always be human.

Year of the Dead Details

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From Reader Review Year of the Dead for online ebook

Jason says

The main character speaks like he is the President of the "Look at What I Did" Chapter of the "I Love Me" Club. The actions are ridiculous and unbelieveable and reads like a pamphlet for Mormonism. Maybe the book gets better eventually. Maybe 1-Star isn't fair considering that I didn't finish it. But my time is too valuable to take the chance that I'm wrong. If you don't have time to waste...don't.

Christine says

Oh the horror indeed...

A friend once asked me how I could read HP Lovecraft. The exposition was repetitive and way over the top. And that is exactly why I loved it. This added to the dread and the fear and while you know it's silly, the character is so earnest and caught up in his personal horror, you cannot help but be horrified as well.

I love spectacle and drama and sci-fi and horror can often deliver the biggest bang for the buck. I grew up on this. I eat it for breakfast. And when it's bad, so often it crosses over the line of cheese, into unintentional comedy. This can be a good thing...hell, it can even be great.

Not so here.

Too many things too convenient and not earned; the protagonist's fortune at being accidentally prepared for holocaust (due to being a bored billionaire playboy and having had matrix-like training in every combat art imaginable), supreme leadership and hero worship; the obvious social and political moralizing; the spoon-fed explanations of everything the characters do; the marginalization of women as adorers of "great" men or feminist stereotypes...Helen Hansen was obviously written by a man and it sounded phony. It read like a parody of a parody, and if that was the aim, then let me reverse myself and say that this was a BRILLIANT book. Then again...one would have to walk away from the experience of reading the book with the understanding that that was what the author was going for.

And no conflict. Seriously...this subject is ripe for conflict but zombies are dumb and easily outwitted, vampires are also dumb and easily outwitted. I realise that a suspension of disbelief is required for the reader, but it wouldn't hurt for the characters to at least say - "What!! Vamps too!? Are you shitting me??!!" Or maybe even something as mundane as - "What?! All these other people sleeping two feet away from me??!! I haven't slept in days and that guy's snoring really makes me want to punch him in the face!"

The test of a good book, to me, is that when I am reading it, I forget I'm reading. The words bypass the eye and go directly into the processing center of the brain that creates the visual. Words become imperceptible and fluid and vanish altogether. That's a tough skill to master. I can't do it. Not many can. So in Mr. Lee's defense, my hat's off to him for doing the work. Only time and practice will say whether or not he'll get there.

April says

What more could fans of dystopic and apocalyptic literature want? This book has it all! I had a great time reading it and it was so refreshing to not be subjected to the usual moronic characters so often found in this type of novel.

Amanda Smith says

My review from amazon.com dated 4/8/2013

Title: Such a great book, zombies, survival, & vampires

An alien probe that doesn't want to be discovered starts the Zombie apocalypse we all fear plus a sprinkle of some vampires. The people of Utah were not expecting everything to happen so fast.

I just loved all of the characters of this book, you had a leader that you could actually understand, legends in the making in the youngest members, and believable situations. Half way through the book the characters stopped thinking about just surviving day to day but actually recreating the society that they once knew. I loved the transition from survival to sustainability of our culture. Such a great start to an amazing story, I definitely did not want it to end. I got this book for free on a day when it was free and I wish I could easier paid for the next two books because I know they will be great. Can't wait to read those!

Justin says

In Year of the Dead, author Jack Lee serves up an unusual spin on the traditional zombie story. An alien probe monitoring Earth determines that what the planet really needs to survive long-term are a lot fewer humans, so it creates a virus that turns humans into horrifying predators - specifically zombies and vampires. The outbreak decimates the country, but in Salt Lake City, enclaves of well-prepared Mormons manage to stay alive. So has Mark Jones, a rich playboy with survival skills, martial arts training, a secret lair full of gadgets and weaponry, and lots and lots of bats (OK, maybe not that last one, but you get the idea). Jones decides to take on the enemy, and along the way essentially takes over the remnants of society.

Zombie/Vampire 411 - For the most part, the zombies in New Zed Order: Survive are your basic Romero-style living dead. In other words; they're slow and they bite, infecting others. Lee does get a little creative with matters of physiology and the zombies' capabilities. The vampires, on the other hand, seem more like werewolves than anything else. They're essentially mindless predators with amazing jumping abilities and superior strength. They don't recruit followers, infect others, or brood gothically with perfectly arranged hair.

Pros - If you can roll with some of the story's more fantastic elements, Year of the Dead is an awful lot of fun. Lee introduces some very memorable characters and gives them each a unique voice. Even in the most unbelievable circumstances, his characters seemed very real and the dialogue was pretty natural. He also writes some very cool action sequences that would translate really well in graphic novel form (that's the picture I had in my head anyway). Lee obviously has a lot of ideas about the conventional zombie/survival story, and has given a lot of little twists that make this a more memorable read.

Cons - Others have pointed out that the main character is essentially a ready-made superhero that just happens to have everything he needs to survive an outbreak at his disposal. This probably would have bothered me as well, but hey, I love superheroes, and Mark Jones was just a cool character. Besides that, it's pretty hard to resist a Matrix-looking dude with a samurai sword decapitating zombies and punching the throat out of a vampire. My main issue was with the alien elements. Not so much the idea (though I have to wonder why aliens studying us would hone in on our pop culture), but the clumsy way it was handled. Those sequences were not the same caliber as the rest of the story.

While not without its flaws, *Year of the Dead* is an entertaining story, and one that should appeal to most zombie fans. It's at about the same quality level as most Permutated Press titles, and is more than worth the low Kindle price. Go into it like you would a graphic novel or Hollywood action flick and you should be satisfied.

Elise says

OK, I'm pretty sure this was written by a Mormon. If I had figured that out right away, I probably would have stopped reading...but I'm so glad that I didn't because his book was really fun to read and I actually enjoyed learning a bit about the structure of the Mormon church. If there was a non-religious organization similar to the Mormon Church, I'd probably belong to it, their chances of surviving a catastrophe are probably pretty high.

Anyway, the basic premise is that a space probe has a mission to help biospheres maintain sustainability and after it determines that Earth has too many people, it watches our communications to find a way of thinning the population that wouldn't be suspicious or indicate outside interference. It determines from our movies and TV shows that zombies and vampires are one way the human population is diminished. So, it produces two separate viruses to create both zombies and vampires (and does a great job of explaining the science between the two).

I liked how well thought out the strategies and devices were that the survivors came up with for combating zombies vs. vampires. And even with the Mormon slant, there were non-Mormon characters and strong smart women etc. so it wasn't infuriatingly sexist or anything (although a few of the characters were).

Bottom line, this is a funny, interesting, scary, informative read that I enjoyed way more than I thought I would. I give it 5 stars because it excels at what it is...a great vampire/zombie apocalypse read!

Elisa Paige says

Going in to this book, I'm pretty excited. The entire concept is intriguing -- that super-advanced aliens, in an effort to save Planet Earth from polluting/warring/nasty old homo sapiens, are utilizing human myths to destroy us. Which means that, in the space of days, vampires and werewolves and every other nightmare creature imagined by man suddenly springs into existence.

Giddy shiver.

Here's hoping the book fulfills the outrageous awesomeness of its premise!

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Okay, I've finished the book. While it could've benefitted from a good editor (repeat words and misspellings make me bananas), I really enjoyed the creativity and a fresh approach to zombies.

The POV jumps around between multiple characters, which is not my favorite storytelling approach since I enjoy getting into one or two characters' heads and staying there. It works, though, in books like Year of the Dead since it allows the reader to more fully experience the zombie-pocalypse. (World War Z is another example of how this approach can work.)

Yes, I saw the ending coming wayyyy before I got there. But I still enjoyed the book and will read the next in the series.

Jenn says

"Vampires and Zombies, oh my heck!"

Mark Jones is a trust fund baby, and his biggest complaint in life is that he has to work to find things to distract him. After running a huge marathon, he sleeps for days in his basement bedroom and awakes to find the biggest distraction he has ever encountered.

An alien intelligence has determined that if left unchecked, the massive amounts of humans on planet Earth will eventually destroy not only the planet, but their own species, taking all other Earth life forms with them. The intervention begins.

And from there, it's Zombies and then, Vampires. The survivors band together, and come up with ingenious ways to take out not only Zombies, but the Vampires as well. It's not an easy task, but with Mark Jones leading them, everyone rises to the occasion in delightfully inventive ways.

This was a bit different from your standard Zombie apocalypse book. Zombies tend to be the "worst case scenario" but they also have a way of inspiring those who survive to also thrive and rediscover the best aspects of humanity.

Jenessa David says

This book is about twice as long as it needs to be. It runs into the same problems as a few other zombie novels I have read--the author seems to be more interested in trying to impress readers with minute, unimportant details to show off his knowledge of certain topics rather than writing a well-paced and interesting story. This is unfortunate because buried under all of the unnecessary details (I've learned more about Mormons and building silencers for AR-15s than I did about the zombies reading this book) is a really interesting story. However I spent myself skimming through much of it and about a third of the way through the book I realized I was FORCING myself to finish because I had already put time and money into starting it.

The origin of the zombie and vampire disease is completely unique to this book and the very best thing it has

going for it, but there is way too little time spent on it. Telling the story through several different points of view also makes it very interesting, though at times several people tell the same parts of the story. Most of the time their points of view are not different enough to warrant this. I found myself skimming in many places because the same thing I had read ten pages ago was being repeated. It also doesn't help that with the exception of two, perhaps two and a half, of these characters, they are all INTENSELY UNLIKEABLE. This includes the "main" character, who is one of the truest Mary Sues I can think of. It is probably not a good sign that I kept hoping most of them, including Mary Sue himself (Mark), would get eaten by zombies.

While this was an intriguing start to the series, I am not sure I can force myself to slog through pages and pages of details of things I don't care about in order to find the few sentences of story. There are also several instances where the sentence structure is very odd and abrupt. The author seemed to be trying to establish their "voice" or writing style, however it just did not flow well and simply felt awkward. In addition, the portrayal of female characters was completely flat. Either the women were delicate little swooning flowers who chase after the alpha males, or they were angry, feminist "bitches." As a woman who is neither, I found this to be somewhat distracting and very unrealistic.

Ashley says

This book, I will have to say, surprised the life out of me. The premise was absolutely terrible--a combination vampire and zombie novel, get real, right? No. The unique approach, albeit very far-fetched and out there, was enough to draw me into the book. The storyline was very intriguing, with zombies, as zombies go, killing off the stupid and those not able to adapt quickly, and then vampires pick off the ones that survive. The creation was very interesting.

The humans, the characters whose stories you follow, were connectable. I liked how Lee jumped from chapter to chapter, almost making it a diary type of book about the characters who have to live in this hell. Some of the characters seem almost too perfect, but I think that Lee's goal was to do that. The one very interesting part, which kind of irritated me at first, was how focused he was on Mormons and LDS. Then I realized, the story did set place in Utah, and the Mormoms, as he says in the book, are very prepared for emergency situations. It was surprising, as I don't normally like books that involve religion. All in all, this book was a very quick read, and I can guarantee i'll be picking up his next one!

Olethros says

-Puestos a buscar excusas para el fin del mundo... .-

Género. Novela corta.

Lo que nos cuenta. Mark Jones es uno de los supervivientes del fin del mundo tal y como lo conocemos, que ha tenido que adaptarse a la nueva situación y pasar de ser una persona corriente (aunque vivía especialmente bien gracias al dinero que anualmente le pagaba un fondo de seguros tras la muerte de sus padres) a un superviviente nato. Pero no es el único, ya que la llegada al Sistema Solar de una sonda extraterrestre al final de su vida útil y programada para la detección y preservación de la biodiversidad planetaria provoca que ésta decida usar conceptos de la cultura popular para asegurar que el ser humano no es una amenaza para su propio planeta. Primer libro de la serie Sustainable Earth.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com....>

Anna says

I really did love the concept of this book- aliens trying to save the Earth from humans by creating pop culture plagues? Yes please!

Unfortunately, I just could not get past the halfway mark. The main problem for me was that it seemed like all of the (many) characters were stuck with the same voice, which was that of a religious, conservative middle-aged man. Even the (only) liberal feminist woman had a very strong, apologetic "I'm not like all those OTHER liberals/feminists!" tone in pretty much every chapter she narrated. She also spent an alarming amount of time defending herself from her marriage-obsessed mother on Skype(during the zombie apocalypse?)

Then there's the self-obsessed billionaire manchild who everyone kind of gushes about. He just HAPPENS to ACCIDENTALLY have his entire house set up perfectly for the zombie apocalypse, as well as having just the right skill sets and apparently dead on intuition as he knows how to kill a vampire on instinct alone. He's also got this super weird nonchalant attitude that came off as being either seriously unhinged or sociopathic to me. I'm assuming he ends up sweeping the ridiculously beautiful, marriage-opposed Feminist off her reluctant feet. But maybe I'm being cynical.

There was also a point where Billionaire Manchild makes a comment about the sick gut feeling he has when he realizes the footage he's watching of people being eaten by zombies is in fact real life and not staged, and how the feeling is very similar to how he felt the first time he saw two men making out (before he reminded himself was cool with it, of course!) which felt super inappropriate to me. He felt the same level of revulsion after witnessing two men kiss that he did after watching his newly undead neighbors rip a woman apart while she screamed? It left a bad taste in my mouth.

I don't know, maybe there was a level of parody here that went straight over my head, but it just felt overly political and very much like an egocentric power fantasy.

Caitlin Maxwell says

Not gonna lie, when I first picked this up, I figured this would be one of the worst books I had read this year. I mean, zombies, vampires, and aliens, all in one book? Really? Who would've thought it would end up being one of the best!

The reasoning the author used to explain the reason there are zombies and vampires on Earth was very original, I thought. As far as I'm aware, I've not heard, nor read, of anything else with that same concept. I may be wrong however. I enjoyed the way the story was told. Much the same as *World War Z*, the story is told chapter by chapter by the viewpoints of different characters during different time frames. It can be a little confusing at first, but once you're accustomed to it, everything gets better.

I had so much fun reading this. If you love zombie stories, read this. If you like vampires, read this. There's not a whole bunch about aliens, but I still say read this! No matter how crazy it may sound, it is definitely

worth giving a chance. I can't wait to get a start on the second book.

Becky says

This is probably one of the least drama filled books I've ever read. The book reads almost like journal entries and makes the whole thing seem so nonchalant and honest. It's kind of like "zombies came, we kicked their butt, we rock". It was light reading with light humor in it. I didn't always like all the technical talk when they were making weapons and such, and yet those parts really added to the book. It kind of made me feel like I was learning and becoming an expert and that I, too, could kick some zombie butt.

At the end there was a prologue for the second book, which sounds like things are really going to get interesting. In a way I think this first book was more of an intro then an entertaining read, though it did that too. It's not a book that makes you feel bad or teary eyed or disgusted. It's more of a book to make you believe that odds can be overcome with ease. It's borderline epic.

K.D. McQuain says

I liked it. Zombie apocalypse books can be a lot of fun. I really liked the premise but I lost interest in the narcissistic self-absorption of the main character and eventually hoped he would get eaten and another character would step into the lead. The ending also petered out, there was no real conclusion or cliffhanger to spark the readers interest in the forthcoming installment. I still enjoyed it but I'm not sure if I will read the next in the series.
