



# Johnny Came Home

*Tony Breeden*

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Trade Paperback Edition (7 x 10) Three years after the fire that took his home and his family, John Lazarus returns to the town of Midwich searching for answers to why he can do extraordinary things no one's ever seen outside of a comic book. Is he human? Alien? Something more? The answers lie within the Titan complex that overshadows Midwich. But someone else wants Titan's secrets too and will stop at nothing to make sure that she alone possesses them. One young man and his friends stands between Pandora and world domination in an action-packed, white-knuckled thrill ride that will leave you breathless!

## Johnny Came Home Details

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Author : Tony Breeden

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# From Reader Review Johnny Came Home for online ebook

## Allan Reini says

From its opening line, *Johnny Came Home* draws you into the world of its reluctant, damaged, and super-charged hero. And what a fast paced, dark, and intriguing world it is!

Author Tony Breeden lays a firm foundation for what I hope will be a series of novels centering around John Lazarus, a young man assumed dead in a tragic, but suspicious, house fire years earlier. Clearly against his better judgment, but driven by circumstances and a sense of duty he doesn't quite understand himself, John returns to the town of Midwich with his long-haired, rocker wannabe friend, Weasel Hopkins. Weasel doesn't know anything about Midwich or the powerful and omnipresent Titan Biotech, whose headquarters overlook the supposedly peaceful town. In fact, he really doesn't know that much about his friend, Johnny, either. And neither do we—at first.

The fun begins as Weasel wakes up in the battered K-car (K-car...I love it!) they had traveled in and begins to press Johnny for answers as to why his friend would drag him to Midwich, of all places. When Johnny reveals just a small sample of his super-human abilities, his friend is hooked, and so are we.

What follows is an exciting adventure that I would describe as *X-men* meets *James Bond* with just a touch, believe it or not, of *To Kill a Mockingbird* thrown in. Breeden skillfully weaves a story that, while leaving you breathless with ever-escalating action, still takes the time to develop a rather large cast of characters—each one touched in some way by Titan's invasive and deliciously morally-ambiguous meddling in their lives. As is real life, each character responds to their past and their circumstances in different ways, some choosing the path of righteousness, while others opt for the more seductive path of power and promised riches. And some, like one of my favorite characters, Football Coach and more (No Spoilers!) Mike Trager, take a path that is decidedly more vague. They often skirt the line, as so many of us do, between what they know is right, and what they are obligated to do by duty, loyalty, or career. These characters press on, influenced by their past and driven by their present, ever evolving as truth is slowly revealed.

Of these evolving characters, none is more fascinating than the lead, John Lazarus himself. Dark, brooding, but with a high sense of loyalty and justice, Johnny's journey is one of self-discovery. Breeden allows the revelations of Johnny's past, and hopefully his coming to terms with them, to arrive at a similar pace to his discoveries of more and more of his preternatural abilities. What results is a reluctant, sometimes angry, but maturing hero that you simply have to cheer for.

It is these supernatural abilities, and their inclusion in a Faith-based Sci-Fi novel that create what I thought were some of the more interesting theological questions in the book. Are super-human abilities, or the possibility of their existence, compatible with Biblical theology? If those abilities are boosted through human intervention, what is our response as people of God? Breeden does not shy away from these questions. Instead, he weaves both the questions and possible responses throughout the narrative as part of the story and the characters' reactions, rather than hammering out obvious opinions through exposition.

Breeden also does not shy away from issues of race and prejudice in his book. Again, without heavy-handedness, he explores these issues through his characters. Johnny is a young, black man, adopted by white parents. He wonders if some of the hatred and opposition he has experienced is due to bigotry and ignorance, yet he never uses those questions as a crutch or a reason to shirk his responsibilities. Other characters must

also come face to face with preconceived social notions and decide how they will respond. In fact, the entire question of the “indigos” (read the book...no spoilers.) is a parallel to so many issues and opinions we still must process in our world today.

On the subject of parallels. In my opinion, there is one, small item that could improve the story even more in future installments. Occasionally, one of the characters in Johnny Came Home would be compared to a fictional character in our actual universe, in order to illustrate a particular trait or a desire to emulate that character. While only happening a few times, I did find it a little jarring, taking me out of Breeden’s universe for a moment and back into our own. My point is this: the Characters in Johnny Came Home are rich and diverse enough to stand on their own. They need no comparison!

Finally, I’d like to close this (long) review with my favorite part of the book. I am simply a sucker for a satisfying ending and tantalizing epilogue. I long for a “Life goes on,” feeling about the characters after I am done reading. I’m going to break my own rule from the previous paragraph. Think of The Incredibles. (Best. Pixar. EVER.) The story ends. The good guys win. But suddenly, the family is about to fight The Underminer. You know that their adventures are going to continue. You don’t have to see it happen. You can leave them there, knowing that “Life goes on.” That being said, I loved the ending of this book! Seriously, I could hear the theme music playing in my head. It is a satisfying, complete story in itself that still leaves just enough unanswered questions, just enough teasers thrown in to leave me looking forward, with great anticipation, to the next installment, John Lazarus: Man from Midwich!

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## **Melanie says**

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

So this is a difficult book for me to review. I love the idea! I can see what the author was going for but something just didn’t connect for me. The premise is very comic book based which is not a bad thing especially with the YA market the way it is and I have a feeling if the author could team up with a great Graphic Novelist this could become a sensation. The problem for me lies with the fact that this “feels” like a comic book / graphic novel trapped in the pages of a regular book and for me it didn’t quite make the leap to where it needed to go.

The storyline is great. Everything you could hope for and a brilliant blending of philosophical questions, corporations with too much money, experimentation and mutation, and so much more. The characters are well thought out and the back stories complete. They have everything they need to make this series a breakout hit but I don’t see it happening like this. For a typical “book” reader I feel that the writing is too choppy. You jump around from character to character and really have to pay attention to avoid missing key details. As a lover of the graphic novel / comic genre too I was definitely able to appreciate what I think the author was going for but I feel that the market for this style would just be too narrow. It is not “Comic” enough for the comic readers or “book” enough for those readers leaving it kind of in no mans land.

Overall whilst I can say that I liked (more than liked) the story, the book itself for me is not there yet. I wish the author much success and hope that he can use some of the things I said here because the idea .... that is a winner!

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\*\*\*Review has been done in conjunction with Nerd Girl Official. For more information regarding our reviews please visit our Fansite: <https://www.facebook.com/NerdGirl.NG>\*\*\*

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## **Ali Isaac says**

I must admit to feeling a little apprehensive at the start of reading this book; “Christian” and “Sci-fi” were not two words which fit comfortably together in the same sentence for me. Add to that, that the author is a Christian minister, and I expected to encounter bible-bashing and moralising at every opportunity.

I couldn't have been more wrong. Oh, the messages are there, but they fit neatly and discreetly into the essence of the story. In no way were they distracting, or overwhelming. In fact, the author raises some interesting questions on the history and philosophy of religion...but if you want to know more, I suggest you read the book.

This is an all holds barred, thrills ‘n’ spills, non-stop, white knuckle ride of an action adventure. I was gripped from the first page by the author's effortless, fluid writing style, and the fact that he throws us into the action from the off. Back story, essential to the complicated plot line, is drip fed to us as and when we need it, so we are never bogged down by boring, clunky paragraphs of narrative that we just want to skip over.

However, there is so much non-stop action, that I had to keep stopping and put the book down, (actually, it was an e-book, which I read on my laptop), just to come up for air. I would have preferred it if the story would have ebbed and flowed naturally between adventures, so I would have had time to assimilate everything I had just read.

There are many characters in this story. Sometimes, I lost sight of who they all where, and as the story twists and turns, it was hard to keep tabs on them all. The main characters, however, anchored the story all the way through, and kept it flowing.

I did feel though, that as the author concentrated so much on keeping the action going, this led to a lack of development in some of the characters. Most of them felt two dimensional at best. The main characters are all young people discovering their inherent super-powers, which they were using to kill and destroy indiscriminately, without too much concern over the consequences. Had there been a lull in the action, perhaps they would have had time to reflect on what they were doing, and we might have seen some struggle within their conscience as they tried to cope. I felt the author hinted at this, but never fully explored it, yet it would have made them feel more real, more convincing, heroes we could actually identify with.

Having said that, I thoroughly enjoyed the read. The author, and even the characters themselves, make comparisons with comic book super heroes throughout the story, yet it reads very well indeed in its current format. Graphic novels are an up and coming market, gaining greatly in popularity, and I think this story would also translate very well into this niche.

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## **Carolyn says**

An action packed story that reads like a Christian X-Men comic book, with lots of action.

Johnny escaped the house fire that killed his family. He knows that Titan was behind it all and thought it best to disappear. Johnny comes back home. What follows is action adventure with X-Men like characters- Super humans with abilities beyond wildest imagination fighting each other and it is just the beginning of the conspiracy.

This book is written for young adults. Important issues such as racism are discussed in an open and honest way.

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## **Mary Davis says**

When I first received this book to review I was unsure whether I wanted to read it as I was a bit put off by its science-fiction genre. However, from the first few pages I was drawn into Johnny's fast paced, dark and intriguing story. The characters are well-rounded and believable. The author kept me on the edge of my seat. I didn't want to put it down.

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## **Lisa says**

First, I want to point out that I gave Johnny Came Home a rating of 4.5 (I do wish Goodreads would let us do half stars!!)

When I first received a request to review Johnny Comes Home, I was in 2 minds whether or not to read it. The synopsis of the book sounded great, but I was put off slightly by the sci-fi/thriller genre, but I decided the synopsis made me curious enough to give the book a go, and hopefully change my mind about the genre!

And boy, did it! From the first few pages I was sucked right into Johnny's story, I wanted to know what was going on, I wanted to find the answers to his questions. The more I read of this book I couldn't help but think of it as a kind of crossover from comic book to novel, in fact as I was nearing the end of it, it popped into my head that our heroes were a kind of cross between The Avengers and the X-Men!

Another thing I was dubious about was the Biblical references. I am not a religious person so was concerned there would be too much, or a lot I wouldn't really understand, but Tony Breeden manages to carefully incorporate enough that it ties in well with the story without coming across as over the top, or too 'preachy'.

There are a lot of characters in Johnny Comes Home, and it takes time to remember who they all are – who is a hero, who is a bad guy, who are the civilians in the crossfire? Once or twice I remember having to pause a second to place who a certain character in a new chapter was, but that was in the first half of the book, by the second half it was easier to remember all the characters and their superpowers, and I found myself warming to certain characters more than others and willing the next chapter to be focused on them!

I enjoyed the way the chapters were done, it wasn't one continuous chapter after another with all the characters thrown in, but each chapter concentrated on a certain character more, rolling the story out from every characters point of view, and not missing any parts of the story from other character viewpoints as they

were all covered. But so much thought and effort has gone into creating a real person out of all of the characters, it wasn't like some had been added as 'fillers' or background characters, instead Tony Breeden has put in a lot of effort and time to make sure we connect with all of them, even the villains, who I have to admit as bad as they were, I couldn't help but love to hate them!

It's not always easy to find an author who can create an entire world of people, places and machinery that you can just close your eyes and envision so clearly as if you were watching a movie, so it is a testament to the kind of author Tony Breeden is that I can say his writing created that vision perfectly for me.

I thought Johnny Came Home may be more of a book for males and that I wouldn't enjoy it a whole lot, but I loved every page of this book and would highly recommend it for anyone to read, be it male or female I think everyone would love it!

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### **Natasha House says**

Johnny came home is a book about a boy named Johnny Lazarus. He returns back to his home town with his best friend Weasel after a dark feeling that if he doesn't he'll die. While he's there he's on a mission to stop a lady name Pandora from destroying a facility called Titan. He originally escaped this place called Titan and had been presumed dead when his family's house had caught on fire killing both his parents. You join Johnny and find out he is no ordinary kid. He has strong, powerful, superhero like abilities that help him along the way.

What I liked: This book is well written, in that the author describes the fight scenes "which are many" very well. I didn't find any typos or errors in the book, which is pretty rare. A few of the fights scenes were really exciting!

What I didn't care for: It was hard for me to read this book in that the plot I felt was lacking. I felt like it didn't make sense that Johnny returned home to stop a lady from destroying a place that he escaped from. The author also jumps character to character. I lost count how many there were. I never felt connected to any of them. It felt as if this book was a sequel and I already should have known all these multiple characters. I even felt frustrated and annoyed because I didn't know who the people were when the author was going from their point of view. I found this book very confusing. While there is a lot of action (which I love in most books) I just couldn't get attached to this book. You may enjoy it if you like lots of action, superheroes, and lots of characters. I'd say give the book a try still, you may enjoy it.

I was given a free copy from the author for an honest review.

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### **Lu says**

Christian Sci fi?? I was unsure of what to expect, but what a thrilling story. Action packed from the very beginning with enough mystery and suspense to keep you hooked and turning the pages.

A town gripped in conspiracy and tyranny and now teenagers starting to understand they have superpowers

accelerated by the towns governing company.

The names of course have biblical and mythological meanings: Lazarus , the hero, Pandora, unleashing all the terrible things she can find in people, Titan, the company acting over the town as a God like figure. With all the action and sci-fi of comic book style superhero's, the writer expertly and gently eases in the moral questions of faith and evolution and how peoples beliefs in the differing ideals motivate their belief in their place in society.

The back story which is essential is timely fed to us when we need to know it and how it affects the story at this point. It gives drive and essence to the actions and understandings our young heroes are facing in this tale of good versus evil, and deciding which side is actually which.

The character development was very well done. The main character incites a sympathy and identification in the reader, while keeping a dark and lonely hero, comparable to many comic book style heroes.

I highly recommend this book to any sci-fi and comic fan

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### **Peter Stone says**

After his parents perished in a house fire, Johnny vowed never to return to his hometown, to never again see the boarded up remains of his fire-gutted family home. Yet inexplicably he returns, dragging his best friend with him. And plunges them both into a world gone mad - for Pandora's box has been opened, unleashing 'evil' X-Men style antagonists onto the deceptively sleepy town. For this is a town of secrets, all of which are related to the shadowy Titan Corporation and its ultra-secret research.

This is an action packed novel, the action starts near the beginning and never lets up, and continues to ramp up in intensity as it draws towards its finale. And it is a most enjoyable ride, I found it difficult to put down, wondering how on earth the characters would overcome the seemingly invincible agents of Pandora.

The author explores the concepts of the unmapped areas of the human brain/mind. What if we could use other areas of the 90% or so of our minds? Could we develop X-Men style abilities? Would we in fact still even be human? Is survival of the fittest justifiable amongst humans? These last two questions are examined in the light of solid Biblical teachings which are an integral part of the story (not preaching), giving us a quantifiable yardstick to measure them against.

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### **Lu Ann says**

First, although this is a totally honest book review, I must acknowledge this book was sent to me by the author for a review. It has been one of the most difficult book reviews I have ever done. I have very mixed feelings on the subject matter vs. literary content.

It is very well written. Breeden has effectively captured an array of strong characterizations yet, has brilliantly intermingled them in an interesting way.



Johnny's super-human abilities go beyond human understanding- I felt it a little too excessive.

This is an action-packed Sci-Fi/Futuristic novel.

The views Breeden has expressed are very interesting.. I believe he put in a lot of foresight in the development of his

characters with super-human capacities. It also portrays that evil would mostly be the result if these things ever came to be.

[Spoiler] I do believe it is beyond human comprehension what could be accomplished if the brain's capacity could be unleashed

to its full capabilities. I also believe that is why a Supreme

Creator has allowed the human mind only a very small portion

of its capabilities.... Look what a mess humans have made of the world with that very small fraction which we have to develop it.

I have passed the book to a YA who's views are different than mine.

I want his "take" on the book before I draw my final conclusion.

I am undecided between a weak Four Stars rating and a strong

Four Stars rating. I respect this avid reader's opinions and views.

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## Joelle says

Before I get into this review, I have a few things to mention. First off, I received this novel for free in exchange for an honest review. Second, I'm totally NOT the intended audience for this book. Well, I don't believe the author intended people like me- avowed atheists of liberal political persuasion- to read the book, unless he hoped he could convert people to Christianity, conservatism, and creationism through his adventure novel. Now in addition to being a politically liberal atheist, I'm also a home educator so I have more experience with creationist materials than most people holding labels similar to mine and I tried to bring that ethic of open-mindedness with me to this reading.

So after that big intro, I have to say I mostly loved this book. I enjoyed the notion- "almost like the X-men," but because God made them that way, not because of evolution- interesting theory if you ask me. However on the same hand, that was probably part of my problem with the book, and part of why I'm not able to give one of those longer reviews that describe what happened in the book: I'd be getting into characterization, the action, and then a character would do what felt like a sermon to me. I have a basic Kindle- whatever screen size that is- and I would be reading along with Johnny and his friends only to have a character spend a whole screen or more talking about god, quoting scripture, explaining how evolution has something to do with Nazis or other "bad people" and it would make me want to put the book down. Remember though that I said I'm not the target audience? I think I wouldn't have experienced these "sermons" as negative if I was the target audience.

Now Johnny from the title is the main character and this is his story. I enjoyed seeing his experiences and thought processes as the novel continued. I enjoyed the chapters engaging with other characters, especially as I got farther in the book and learned more of the complex interactions of different people from his home town.

A fun adventure book, but skip it if you're not a conservative, creationist Christian.

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### **Anthea Carson says**

I'm always drawn in when an author tells me in the first sentence the goal of the character. I am especially drawn in when an author then immediately shows the character contradicting his stated goal. Such is the beginning of *Johnny Came Home*, because, as the title reveals, Johnny violates his intention to never go back to his hometown of Midwich. In fact he swore he'd rather die!

This is a very action-packed adventure, with comic book style characters who have super-powers. Normally this is not my style of book, but the odd Christian angle made it particularly intriguing.

The character development was well done. The main character is a complex and evolving, sort of dark hero that evokes a sense of sympathy and identification in the reader. New characters are introduced in a way that keeps the story moving, without being confusing. This was a skillfully written story, revealing just enough to keep you interested.

I would have given this book five stars, however the one complaint I had was that a lot of the story was told in a more narrative fashion, instead of allowing me to experience the events of the story for myself. There were a lot of overly descriptive passages that occasionally caused me to lose interest. But overall this is a well-told story, and I recommend it as a curious diversion from the ordinary superhero, comic book genre.

I was provided a copy of this book, but was in no way obligated to write a positive review.

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### **Timothy Coplin says**

Interesting premise with a good message. overly reliant on the preternatural abilities of the book's subjects. Ending is unsatisfying as a conclusion to a stand alone piece; is this intended as book one of a series - it certainly finished as though this is the case.

Clean book sans profanity and questionable humor. Heavy subject matter is handled well without crossing any lines.

Now for the gorilla in the room: EDITING. There are many missing words. There is an over reliance on phraseology. And the KINDLE font formatting is inconsistent.

Overall opinion: the book is essentially one LONG fight sequence where the bad guy has now chance but the good guy can't seem to seal the deal, all of which had me longing for the end.

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### **Tony Breeden says**

Here's what readers are saying about *Johnny Came Home*:

"This is an all holds barred, thrills 'n 'spills, non-stop, white knuckle ride of an action adventure. I was gripped from the first page by the author's effortless, fluid writing style, and the fact that he throws us into

the action from the off. Back story, essential to the complicated plot line, is drip fed to us as and when we need it, so we are never bogged down by boring, clunky paragraphs of narrative that we just want to skip over... there is so much non-stop action, that I had to keep stopping and put the book down, just to come up for air." - Ali Isaac [Goodreads review]

"I finished "Johnny Came Home" by Tony Breeden yesterday. What a fun story! If you like comic books or superheroes, I highly recommend this book to you. I'm looking forward to future adventures featuring main character John Lazarus." - Joe Westbrook, co-author of the Truth Chronicles [Facebook comment]

"This was an awesome book with a mixture of action and personal relationships. It included sound biblical truths without being preachy. It definitely leaves you wanting a followup. The characters are well rounded and believable. Tony has a unique writing style that keeps you on the edge of your seat. I couldn't put it down!" - "Lady Ace" (Amazon review - 5 stars)

"...an action-packed story full of surprises. The action, once it begins, is almost non-stop all the way to the end of the book. You won't want to put it down." - Buddy Helms, author of Mike's New Reality (Amazon review - 4 stars)

Find out more about this book at <http://tonybreedenbooks.com>

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