



## After Life

*Jaron Lee Knuth*

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## **After Life** Jaron Lee Knuth

Since the seventh grade, Alex, a retail slave, has secretly been in love with his best friend, Morgan, a web cartoonist. Unable to overcome social awkwardness, they both find themselves in very separate lifestyles as they reach adulthood. Amidst these distanced and inhibited lives, Alex and Morgan are suddenly faced with the literal end of the world. Corpses around the globe begin to hunger for the flesh of the living, and society crumbles quickly under the shock of the attacks. With the animated dead filling the streets, Morgan has no choice but to hide in Alex's apartment, surviving on canned food, soda, and a huge supply of illegally downloaded movies. While death is waiting outside the apartment every hour of the day, the two friends force themselves to rethink every social rule and emotional response in order to keep their sanity. Both of them will ultimately decide whether they should struggle to hold onto the life that they lost, or adapt to the change. In a world where only the numb can survive, Alex and Morgan must face their true feelings for the first time. Love, blood, and the undead.

## **After Life Details**

Date : Published April 1st 2009 by CreateSpace

ISBN : 9781442135642

Author : Jaron Lee Knuth

Format : Paperback 268 pages

Genre : Horror, Zombies, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic, Science Fiction, Fiction

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# From Reader Review After Life for online ebook

## Michelle says

Just your typical run of the mill zombie story with some very flat characters. Every single character seemed to have been written the same exact way and had the personality of a wet leaf. I've met caterpillars in my garden that had more character.

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## Robert Beveridge says

Jaron Lee Knuth, *After Life* (CreateSpace, 2009)

With the current glut of zombie lit, which is not only coming at us from the major labels and the specialty presses (there's even one, Permuted, devoted solely to zombie lit) but the self/vanity publishing world as well, it's pretty much guaranteed that a lot of it is going to range from the mediocre to the terminally bad. While *After Life* is paint-by-numbers, it's much closer to the "mediocre" than the "terminally bad", so if you're jonesing for zombies and you've read everything you can get your hands on, this isn't the worst place you could go.

Plot: zombie apocalypse. Yep. That's it. There's nothing here you haven't seen before, from the slightly-scary-seeming survivors to the unrequited-love plot to no one realizing what the zombies are until it's too late to the clearing out of the apartment building to... you get the idea. You've got stock characters in stock situations, and the whole thing will seem very familiar to you. Knuth has some decent ideas about how to flesh out his characters, but never ties these ideas to anything, leading us to cardboard cutouts with some streamers hanging off them flapping in the breeze. And those cardboard cutouts react just as you would expect them to in the situations they're given.

All that said, there's a lot worse zombie lit out there. There is something to be said for the comfort of the safe, predictable novel, which is why Danielle Steel and the late Barbara Cartland have sold enough novels to circle the world a couple of hundred times. If you're just looking for some undead and a way to kill a few hours, especially given the price it's available for on Kindle, you might as well check it out. \* ½

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## Alexis Winning says

Overall, *Afterlife* is a decently crafted book. I certainly wish I had read it early on in my zombie lit experience because, although a well crafted piece, nothing new was gained in my mind. *Afterlife* follows the formula of a good zombie book pretty closely, and manages to throw in a little romance to boot.

I would recommend *Afterlife* to someone who is just trying out the genre. It's a good "gateway book", and there was nothing in particular that annoyed me. It was engaging, well written, and focused on the human story as opposed to being overly concerned with action, blood, guts and gore. My only criticism is of my own doing-I have read SO much books in this genre of the last year, that I am now seeking different spins on

the often formulaic zombie story, and this one would have served me better as an initiation read.

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## **Mark Schaefer says**

It was good, and I love the ending.

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## **Eva Leger says**

I'm still fairly new to the zombie genre so I'm not sure how much credit my reviews should be given. I've, so far, liked most of the zombies and/or end of the world books I've read.

I liked this as well. It seems as if the author knows exactly what he's doing when he writes about the zombies themselves and how people survive during an attack or outbreak.

The biggest thing I did not like about the book - and this is fairly large in this story - is the relationship aspect. I just can't stop thinking that any normal person, young or not, wouldn't act as Morgan and Alex acted. I understand crushes and love and all that good stuff but when zombies are trying to eat me? Yeah, I'm not giving a shit about a crush, love, OR sex. I'm giving a shit about not being torn to pieces by flesh eating monsters. So, I thought those parts of the book were horribly unrealistic and unfortunately there are many parts of the book that deal with this.

I think I can see where the author was going. Trying to add a twist in to the zombie genre and I suppose it could even be done well. Strike that - it *has* been done well. The first book(s) that come to mind that do the relationship aspect realistically are Rhiannon Frater's *As the World Dies* trilogy which includes *The First Days*, *Fighting to Survive*, and *Siege*. Those books hold a very realistic relationship (more than one actually) that have stayed in my minds through the past few years.

I'd like to actually state some differences between the relationships in Frater's trilogy and Knuth's *After Life* but I can't. I have to chalk it up to it's just the feeling I got.

That being said, I do believe Knuth has a knack for zombie writing. I mean, let's face it, it's not easy no matter what some people want to believe. *Saying* you can write or can write better than someone is definitely easy but actually *doing* said writing is a lot more difficult.

My favorite part of the book - and the most suspenseful IMO - was the time in the Wal-Mart. I sort of thought I knew where Knuth was headed but was off a little a time or two and it could be called 'edge of your seat' reading during those parts.

I'd very much like to read a more "typical" zombie book by Knuth, one not so focused on the characters finding love. But maybe that's because I haven't worked my way through the genre like more knowledgeable readers.

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## **Jennifer Lee says**

The dead have started to come back and eat people. Alex and Morgan are in love but too angsty to say so. They try to survive.. ish. That about sums it up.

It wasn't bad, I just found that it lulled alot in quite a few places. There just wasn't as much surviving as I would have wished. But there was some really intense parts no doubt. I did like the fact that they pretty much looked out for number one. I think that would be the most realistic way that a zombie apocalypse would be done, in the sense that people would look out for themselves and their loved ones before perfect strangers,

and as harsh as that sounds, there wouldn't be people risking their lives for others. That's what I think anyways...

I'm not sure if I just completely missed it, but there was really never any explanation as to what brought them back to life. But then again, it's not like you'd have some scientific analysis with you in the middle of it all going "Hmmm yes, I see what is going on here, hmmm... It looks to be a viral blood infection with hmmm extraordinary blood counts that are molecular progressing in an hmm accelerated rate!...." (yes that is my nerd speak, it sounds much better in my head, just picture with a squeaky voice =]) Also I'm sure that sentence makes no sense, but whatever. So that didn't really bother me.

What did bother me though is Alex and Morgan. It was completely nauseating the way they bounced back and forth between "I think I like him/her, but no this is so wrong people want to eat my brains, I shouldn't be focusing on love at a time like this." UMMM?? Then stop being all angst over it and get your shit done! The ending was too abrupt as well. I was just reading along about them surviving and then **BAAM** (view spoiler). I was like.. *Wait.. What? that's it?*

Overall, it wasn't the worst zombie book I've read. But for me, the whole reason I read zombie books is for the survival aspect. I love reading about then travelling, outrunning, hiding and raiding. And the **OPPS RYAN JUST GOT OMNOMNOM BY SOME ZOMBIES** oh well have a sobfest later, we gotta keep going! <-- That's why I like zombies, but this just didn't do it for me. Doesn't mean some people won't like it, it just didn't wow me or get my adrenaline going.

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## Alisha Marie says

Let me start out by saying that I am a huge zombie fan. Zombie movies just cause hours of enjoyment while simultaneously scaring the hell out of me. When it comes to reading zombie books, I'm also a little apprehensive because I'm not seeing the gore and horror on screen. I've only read one previous zombie book (The Forest of Hands and Teeth) and enjoyed it and since I saw that After Life was only 99 cents in Kindle format, I decided to buy it. I thought that it was just okay.

After Life starts out with a bang. The two main characters, Alex and Morgan are in a diner before all hell breaks loose in the form of zombies. Yet while the book was going on, I couldn't help but feel like it was extremely repetitive. Then, there were other instances where absolutely nothing of interest was happening.

Another aspect that bothered me was the whole romance between Alex and Morgan. Well, not really the "romance" so much as their repetitive whining of it. If you like each other just say it. It's less annoying that way. If you're thinking "But we're in the middle of zombie mayhem! Now is so not the time", well you'd be right. So just put it out of your mind. It's less eye-roll inducing for the rest of us.

Besides the two annoying main characters and their constant relationship woes, the book did have some really good moments. I liked that it showed the way humanity would disintegrate realistically. Let me be honest for a moment and say that if zombies really were to break out in the U.S. most people would be looking out for number 1 (and their own loved ones to that effect). There would rarely be any hero antics happening. After Life emphasized that in Morgan and Alex's behavior. They were going to look after each other...to hell with everybody else. As cynical as the thought may be, a majority of the population would do this if zombies were to break out. (Let me just mention that I'd be one of the first ones gone if zombies were

to roam the Earth. I would so not survive.)

So, After Life was an enjoyable read for 99 cents. That being said, I would've been slightly disappointed if I paid \$11.99 for it (the current paperback cost) as there wasn't enough closure for my taste. It should've been a bit more longer and explained itself a bit more. Still, "okay" zombie mayhem is better than none at all.

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### **Felicia A says**

Sigh. No, really. SIGH. You know, I really, really hate it when I am all ready and excited to sink my teeth (heh) into a new zombie book and it lets me down. I guess there is only so much you can do with the zombie formula at this point, and I always like it when there are some new and different twists.

There really aren't any in this book, but the story had a proper ending, which a lot of these books don't. I think I get what the author was trying to do, but it really just comes across as a zombie romance. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but it wasn't what I want out of a zombie book.

Honestly, I'd probably give it 3.5 stars, but the lack of editing in self published works just really irks me and takes away from my enjoyment. When I am having to edit as I go along, I cannot immerse myself in the story the way I want to.

At one point, a character who has just been killed shows up in the next chapter. Really??

The author definitely is off to a good start, just needs a little polishing, and the book is added to my zombie collection.

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### **Glenn Bullion says**

I agree with what I've read elsewhere that it started slow, but got cranking later. I like this zombie story because it was the first one I've read that I thought included a solid romance as well.

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### **charles ward says**

**Its a zombie book!**

Was it worth reading yes was it cheap yes did i read it multiple times yes. Would i buy it again yes

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### **Amber Carson says**

After Life By Jaron Lee Knuth was a great quick read! I sat down to read this book with low expectations and was pleasantly surprised! This book was a real page turner and kept me on the edge of my seat the whole

time. I did feel like it kind of ended abruptly like possibly the Author was rushed. but other than that I really liked it. the characters were realistic and likable. i would recommend this book!

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### **Jessie Banach says**

One of the best love stories I've year in a year, at least. Sure, it has zombies. Yeah, the world has ended, and people in Wal-Marts across the nation are still crazy whack jobs. But the love story between the two friends, out shines the awesome gore scenes, the dramatic on the edge of your seat parts of them trying to get food from other apartments and having to fight with the inhabitants, or even the funny/silly parts of them getting drunk on the roof.

The world has ended. People are dead and coming back. Red-necks inherit the earth by hiding in Wal-Mart. And people are effed up no matter what. But love still goes on.

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### **Dan Amrich says**

I bought this book due to its glowing reviews, and I was disappointed that so few mentioned After Life's glaring mechanical writing issues. The book lacks polish; it's pockmarked with labored descriptions, missing punctuation, embarrassingly misspelled words (a conversational transition is not a "segway"; corpses do not lie "in taters" on the ground), and an overall lack of narrative style. It's extremely uneven in presentation and, for the first quarter of the book, a labor to read. The author hits a better stride as the action picks up, and his take on society's breakdown during the zombie apocalypse feels plausible -- but getting there was, at times, excruciating. Also, prepare for the drama to turn to eye-rolling melodrama at times.

This could really benefit from collaboration with an actual editor, which is not the same as an automatic spell-checker (which is almost certainly the reason that the lead character, while driving a car, "slams on the breaks"). The compelling parts of the narrative and interesting characterizations would shine through if the mechanics and stylistic choices could be addressed, refined, and just flat-out corrected. After Life is not a bad story; it's just in need of a more skilled storyteller.

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### **Shaunte Baptiste says**

I love zombie apocalypse books. This one was alright though. I loved the concept of the love story in it, and I loved Alex and Morgan. I also loved the fact that there was a happy ending.

I hated the fact that I felt like it was kinda missing something. I can't quite put my finger on it though. (Sighs)

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### **Abbie says**

This started off quite good, and gruesome. Though, as it progressed i was bored.

It really annoyed me how long it took for Morgan to accept they were zombies.

When you've just seen someone die, get back up, then eat someone else, i think it's easy to know they're zombies!

Morgan and Alex's relationship did annoy me at points, because i found the story to be more about "i really like you, but we can't.. can we?" than trying to survive.

The bit in Walmart was kind of good, but after being bored for so long, it didn't do enough to make me like the book.

I did like the ending though. It tied things up nicely, and was quite sweet.

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