



Taking on the Dead

Annie Walls

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Life for Kansas was perfect until the day the world changed.

She has been hiding out for four years in solitude. It's the only way to survive. The only way not to draw the living dead. Helping a small group of people, she learns the new world might not be what she assumes. Venturing out of her refuge and comfort zone, she meets Rudy, who helps her find a greater purpose. She realizes that the world has moved on without her. Only it's not what she expects. Her knowledge of the living dead grows and only makes her more curious as humanity continues to hang on by a thread. While on her search for answers she finds comfort in new friendships and love, but her past seems as if it will haunt her forever.

Kansas takes it upon herself to help other survivors, which would be easy if the famished were the only obstacles.

Taking on the Dead Details

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From Reader Review Taking on the Dead for online ebook

Wanderlust says

“A good spirit you are. He is with the Lord now.”

Laura Thomas says

So here you are at the carnival, walking hand in hand with your boyfriend, anticipating a night of rides and games, taking in all of the sights, sounds and smells. Suddenly, zombies are everywhere, and you are in for the fight of your life.

That’s what happened to Kansas. She survived that night, but paid a heavy price.

Fast forward to four years later. Kansas City Sunshine Moore, also known as Kansas or Kan for short, has been surviving, hiding out in her family’s underground bunk all alone. A betrayal by a group of people she offered shelter to forces her to leave her home and search for a new one. She quickly discovers there is much she doesn’t know about the zombies. There are the fresh ones, the Famished, and they are very fast and strong. What else doesn’t she know? She has been secluded for four years and now it looks like that wasn’t the smartest thing to do.

The first time Kansas meets Rudy, they don’t actually meet. With the long reach of his compound bow, he helps clear zombies from her path, but Kan is still wary of strangers and jumps in her car and races away. It’s a good thing Rudy decides to follow her, because the next time they meet he saves her life.

Kan comes to in the back of Rudy’s van. Well actually, it is an armored truck, the kind used to transport money, and it’s perfect for keeping out the pesky zombies. It can also mow them down easily. After a brief scuffle, Rudy convinces her he means no harm. Through conversation, Kan learns about the Famished, the dangerously fast zombies, and how different they are from the others. She learns a lot about what’s been happening while she was isolated in her bunker the first four years. Staying with Rudy, at least for now, is her best bet.

My thoughts and Ramblins

I’m going to warn you, I feel this story is for the older reading audience. There are no graphic sexual scenes but there is some mature content.

I love my zombies and I sure did get plenty of them in Taking on the Dead. I also got one heck of a great story about survival and humanity, and the lack of it. Not everyone that survives is nice, just like before the apocalypse. The characters are diverse and all too human.

Of course, there is some romance in the story. It is subtle, creeping up on you, just like it does to Kansas. It is not the focal point, but it definitely makes the story better. Wouldn’t you want someone to have and to hold when your world is overrun with zombies? I know I wouldn’t mind having someone to care about, otherwise, what’s the point of surviving?

Kansas is strong-willed and independent, but not necessarily a loner. Enter Rudy and her life gets complicated. Who could resist a man like him. Strong and gentle, with a large dose of sexiness and endearing humbleness. They are a good fit.

Here are some of my favorite scenes:

I almost elbow Rudy to wake him until I see how he looks when sleeping...Despite all the fighting, his nose is straight. Small scars from past fights etch his skin. A small, wide one dresses his lower lip. One much longer goes from his lower jaw to underneath the chin, his stubble efficiently covering it up. A chipped tooth adorns his bottom row of teeth. The scar on his right eyebrow no longer allows hair to grow, splitting the eyebrow in half. He might get another scar on his left eyebrow, the cut is scabbed over now, and it's wider than the scar on his left side. Very small imperfections, not even noticeable unless you look closely. It doesn't take away from his handsome face. It enhances his masculinity, as if he needs it. The small flaws have history and give him character. Flaws I want to know about, and could grow quite fond of if I'm not careful.

Jesus. This chivalrous barbarian is beautiful. What am I getting myself into?

And of course some humor

"I'm thinking of naming your truck. I must be out of it." I prop my head on the pillow against the window.

There's slight amusement across his features. "What did you have in mind?"

"I don't know. Something domineering and associated with a big ass." I motion with my hands.

He surprises me by saying, "Agatha. I had a teacher in the sixth grade, and that was her first name. She liked her power over us weaklings and she had a gigantic ass." He starts laughing and shaking his head as if to clear the thought.

"Yeah, that fits. Agatha." I say, trying it out.

"She was scary. I was glad when sixth grade was over." We both laugh at this. I can't picture him afraid of anything. It feels good to be laughing about something completely stupid. I can see he needed to laugh too.

The humor is well placed throughout the story, lightening the mood and giving you a break from the stress of survival, just as it would in real life. You know the scenes, where the cop makes a joke in poor taste about a victim? That is a coping mechanism, and everyone needs one. The humor makes this story believable.

In one part Kansas poses an interesting question about zombies. One I am now curious about as well.

Do the souls get stuck to watch and feel their bodies decompose, all the while having an uncontrolled, insatiable craving? I guess that's why I like killing them, just in case. No one deserves that fate.

There are some colorful characters you'll be meeting. There are the good, the bad, and the ugly. They all play their part, keeping you entertained and engaged.

This is my stopping point. I don't like to tell much about the story past the one-third point. I like to draw you in and get you interested, much the way Annie Walls did to me.

I loved every second I was in it, and yes, it felt like I was a part of it. Fantastic job Annie!

Just one more thing and then you can go get Taking on the Dead.

About the ending!

I was talking to Mandy over on Goodreads. She is right about the ending! That's all I'm saying.

Mandy (I Read Indie) Anderson says

*Keep in mind this is an adult read...not YA.

Four years ago the world changed and zombies were eating everyone in sight. Four years ago was the end of Kansas' old life and the beginning of her new life. Her new life that consists of living in a bunker built under her house all alone. And alone was working out pretty good for her until 4 survivors pass through seeking shelter for the night. Unfortunately that is not all they wanted.

Now Kansas must up and leave her underground sanctuary to find a new place to live and survive. But the things she discovers about the zombies and the world outside throws her for a loop and leaves her shocked at what she finds.

When I say I love me a good zombie book, I love me a good zombie book. But Taking on the Dead was not a good zombie book....it was a FABULOUS zombie book. I loved every ounce and ate it up. (snickers at my pun) It had guts, it had nail-biting suspense about what would happen next, it had me thinking 'did I lock the back door? does it matter...cause a zombie could bust it down, right?' AND...it had a little romance. Not a lot...just the right amount. If I were running for my life in a post-apocalyptic world, I know I would still like a hand to hold. Something that gave me hope that one day it will all be better. (Ok corny moment over.) Seriously though, the romance was just right and I loved every bit. I actually want to re-read the book right now...but alas, too many books I must review.

Taking on the Dead had a whole lot of twists, turns, and gore to keep you entertained throughout the whole book. I don't think there was ever a dull moment that I thought it was dragging or boring. The ending...oh yes that perfect ending...we get a lot of answers and even some we were not expecting. And I loved the characters that Annie gives us. Each bringing something to the story and each hiding something too.

So yeah, Taking on the Dead was flippin fabulous. It is perfect for those like me, twiddling our thumbs waiting for The Walking Dead to come back on (even though I have Dish and have to wait for it to be on Netflix). I am even going to go so far as to say I loved it more than Amanda Hocking's The Hollow's series; which I absolutely loved. And to know that there are 2 more books in the series is even better. So you zombie fans out there better be ready for this one.

Annabel says

10/05/12 I am so excited for this book! I love everything about it, the cover, the synopsis, the title and theme! Aaaaaah need to read this one as soon as it comes out!

Update: 21/09/12 Taking on the dead is creepy, terrifyingly shocking and absolutely great. LOVED IT!

Carol (StarAngel's Reviews) Allen says

Wow...this book took me FOREVER to finish it!

I'm sorry but there was just too much in-depth descriptions that took away from the action of the story.

This has definitely not been one of my favorite zombie books and I don't know if I will continue with the series now that all the back stories have been revealed.

Butttt...I kind of want to know what happened with Mac and what will happen with Rudy and Julie!!

UGH...decisions - decisions!!

Beth (YA Books Central) says

Taking On The Dead is going to the top of my favorite Zombie books! I absolutely loved it! Annie Walls creates an incredible intense story that makes you feel as though you are experiencing every moment with them!! I had received Taking On The Dead as an E-Arc but just completely fell in love with the cover so I knew I had to have it for my bookshelf! I mean a woman, with dreads, and wielding an machete?? Um HECK YEAH!!!!!!!!!!!! So I waited until the paperback came in to begin this awesome journey. Had I known this book was so awesome I would have read it immediately from the E-Book!!!!

I am a huge fan of Zombie books. Some people see "Zombie" and immediately think ugh that can't be good.. But let me tell you that they are SO wrong! Yes Zombie books have the undead in them but that is not all they are about. These books are books of survival and triumph. They delve into the lives of these people that have survived and are living each day as if it were there last. When you read a zombie book you are reading the characters life story. I truly love them because you get to see how people really would act if an apocalypse ever happened.

The main character in this book, Kansas, is a complete kick-ass heroine. She is the sole survivor of her family after the apocalypse happens and the first chapters are the book explain how she has come to this point and how she lives day to day. I love every aspect about her but I have to admit one of my favorites is the fact that she has "dreads"...I mean this girl is KICK ASS!!!! She reads books about survival and trains herself for combat. She builds her own bunker and her own weapons. She is everything that I would hope to be should this ever happen.

After four years alone she is surprised one day by another group of survivors. Her gut tells her not to trust them but she does and she beings to friend them. Well of course, in this world that is a big No-No! Live for yourself and only yourself! They turn on her and try to take over her bunker. She gets away and then her real story begins.

In comes Rudy...the manly, handsome, amazing, incredible, gorgeous.....(Yeah I am a little obsessed with him) hero that comes to Kan's rescue when she is faced with an small army of the famished. Kan is injured and Rudy realizes that she needs antibiotics so he takes them to a place where he knows they have medicine. Well what Kan doesn't realize is that Rudy has to trade fighting in order to get her the medicine she needs. The "town" is a very strange place with strange people. I don't want to give away too much because that

takes away from the effect of the story so just believe me when I say STRANNNNNGEEEE.

Kan meets several new people in this town including Reece, Glinda, and Mac...Oh Mac...yep another stud! And of course Kan falls for him as well. So now enter the love triangle. Mac is incredible and I love his character almost as much as Rudy. Annie Wall's knows how to write some awesome males into her stories!!

I could go on forever about this book and write every detail but I won't. You need to read it for yourself! It is truly awesome! Kansa's courage, strength, and will to survive is incredible. I felt like I was living every moment with the characters. I cannot wait to read the sequel and find out where this Kansas, Mac, and Rudy end up!!! Thank you Annie Walls for writing such an intense story! I love that I have now found me another favorite Zombie story to add to my list!!!!

Lori {Romancing the Dark Side} says

A zombie masterpiece!

After a zombie outbreak changed her life forever, Kansas City Sunshine Moore (*what a cool name, right?*) has spent four years in solitude and avoiding the living dead in her family home. Her survival depends on keeping a low profile but when she encounters a group being ambushed by zombies, her compassionate nature takes over and she takes them into her safe haven, only to have them turn on her and forced to leave her sanctuary. Soon after leaving her home, Kansas is forced to explore new territory and meets up with Rudy, a ruggedly handsome man who helps her during a zombie attack and takes her under his wing, introducing her to a world she's long forgotten and giving her a new reason to keep on fighting.

I have to say the writing and creativity in this book blew me away! When we meet Kansas she's a young woman in love, without a care in the world, out enjoying herself at a fair with her boyfriend until a zombie plague attacks the population and loses all those she loves. The story then forwards four years later with our heroine all grown up and kicking some zombie a**! Kansas is a stellar heroine, she's got guts, brains (*no pun intended!*) and plenty of heart. She's faced with a horrific situation and is forced to grow up fast and become a fighter to survive, her will to live is admirable. I'm a fan of a feisty heroine but what makes Kan (*that's what she likes to be called*) extra special to me is that she's not paranormal, just a regular Midwestern girl turned machete wielding, crossbow shooting powerhouse in a world full of the Famished.

Aside from an outstanding heroine, there are some fantastic supporting characters that you'll love as much as Kan. Rudy, the "chivalrous barbarian" with a heart of gold (*yes, I'm TEAM RUDY!*), Reece the snarky tattoo artist, Mac, the sexy soldier and the ever sassy Glinda all steal the show at some point with their charismatic personalities and charm (*that's all I can say without giving too much away*). A subtle romance and great humor throughout the story helps lighten the dark reality of their world, making it believable.

Taking on the Dead is emotional, gritty and hair-raising! The heroine's voice instantly pulls you into her world and has you biting your nails at the heart-stopping suspense. Ms. Walls weaves horror, fantasy, romance and humor effortlessly into a vivid post-apocalyptic world you can't get enough of...even when you're a little grossed out...LOL With a superb heroine that's not afraid to get a little dirty, stand up male leads and some supernatural magic, *Taking on the Dead* is dark urban fantasy at its finest! My praises to Ms. Walls for a spectacular zombie debut that was truly EPIC! (*as my Zombie Queen friend would say*).

{ebook courtesy of author via BB Book Tours for review.}

Original Romancing the Darkside Review:

<http://romancingthedarkside.blogspot...>

Jareed says

Also posted on my blog: [i'mbookedindefinitely](#)

I have substantially pondered the rating I would give to this book with finality. First because this is an independently published book, a fact that should always be afforded respect if not praise for it is no mystery both to writers and even to non-writers like me how hard it is to establish names in the market, more so to move beyond great names in the myriad of genres like Tolkien, Lewis or Le Guin in Fantasy, or of Asimov, Clarke or Heinlein in Science-Fiction (or of Max Brooks in the Horror-Zombie Genre?). Second is that this book has claimed (this word is most appropriate as will be discussed later) to be under the proliferating Horror-Zombie genre. However, it is a greater sin to rate this with something it does not deserve. If a book should break those veils Tolkien and the likes have unconsciously erected albeit in a successful and (portentously) ageless manner, it should be by its merits alone, and by merits alone that this two star rating is founded upon.

The Zombie Factor

I am a fan of the mindless, flesh eating, human craving zombies. Somehow, in this fictional setting, a thinking, evolving, zombie is untenable and its essence against the basic tenets of the zombie horror genre. Why? The appeal of the zombie genre has been anchored upon the story of survival of humanity, but this story of survival undeniably comes hand in hand with the zombies. This survival has two faces, the possibility of extinction on the one hand, and on the other, triumph over this fictional anathema. Put a thinking zombie in here and the balance tilts to either what is called human extinction removing the conspicuous appeal of human triumph and power or could either be a book, meant more for humor or for the YA shelves of romance. Enter Taking on the Dead! Where there is no need for a zombie literary pundit to tell that zombies are either subplots or plot devices. It is a subplot because the book is not about survival but of personal feelings, specifically the female sexual feeling of the main character. It is a plot devices because zombies momentarily appear to further personal (sexual) relations of the female protagonist with the numerous male characters. The middle of the book is solely dedicated to romance of the female protagonist.

Character Development

I don't know how the author has visualized the main character, it turned ultimately as an inconsistent persona. The author wanted to paint a protagonist who knows how to survive in the post-apocalyptic world by saying that she had resource materials, can jack a car and survived alone for four years since the outbreak. For all that, she turned out to be stupid, real stupidity or forced stupidity, i don't know, all that matter is she is stupid. (e.g. Who takes a bath in a lake fully naked unarmed?)

The men are all objects of the pent up libido of our main character, that is all I can say.

The supporting cast is the literary embodiment of racial stereotypes. The asian-american as practitioner of martial arts, the african-american as the street gangster/rocker type.

The Writing

The writing is, like most YAs, (drumroll) in the prevalent stream of consciousness occasionally interjected with conversations. So it is an easy read.

There are a number of awkward passages within the book. Like this:

"Ice seemed to spread through me."

Better Fit for the YA Romance than the Zombie Genre

I fault myself for not taking caution after reading the prologue:

"Sometime later, we got off the Ferris Wheel, both heated, clinging to each other, and ready for another tryst when we went off the beaten path to use the foul port-a-potties. When I think about it now, I know the outbreak began early in the day. We passed several wrecks, heard many helicopters and sirens, and probably saw a few zombies, but were too wrapped up in ourselves to notice. I blame it on being in love, but I swear to myself now if I saw a person walking down the street covered in blood or eating someone, I would have paid attention. Maybe."

The paragraph was portentous. It had the picture of a romantic, sexual, stupid oblivious makings of the book. I mean come on, who ever you are, however in love you are, you can't be oblivious to several wrecks, helicopters and sirens. That's just being plain stupid.

Lori says

The plot is solid. It's amazing. It twists and turns. It kept my pants on fire for the two days it took me to read it. :(Why so long? Well because I had to pick it apart as I was reading it. Also I had to work at my part time job. Boo. Mama needs the cash though. Ok enough rubbing it in that I got to read it already and you didn't. NA NA. LOL.

This book was unique. Trust me Annie it was! I still haven't figured out what the hell is going on. I like it though. I like it a lot.

When I read the preview a while ago. I was like...righteous! This is balls to the walls amazing. I was so off course with my assumptions of what the rest of the book would be. I thought that she would meet a group of people and continue to flee the famished. Maybe fall in love. Kill a shit ton of zombies. Find some semblance of a sane life and then have it ripped out from under her. Making the next two books necessary. SOME of these things happen. Not in the way I thought though. Not at all. There is something seriously fishy going on here. I can't quite put my finger on it though. I feel like I get close to figuring something out and Annie throws something new at me.

The romance. Oh gawd the romance. It's hot. This book is not meant for the the typical YA set. This is very much an adult book. The men (I'm a woman and straight, of course I am going to focus on the men) are freaking hot! OMG. Drool. There is more than one too. They reek of alpha male with a soft side too. Oh be still my beating heart. The romance is on par to something in AtWD. Sure Rhiannon never focus's on it as intensely as Annie does but these are two different stories. I just wanted to give you another example of love in the time of a ZA. It develops only because they are in a semi safe place at the time. People do not stop being sexual, or being attracted to others just because zombies around. I think most people would use it as stress relief. Also, Kan has been alone for 4 years. Let's not begrudge the girl some fun. Some just reek though. Haha.

Fella's, Kan is pretty smoking too. She's got brains, brawn and a sense of humor to boot. There are sexual situations in this book, and there is drug use. Oh and I forgot. GORE GALORE. Is it the grossest zombie book I have read....hmm? Well, there are parts that literally turned my stomach. Which was awesome. It wasn't just shock value either. These are genuine actions that these characters partake in. They are true to character.

The B-List characters are a freaking hoot. I mean it. There are some unsavory characters that Kan meets. Each is more disgusting than the next. Kan also meets some awesome new friends. Don't let this make you think she's compliant though. She isn't. She keeps her wits about her at all times. Well most of the time. Nothing is too easy for her. She has skills that definately help her survive but it's not all just given to her.

Annie makes her work for them. Awesome. I hate it when the heroine is able to pick up a gun and suddenly be Jean Claude Van Dam.

There are some gut wrenching parts too. Like my heart is in my throat parts. Annie treated these parts right. Kan has a vulnerability that is genuine.

Ugh have I said any spoilers. I sure hope not. Anyway...about that rating. Well it's random. I HATE giving a number rating to a book. To me if it entertains me and is fun it's worth a million stars.

Eva Rose says

Actual Rating: 0.5 stars

This book lied to me.

It did.

It made me promise that it couldn't keep.

This book, promise me an epic story of a zombie apocalypse only to turn into a "Days of Our Lives" soap opera episode with zombies and some gore splatter around just for shits and giggles.

It starts out well enough, gory and dark just like any book with zombies should be like but then around 60% of the way through suddenly the plot vanishes and we start to focus on the drama unfolding between Kansas and her two love interest and the bane of my existence pops up to kick me in the head.

Yes, a fucked up love triangle happens!

More like love square really, because there is another girl added into the mix.

I mean, there are zombie's out there and an infection suddenly happened and quite possibly the zombies are getting really smart and shit. BUT forget that, let's focus on the drama of Kansas and the pissy fight happening among two friends fighting for the right to tumble her. Seriously, it was tiring and I got really angry at the men because they both held back seriously important information from Kansas. And don't even get me started on the protagonist main love interest getting trapped into a relationship by her rival because said woman is pregnant, yes, you read that right the pregnancy trap.

Really, the zombies where there for shock value and gore because the plot involving them is really thin and undeveloped.

I was really closed to the end when I quit trying to make sense of it all, I just couldn't take anymore of that nonsensical crap. It was all quite nasty.

Ali says

You know when you find a book that you just can't put down - a book that causes you to ignore all other things in life; kids, laundry, eating, etc. and you don't do anything but read? Taking on The Dead was one of those books for me. And even weeks after reading it, I catch myself daydreaming about what might happen

next. I'm obsessing...truly.

Annie Walls throws the reader head first into the downfall of Kansas' great life. The zombie infestation takes away her mother, her smart but paranoid father and the love of her life. Leaving her to survive on her own in a bleak and terrifying world. She uses the skills her father taught her and the knowledge he left behind to build a small sanctuary for herself, where she lives in relative isolation for four years.

When a small group of people stumble upon her little haven, Kansas takes pity on them and in return her outlook on life and the world she thinks she knows, crumbles. With her safe house no longer safe she is thrust into a new world of horrors. Not only will she battle zombies but also, rapists, religious zealots, cannibals and people that would use her for things she really does not want to be used for.

Kansas is one total bad ass, zombie-slaying chick. It has become so engrained in her that she gets excited by the mere thought of killing the infected. Yet she's lost much in the process of becoming this lean, mean killing machine. While she doesn't shy away from the monsters she encounters, she has an extremely hard time with anything remotely warm and fuzzy.

Rudy enters her life by rescuing her from a zombie attack. Like Kansas, Rudy too is socially inept. Yet, the pair finds something kindred in each other and form a strange sort of solidarity. Rudy is, to put it bluntly, f*cking hot! Or as Kansas calls him 'sex on feet'. The sexual tension between the two is an ooey-gooey, sticky, sweet mess. But many things stand in the way of either of them being able to just give in to the attraction.

As Kansas grapples with learning to survive in her new situation she finds she is able to trust and care again. She finds friends in a wonderful cast of unique characters. Some you love, some you hate, some you may love to hate, but all are creatively well developed.

Kansas is plunged into a raw, gritty world and takes it all head on. She's a 'warrior princess', a battle maven, a little sex starved hottie and underneath it all, just a girl trying to survive.

So much takes place in Taking on The Dead, there is hardly time to come up for air. Which I love in a book. Walls never gives you the want to set the book down, you are constantly in need of finding out what sort of horror or bedlam happens next. It is a non-stop ride from start to finish. Taking on The Dead is not just a smash and gash zombie book, it's a journey of learning how to truly live in a world of so much death.

I could fangirl over this book for days but instead I think I will assume the position of Annie Walls' new stalker as I wait for details on Controlling The Dead, book two in The Famished Trilogy (head to the blog ginger-read.blogspot for an exclusive excerpt).

Abbie says

Actual rating - 3.5

Kan was a strong character, and most of the time I liked her.

This started out really good, but there was a huge chunk in the middle that was quite boring. It did pick up again though, and I really enjoyed the last quarter.

Overall, A decent apocalyptic read, but had a very slow middle.

Steph says

First, as a big fan of zombie apocalypse novels, I should alert prospective readers ~ the second half of the book veers away from the gory zombie killin' and survival bits and moves toward romance. To make matters worse, not only is there a love triangle, but it soon becomes a, what? A square? This would have probably turned me off the book had I known about it before starting. If that is not your cuppa, you'll probably want to pick a different book. Second, there are rape triggers throughout the last quarter of the book. Another reason some may choose to avoid this one. Third, if inconsistent and incorrect grammar makes you want to burn a book or bash your Kindle's pretty little head in, you may want to keep browsing. Sadly, while not overly abundant throughout, they do exist, which shows a lack of good editing prior to publishing. Similarly, there are multiple occasions where a bit of research on subjects, such as guns, would have helped as well. Lastly, vernacular writing is typically a major fail for me, with the exception of Stacia Kane's *Downside* series. In this case, it was just bad, y'all. I'm from the south, but WOW - a bit over the top. I'm not sure if the author was going for a Louisiana southern/Cajun twang or what, but it did not work for me.

That said, it's fiction, so the author is free to create her own version of a zombie apocalypse and the survivors in it. I want to give the book a high rating, like most other GRers, because I sought out time to read it and I was able to connect with most, if not all, of the characters. I am a gore-girl, so I dig it when ZA books get down and dirty. But, there are things I did not like as well. Aside from the bits I mentioned above, the second half felt a bit over-packed for me. A novella might have been a better option for the bits that felt slightly forced in this one. And, as much as I like the main character, her actions were not consistent throughout. Normally, this could be credited to character growth, but it felt like the reverse instead. For instance, Kansas (nicknamed Kan) was extremely self-sufficient when we first met her. She'd lived on her own (and lived well) for four years. However, once she started interacting with others she seemed to lose the very attributes that kept her alive. I could blame this on the sudden shock of becoming part of a community, but should I? Shouldn't her new found knowledge of the "new world" only make her more alert? I thought so too.

The world Annie created, both inside of Kan's bunker and out, is intriguing. She's managed to show some of the best and worst of humanity. My hope is that, in the additional installments, she is able to bring us back to the questions ZA fans will have and further away from the romance aspect. It is very realistic, however, to think people would be looking for close connections during the apocalypse.

"There's no room for feelings in a world full of zombies."

"You don't believe that. If anything, a world full of zombies gives more room for feeling."

But, please, find a happy medium between the two. I'll be continuing on until the end because I must know ... who, what, where, why, when & how?!

karen says

okay, this is another book that has such uniformly high ratings that i don't feel bad for being a little critical, even though i do have a soft spot for the self-published authors, and i do always try to cut them a little more slack than i ordinarily would.

right off the bat - this book is not bad. but it does have its problems, and i am going to discuss those problems, hopefully in a humorous way. but since i have suddenly made the stgrb posse aware of me by

writing them an email about how joe's review of *matched* is in no way a bullying one, and their calling it bullying is desperate, i assume that any even slightly negative review i write from here on out will probably be posted "somewhere". oh, well. i'm not going to pretend every book is perfect. because not many are.

i saw this book on here a long time ago, and it seemed like it would never become available, but i had it filed away in the brain as "this is a YA zombie adventure book that i shall read someday."

whoops.

this is not YA.

and it is not even really a zombie novel.

it does have zombies, yes, but the things that shape and progress the narrative are not the elements you find in a typical horror/adventure novel. they are the things you find in a romance novel. and that's fine - i am in a romance-novel book club, and an erotica book club, and while i don't usually willingly read within the genre, i am not *averse* to reading them. but i hate being fooled into reading one when i am rarin' for pure zombie goodness.

again - there are plenty of zombies. there are action sequences and blood and gore and weaponry and all of that, but the middle hundred pages are pure romance, where characters discover feeling, repress feelings, are confused by feelings, reject feelings, reconsider feelings, and have intercourse.

fine. we have identified the novel and called it a romance. i assume i will get some argument on this matter, but i will not bend. the concerns in this novel are more of the interpersonal variety than the survival variety.

so, moving on. this is an e-book, and it falls into the oopsies that less stringently-edited books do: compound words masquerading as separate words, inelegant word-breaks, apostrophe errors, typos - how you react to this depends on how sensitive you are to these things. usually they don't bother me, but i feel i should mention it for the grammar-intolerant. it's just a little sloppy:

The afternoon light coming from a window shines behind me, making my hair look ratty. My dark brown hair has, at some point, become a ratted, matted mess, creating thick dreadlocks falling down my back to my waist.

later "flowers" give a "floral scent" to the air, etc...

although sometimes it is adorable:

They are sitting chickens waiting for slaughter. And who knows what else?

I AM HAVING AN ANIMAL METAPHOR PARTY!! THEY ARE ALL COMING AT ONCE!!! NO, I DON'T THINK IT WILL BE WEIRD, THEY WILL JUST MERGE...

the names in this book kill me: kale, glinda, kansas*??? and *rudy* as your dreamy male lead??? there is only one rudy, and it is not a sexy dude:

(although - holy cow - she got gorgeous)

but what is happening here?? do only people with stupid names get to survive zombie apocalypses?? (i am not even going to mention kansas' full name, because that is just... wow)

but it really doesn't matter what kansas is actually named, because she is more often that not called "kan" or "darlin" or "sunshine," or "suga."which drove me crazy.

this is when i first realized i was in trouble:

Black leather boots under frayed jeans hold a zombie head down as he jerks an arrow out of the skull. His arms flex when he wags gooey bits from his arrows.

I can't see his face, but he is tall, much taller than me with broad shoulders and wavy brown hair tied back with a green bandana. His hair shines golden brown as it blows in the wind, caressing the compound bow strapped to his back.

A large arrow holster hangs by his side. The hunting bow goes from the back of his knees to a few inches above his head. The biggest bow I've seen, making me think it is custom made. The wind blows in the other direction, and his hair whips across his face. It barely brushes the tops of his shoulders.

This guy is locked, stocked, and loaded with a big gun tucked into the front of his jeans.

oh, indeed. still think we are in a horror novel? with all the jerking and flexing and blowing and caressing and big bows?? oh, yeah, and the big gun in the front of his pants. i nearly missed that subtle image.

but this - this is where i almost lost my mind:

"Well, I see yew wakin' up. We have a tawk, yew and me." Again the accent confuses me, most likely from a northern location. "Pretty boy came into duh city, told me yew was sick, so I lent dem drugs to yew. Pain killas too. Got's stitches now, yew gotta be careful wit dat. I know da pretty boy from months past. Met him lookin' all like juice head gorilla. He's off seeing to me a fava. But yew gots a few more days, needs dem drugs for two weeks."

writing in vernacular should never be attempted by someone unless they can really make it work. what kind of accent is that supposed to be, anyway?? (incidentally, the character's name is "guido," so i can hazard a guess, but what a mess.) and why, later, repeatedly, should "fuk" be spelled like that? it has the same sound as "fuck." is it just to denote the relative stupidity of the character? like, "man, this person would probably spell that word this way because they are totally dumb and low-class..."

in a related note:

the "asian-american" character is introduced at the same time as "his buddy," the "african-american" character. the "asian-american" is a practitioner of the kung-fu, while the "african-american" character is... ready?? *DANCING TO A BEAT IN HIS HEAD*, all gold teeth and baggy clothes. he then says "wussup?" it is good to see that the antiquated stereotype store is still in business.

this is a tiny thing, but it is more evidence that we are not in a zombie novel: you get to go through someone's closet to find new clean clothes and you choose a sundress?? no. a thousand times no. you don't need to look good, you need to be able to run and climb and maybe you want some more coverage so that zombie-teeth have to work harder to break your skin. also, as an aside - waist-length dreadlocks are another zombie no-no. yeah, it makes you look all tough and mad max-y or whatever, but a zombie is just gonna use them to reel you in like delicious seafood. good lord, do i have to teach you people everything?

I decided against taking anything, believing we have enough of this stuff anyway.

i never understand this attitude. you know the world has essentially ended, and they aren't making any more of this stuff, right?? this is like that susan beth pfeffer series, where they are all "let's just take what we need right now because i am sure no one else will want these supplies and they will be here forever..." NO! INCORRECT!! usually hoarding is bad, but THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD, PEOPLE! this is zombie novel rule 101. oh but right - we are in a romance novel. we are all about measuring out the release... the tease.. the slow disrobe. let's not take it all at once.

gain one star for underground zombie sex party. you would think this would lose it a star, but i actually liked this club - where men fight in the ring (yes, this also points to it being a romance novel, as our sweaty male lead fights for dominance under the watchful gaze of our reluctant female),and zombies are chained to pillars and nudely "dancing" in cages for lively decorations.i thought this part was very evocative and not something i have read before. i liked the atmosphere she wrote here, although i personally would never go to one of these places. i am liking it as a reader, not as a "gee, i wish these places existed.."i also liked the tip on "why we mustn't throw molotov cocktails at zombies:

I quickly figure out why this is not a good idea. It only makes the zombies come at you while on fire.

i file that one away for future use.

but, lose one star for letting someone who was bitten by a zombie into your secure bunker.

so, this review is my response to all the 4 and 5-star reviews, which make me sad for not loving it as much as everyone else, but "fine" does not make me give it a 4. unfortunately. not even to an indie.

*which, if you have seen *zombieland*, should make you wince. particularly when the film is explicitly referenced later.

come to my blog!

Simm says

Sometime on Tuesday or Wednesday of last week, I finally finished this book. Since then, I have been trying to figure out how best to approach and write this review. The first time I saw this novel was on an ad for a book tour. Being a zombie apocalypse book, I was very quick to jump at the opportunity to read it. Unfortunately, despite my love, I really did not enjoy the book. The reason is because this book completely failed. And it failed spectacularly!

At first, I had high hopes for this book. Reading through the prologue, I was fairly impressed. It was very powerful, gave a wonderful opening for the story, and did a good job of showing how the zombie apocalypse can seemingly come out of nowhere to disrupt a perfect life. At this point, I started to notice a few extraneous commas, improper placement of punctuation, etc. However, since it could be easily explained as a typo, I didn't think too much of it. That is not to say that it didn't put me on alert. As the book progressed, I started to have issues with the voice. It can be very hard to write in first person present active; however, the author manages to pull it off. That being said, something about Kan's voice was very troubling. Unfortunately, I still cannot quite put my finger on it. And, while the narration was bothering me, I started to notice that the grammar issues continued to get worse. It evolved from a few mishaps into the author's

haphazard attempt at throwing in punctuation because it seemed appropriate. She started doing clause fragments. (Keep in mind, this is not a technical term; it is one I coined to describe her errors.) Further into the book, I started to wonder whether she understood what adjectives, series, and multiple adjectives to describe a noun really were. It is hard to describe fully what she did; however, if I had not known what she was doing, this book would have been hard to understand. Unfortunately, comma misuse can seriously change the meaning of a sentence.

Aside from the author's haphazard and willy-nilly approach to grammar, she had grievous issues with consistency. On one page, she would oscillate between "t-shirt" and "T-shirt." Unless the author was trying to write within a certain style, I do not care how she chose to spell T-shirt. My issue stems from lack of consistency. Decide how you want to spell the word and keep to it. Even if the word was misspelled, if she consistently used the same spelling, I would not be as annoyed.

While the author's grammatical errors were egregious, this book also suffered from an obvious lack of content editing. I felt there were a lot of things that Kan did in the later part of the book that were completely out of character with the original girl the audience met. In most books, this can be explained by character development; however, there was no true character development. Further, at one point, Rudy makes it clear that he worked as a contractor before the zombie outbreak. If the reader continues reading, Kan makes a comment that helping at the greenhouse made sense due to his carpentry background. Where did Rudy ever say he had a carpentry background? Working construction does not guarantee you have that as a background. In addition, I cannot fully grasp Kan's need to carry around a computer. Granted, her computer used to connect via satellite; however, it might not be able to connect at other locations outside of her home base. Further, if some person manages to get the Internet up and running, why would she suddenly have access to wireless? This makes no sense to me. Even my husband, who has worked as a systems administrator for over a decade, could not understand the rationale behind this.

If the author had mentioned "arrow holster" one more time, I would have broken my husband's Kindle. Anything that is used to hold arrows is considered a quiver. The fact that her quiver is larger than others and made out of a gift container for a bottle of wine does not automatically make it something other than a quiver. This really got on my nerves. Another thing was her explanation of bows. Yes, long bows are fairly old; however, a recurve bow predates them by more than a millennium. In addition, a recurve bow was desired for its power and the energy it put into the arrow. Long bows were more desired for range and the fact that they worked well en masse.

Along with the bows, the author really needed to do her homework when it came to guns. Yes, a grip is one of the most important things in determining the correct gun. However, her comment about making sure the person could use the slide very fast isn't accurate. You need to be able to move the slide smoothly and have a good grip. Further, the weight of the gun also needs to be considered when finding the right weapon. And Kan's adventure with the sawed off shotgun was fully inside the realm of fiction. Yes, because of the shortened barrel length, a sawed off shotgun will have a nasty recoil—and will more than likely bruise your shoulder. However, it will not knock you off your feet and send you several feet in the air. Well, I guess it will if you're on the receiving end of the spray.

When talking to Reece about her book collection, Kan pooh-poohs *The Jolly Roger's Cookbook* by stating that it wouldn't be able to teach them how to make things like pipe bombs because it is too old. This could have changed in the last decade; however, when I was still a teenager, the book was not static; people kept adding to it. And, at the time, it had recipes for making pipe bombs. Further, Kan tells Reece that they can get better books by looting bookstores. So, by the author's logic, I can walk into a Barnes & Noble and purchase a book on advanced bomb making (and, of course, making a simple pipe bomb is extremely advanced bomb making).

It stuck out to me that Reece—in a time period where infection is easy, antibiotics are not easy to come by,

and an open wound could possibly mean zombie infection—doesn't take the time to cover his new tattoo. Yes, the ointment is important; however, a fresh tattoo is still an open wound and susceptible to infection. This really upset me because I have multiple tattoos. It seems to me that a tattoo artist would be extremely vigilant about that, especially during a zombie apocalypse.

Honestly, Kan is zombie bait. The only reason she has survived is because she was alone and then surrounded by men that would take care of her. She can only handle a pistol crossbow and her few blades. She talks about not being overly accurate with a full-sized crossbow, she is not able to handle a regular bow (a compound bow), and cannot find the safety on a gun. I honestly wondered why she was put in charge of a group. Further, aside from the few she dealt with on her way to the survivor camp, she had no experience with the famished. Someone like Reece would have made far more sense. I cannot stand a heroine who has to rely on male characters to keep her alive. If the characters acted as partners and relied on each other, I could easily accept that. However, I am sick and tired of seeing these supposedly strong female leads that cannot take care of themselves. Half of the things Kan does to get herself in trouble are simply because she lacks common sense or forethought. Her use of the Molotov in Wal-Mart is a perfect example of this. It would not have taken her two seconds to figure out it was an extremely stupid idea.

I do not understand why Kan was so hell bent on bringing Julie with her. It made no sense. Further, how would a woman who is eight months pregnant be able to fit on the back of a Ducati? If she was able to (which I sincerely doubt), how would Kan keep her from getting off the bike? It would have made more sense to leave Julie, reunite with the gang, tell them the information she learned from the doctor, and then plan another strategy to gain entrance into the base. In addition, since the doctor knew about the impending attack (because Kan was too stupid not to tell Julie next to the playground), I don't understand why extra security measures were not taken. Further, I am not sure how a few pipe bombs were able to breach the walls. I have to wonder whether the author really knows what pipe bombs are for. Using them against zombies is a pretty good idea. They are shrapnel bombs meant to inflict as much damage to a person as possible.

The author's constant obsession with the "happy trail" was enough to make me gag. I understand being in isolation for four years will cause a girl's libido to spike when they're around a sexy man; however, it was over the top.

There is a lot more I could address in this review, but it has gotten to be quite long. Needless to say, when I finished this book, I was very disappointed. To me, it is the perfect example of why I dislike self published pieces. Granted, there are some wonderful things out there! Unfortunately, a lot of people are in a rush to get their novels published because they think it is good and they completely forego editing. I'm sorry, but there is a reason for the process. I will give the author a little credit, she has the bare bones of something that could potentially be a good story. However, she needs to go through several revisions and rewrites. Honestly, by just having some friends and/or family read it to see if it made sense, a lot of her issues would not have appeared in the final book. Further, if she decided to completely turn her nose up at the editing process, I wish she would have spent a little time researching things and rereading her story before it was made available to the public. As it stands, this book is a long way from a polished work of fiction. That being stated, I will end up reading the other books in the series. However, I hope for her benefit—as well as that of her audience—she will seriously look into getting her next books edited.
