

N.J.Hallard



Breaking News: An Autozombiography

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"The end of the world is nigh. Someone stick the kettle on, I'm gasping."

When civilisation finally collapsed and the undead grew weak enough for the survivors to catch their breath, they were left with one question... what to do with dear old England?

On the south coast two zombie film fans are caught up in the summer madness of a real plague of the undead. They know how to deal with the situation and what to arm themselves with, but everyone else seems a little preoccupied. As mobile reception is lost, radio stations fall silent and passenger jets drop from the sky they seek shelter on top of an Iron Age hill fort, soon joined by friends and enemies alike.

Breaking News: An Autozombiography Details

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Author : N.J. Hallard

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From Reader Review **Breaking News: An Autozombiography** for online ebook

Ruby Tombstone [With A Vengeance] says

This was an unexpectedly good little zombie novel. No pretensions, no ridiculous action sequences that defy the laws of physics, and no superhuman leaders - just a group of ordinary English people trying to survive the apocalypse. There are truly gory zombie scenes, heart-breaking circumstances, detailed survival efforts and, through it all, the low-key, sarcastic, slightly whimsical sense of humour of a typical bunch of 30-something fanboys.

I have heard other reviewers say that they found the protagonist to be glib and hard to connect with. I have also heard people say that the wife, Lou, was painfully stupid and gave a negative portrayal of women. I can see why people have said that, but if you stick with the book, Hallard does let you see inside the character's heads. You end up realising that this is a man's account of how he grew as a person. At the beginning, he may have lacked responsibility, and he portrayed his wife badly at the same time. But you see the character grow, and he learns to respect the strengths and character traits of those around him - especially his wife. By the end, I couldn't help loving them all.

The sense of humour is sarcastic and underplays the seriousness of the situations the characters find themselves in. In reality, I could see my friends and I making the same comments and pop culture references. The pop culture references, by the way, are spot on: from the obvious "Night of the Living Dead" references, through Star Trek and Monty Python, all the way to Alan Partridge, Ray Mears and vintage sneakers. My boyfriend and I laughed about these together all the way through. This is how English people (and Australians like myself) deal with catastrophe - we underplay things and keep our wry sense of humour. It's a cultural thing, and for me, very relatable.

The story takes place from the day of "Point Zero" (the tipping point of the virus, where it becomes inevitably uncontrollable), right up to one year afterwards. Along the way, the characters fight: first to survive the zombies, then to survive the collapse of society, and also survive each other. They fight to rebuild their world, the England they believe in. The fight scenes are so realistic, I did find myself thinking that the author must have acted them out. He knew where each person's weight must be centred, when they would need to change hands, and what could go wrong in each scenario.

As well as action scenes, emotional breakdowns and humour, a lot of attention is given to the survival aspects of an apocalypse. Whole lists of supplies are outlined, and Hallard explains in realistic detail the improvised equipment and how it would work. For survivalist fans, it'll definitely give you something to talk about.

I really liked this book, so on the GR rating system it gets 4 stars from me. I also gave 4 stars to *The Passage* however, which is a far better written and darkly imagined novel. It's important to remember, however, that we're comparing apples and oranges here- *Breaking News* does exactly what it sets out to do, so I will give it 4 stars, and very definitely read the sequel. All in all, it's a great read.

****EXTENDED REVIEW WITH SPOILERS**** (view spoiler)

Zoe Mitchell says

This is a warm and witty page turner – an adventure not for the faint of heart which transcends the zombie genre. Although the book does contain expected scenes of violence and gore – written with genuine relish and vivid imagery – the story and the characters are so well drawn that they remain with you long after the last page and leave you wanting more. If you enjoy the zombie genre, you’ll enjoy the knowing references to popular culture and the spectacular battle scenes. If you’re not normally drawn to such dark topics, there’s still a lot to enjoy in the finely drawn characters and situations which are written with a humour that grounds the story in the mundane reality of human relationships – and the restorative powers of a good cup of tea regardless of the situation - without becoming glib or self-referential. Like more established authors such as Joe Hill or Neil Gaiman, Hallard plants very real people with easily relatable emotions and behaviour at the heart of his fantastic tale in a way that really makes you care about what happens next. The attention to detail regarding the logistics of survival and strong sense of place keep you hooked and really make you think about how humans would cope if such a “day zero” of zombie apocalypse were ever to arrive. I highly recommend this book. All hail the great Baron Cissbury - looking forward to the sequel!

Kevin says

Decent page turner - liked the detail in it all, and funny throughout - lost interest a little towards the end though, if it had kept up the pace and the detail throughout, it would have gotten 4 stars from me.

Jaime Horio says

“Breaking News: An Autozombiography” by N.J. Hallard is the first book I bought for my Kindle, and I think I made a good choice.

The story follows a group of survivors during the zombie apocalypse as they try to rebuild. Things are different, lots of technology is lost, so their lives are lived in a simpler way. Well, except for the zombies coming for them!

One of my favorite aspects of this book is that the author has clearly thought out his survival techniques. He describes in detail how shelters were made, how weapons were made and basically the little details needed to survive. They start simply, with tents and simple shelters, eventually building full on solid structures, and developing a (very necessary) system to weed out potentially infected individuals trying to join the encampment.

The story takes place in England, so I found myself using the dictionary feature on the Kindle quite a bit. I wished I had marked the words, but I found a few that the definition started with “Primarily Brit.” which explained why I didn’t know the word! There were some other words that I was unfamiliar with, and they weren’t in the dictionary, but don’t worry, you’ll figure out what’s going on based on the context.

If I had to come up with a complaint about this book, I’d say it needed more illustrations. The author includes several illustrations of the events taking place throughout the story, and I loved them!

Fiona says

Fantastic find! I LOVE a good zombie novel, and this was exactly my cup of (brick orange, two sugars) tea.

British zombies always win (in my head) over their American cousins, even simply due to the massive advantage that living in a country which still has castles would provide. The novel tends more towards the "how we carry on later" than the "oh god blood everywhere" apocalypse, which is greatly lacking in the genre.

Particularly our early characters are well-developed, though some do fade into the background (Al really doesn't make much of an appearance past the halfway mark). Speaking of the end, it did speed up quite a bit - there was a lot of fairly rushed travel and development in the last 10% or so of the book. Still enjoyed it, but it could have been drawn out, or even extended into another book.

I will definitely be coming back to this book and re-reading, which is absolutely the best way I know to rate any novel.

Nicholas says

This was a great story, though most of the action was over at the halfway point. The story did bring up several interesting points about current culture by showing how the lack of individual social constructs would effect change in our culture. It is initially a thrilling zombie apocalypse horror story, then a story of how humankind will survive and collaborate to really live.

Tyler says

There are seemingly billions of Zombie apocalypse novels out there, each with their own gimmick. This one's gimmick is that it's from the British perspective. Alright, nothing wrong with that. Let's give it a look.

First, this is a book that is trying to be a mash up of Shaun of the Dead and something like World War Z. Serious with humor. So hopefully you'll have witty British humor with some conflict and heart-felt moments. Still sound alright. Secondly, this is novel where the narrator claims it to be autobiographical - but it's written in more of a present-tense first hand account that is over detailed in some parts and barren in others. Now we're running into some trouble...

Unfortunately it falls flat. The characters are surprisingly resilient to the fact that their world is falling apart around them. They're boring, completely logical, collected, and far too genre-aware. The British humor is bad, and they all feel like a different facet of the same guy - the author I suspect. They spend a great deal of time talking about the merits of different zombie types and cracking out-of-place zombie cultural references. I just can't care about these people. It feels like they're treating the apocalypse as some sort of jolly picnic in the woods.

Which starts me on the most annoying aspect of the book. British people will be happy to hear that the

British way of life will continue mostly unabated in the face of certain doom. You'll still queue up, and get a piping hot cup of tea every five minutes (seriously, the characters seem to magically pull the necessary items for tea out of their ass at every stop).

I also found pacing to be a problem. At the beginning, it's breakneck fast, in the middle it's terribly slow, like a hundred pages to cover three days. I don't know what the end was like, because I got so frustrated and bored I threw it out. The reviews pan the end as the worst part of the novel, so take their opinions on that where mine lacks.

All in all I suppose the point of Zombie Apocalypse novels is lost on this book. It's supposed to be how people deal under stress, establish their own society, and deal with the loss of the old one. Considering how deeply rooted the British are in their history and culture, it could have been really interesting. Instead, it just never comes to pass. Final verdict is: Avoid.

Stephen says

An interesting and convincing exploration into the world of wild card scenarios from the perspective of a zombie crisis. See our review at:

<http://www.eufo.org/the-futurist-blog...>

Angel Hall says

True zombie struggles

I love this story! I feel as if this is more like what it might be like, if people fought back right away, instead of the normal story line and it's a terrific read!

Dwayne Shugert says

Excellent story! Full of the good, the bad and the ugly of humanity. But as all good zombie books hold out for us to remember...there is always hope. Hope for redemption, hope for love, hope for life. Well done...

Kelly says

This is one of the better zombie novel I've read in a while. It's smart with plenty of gore and zombie destroying action. It finds a good balance between zombie horror story and survival story. I'm really looking forward to then one.

Gertie says

3.5 stars. Here's the thing. I think you might like this book if you are into zombie stories. I used to be into zombie fiction, but have grown tired of it - which I *think* is one significant reason I had trouble getting into this book. I had no major issues with the way it was written, or the story, but I just couldn't get into it. I would maybe go so far as to give it 3 stars, for my personal preference.

The zombie market is so oversaturated now that you practically need a gimmick to make it work, or some new twist on the story. If the stories of the individuals and their characters are really built well, then the story itself isn't so crucial. It could be about killer kittens, a virus that turns everyone into women, it doesn't matter quite so much IF the characters are well built. In this book, however, there was some effort to represent people dealing with the trauma of having zombies wander around, but it was not developed enough for my tastes. So I could have gotten past the zombies if it were written in a way that really pulls you into the characters minds, their stories, their struggles. Unfortunately, this turned out to be more of a "he did this, she did that" than an exploration of how people felt and dealt with the new world they'd been thrust into. Like I said, not a major issue, but definitely has an impact on how enthralling a story is.

Now, speaking as an American (or a U.S. citizen I should say, since some take offense at the term American), I did have a little trouble with the language in this book. There are quite a lot of terms such as "Pips, chavs, barneys, chuffs". For the most part, context made it not a problem, but I definitely noticed it more in this book than others, and it did actually impede my understanding of some sections.

Memorability factor 5/10

dave says

Well it was a pretty good book i suppose. Not the best written piece of literature out there but certainly entertaining. Lots of good references for us nerds, lol. I particularly enjoyed the alan partridge references. If youre lookin for a quick easy all most junk food type book then this is a good choice. Tasty and quick but no real substance or nutrition.

Emma Newman says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, solid writing, great voice, and I felt like I was very much the ideal audience of being a slightly geeky thirty-something; so many great pop culture references that made me laugh out loud. Very British, very funny and poignant in places, most heartily recommended.

Drew says

This book is very....english. Not sure if thats why I couldn't fully get engrosse but just didn't pull me in. It was pretty witty (and enjoyable in that sense) but was a bit lacking in the action department.

Also the nook version has a lot of "s" missing so for abut the first and last 50 pages his wife is a he and there

are alot of times when "omebody" did something.
