

ZOMBIE SQUAD

A Taste of Future Death



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Zombie Squad

A Taste of Future Death



Popeye Theophilus Barrnumb

Description

Zombie Squad: A Taste of Future Death is a FREE e-book *singlet* short story teaser-excerpt, the first two chapters of the first book of a Young Adult (-ish) novel series. The working title of Book 1 is *When We Used To Be Alive*. (intended for teen to adult)

The full story is about two freshly-orphaned, mid-teenage girls trying to survive in a Zombie Apocalypse. In a world oddly lacking in adults, filled with crazed zombies, and some humans who are worse in their own way, to increase their chances of survival, the girls join a group of mostly-teens who call themselves... the Zombie Squad.

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Colophon

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I'm not kidding.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination, or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events, in the past, present, or future, is purely coincidental. That's my story, anyway, and I'm sticking to it.

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Copies of this book are available at Smashwords.com and Amazon.com in e-book format (Kindle and possibly others), the author's website (www.iPopeye.net), and possibly other locations on and off the InterWebs.

Dedicatum

I dedicate this story
to all writers and creators
of Zombie-themed stories,
TV shows, films and
other multimedia content.

You have all enriched our lives and given us
countless hours of wonderful entertainment.

Thank you.

Author's Foreword

Instead of duplicating too much of what I wrote in my novelette *Katydid's* foreword, much of which is apropos here, as well, I will abbreviate this, keep it short and sweet, and you can always read that one and see what I mean.

I'm making this short story *singlet* (sometimes known as a 'single' or "Kindle single") available as a FREE e-book, in part as part of my "marketing plan" for my novelette, *Katydid*, in the hopes that, if people like this story, they will check out *Katydid*. (and my novella *Barbra*, once it is published, and any and all other future works) More information about it/them can be found on my author's website: www.iPopeye.net

But I am also looking forward to sharing this story in and of itself, because I think it is a good story, even in the abridged, short story, teaser-excerpt form provided here. The full novel, and novel series, if/when I finish and publish them, will be even better. (if I do say so myself) So we'll all have to wait and see how that goes.

But I think this short story does stand on its own. (more or less; probably/hopefully more more than less) So there is at least that. It *may* take a little imagination on the reader's part to "fill in the blanks" upon conclusion for ultimate experiential completion. You can do it. I have faith. At the very least it is something of an introduction to the overall story — a taste of future death. I hope people like it and enjoy it. ('again', "we" write for *you*)

Note that I have a certain writing style that is somewhat casual and conversational in peculiarity, which I like and prefer. Your mileage may vary. And you may not find much of what I refer to as "Perfect Pitch English" in my prose (which is purposeful, believe it or not). Some may like it, others not. At least you can't say I didn't warn you. (so that may "explain a lot" – I hope you like my writing style and find it readable)

I'll repeat the same *Thank you* here to my editor, Marla Crites, that I did in *Katydid*, for her editing and proofreading prowess. However, please note that all extant errors, mistakes, and issues are solely mine and shan't besmirch her fine reputation and good name, especially those instances where I chose to go against advice.

Thank you to my pre-readers, Russell Johnson and Christopher Page (and his daughter), for the constructive critique and notes. It is *very much* appreciated and always comes in handy. (check out CK Page's new post-apocalyptic fiction-genre e-book, "Love, Death, & The After: Part 1: Darkness", available at: www.pageturn.com, for which I was the Editor of Note)

If you liked (or did not like) this story, I'm always interested in hearing from readers. You can contact me via my author's website.

In the meantime, keep an eye out, and stay on your toes. The Zombie Apocalypse is most likely right around the corner.

/s/ Popeye Theophilus Barrnumb, Esq.
May, 2015

Zombie Squad

A Taste of Future Death

Chapter I

The End of the Beginning

“Hey, kiddo. Time to wake up. Don’t make us late for school.”

Hope Paley was not asleep. She didn’t sleep much these days. She opened her eyes, turned her head on the pillow and looked at Faith, her big sister, by about a year, standing in her bedroom doorway, a look of confusion on her face — on Hope’s face, not Faith’s. Faith was smiling – kind of. It was a weird kind of smile. The first time Hope had seen her smile in... how long? Weeks? Months? Longer? How could it seem like longer than forever? But definitely not her once-beautiful smile. Hope noticed that the smell was particularly bad today.

Faith stood there, looking expectantly at her sister. Hope was so tired she didn’t quite comprehend what Faith had said. It simply didn’t make any sense. So she didn’t reply. She just stared at Faith standing there, seeming to be waiting for a response. Trying to make sense of it all. Perhaps both of them, that.

Faith’s smile faltered a little, and then returned. Kind of. It seemed to take a tremendous amount of effort for her to almost-smile. Hope understood that. It made her feel even more tired, if that was even possible. Faith’s dirty, ragged sweat shirt and bottoms hung on her thin frame now – they used to be a tight fit. She wasn’t wearing shoes or socks, either, which was probably good, since her feet were definitely not clean. *Filthy* was probably a good descriptor. Without another word, she seemed to gather herself, turned, and walked down the hall toward the bathroom. It was definitely a scary kind of smile.

Hope sat up in bed and threw back the covers. There was some light streaming into her bedroom through the cracks in her boarded-up windows, so it was morning, or morning-ish. She wished she had a wind-up clock. She missed the sun. Hope couldn’t remember how long it had been since she had gone outside, and that bothered her, more so than she would have thought – a sudden realization. *Cabin fever*. Another realization. Hope had heard that term before. Maybe that was part of the problem. She would have to look up the definition. Didn’t they have one of those home medical reference books around here somewhere?

It was still a little chilly. Not quite Winter, but not quite Spring. Before long it would be *April showers bring May flowers*. At least she couldn’t see her breath fog in the air anymore. She rubbed her eyes and yawned. Was it even possible to be this tired? Especially in the morning. You were supposed to feel rested when you woke up in the morning. And she hadn’t even done any late-night reading the night before. Hard to read without light. She couldn’t remember when she last felt rested. Or safe.

Hope could hear Faith in the bathroom down the hall. Familiar sounds of someone performing a familiar morning routine that bordered on ritual. Some of the sounds, anyway. Some would probably never be heard again. Morning ablutions. *Ablutions*. Hope always liked that word. She liked all words. Loved them, actually. But some more than others. And ‘ablutions’ was one of her favorites. She knew it was one of the many words in her hard-bound dictionary – a gift from her parents years ago – that had a check mark by it. Each word she had

looked up and read the definition for had a mark. She had planned to eventually have a check mark by every word in her dictionary. She wasn't sure if that was ever going to happen now.

Even though thoughts like that made her feel sad, they also gave her comfort of things familiar. Things from *Before*. When she thought of that word, when used to mean back when things were the way they were supposed to be, it was always capitalized in her mind now – and, yes, perhaps even italicized. Somehow she naturally felt inside that things like that were important. Memories of things from *Before*. In small doses. As long as you didn't dwell on them too long. Then it could become a problem.

The morning was quiet. *Too quiet*. Hope almost smiled at that, a familiar, clichéd usage from books and movies, now-days often used in a humorous manner. That's what sometimes happened with things after they had become so overused and common. At another time, a thought like that would have made her chuckle at the very least. It had taken her a while to get used to quiet like this, in their big, now-empty house.

You never really heard the sounds of everyday civilization, noticed them, until they weren't there anymore, like when there was a power outage. Kind of like that, but worse now. Although, if you stopped and strained, listened real hard, or maybe not so hard at all, you could hear the ever-present, very low drone kind of sound, like bees in a cherry tree, that gave you the chills, and not the cold kind. You got used to it after a while, too, so now it was very unnoticeable. But mostly you didn't want to acknowledge its presence.

Hope swung her legs over the side of the bed, slipped her socked feet into her favorite fluffy bunny slippers, and stood up. She was wearing her favorite PJ's, the ones with unicorns on them. At 15, she would have been a sophomore next year in high school, she almost felt that unicorn pajamas were too young for her. Almost. But they were comfortable. And warm. And her mother gave them to her for her birthday the year before. She quickly put those thoughts out of her mind. Even though it had been a while now, it was still "too soon". She had heard that phrase before. Now she knew what people meant by that. Too well. And she loved unicorns. She couldn't imagine ever not loving unicorns.

She tried to gather herself up and trudged toward the doorway and dark hallway. *Trudged*. Another good word. In some ways kind of a sad word. Especially in these times. She was trudging along. Trying to wake up and gather energy as she did so. Down the dim hallway – the whole house was dark or dim these days, since the electricity went off, and especially with everything boarded up – past Faith's bedroom, and to the doorway of the *bathroom*. The room they used to take baths in. And shower. And use the toilet. But it wasn't used for that anymore. Not since some time after the water had gone off. Bathing was a thing of the past. Cold water sponge baths more or less had to do. Using a bucket of water to flush worked for a while. Then things had become hopelessly clogged. What would they do for water once the rainy season ended?

Hope couldn't remember the last time she had even gone into the bathroom. Plus it had a mirror. And mirrors showed you things you didn't want to see. Not anymore. She knew that meant much more than the things she "hated" about herself — her short, mousey, light brown hair, and her "plain" facial features — a too-small nose, too-large ears, a long, scrawny neck, and other features that seemed to come from her father rather than her beautiful mother. Not that her dad wasn't handsome – he was. That's how she saw herself, anyway. Others often disagreed, and she silently disagreed with them. Her hair was longer now. She would have to cut it soon. Maybe ask Faith to do it. It probably looked pretty ragged, and she could only imagine that didn't "help."

Their toilet was in the garage now. To keep the smell out of the house. Not that that helped much these days, with the ever-present *smell* from *out there* that seemed to permeate your very soul. They used a five-gallon bucket, with a trash bag liner. Those were getting in short supply. With a make-shift seat that Hope had fashioned out of a piece of plywood. She had never used power tools before, her dad's tools, and she felt a little bit of pride in her *ingenuity*. Dad would have been proud of her. Luckily, most of them were battery-operated, and her dad had recharged them before the power went away completely. If you weren't careful you could get slivers, though. Someday she would have to do something better than that. Somehow. And then, as she spied the never-use-again toilet, the thought suddenly came to her that she could probably take the seat off and use *it*. That brought on a silent self-berating that she hadn't thought of that before.

Faith was standing at the sink in front of the mirror, primping and preening like she used to (or going through the motions, anyway), like she was as pretty as a peacock. Which she was. (the male variety – how unfair was that? *Nature could be so cruel*) Prettier in fact. (*or she used to be...*) Faith was always “the pretty one.” She took more after their mother. (although some people said she looked more like their dad) It didn't hurt, and helped a lot, that she knew how to do makeup and dress. It didn't take much makeup, though. Less is more. She had offered to help Hope with makeup and all that, but that wasn't *her thing* (that's what she told herself, anyway), so she always politely declined. She had little interest in such things. But today, like so many days prior, in more or less recent history, no matter what Faith did, it didn't help. In fact, it was almost like she was pretending to go through the motions, in a halfhearted manner, at best. Like she knew, deep down, that things weren't as they used to be. Which they weren't.

However, Faith was having problems with that. She had been acting more and more... strange... the last several weeks. Not quite connected with Reality with a capital 'R'. Depressed. (*who wasn't these days*) And that scared Hope. Scared her more than all the rest of it. Because Faith was all she had left.

Faith picked up her hair brush and pulled at her blonde hair, which was not very clean, and hopelessly tangled, even though she had cut it shorter some time ago. She hadn't asked Hope for help, and it definitely *was* looking ragged. Such a contrast to the long, luxurious hair that used to be *so* beautiful. Full and shiny, like the sun looked forward to making it sparkle every day. But now it was dull and lackluster, with, *gasp!*, split ends. That last thought almost made Hope smile with an odd sort of humor. Instead her shoulders collapsed in some form of resignation or something. Like the weight of the world was just a little too much.

“Don't just stand there, get hopping.” Faith gave Hope a quick, sideways glance. It seemed kind of nervous or something. “Jeez-Louise, what is that *smell*? Did someone forget to flush?”

Hope stared at her sister. Her slight frame made more so by insufficient calories – it was probably worse than it looked, with the “baggy” sweats. They were on half rations these days. That's what her dad would have called it. Again, Hope's body type took more after her dad, more straight than curvy, unlike Faith's once-gorgeous shape. Although there had been some changes the last year or so. Her mother had mentioned that she was a late bloomer, and there was some truth to that – physically, anyway. In other ways she was years ahead of her calendar age, like her reading level and that sort of thing. That was what she was good at, and what she excelled at most of the time.

Standing there, random thoughts going through her head, finding it a bit difficult to focus, Hope didn't know what to say. Before she knew it, words were coming out of her mouth. “Please don't.” And this as she realized that Faith had called her “kiddo” earlier, way back when they

had started this one-sided conversation, like she used to back in the day. Could it really have been only a minute ago? She wasn't even able to enjoy that little thing from *Before*.

Faith stopped what she was doing, which wasn't anything, really. Her hair was still in tangles, a hair brush wasn't going to fix that. And there wasn't enough makeup in the world to get rid of the dark circles under her eyes. The darkness had the effect of offsetting her brilliant green eyes, perhaps making them even prettier, even though they were *atypically* clouded, and hooded, to a degree. Nature's makeup. Hope didn't think that would have the same effect on her light blue's – her mom and dad called the color periwinkle, and her father would always wink when he said it.

Faith's drawn features due to lack of food made her look ill, really. (maybe there was more to that than Hope wanted to think about or acknowledge — maybe cabin fever was going around — that's *all* they needed – *another* plague) And her face, like her clothes, wasn't clean, not by a long shot. *If it didn't already smell so awful, we would probably both smell pretty bad*, Hope thought. She couldn't even imagine what her sister was seeing in the mirror.

"Please don't." Again. Hope felt like she was on auto-pilot. What else was there to say? What else *could* she say? So "Please don't" would have to *suffice*.

Faith looked directly at Hope. "What are you talking about? I have no idea what you're talking about, I'm sure." That last looking away toward the mirror again, said with a slight put-on accent and a 'flair'-ed emphasis like she used to do when they 'played' with each other with words and phrases and speech. Like they hadn't done in a very long time. Faith secretly liked words, too, just not as much as Hope. They both got straight A's in school, it just didn't seem as important to Faith. But she was no slouch in that department, either. Truth be told, there was probably some pretending going on in that respect with her, the way some people do. Sometimes people were 'weird' that way. Hope didn't understand it herself.

Without another word, Faith slammed the hairbrush down on the counter and turned and brushed by Hope *brusquely*, bumping into her, perhaps attempting to make some sort of a point. Faith *never* acted that way toward Hope. That was one of the best things about their relationship. Sure they had occasional small arguments and things like that, but they had always been best friends. Never staying mad at each other, or the other one, for more than an hour or so, at most. Looking out for each other. Being there for each other. Confiding in each other. Compared to what Hope had heard and seen with her friends and relatives and other people and families, she always felt so lucky that she had the relationship she did with her sister, and she knew that Faith felt the same.

Not having the energy for even a sigh, Hope quietly turned and followed Faith. The short distance down the dark hallway to her sister's room, sliding her shoulder down the wall, using it for support, stopping again in the doorway. Faith had gone in and straight to her closet, taking out various pieces of clothing on hangers and holding them up to herself, looking to see what they looked like in her (now-cracked) full-length mirror, putting some of them back, and others lying on her unkempt, unmade bed. Like she had done so many mornings before as she got ready for school. Her unmade bed, like too many other things now, was typically out of character for her sister – *Before* she *always* made her bed first thing, right when she got up, before she did anything else. It was a morning ritual that almost never faltered, unless Faith was sick.

"Please stop." It was all Hope could think to say. (at least it wasn't another "Please don't") She tried to do so without too much pleading in her voice. It would take too much energy to make it sound more like a command. She wondered if it had even come out aloud, or, if it did, loud enough for Faith to hear. She took a half-step toward her sister, almost into the room, and

stopped. She didn't know what to say *or* do.

But Faith apparently did hear it. She stopped what she was doing, almost so still she looked like a statue, or like they were playing that game called *Statues*, and Faith had to freeze because Hope was the Curator and she had quickly turned around trying to catch someone in movement, to be put out of that round, before someone could tag her and “win.” Then Faith looked directly at Hope again. And Hope definitely didn't like the look she was getting — what she was seeing in Faith's eyes and on her face, and she supposed there was some body language involved as well.

Hope couldn't help but wonder how someone could show so many different emotions on their face seemingly all at the same time. Irritation. Anger. Hostility. Surprise. Despair. Hopelessness. Fear. Terror. Was that *hatred*? Confusion. How was all of that even possible?

And all at once it all just became too much for Hope. She skipped crying altogether and went directly to sobbing. The first sob, that seemed to course up through her body, through her very being, and escape from her mouth, scared her most of all. And then the many more that followed. One after another like droplets in a soon-to-be waterfall. The dam had burst and there was no stopping it now. It was all out of Hope's control. So she gave into it and let it consume her. As if she had any choice in the matter.

Standing there, her body became wracked with tremors, starting as small spasms, and then quivering like a bowl full of jelly in an earthquake as her sobs became louder and greater in frequency, until she could no longer stand, so she slid down the door jamb, making half of an attempt to hold on, letting gravity do its work. She did her best to not be too loud, because that was dangerous these days. She ended up on the floor, half lying, pulling herself up with the greatest of effort into a sitting position with her arms around her legs to hold herself together so she wouldn't completely fall apart and disappear into nothingness, the wall at her back so she had something solid to lean on.

At some point, Faith's look changed to shocked surprise, and then quickly back to some semblance of where it was prior to that. “Stop it!” she yelled. And as Hope collapsed, Faith's yell turned into a scream. “Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!!” *Too loud. Shhh. Too loud.* She fell onto her bed, beginning to cry uncontrollably herself. This only lasted a few tens of seconds. She lifted her head and looked in the direction of her sister, and then sat up as their eyes connected. Faith began shaking her head slowly, as if to say, “No”, and then the word itself came from her mouth. “No-o-o!” Not short, but protracted, with more vigorous head shaking in the negative manner, with more crying, but not as much as her sister. Not yet.

A look of “knowingness” swept over Faith's face, like she had suddenly come back to conscious reality, like a veil had been lifted from her eyes. And then she began to scream, a blood-curdling kind of scream. Putting her hands over her ears to prevent them from hearing something she didn't want to hear. Couldn't bring herself to hear, much less listen to. And the agonizing screams continued, more of a shriek, really. *Too-LOUD!*

This seemed to snap Hope out of whatever depths she had sunk. Her sobs morphed into simple crying. At which point she slowly got to her feet and made her way to her sister's side. Faith had, thank god (yes, with a small ‘g’), stopped her screaming, and was also just crying, almost sobbing herself. Hope wasn't sure how much longer she could have endured the screaming. And she worried that the sound had carried and *someone* had heard who they didn't want to hear. They usually tried to be as quiet as possible. So much safer that way these days. She put her arms around her sister and held tight. Faith did the same. And they sat there for a time, holding each other and crying. It seemed to go on forever. So many things seemed to go on

forever these days.

Finally Hope's voice returned as her crying eased. "It's okay. Everything's going to be okay. I promise. It's going to be okay. Okay?"

Faith's voice was low and weak, barely a whisper through her tears. "Too many *okays*."

At that, Hope actually did laugh, a little, through *her* tears. It was a long-standing joke between them. "Use your words." They used it on each other, and in reference to others, when someone repeated a word 'too often' in their speech in any given situation. It also worked for things like "Uh's" and "Um's" and other utterances. Sometimes they would get creative and morph it into other situations that didn't involve speech. And then they would always giggle, or laugh and laugh. A private joke between them.

Faith tried harder and spoke again. "I'm sorry I was insane."

Not "acting insane", or "out of it", or "lost it for awhile". More scariness because she used the word plain and simple.

Hope lied. "You weren't. You just forgot for a minute. I forget sometimes, too." She was trying to stop crying, but she wasn't sure if she was going to be able to accomplish that *gargantuan* feat.

"You do?" Faith asked meekly, trying to stop crying, too, and seeming to do a better job of it than her sister. This wasn't the first time either of them had cried, although not for a long time. How many tears did a body have, anyway, before it just dried up and shriveled away?

"Sure." More lies. But perhaps they were 'okay lies.' Kind of like white lies. They didn't really hurt anyone, and maybe even helped a little. That was the hope, anyway.

And they sat there for a long while, holding each other. Until Hope and Faith heard the sounds coming from downstairs.

Chapter II

The Beginning of the End

“Hey, kiddo. Time to wake up. Don’t make me late for the first day of school.”

Hope woke up slowly, and lazily turned her head to look over at her sister. She had been having a dream of some sort. Not a bad dream, but not a good one, either. She couldn’t really remember. Sometimes she remembered her dreams and sometimes she didn’t. She usually remembered bad dreams when she had them, but not always. Sometimes it was just a lingering bad feeling. A dream shadow. It was always nice when she had a good dream, especially really good dreams, and remembered them. That never happened as much as she would have liked. She was pretty sure that, sometime in the night, she had dreamed about a blue bunny, and grasshoppers, and dragon egg Easter eggs. Weird. But cool. As far as she could remember. Fun dreams were good dreams.

Hope yawned and rubbed her eyes. She looked over at her sister standing in the doorway. Again. Faith was in focus now, not like the first time. She saw the look of expectant eagerness on her sister’s face. Faith always woke up *bright-eyed and bushy-tailed*. That’s a phrase their mom always used. Hope envied her sister that, and wished she felt like that in the mornings.

“What did you do, stay up all night reading? You’re going to *rot-your-brain* doing that one of these days.” Faith didn’t say that with too much seriousness in her voice. Just a little.

“Just the opposite, actually,” Hope mumbled. She wished she was more awake and felt more rested. She would need her energy today. It was bad enough that it was the first day of school. That it was her first day of High School, as a Freshman, made it all the more important. And scary. Faith being a Sophomore this year, and there to help her through it all, made it a little less *daunting*.

“Don’t make Mom or Dad get after you this morning. You’ll be in *Trouble*,” Faith put particular emphasis on the last word, “like in River City, with a capital ‘R,’” she said with a kidding tone and a gleaming smile. The kind of smile that lit up a room and warmed people’s hearts. And melted some. Those would be boys.

“It’s *Capital ‘T’*, actually.” Hope was always having to correct her big sister on small details like this, especially those that were of a literary nature – Faith didn’t read as much as Hope – and movie references and popular culture, as well.

“Too many *actuallies*, actually.” Faith’s smile widened wider than one would have thought possible. Hope couldn’t help but smile herself at that, and it lifted her spirits.

Faith continued, “What-evs. Just get your butt in gear and get a move on. The day awaits.” She swept away from the door with a *flourish*, already ready and *dressed to the T’s* (Hope liked knowing and using words and phrases like that), moving in the graceful way she had a way of moving. That was all Faith. Hope wished she moved more like that. But it wasn’t in her nature. It’s not who and what she was, and would probably never be. And she was almost okay with that. She had her books. And all her words. (some of them her best friends, both) And let’s not forget the unicorns on her favorite PJ’s. And Mom and Dad. And Faith. And that was enough,

for now.

Downstairs, Hope could hear the soft murmurings of her mom and dad talking in conversational tones, probably in the kitchen-dinette, and then her mom's delightful, lyrical, near-giggling laugh. Hope had always guessed that's partly why her dad was always making her mom laugh, just to hear it. That's one of the things she had gotten from her mom. Not quite as nice, but close. Faith laughed more like their father. It was weird the way that stuff worked.

And then the wonderful smells of her mom's cooking wafted into the room. The aroma of bacon, eggs, fried potatoes, and biscuits permeated the air. Brain food! That got Hope moving, before she got the call from her mother, "Girls! Breakfast!" She didn't have to be called more than once. Getting ready for school could come after food, something that annoyed Faith, who was always ready beforehand.

Hope knew it was going to be a great day. And, despite her stomach butterflies about a new school and being a Freshman, most probably a great year. There was so much to look forward to. No matter how scary some of it was.

As Hope finished putting on her robe and slippers, she grabbed her cell phone off the nightstand and headed toward the bedroom door. Both girls were rarely far away from their phones. Faith walked by the open door laughing the laugh that resembled their dad's, with her phone up to her ear, talking to one of her many friends, or possibly one from her close clique, what she called her posse.

"What??" Pause. "Yeah, right." Pause. "It's probably one of those stupid viral marketing things they do. You know, for some new movie or TV show or something."

As Hope exited her room, following her sister down the hall toward the stairway, her phone 'buzzed' with a high frequency, 20KHz "mosquito" ringtone that cannot be heard by most people over the age of 25 years of age or so. It was a young person's world. That signaled that she had received a text message. She looked at the screen, touched the read button, and the text message showed.

Oddly, the sender name and phone number were blank. Hope wasn't sure what that meant or how it could even happen. And for some reason, the message she read caused a deep uneasiness to flood through her to her very core.

It contained a single word.

ZOMBIES!!!!

###

More?

If you enjoyed this story, please check out my other stories.

Katydid is a medium-length novelette published in 2014 and available now.

Barbra is a novella that should be available sometime in late 2015 or early 2016.

My Perfectly Wonderful Zombie Christmas is another FREE e-book singlet short story. It should be available sometime before Christmas 2015.

Sign up to my e-mail list on my website to receive notices about publication and availability of these stories.

Below are the descriptions for each. You can find them and more information via my website: www.iPopeye.net

Katydid is an inevitably uplifting story about a day in the life of a 10-year-old girl trying to survive on her own in a post-apocalyptic world. Staying alive and dealing with the daily perils in After is not easy. Trying to not become prey for the many predators that rise out of the ashes is often the least of your worries. It would not be easy for anyone, much less a lone, young girl. After losing everything she had, and everyone she knew, from Before, Katy is bound and determined to keep the one thing she has left – her life. Such as it is. And will be.

This medium-length novelette is an extended adaptation of the author's short film screenplay of the same name, which is included, along with two poems.

(contains adult themes)

Barbra will be a novella and is also an extended adaptation of the author's short film screenplay of the same name. It's more of a teen-plus to adult story. (due to violence and violent imagery)

As a long (~30+ minute) short film, it is a modern day partial homage to the 1968 B&W cult classic film "Night of the Living Dead" (NotLD), mostly in theme and/or sub-theme. Even though the film occurs in current times, there is an innocence about it, in speech, dress, interaction, etc., similar to the 1960's. That is the intent.

The story is zombie-esque in nature, but can be better described as a dark, psychological thriller with a zombie theme, that explores the frailties and fragility of the human mind and psyche, with devastating consequences.

My Perfectly Wonderful Zombie Christmas is a short story written in a semi-stream-of-consciousness style. Some like this style, and others do not. So give it a try. I hope you enjoy it.

It is a story about a man who is attempting to deal with the horrors, trials, tribulations and psychological issues of surviving a zombie apocalypse as best he can, hopefully with sanity intact. It is something of a diary, or diary entry, containing his somewhat-rambling thoughts on how he got to where he is in the story to date, with some memories and recollections of times past, and a smattering of this and that. Oh, and forewarned is forearmed, Santa does not fare well.

About the Author



Popeye Theophilus Barnnumb is an autodidact, writer, author, poet, screenwriter, editor, essayist, bibliophile, logophile, linguaphile, humorist, creative, imagineer, artist and artiste, independent filmmaker, director, producer, documentarian, over-the-hill Computer Wiz Kid, master problem solver, computer programmer, coder (at heart), debugger, analyst, software engineer, creator of (as WHD) the Simplexity Cypher, CRAV Computing hobbyist (Classic / Retro / Antique / Vintage), collector of Survivalist Fiction, veg(etari)an, philanthropist, humanitarian, Rights Activist (Human and Non-Human Animal and Environmental Rights and Peace Activist), lay-philosopher, founder of (as WHD) *Rights Activism* and *Rights Activist Philosophy*, wanna-be polymath and polyhistor, recovering InterWebs addict, and all-around nice guy.

He lives in Northern California, USA (currently, sadly, companion animal-less). One of Popeye's nicknames is *Amadeus*. PTB is the creative works pseudonym of William H. Donnelly, and is mostly used for fiction writing, screenwriting, and some aspects of indie filmmaking. You can call him Popeye or Bill – he answers to both – one with a smile and one with a grin.

You may contact the author via his website: www.iPopeye.net

Don't forget to spread the word about *Katydid* and *Zombie Squad*. **Thanks.**

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