



The First One You Expect

Adam Cesare

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When he's not holding down a dead-end job or lurking in his mother's basement, Tony Anastos spends his time shooting ultra-low-budget horror flicks. After meeting his sexy fame-hungry coworker Anna, he sees an opportunity to launch his career into cult stardom. But when Tony's plan to jolt their next film's Kickstarter into overdrive calls for real blood, he will sacrifice the last bit of his humanity for a shot at recognition. But it makes sense. Look at him. The stuff he makes, I mean, he's the first one you expect.

The First One You Expect Details

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From Reader Review **The First One You Expect** for online ebook

Kaisersoze says

Somewhat ironically given the title, I had little idea of what to expect from **The First One You Expect**. I only knew it was available as part of my latest run of Kindle Unlimited downloads, so I snatched it up without even reading a synopsis, because it was written by an author I've very much come to enjoy, Adam Cesare.

The short version of this 77 page novella is that it's an exceedingly well-written and engaging tale about the writer-director of a bunch of zero-budget, gore-based horror films meeting someone who effectively changes the way he does business. Cesare has either done his research, made these types of films, or hung around people who have, because he really nails the nuances of some of the aspects attached to this type of work. I should know: I've made a couple of terrible, zero budget films. (Though they weren't horror as much as they were generic Tarantino/urban crime thriller knock-offs. Did I mention they were terrible?)

Anyway, this would have been a fantastic novella were it not for a major plot point mid-way through I had trouble believing - but will not divulge for fear of spoiling something that is nevertheless very interesting - and the fact that this is quite similar to another of Cesare's works, Tribesmen. The latter I can forgive as the sub-genres Cesare is playing with are so different, but the former issue really did stick in my craw.

Still, if you can get past this element, there's a clever story to be found within the pages of **The First One You Expect** that mixes themes of obsession and greed to good effect. It also has a killer final line that really hammers everything home.

3.5 to 4 Directors yelling "CUT!" for **The First One You Expect**.

destiny ? [howling libraries] says

Look at me. The stuff I buy, the shit I've made. I'm the first one you expect.

First off, this is a really tough rating to give and one of those titles that makes me DESPERATELY wish Goodreads would implement a half-star rating system, because this is a 3.5-star read if I've ever seen one. It's too much fun to be a 3-star read, but I had too many issues with the narrator for it to quite make it to 4.

The First One You Expect follows Tony, an independent filmmaker who wants to make it big in the league of horror flicks, but hasn't quite caught his big break yet. When he meets the new girl at the local grocery store he works at and she expresses an interest in being his next film protagonist, he thinks he's struck gold, but something isn't quite right with her and things become messy very quickly.

It's a really fun, intriguing story that I think every horror film lover can appreciate. You can tell that Cesare knows his horror films, and he throws in all of these fun little references and remarks that are terribly enjoyable to sift through.

Unfortunately, I just really couldn't stand the narrator. He's awful, crude, and his attitude towards everyone around him is just gross. I get that he's intended to be this walking cliché of sorts—at least, I *assume* it's intentional—but it was too over the top and cringe-y for me. If it hadn't been for that, and the fact that the ending felt weird and anticlimactic to me, I think this would have received much higher marks from me.

That said, *The First One You Expect* is still a damn good time and I will happily be checking out more of Adam Cesare's work in the future!

Janie C. says

Oh, no, this is not gonna end well. You know it as soon as Anna gets a hold of that knife. Nicholas, Nicholas, what are you thinking? The girl calls herself Cat Killer! Get away from her if you still can...

No animals were harmed during the reading of this book. But my fingernails are ragged. This was my first novel by Adam Cesare, and far from the last.

Jamie Grefe says

Adam Cesare's *THE FIRST ONE YOU EXPECT* is a tense slice of noir-infused horror, a microbudget slasher film-fueled dose of tension, anxiety, violence, and wicked consequences.

We follow a young film director and his friend who encounter a beautiful and dangerous girl who sets this story spinning into a nightmarish world that'll keep you turning those pages until the credits roll. Cesare knows the world of low-budget horror, knows how to pull us into a story that seems to be happening right now, swirling with social media references, detail upon detail, and inner dialogue that sings, makes this book both believable and hard to put down. You'll want to read this one quick, probably won't have much of a choice. It'll haunt you.

If you're a horror fan who is looking for something that dissects and probes the dark side of the production of an extremely low-budget flick--using that as a premise (a damn good one, too), or a crime fiction reader looking for something dark and dirty, Cesare is sure to satisfy. And, the next time you find yourself clicking through some obscurely titled and tagged horror video on Youtube, find yourself watching some particularly gruesome scene, something that looks, feels so real--gets your blood pumping--you might think twice, might find yourself stepping away, turning on the lights, or taking a closer look as you try to wipe the blood from your hands. The blood does look real, yeah? Keep watching.

Russell Coy says

Vicious, clever, and rocket-paced, I raced through this novella in one sitting. Cesare knows the world of underground horror like the back of his hand, but uses it as background dressing for this tale of brutality and paranoia. This is Jim Thompson in an August Underground T-shirt!

Sadie Hartmann Mother Horror says

Hot damn, Horror fans! Don't you love a quickie? This book is short and sweet. Adam Cesare doesn't waste a single word. Page one, you get a real sense of direction--this story is going somewhere and it starts NOW. Tony Anastos is this seedy guy that makes these very low budget horror movies starring his co-worker Burt (The Debaser).

There is nothing likable about either of these losers or their dirty hobby. One day, Tony meets Anna--a new employee at the store where Burt and Tony work. She finds out about the dark, basement pastime they share and seems to be pretty interested in it--to the point of possibly starring in one of their films. This seems weird to Tony because up until this point, nobody as attractive or seemingly "put together" as Anna has ever been interested in what they do. It seems pretty weird to us readers too because, "EW". We know Tony and he's scummy.

From here--the story goes bananas in the best possible way.

I could not turn the pages fast enough. My favorite thing about Adam's writing is how relevant and accessible it is for people who exist right now in the horror industry. The references to pop culture, social media, Kickstarter, follower counts--it's clear that Cesare has his finger on the pulse of horror. Being immersed in the genre and the community myself, this reads like it was swiped off of a BuzzFeed article or something--the believability is off the charts. I was laughing and shaking my head at the plausibility of it all; entertaining AS HELL! Not to mention the ending is totally unexpected and so much fun. Yes, yes, a thousand "Yeses".

This is horror for our time (I would love to see a movie of this, actually). Horror fans: BUY THIS BOOK and then let's all buy the rest of Adam's back catalog because every time I mention this guy's name on Twitter, like a dozen people recommend more of his books to me. Gotta have them all!

mamalovestoread says

"Fame at any cost" - the underlying subtext of *The First One You Expect* (in my opinion).

Some people will do whatever it takes to get their face on TV and some people will go along for the ride, convincing themselves it's all in the name of the bigger goal! This sums up the strange relationship between Anna and Tony in this fabulously horrific and tense novella by Adam Cesare.

This was my first Adam Cesare reading experience. I've been following his Youtube channel for a while, soaking up his book and movie reviews. This book popped up on my kindle unlimited recommended reads and so I gave it a shot. I'm now hooked on Cesare! A quick drive-by Cesare book haul on Amazon 2 days later and I now own 4 of his paperbacks that sit eagerly on top of my TBR.

The First One you Expect is classic horror, not just in terms of the gory detail but the horror of the human need to pursue fame at any cost. Something that is very real and present in today's society. Ok, not many people will go on a murdering rampage to achieve fame (though some sadly do) but people will literally do whatever it takes to achieve fame.

Here's my final note, any self-respecting horror fan should check out Adam Cesare and should buy his books. If you're on the fence, pondering the first step into the horror genre, you should check out his YouTube channel, there you will get an education and a fab intro into the genre itself.

11811 (Eleven) says

My first experience with this author was Tribesmen and I thought it was great. One of those rules for authors is to write what you know - This dude knows film. He knows horror. He melds the two nicely in his writing. This is my second read from him and, unfortunately, it was remarkably similar to the first. I still give kudos to "write what you know" but this novella seemed like a different version of the same idea.

In both of these books, the premise is basically the same. I can't tell if this is spoiler or summary for either book but:

(view spoiler)

The author brought me into it when I read the first book. It was a little crazy but it was also campy, fun, and witty. Right now, I feel like I just read a different version of the same thing. The particular thing that killed me at the 40%ish area regarding our protagonist is that (HUGE FUCKING SPOILER)

(view spoiler)

We didn't even get a deux ex whatever you call it.

This ruined it for me. Video Night was next on my list but the title alone suggests I may end up reading the same thing for a third time. I haven't made a call on that one yet. Tribesmen was a blast. I'm somewhere in the middle on this one.

Rachel (TheShadesofOrange) says

4.0 Stars

This was an incredibly dark novella narrated by a vulgar young man with a distinctive voice on the page. As a low budget film director, he has a passion for films that are much grittier and subversive than the mainstream horror films I watch. I had previously read some of the author's other stories like Video Night and Zero Lives Remaining, which are very different than this one. Cesare shows excellent range in his work and I would certainly recommend this stories to serious horror readers.

Nev Murray says

"This story for me wasn't just about horror or murder or someone seeking fame and fortune. It was about control and how one person can lose it and another gain it without the other realising it has happened. It's about manipulation and how it can affect two different people searching for the same thing. It is extremely effective at getting this point across. Lives can change in the blink of an eye. Sometimes when they do, there is simply no going back. Sometimes, even though it isn't, it just might be The First One You Expect."

See here for the full review:

The First One You Expect

Michael Hicks says

Tony Anastos is a smug, smarmy, self-involved, low-budget indie horror filmmaker. He and his friend, Burt, make and release low-rent slasher flicks, but when they cross paths with Anna, a sexy minx with dreams of stardom, Tony is struck with a minor epiphany. Anna is his new star, and her glitz and glamour are going to catapult both of them into the big-time. She's his key to creating a wildly successful Kickstarter campaign to fund his next film, which will see Anna wow the gore-hounds as a cinema's new, preeminent, slasher villain.

As is the case with prior books from Adam Cesare, particularly *Video Night* and *Con Season*, the author's love and affection for the horror genre in all its many forms bleeds through the page. And as with *Con Season*, you get an authentic insider's feel for the material as Cesare, a former Boston University film student, guides reader's through the behind-the-scenes process of indie film-making. If you've read any of his prior material, or check in with his YouTube channel with any degree of regularity, then you know first-hand just how much a horror buff Cesare is. He knows his stuff and all the various levels of genre fandom, from the low-budget indie flick scene to the sprawling conventions.

All of this is, of course, on display in *The First One You Expect*, a quick, down-and-dirty horror novella about film-making and the price one may pay, willfully or otherwise, to reach their dreams. Tony's an odd-duck of a character, one that isn't really likable but who is at least depicted honestly. He's not a good guy, but possesses an unusual amount of self-awareness, even as he brushes aside whatever thin, shallow bits of morality remain. He does stupid things and makes plenty of bad decisions over and over again. While he worries about the long-term repercussions of these actions, it's usually not enough to stop him from dreaming big, even if these dreams only serve to dig him a deeper hole. Tony is really his own big bad in this story.

Anna makes a wonderful foil for Tony and Burt, and by book's end I found myself wishing this title were longer than its novella length simply to see more of Anna in action. Like Tony, I wanted to know more about her and get inside her head (an impossibility, as *The First One You Expect* is confined only to Tony's POV). You can sense a deep sea's worth of story surrounding Anna, even if the story is strictly about Tony's reactions to her. She's a great character, though, and her and Tony's burgeoning work relationship gives this book an edgy noir flavor that I appreciated.

Fun and compulsively readable, *The First One You Expect* kept me turning the pages, and Cesare's prose is deceptively easy writing that rapidly moves the story along. The ending caught me a bit off guard with its abruptness, and what I wouldn't give for a few more pages to spend in Tony's cynical and bloody world. This is a good one gang!

Mindi says

So this is a situation I've found myself in too many times to count. My good friend Sadie will read a book and then gush about it and tell me that I need it. I will then buy the book, read it, and totally agree with her.

Rinse and repeat. Sadie knows me, and she knows exactly what kinds of books will resonate with me. Essentially because we love the same books and think alike to the point that we are practically the same person.

The First One you Expect is a firecracker of a horror novella that just continues to pick up momentum until the ending. That ending! But first, how we get there. Tony is a low-budget horror film maker. Actually he's probably whatever level is one below low-budget. He makes slasher flicks with his alcoholic buddy Burt in Burt's skeezy basement when the pair aren't working at the local grocery store. Both of them are totally unlikable losers who hire desperate women off of Craigslist to star as topless victims in their movies. Did I mention that Tony still lives in his parent's basement? You get the idea.

One day a gorgeous and wholesome looking girl named Anna shows up as a new cashier at the grocery, and weirdly she's into Tony's work. This is where the red flags start going off. She wants to star in Tony's next movie, and she has all the details planned out, something that Tony isn't used to at all, but he's willing to relinquish that power for his sexy new villain. At least initially.

If I say anymore I'm headed into spoiler territory, and I never want to do that. This is a short novella with a whole lot of story packed between the pages. Once Anna shows up the story seems to take on a life of its own, and the reader just gets swept up in it. The rest is a totally unexpected horror lover's delight. So this is the part where I tell you. You need this one.

Bandit says

This author's name has been on my radar for a while. But then again I don't read as much scary these days and my standards for it have come up to make me cautious about a lot of genre's selections, especially the ones that lean toward the guts and gore. This one was brief enough to merit a sampling and turned out a pleasant (ok, that's a really wrong word for the sort of story this was) surprise. I mean, yes, there are guts and gore, the book is about someone who makes microbudget slasher flicks with his best friend, finding sleazy girls for the action scenes. The guy also lives in his parents basement and works as a grocery store cashier (a 15 year career no less), subsisting on pizza and porn and gorror. This isn't an upstanding young man you can cheer for, but then again neither is he a murderous psycho. He's just the first one you'd expect to be. Which plays out pretty tragically when he actually meets one in real life. But very entertainingly. And the awesome thing about this novella is that the writing is actually good enough to sustain a bunch of morally and ethically challenged and completely unlikeable characters doing terrible things to each other, all presumably in the name of cinematic immortality. So it's a fun story well done and a very entertaining way to spend 90 or so minutes. Not to mention a great introduction to the author. Recommended for genre fiends.

Bill says

Tony films micro budget horror films in his best friends' basement. When Tony and Burt meet Anna, she may be perfect to star in their new film and get them all the recognition they deserve. Move over Debaser, there is a new slasher in town, and her name is The Cat Killer, a beautiful, sexy and deadly new murderess on the scene. Roll camera.

This one seemed a little different from the other works I previously read from Mr. Cesare - Told in the first

person narrative with a tongue-in-cheek story line that reminded me a little of Jeff Strand without the biting comedic commentary. Still, it was a fast paced and entertaining short novella, with some very interesting characters that I would have liked to get to know a bit more, perhaps, in a slightly longer format. I am looking forward to reading more from Adam and will remedy that very soon.

Gef says

You'll occasionally hear one of your male friends complain about his crazy ex-girlfriend. I know I have. Well, it's safe to say that no matter how crazy those gals were, they got nothin' on Anna.

Okay, technically Anna is Tony's new production assistant, but let's not get bogged down in details, all right?

Ya see, Tony is an independent filmmaker, a connoisseur of super-underground, micro-budget, hyper-violent horror movies. As such, he's kind of catering to a niche market. A niche market that's barely heard of him, but that changes when Anna comes on board to help him with the online fundraiser. The fans love her. But as Tony's latest project picks up steam, things get weird. Like, oh my god I hired a psycho kind of weird.

Adam's offering of this psycho-thriller crackles with tension. I'm tempted to call it a roller coaster ride of horror, but it's more like poor Tony fell out of the proverbial tree house of horror and hit every branch on the way down. Despite the supremely bad choices Tony makes, his desire for recognition and validation outweighing instincts of self-preservation, Adam makes him sympathetic to a point, and as for Anna ... well, there is a certain attractive quality to her hidden under all that cray cray.
