



the Key to everything

Alex M. Kimmell

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Cracked and weathered binding, hiding mysteries on pages tied closed by a bloodstained string. A happy young family enchanted by dreams and possibilities. A barren, empty room. A boy with no friends obsessively drawing angles, edges and diagrams. In his debut novel, Alex Kimmell captures a vivid and startling tale of fear. Auden's journey begins when he discovers a curious leather-bound book whose contents will soon endanger his entire family. The pages of this book draw him into a prison that cannot be breached, a place that can only be unlocked with a very special key. In *The Key to Everything*, fear is explored and heightened through jarring imagery and a terrifying, unique menace, ratcheting up the tension until the novel's gripping climax.

the Key to everything Details

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Bandit says

This one has lived on my Kindle for so long and I figured maybe today was the day for it, but alas in retrospect maybe should have just left it there, sitting around and looking intriguing. Usually books about books are definitely my thing and it was a nice twist on the otherwise done to death (pun intended) haunted abode genre. And yet...something here just didn't work. I've been trying to put a finger on it, but it's elusive, because there are a lot of really good elements here, it's original, atmospheric, with some really good ideas, descriptions and character writing and yet...it's just too acid trippy for its own good. Even reading this in one sitting, the plot still managed to frequently confuse with its serpentine turns and twists, realities turning and twisting into each other, it just got tiresome. The book read quickly and started off and finished nicely, it's all the in between convolutions that needed to be organized into a more cohesive engaging plot. Well, let's write it off as an experiment. The author shows considerable promise, but not all books are meant to be read. Which is pretty much what this one is all about actually.

Angela says

I don't normally read horror, but this book takes the cake! I found myself not only reading on to find out what happens to the original family, but to find out how all the different story lines linked together. It was eerie and poetic, and I was amazed to see how often the author was able to make words lovely and grotesque in the same sentence. The second person narration was interesting and very well done. The fact that it is used for only one character adds a strong distinction to those chapters. This is definitely a book I will have to read again... just not late at night!

Matthew Porter says

Did not like it at all. I don't like third person books, the terms you, your, you're, i felt like someone was trying to tell me to do something i didn't want to do. Not very well written.

A. Carina says

Alex Kimmel has created a fun, chilling trip down the rabbit (or squirrel) hole with this story. Falling between "House of Leaves" and The Grudge in strange, multi-plane weirdness, "The Key to Everything" starts off moderately creepy and just ramps up from there. It also hearkens to mind the middle book of the Elric Saga as well as Alex introduces us to a fairly long cast of players, but slowly.

As you can imagine, the larger the cast gets, the more likely things are going to become dire in a horror novel. My biggest suggestion in reading this is do NOT discount the children. They aren't mere fixtures, some are vital players, which is truly refreshing.

This tale is not as convoluted as the triply-nested "House of Leaves" story but you can wind up needing a

score card towards the end with the quick pacing. This is a book best read when well-rested, even if you are tempted to push on while tired. The tale is a good romp and if you like haunted houses, strange goings on, and leap-at-you off the page effects you will like this one. Oh, and watch out for squirrels...and keys made of shark's teeth.

Duncan Ralston says

A labyrinthine look into the mouth of madness...

Alex Kimmell's "The Key to Everything" thrusts us into the mind of family man Auden as he and his wife and children move into the new house. Odd things begin happening right away, starting with the squirrels. Is he losing his mind? Or is it something worse? When he finds a strange lock in the staircase's seventh step, things turn from strange to disturbing, and Auden's happy home life begins to unravel.

"The Key to Everything" jumps between characters and narrative styles, from second person to third, from the past, to the present and (possibly?) future, in a dizzying, disorienting tapestry of interesting, realistic characters dealing with ultimate evil. "The Key to Everything" skillfully weaves together several narrative threads toward a chilling, satisfying conclusion.

Its closest literary comparisons are Steven Hall's "The Raw Shark Texts," or Mark Z. Danielewski's "House of Leaves." But where "Texts" seems self-satisfied with its own artistry, and "Leaves" remains coolly detached from its characters, "Everything" is at its core a very human story, a horror story about the tales we tell each other and ourselves.

Clive Barker once wrote, "Everybody is a book of blood; wherever we're opened, we're red." This book is bloody all the way through. Prepare to be disturbed.

Scott says

I feel bad giving any author's work one star, but after 60 pages, I just could not get into this book! His use of writing in the 2nd person is so annoying that I found myself translating everything into 3rd person in my head as I read. Too much effort. I would think that a good editor would have discouraged this.

I'm also bummed because the description of this story sounded really interesting and I would have liked to have read it.

If the book ever gets a rewrite, I'd be happy to pick it up again. Until then, I'm sorry. I can't recommend this book to anyone in its current state.

Tara Bush says

This book was on sale for 99 cents and it had some decent reviews, so I gave it a try. I'm a fan of a scary, suspenseful, thought-provoking horror novel, but that isn't what this is. First, I think the author just sat down to think of what kind of disgusting, gory scenes he could put in a novel (hey, let's skin a child alive!) and

then tried to build a story around it. As you read, there are no hints as to what's going on or why, just one gory scene after another. Consequently, I wasn't pulled into the plot; I really just wanted it to be over. I often considered not finishing it, but kept hoping that there'd be a big finale to make my gruelling journey worthwhile. There wasn't. There's a partial revelation that lets you in on a few things, but overall, the story gives you no reason or purpose. Don't hold your breath for a happy ending, either.

Majanka says

Review originally published here: <http://www.iheartreading.net/book-review-the-key-to-everything/>...

In *The Key to Everything*, we meet a diverse cast of characters who each have one thing in common: somehow, their lives got entwined and connected to the Key. Auden, our main character for the largest part of the book, moves into a new house with his family. From the moment he sets foot inside, strange things start happening. An ancient, leather-bound book, calls for him. At first, he believes it's just the stress of moving that's catching up with him. But as he starts having nightmares about his family, with neck at an impossible angle, and their mouths impossible wide open, he starts to believe there may be something more sinister going on.

I thought at first that this would be your average, ten in a dozen, haunted house story. But it turns out to be so much more. The writing is amazing. Alex Kimmell has a distinct narrative voice, a clean eye for detail as an author, and the ability to make his characters seem like real flesh-and-blood people. He masterfully writes down the gory, gruesome scenes this book demands, but is just as skilled at slowly building up tension. While it may have started out as your average haunted house cliché, it's anything but.

If I had to come up with one flaw, it would be the second-person POV used when the chapter focuses on Auden. I'm not a fan of "you did this, you did that". I much prefer third person, or first person POV. But it does manage to give the book a bewildering, surreal quality, so maybe it succeeded in what it tried to do.

This book deserves to be read by all horror fans. Immensely flawed characters, great narrative, interesting plot, deliciously creepy.

Marina says

This story begins with a small child. A child who accidentally chokes with a small plastic key and dies.

Auden's family moves to a new house. New home, fresh new beginning. They find a key in the house that isn't theirs and it doesn't fit in any of the locks. And one of the stairs sounds strange when you step on it. A small squirrel shows up in the backyard looking strange right into your eyes. There is a very old book on your bookshelf that isn't yours. Strange things begin to happen. Is it just the stress from the moving or something else is going on?

I'm not very big fan of horror stories. I always expect some logical explanation. But this horror story took me from the start. The story twists and twists and sucks you into. When I started, I couldn't put it down until I finished it.

I must say I liked the story. The way it was narrated. The story was so twisting that there were moments when I couldn't tell was the scene real or it was just character's imagination. Unusually, it was written in second person narrative. There wasn't just horror part. I liked Auden's family, the wife and two sons, the way they were connected, the love they shared. Family scenes were really calm, and horror scenes would scare you to death. And the squirrels, I'll never look at the squirrels with the very same eyes again.

It's a great start for a debut author. He has done a really good job. It's a fresh new start in horror and mystery genre. Many of the stories in this genre have very disappointing ending, but that wasn't the case here. It is not monotonous with just one or two characters, but there are also supportive characters who spice up the story.

The author took two really sweet things in real life, children's curiosity and a cute little squirrel and made a plot for a horror story. This book can easily be turned into a movie.

It's twisting creepy story that will keep you up all night. It did it to me.

Stephanie says

"If we get really lucky, and I mean very lucky, we might even meet someone who is not only our key, but we can be theirs, too."

This book is classified as a fantasy horror; and it is definitely terrifying, strange, gory, weird, creepy and any other synonym you'd like to use. You'd love this book if you like to give yourself nightmares or if you're up for a good scare. You do not want to read this book if you love squirrels or if seven is your lucky number.

That being said I'll try to explain what I can without giving anything away. This is a very intricate story, it is one where you just have to read and let it take you for the ride. If you try to hard to figure it out too soon, you might give yourself a headache. Auden, his wife Emily and their two son's move into a beautiful new house in a nice neighborhood. When he's moving all of his stuff in, Auden notices a strange padlock, has an even stranger encounter with a squirrel and is compelled by a key that's buried beneath a tree. Oh, and he finds a strange book that looks like it's bound in skin and might be breathing. Abram and Dedra, another seemingly normal family...except Abram has some secrets about his past and now he is obsessed with keys and locks and his brother that died long ago. What has Abram released with his pursuit of locks and keys? What power does the book have to suck people in?

This is a unique read for the horror junkies out there. I did have to put the book down and come back to reality for a few minutes at the extremely gory parts. This book will suck you in (hopefully not like the creepy, skin-covered book) and it does contain mature content (if you haven't figured that out already.) There are quite a few characters in this book and the point of view for each chapter jumps around. However, the way all of their stories intersect is part of the fun mystery of the book. You also get to see each character's creepy encounter with the demonic squirrels, which for me, became sort of terrifyingly humorous as the book progressed. I was really intrigued by the end and we get to figure out just what is up with those squirrels! You know you want to read it...especially since "You are the key."

Terra says

Stupid, stupid and stupid!!!!!!!

This book made no sense. There were so many things that didn't add up. The little boy repeating seven over and over. The seven stones in the river.... why were they even there and how did it relate. How did Jabez get out and meet the Sgt... What did the baby Auden have to do with any thing. It's like the author had a bunch of creepy thoughts that he vomited onto a book but couldn't quite make them connect. This was the biggest waste of my time ever, UGH!!!!!!!!!

Loretta Matson says

I haven't felt so delightfully creeped out by a book in years! It gets weird in places, so hang in there.

Stephanie says

Do you like to read? Do you like to creepy stuff? Do you like squirrels? Do you have a phobia of keys? If you answered yes to at least one of these questions, then you need to grab yourself a copy of Alex Kimmell's "The Key to Everything".

After a few recommendations from friends, I started reading it on a weekend trip to my in-laws (as if that isn't scary enough, right? If you are my in-laws reading this, you know I'm just kidding...I love you guys!) who live on the outskirts of town in mid-Michigan. Nice wooded area. Some wildlife. Not a lot of outdoor lighting. One night I decided to stay up and keep reading, because I was really enjoying this book. Well, I hit about the 50% point of the book and decided I was a little more creeped out than I wanted. I was a little concerned about falling asleep without having weird squirrel nightmares. And sitting in the living room all by myself. A single light on in the kitchen, which I had to walk through to get to the guest bedroom...and lots of windows. Windows where the squirrels could be watching me. Staring me down like they do in the book. *shudder* I was a little more than creeped out!!! I may or may not have walked as quickly as possible through said kitchen and avoided eye contact with anything but the floor. I'm a little more than embarrassed to admit that, but it is true. Maybe. ;-)

I've been reading Stephen King books since I was 12 and LOVE a great scary/creepy story...this book is so much better than the King that I've read in the last few years. So, so much better!!! So much so that I read the whole second half of the book on our drive back home that weekend. 6 hours of straight reading! I was apparently making weird squeaking noises or something while I was reading because my husband, who was driving, kept asking what was wrong...ha!

Anyway, what's my point? Get yourself a copy of this book and prepared to love it! And never look at squirrels or keys the same ever again...promise.

Pheebz says

This tale starts with a family moving into a new town and neighborhood. Things get creepy real fast as it rockets you on a journey across time. What would you do if first you find a very old and interesting key and a small lock in a panel by your steps? The key seems to fit....would you try and open it? If you did and nothing seemed to happen, would you later remember how many times you turned the key? What if you later found a creepy old book bound in leather with yellow pages and pieces of things sticking out between the pages. You get a bad vibe from this book, would you open it?

"The key to everything" is a cross between wonderland and your greatest fear wrapped up in a graying blood soaked bow of what if and what now. It is very interesting and intriguing. It is very well written and the images it brings to mind are frightening. It encompasses something older than time it's self. Come and take the journey that Alex Kimmell has so elaborately laid out for you. You won't be sorry you did.

Kris says

I had high hopes for this book based on the description. Unfortunately, it didn't come close to living up to expectation. I am not a fan of reading things in 2nd person, so I was immediately put off by that. However, I found the authors tendency to switch from 2nd person to 3rd person and back again far more distracting. The fact that the book was riddled with grammatical errors added another level of irritation. The story itself had potential, but it just never managed to go much above mildly interesting. Overall a disappointment and a waste of time.
