



## The Darwin Variant

*Kenneth C. Johnson*

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**Kenneth Johnson plunges readers into a day-after-tomorrow thriller about an imminent global catastrophe and explores how ordinary people respond to extraordinary circumstances.**

When the icy shards of a rogue comet fall to Earth, they bring an unknown virus that accelerates evolution to extremes. Suddenly, infected plants grow stronger, choking out those uninfected. Animals turn aggressive and deadly. The eyes of loved ones go cold, and infected neighbors begin exhibiting signs of brutal domination.

In a small Georgia town, fourteen-year-old Katie McLane sees her neighbors changing, one by one.

Dr. Susan Perry, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, uncovers the frightening scope of the menace. The infected aren't just evolving. They're conspiring to alter the very nature of what it means to be human.

Katie and Susan become fugitives because of what they know, encountering bitter betrayals and lethal dangers, but also loves ignited and inspiring camaraderie, as they fight to prevent a viral conspiracy from creating a terrifying brave new world.

## The Darwin Variant Details

Date : Published June 12th 2018 by 47North

ISBN :

Author : Kenneth C. Johnson

Format : Kindle Edition 458 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Horror, Fiction, Did Not Finish

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## From Reader Review The Darwin Variant for online ebook

### Chris says

I was given this book for free with Netgalley for a fair and honest review.

This was the first "oral history" style book that I've read, so I should preface the review with the fact that I didn't really enjoy that perspective. The story was a little bit "Armageddon" coupled with a helping of "The Andromeda Strain". The constant shifting of accounts, without any real character depth, made it hard for me to really care about the story. I didn't really feel committed to the plot. Without compelling characters to pull me in, the story needed to be exceptional to balance it out, and I didn't find anything unique or original enough in there to get me there.

The story was well written, with topical references and a fair amount of science detail in there, so if you like the docu-drama style and different perspectives telling the narrative, then you may like this book.

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### Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

There were times when I wondered where this was going. What starts out as a comet heading to Earth turns into a race to find a cure for an infection brought by the comet. The story line is very complex. The list of characters is very diverse and the story often changes points of view using all in the plot line. The world building and backstory are very well done. This is a tension filled story with danger at every corner. The solution and the person who finds it are both a surprise. More a thriller than just science fiction.

I received a free copy of the book in return for an honest review.

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### Lisa Henderson-Farr says

Thank you to 47North and NetGalley for an advanced copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. This book is written as a documentary of a past event.

We begin this book with the discovery of a meteor in a direct collision course with Earth. Global cooperation is needed to find a solution to stop the meteor from destroying Earth and all of humanity. Working together the nations of the world succeed in saving Earth with only a few fragments of the meteor crashing to the surface. This is where things get interesting because something from the fragments is altering the environment surrounding the crash sites. Human's and animal's personalities are changing and not necessarily for the good. In fact humanity is still in danger when the contamination from the meteor causes humans to be more aggressive and seek to rule the world through intimidation. Those not affected race to find a cure that will stop the infected from destroying humanity all together.

This book reminded me of The Genius Plague by David Walton where a fungi was responsible for altering personalities.

If you like Sci-fi this one is probably right up your alley and worth giving a try.

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## **Liz (Quirky Cat) says**

I received a copy of The Darwin Variant through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review.

The Darwin Variant is described as a ‘day-after-tomorrow thriller’ full of catastrophe and danger. I found it to be reminiscent of a lot of science fiction already out there, which can be considered good or bad depending on your opinion on the matter. The earlier parts reminded me of half a dozen space collision stories out there, while the latter half reminded me very much of Annihilation.

The other thing worth mentioned before we begin is the storytelling style Kenneth Johnson opted to go with. It’s written as sort of an oral story being told after the fact. So it’s more a collection of stories from a half dozen people that lived through the events. I don’t mind this style of storytelling, as long as it’s done right, but I know it grates on some people’s nerves.

(view spoiler)

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For more reviews, check out Quirky Cat's Fat Stacks

## **John Porter says**

### **A page turning roller coaster of emotions and plot twists**

It took me a little while to warm up to this book, but once I did I couldn’t put it down. The story drew me in and I made an emotional connection to the story and characters. I was upset and worried when things seemed to be going wrong, elated when things quickly started going right, and even found myself shedding a tear on the last page. I enjoyed the various narrators and the inclusion of other devices such as police reports, illustrations, and notes.

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## **Minke says**

I really loved this book. The story kept me on the edge of my seat and I can really see this being turned into a series on tv. I would definitely be watching.

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## **Jen says**

[I am just getting so bored with every broken society deteriorating into fascists. Oddly, even with their new

"superpowers" they didn't do anything worse than other fascist regimes have done- I would have thought that they would be more frightening. I was okay not reading about anything worse- it just struck an odd note for me. (hide spoiler)]

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## Koeur says

<https://koeur.wordpress.com/2018/02/2...>

Publishing Date: June 2018

ISBN:9781503954113

Genre: SciFi

Rating: DNF

**Publisher's Description:** When the icy shards of a rogue comet fall to Earth, they bring an unknown virus that accelerates evolution to extremes. Suddenly, infected plants grow stronger, choking out those uninfected. Animals turn aggressive and deadly. The eyes of loved ones go cold, and infected neighbors begin exhibiting signs of brutal domination.

**Review:** Honestly I did not give this novel a chance because it didn't give me a chance to like it. It opens with this jumbled narrative of interviews and perceptions of various people as they live through the outbreak. Not my cup of tea. Additionally the whole "alien virus from space" shtick has been over done. Perhaps I will complete it at a later date should reviews pan out.

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## exncgal says

There's an old Cherokee parable that says we all have two wolves inside us: one is evil (anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, ego) and the other is good (joy, love, hope, kindness, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion). Which wolf wins? The one we feed. Johnson has crafted a story that shows how science is neither good nor evil; it's all in how people apply that science, or which wolf we choose to feed. It's an interesting scenario.

I was iffy on the structure of the story; though I think it was necessary to have multiple narrators, some of them were too omniscient and spoke in a way that didn't really ring true with their characters (Katie) or who were tasked with waaaaay too much exposition to advance the plot (Susan, Hutch). And I had a hard time keeping track of who everyone was! I also felt there were some characters and plot points introduced early on (aggressive animals, Lisa and the other high school students) who vanished without much of a trace.

As a former biochemist, the science gave me a bit of a headache... for example, "an enzyme inside the amino chains of our DNA molecules" (Kindle edition page 404) - I'm really scratching my head on this one. And the ending isn't really sitting well with me - admittedly, it's only been 15 minutes since I finished the book, but my initial reaction is that the ending is a bit of "painted into a corner."

Overall, I guess it was a good story, but a bit lengthy and in need of editing/better science.

I won this book as a Goodreads giveaway. Opinions are mine alone. I am neither a Friend nor a member of the Resistance.

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### **Richard says**

I'm new to Kenneth C. Johnson - never read anything else he has created and didn't watch V. (I confess that I'm old enough to have watched the Six Million Dollar Man, the Incredible Hulk, and the Bionic Woman that he produced.)

This was an engaging and exciting book to read. There were great characters, a lot of suspense and mystery, and a very interesting "story telling" writing style. This book is told via journal entries from the various participants which can make it a little hard to follow but empathizes the personalities and lives of the heroes and villains. The writing and story style seems more like a movie or play than a Science Fiction Novel but that is one of the things that makes it so interesting.

My complaint with this book is the science. Johnson lists some serious scientific personal in the credits. Still, I found the "science" of quick changes, genetics, human compatibility with alien life, etc. more like a 1950's Sci Fi book - good on ideas, character interaction, and imagination but short on believability. For that reason, I give this book a four, rather than a five star rating.

If you can overlook what I will call the "scientific stretching", you will really enjoy this book. I also want to mention that the author is donating some of the book's proceeds to three excellent charities. Good job Kenneth Johnson!

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### **Georg says**

The first 90% of this book is a page turner. Light, good entertainment. The documentary style of telling the story – through multiple characters and reports – works well.

I have only one big and one smaller issue with this part. The big one is a clichéd, unrealistic description of the main protagonist's autistic sister. She is more "Rain Man" than real life autist. The small one is that the reports being used to tell parts of the story, did not survive very well the move to Kindle format: The design makes some of them confusing and hard to read.

What makes me give this book an average rating, is the Goody Two-Shoes approach to the last 10%. Lazy, idealistic solutions to everything. I still would recommend the book, but be warned and do not get too annoyed towards the end.

I seem to be the one reviewer who did not get this book for free from anybody. Just mentioning ?

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### **Dee Arr says**

Author Kenneth Johnson's book begins as an apocalyptic sci-fi story which quickly morphs into a horror novel before concluding with a sci-fi thriller ending. This book is a fast and entertaining ride, though not without a few speed bumps.

Mr. Johnson has chosen to tell his tale in a documentary form, with the characters relating the story after the fact. Additional details are filled in with security cameras, voice and flight data recorders, television footage, and unclassified communications within government agencies. The power of this technique works well, as the characters all tell their stories in first person, giving the reader the feeling of being there as the action takes place. This increases the horror factor, ratcheting up the tension as the virus begins to change the way people think and act.

Characters are fleshed out, and we are privy to many of their inner thoughts and motivations. The author did a fine job of allowing some of these characterizations to be perceived through their individual sections. This helped to breathe additional life into the book and allow me to feel an interaction with the people involved.

Before the story begins, the "Mission Statement" describes how the book has been assembled from diaries, depositions, court documents, transcriptions, etc. Each time a character takes over the storyline, his or her name is inserted. Unfortunately, there is no explanation of where the information came from (diary, transcription, etc.), and sometimes the descriptions do not sound like a person talking. For instance, Shelly Navarro concludes one section with: "I looked at him with an arched eyebrow and my expression of oh puh-leeze. Then I took another unfulfilling hit on my e-cigarette." Passages like this one could have been easily explained with more informative section introductions, such as "From the diary of Shelly Navarro." While these instances were not overly excessive, they intruded on the story and the author's intentions.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. There are few slow spots, but the path the book takes leads people through different types of dangers. These various scenarios kept me engaged all through the story until the very end. Four stars.

My thanks to NetGalley and 47North for an advance copy of this book.

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### **Feather Stone says**

I kind of got an Armageddon vibe going during the first around 100 pages. It was pretty good. I really liked some points when parts of the story were told by things like security cameras and body cams. The only reason why I gave it 4 stars was because it wasn't really what I was expecting when I bought it. Although, the ending was phenomenal.

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### **Marissa says**

I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley.

The Darwin Variant is a blend of sci fi, horror, and thriller that re imagines a world where the Earth has a close call with a comet and believes themselves to be in the clear only to be found that it is infected with some kind of alien virus that turns the population encountering it into what amounts to a bunch of doped up, super intelligent, horny, power hungry humans. Disclaimer up front for anyone interested in this book - it contains elements of violence and rape, one aspect of which includes rape of a young girl with a mental disorder. It's very disturbing. The book is written similarly to World War Z. Multiple points of view are provided in a variety of different writing media. Once the virus is uncovered, I found that the story got very repetitive and therefore moved too slowly for me. I felt this concept might have been better executed as a movie or television series rather than a book.

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### **Barb says**

Amazing story. Could easily explain the current political/societal stupidity, minus the novel's happy ending. So compelling, I might have finished it in a day but for the kindle's need to recharge.

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