



# Afterlight

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## **Afterlight** Alex Scarrow

The world lies devastated after the massive oil crisis that was described in **LAST LIGHT**. Human society has more or less entirely broken down and millions lie dead of starvation and disease. There are only one or two beacon communities that have managed to fashion a new way of living. Jenny Sutherland runs one of these groups. Based on a series of decaying offshore oil-rigs - for safety - a few hundred people have rebuilt a semblance of normality in this otherwise dead world. But as her and her people start to explore their surroundings once again, they start to realise not every survivor has the same vision of a better future than their catastrophic past. There are people out there who would take everything they have. War is coming, and the stakes are truly massive...

## **Afterlight Details**

Date : Published 2010 by Orion (first published 2007)

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Author : Alex Scarrow

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Genre : Fiction, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic, Thriller, Science Fiction

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# From Reader Review Afterlight for online ebook

## elaine o'rourke says

again loved this book, hated finishing it.

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## Susannah says

Having spent the last year and a half devouring every post-apocalyptic and dystopian novel I can get my hands on, I can confidently say that Last Light & Afterlight are my favourite so far! (In fact, I think this second book is actually better than the first, which is fairly unusual as these things go) Between them, they depict such a likely scenario, (I personally believe it's the most likely potential apocalyptic event at this point in time ... and particularly we in the UK would certainly hit crisis point extremely quickly, because we store/grow/raise so little food here!! Makes me crazy mad when I think of how completely un-forward-thinking our government are being, sigh.) and the author has clearly put an awful lot of time into researching the probable consequences of a sudden loss of oil, and the ways in which people might survive such a situation.

But it's so much more than just a good story with good knowledge suffusing it! Lifelike, interesting, flawed characters who you can really grow to care about people this book, and the world building is extremely well executed. Plus I just loved the cleverness with which the characters survived.

Give it a try - it might just become your new favourite! ;)

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## January says

Great page-turner. The fact that it only took me 3 days to read this 584 page beast proves how much I couldn't put it down.

I really enjoyed seeing the different communities that succeeded (or failed) 10 years after the crash. It's a refreshing change of pace from the typical starving plague-ridden cannibalistic riot stories that make up the majority of post-apocalyptic fiction.

The treatment of women though... It wasn't offensive. It wasn't chauvinistic and it wasn't feminist. It was just downright strange. There was so much talk of gender, women versus men, rape (incredible amounts of rape), deep-seated generalizations about both genders. I can tell that the (male) author has an amazing respect for women. And sadly not as much respect for men.

The theme of this novel seems to be: the men screwed this world over and the women are going to heal it. The last paragraph only confirms that:

"When young people ask me hard it was just after the crash, how did we manage to get through those tough, dark times and build things anew, I find myself thinking that it was 'power' that got us here. Not the sort of power that comes from burning oil or gas, or spinning turbines, but the kind that comes from a mother who

wants something better for her children. There truly is nothing more powerful, more world-changing, more complete than a mother's love."

This is so beautiful. And maybe it's true. Maybe it will be love that saves us all.

It made me sad though. I'm a woman but I'm tired of being a woman. Can't I just be a human? Can't we all just be humans? All races? All religions? All genders? Why are there always these dividing lines between us all?

If love is what saves us in the end, I hope it is the love of PARENTS for their children, not just mothers. If love is what saves us, I hope it is the love of all humans for all of humanity. That is the only way we can survive this.

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## **Sandra Danby says**

The setting for 'Afterlight' by Alex Scarrow is the UK, ten years after the oil ran out. It is a sequel to 'Last Light' but can be read as a standalone novel. Like the first, it is a moreish thriller with the touch of frightening reality. After the oil crash there were riots, looting, murder and rape. Beacon communities were established, safe zones which eventually became unsafe. Now, only two remain. This is the story of what happens to them as survival and recovery phases into rebuilding and re-establishment of democratic government.

Scarrow recalls some of the main characters from the first novel – Jenny Sutherland and her two children – and introduces new people. There are flashbacks to the oil crisis which shows events from different viewpoints. Ultimately, this is a story of Them and Us which does at times seem stereotyped. Jenny now runs a community of 400+ living on an abandoned oil and gas rig in the North Sea off the Norfolk coast. There are rumblings of discontent with the strict rules, then a mysterious Belgian stranger arrives and a young girl goes missing. This story is interwoven with that of Adam Brooks, a former RAF officer, who was sent to secure London's O2 Arena as a safe zone. Run by a civil servant and policed by a gang of teenagers with guns, it is far from safe. This segment of the story is the least satisfying. The link between the two places is Jenny's children, Leona and Jacob, who set off for London. Jacob longs to see city lights, which he barely remembers, and Leona wants to return to the family home to die alone.

There are some big subjects tackled here. The functioning of the group dynamic in far-from-ordinary circumstances, the management of resources and long-term planning, and how to handle a crowd which hasn't realized the food really is going to run out. These pressures challenge what it is that makes us human, in our preferences, tolerances, sacrifices and beliefs.

I confess to picking this up one weary weekend when I had re-read a chapter of a more worthy book. 'Afterlight' was just the tonic. I read it in two days, curled up on the sofa on a snowy afternoon. I returned later to the worthy book, and enjoyed it too.

Read more of my book reviews at <http://www.sandradanby.com/book-revie...>

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## **Zarina says**

*Afterlight* is not the type of book I would normally pick up but I'm glad I got a chance to read it as it was immensely gripping and scarily realistic.

The novel tells the story of how after an oil crisis in 2010 our world has become devastated. The story is mainly focussed on the United Kingdom and in flashbacks shows us how the first days after the crisis were filled with riots and parties and everybody taking whatever they could get their hands on for themselves and if necessary (and sometimes even when not) killing other people along the way. Ten years AC (after the crash) it seems that a small group of people has finally managed to create a self sustained community on old gas platforms in the North Sea, yet there are still those out there planning to just take, take, take and maybe even ruin this last beacon of hope. What follows is a very realistic story of what humanity can come to when there is no democracy left to guide them; groups of young children running around the city as wild tugs possibly resorting to cannibalism, dictators emerging and those proclaiming the word of God but only to help themselves, child soldiers, you name it.

*Afterlight* is a very fascinating novel and makes the reader think. It shows us how we take things we use on a daily basis for granted and have become absolutely reliant on them in such a way that we wouldn't be able to cope for ourselves without them anymore. And more importantly how easily it can all be lost.

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### **Steve says**

Post apocalyptic thriller, which had me from the first page. This is a follow on from *Last Light* and I can honestly say that this was better than the first book. The scary thing was not the ruthlessness of life post social breakdown, more the way the story rang true. This is no *Mad Max* type wasteland novel, this is how I suspect things would really turn out if we ran out of oil. There are some interesting parallels to *Lord of the Flies* and the inclusion of a charismatic child abuser added a dimension which had me thinking about who you really could trust in a world where the old rules had broken down.

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### **Digit says**

I got through a quarter of this and I'm bored. I had high hopes as I thoroughly enjoyed the first book (*Last Light*). Unfortunately, the book is too slow to get started with the story split between the days of the crash (which was fully explained during the first book) and also the interactions of a community spent on an oil rig..... too much time is spent trying to force on the reader a utopian existence without power, rather than constructing an action post - apocalyptic action story that could have still had some subtle philosophical messaging!

The character continuation from the first book to this book was confusing, I can't believe that the two kids, despite surviving the crash, would have grown to become such passive and weak individuals. In fact, I would have thought the daughter, with what she did in *Last Light*, would have been more likely to have lead the oil rig community rather than the mother!!

I may revisit this book at a later date, but that would be through obligation rather than desire.

PS - I may have been compromised by the authors note in book of each which I felt was a little pretentious and self righteous.

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## **Kevin says**

Overall, incredibly disappointing book.

After reading the first of the series, I had high hopes for the sequel - I was very wrong.

Set 10 years after the events of the first book (with the exception of some of the characters at the start of the book which take place during the same time period as the first book until they catch up with the other characters (time-wise) and then they run in parallel again.

Despite using some of the same characters (the heroes of the first book) - I'm completely at a loss to understand how the author not only managed to make them completely unlikable, but also incredibly boring, predictable and also rob the reader of caring about what happens to the character in the least.

I had a very hard time finishing the book purely because I didn't care in the least about what happened to the characters.. actually.. thats not completely true.. but the only caring about the characters I did was caring that they'd be killed in the next scene. Because of this.. for most of the book, I was woefully disappointed.

Ok.. spoiler time to vent some more

(view spoiler)

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## **Darren Gore says**

About a year or so ago, I read the Alex Scarrow novel 'Last Light' where the world's oil supply is disrupted, global civilisation collapses within a matter of days and an English family fights to survive and escape from an increasingly savage London.

Although nothing new in terms of premise and delivery, 'Last Light' was a compelling thriller that kept me reading until the end.

'Afterlight' is the sequel that takes up the story again 10 years after 'Last Light'. Despite the hardships and privations of post-collapse England, one community is making some success at surviving until it comes under threat from both within and without - especially after an expedition to a mostly-empty London makes a dark discovery...

There is a lot to like in 'Afterlight'. At times, it is very gripping, moving, thought-provoking and unnerving. As well, during flashback scenes to when London burned after global collapse, it was hard not to be reminded of the stunning 2011 riots that took place in England only weeks before I read 'Afterlight'. Like its predecessor, 'Afterlight' has many page-turning moments.

Alas, there were other parts of 'Afterlight' that I didn't find as interesting. Part of this was personal preference - I found the expedition-to-London scenes more compelling than the community-under-internal-threat scenes - but part of this was when the prose did more telling than showing, and became plodding rather than stimulating.

Still, 'Afterlight' is not bad, and if you liked 'Last Light' you most likely won't mind this sequel.

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### **Bogdan says**

i was fortunate enough to see the end of communism. hopefully i will be fortunate enough to not see the end of this civilization.

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### **Iona says**

Loving this from the start. The story took up from Last Light and told the tale from 10 years in the future back to the crash day, jumping forward and back to fill in the gaps. I think I like the idea of the world as we know it ceasing to exist and mankind having to start again. A tale of survival.

Thoroughly enjoyed this story from start to finish. No major surprises just a well told story which is totally believable. We have been warned!

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### **Kiera Healy says**

I'm seriously irked because I wrote a whole long review of this terrible book, and it got eaten by my computer. So now I hate it even more! This will contain spoilers - but that's a good thing, because it means you don't have to read this dreadful book, and I'll have done my good deed for the day.

Afterlight is the sequel to Last Light, a laughably bad novel about Peak Oil. When we last saw our heroine Leona, she had narrowly escaped being murdered by a shadowy Illuminati-style cabal of political lizards responsible for everything from the American Revolution to the rise of Hitler to me bruising my hip on a table this morning. They were after her because she alone had the power to identify them, and they had sent

their most prized assassin to try to destroy her.

Naturally, we never hear from them again. They are completely written out of the sequel, replaced by Alex Scarrow's *How to Survive the Zombie Hoodie Apocalypse*. Lesson One: Don't Wank on Legumes or Pulses:

*"Did you kill the guard?" she asked.*

*Walfield looked down at the body and nodded. "Stumbled on the bugger whacking off on the beans."*

Ten years have passed since Peak Oil. The survivors of Great Britain are mostly divided now between two camps, unaware of each other's existence. One is explicitly described as a concentration camp. It's led by a mid-level civil servant (boo!), who has assembled a crack team of thuggish urban youths, mostly black. In the last book, our heroine Leona was nearly raped by an urban black youth whom she named Fifty, because he resembled a famous rapper. Alex Scarrow clearly thought this was a very clever idea (possibly worth opening a tin of Heinz for), because he stretches it to breaking point. Now we have a whole gang of urban youths - mostly black - who have all adopted rap names for themselves: Snoop, Dizze, etc, etc. They enjoy playing violent video games, listening to hip hop, demanding that bitches show them their "pooty", and wearing lots of gold jewellery. There's a really unpleasant undercurrent here: it's like Scarrow thinks that black youth culture is responsible for all thuggishness in the UK. Millwall fans beg to differ.

Fortunately, our mid-level civil servant has stockpiled enough oil to power up arcade machines for a fortnightly night of fun, along with alcopops and a ten-year supply of cocaine. It's not clear where the latter came from. Did he scavenge it? Was it a gift? Did all the survivors pool their cocaine together? Did he have it in his pockets in case of emergency? I demand answers! Sadly, none are forthcoming.

Anyway, the rest of the survivors are off the Norfolk coast on an oil rig that they have transformed into a feminist paradise. Now, there are of course pros and cons to living out here. PRO: Nobody is knocking one out on the borlottis. CON: Alex Scarrow has never met a real live woman, so his feminist enclave is literally a bloody mess:

*Of the four hundred and fifty-three members of their community, a large proportion were women between the ages of sixteen and fifty. On any given day there were at least half a dozen of them reporting to Dr Gupta - once upon a time a GP - for something to ease stomach cramps.*

#### PERIOD PAIN: THE REAL HORROR OF THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE.

Into this feminist dreamland comes a dark-skinned stranger with a sexy accent, and everything falls apart. The women are suddenly at each other's throats in their desperation to wash the Francophone heartthrob's underwear (actual plot point). But it's all for nothing because he turns out to be a paedophile. This is telegraphed by the facts that a) he is Belgian, and b) he is some kind of priest. What chance did he have?

So the Belgian paedophile kills Leona's daughter. When we last saw Leona, she was an eighteen-year-old university student. Now it's ten years later, and she hasn't changed apart from the sudden development of a five-year-old girl. The father is never mentioned, not even in passing. I can only conclude that Leona dove into a bathtub of baked beans, with disastrous consequences. It's all moot, though, because the daughter is just a catalyst in pigtails who shows up, gets murdered, and causes Plot to happen.

Plot is this: Leona's mother Jenny is grievously injured. So she and her brother abandon Mum and head off to London, where Jacob hopes to find a working streetlamp (??? This is a teenage boy who thinks about Yu-Gi-

Oh a lot and doesn't know what a blowjob is, so bear with him), and Leona plans to return to her old house, where her dad died, and kill herself, which is...sweet? Dad's body is still there, by the way, because nobody ever thought of burying him. God, these people.

Along the way, Leona and Jacob get taken in by the evil civil servant and his gang of hoodies. Here, horrible things happen, but the most horrible is Leona herself. She is beaten horrendously and nearly raped (she isn't, of course, because nice girls aren't). Minutes later, she listens to a girl in the next room get raped. Her thoughts on this:

*She wondered if the girl was really there out of choice - because she got treated to a little alcohol, a little dope every now and then.*

Then Jacob is killed, which is weird, because as I mentioned in my review of Last Light, Jacob is named after Alex Scarrow's own son. I can only think that Jacob Scarrow is quite the scallywag: "Jake, do your homework or I'll make your character a dweeb who all the other youths hate", "Help your mum with the washing up or Book-Jacob will be told to rape his own sister", "You got detention?! That's it, I'm killing your character!"

Finally, we have a climactic battle where Our Boys - the remnants of the British army, still proudly loyal to Queen and Country ten years after the apocalypse, and the antithesis of those dreadful hoodies - save the day, and everyone lives happily ever after, although a few beans will never be the same again. So that brings our checklist to: violent video games, youths, rap music, mid-level civil servants, feminism, foreigners, paedophiles, men who look like imams and turn out to be kiddy fiddlers, the army saving the day...I can only conclude that the entirety of Afterlight is Alex Scarrow's cover letter for a job at the Daily Mail. It finishes with another smug afterword in which Scarrow congratulates himself for writing such a great book, and tells us all that we are doomed. God, this man must be a nightmare dinner party guest. Do yourself a favour and don't read this book.

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## **Lolliipop says**

This book is recommended to me by Don.Thanks yo!XD

I know this book is a sequel, but I dont bother to read the first one.u dont really need to read the first if the second book somehow explains to us what book one is about.spoiler,yo!

Ok, I've bought this book when I was going to an outing(to a bookstore,really!) with my bestfriend(Mi\_kan) the other day. I was browsing through the shelves when I saw this book looking at me curiously.Or maybe u can change the 'T' and 'the book' position in that sentence.This book was,at that time, sitting alone on that shelves.Yeah, it was the last copy,I guess.So, I was lucky to notice it and at The same time I remembered the recommendation by Don.So, what else?I bought the book,of course!haha

I read this book a few days after that, and yes, this book is a page-turner.Then, I brought this book along with me when I went to holiday and somehow my holiday turned into finish-this-book trip!oh!

I am going to be honest.This book is good, really!But, u have to be real 'tough' to go on with this book if u were some way like me.I cant stand when people make something mine like his/her.And that, happens in this book through Valerie Latoc!And I cant stand a person who talks malicious about someone just because

he/she was not in charge and felt unimportant. And that, happens through Alice. I hate both of them like I hate everything most hateful in this whole world! I don't know if you know how much hate I needed to go through! Urgghh for just thinking about it.

However, surely I have reasons for saying that this book is good even though the author killed my favourite character, in a mean way! ok, ok, relax! I will go to the good sides.

Well, good, good. Which parts are good? Think. Think. oh, yeah! I know! the whole book is good except the parts that are not. How's that? lol~

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## **Dave Farmer says**

If you've read the previous book, *Last Light*, you'll probably enjoy this one too. It's set 10 years after the events of the first one, Alex Scarrow states his reasons why which I thought was a refreshing thing to see - I like it when an author takes time to connect with their readers.

The story itself isn't quite as gripping as *Last Light*, the sense of urgency is somewhat lacking, possibly due to the nature of the story being 10 years after the chaos and panic of the first story. However, I still found myself eagerly turning each page at 2 and 3 in the morning. There are plenty of "what would you do?" thinkers dotted along the way as the characters struggle through their various paths. I like a story that makes me ponder how I would react in a similar situation.

As with *Last Light* I thought some of the characters were pretty well fleshed out. Others I wanted to know more about seemed a bit limited in their purpose, needs, desires and so on. The use of dialogue gives the characters good individuality, although I'm not a huge fan of the multiple exclamation marks the author uses in his dialogue. The circumstances and character behaviour (if well written) should be enough to tell the reader a situation is tense or not without a lot of !!! at the end of so many bits of dialogue.

Another nit-pick for me is the use of capitals in dialogue. Again this shouldn't be necessary to convey emotion if the writing is strong. Despite this, the dialogue and regional dialects, slang, street talk etc is very well done.

I'm sure the Kindle version has been poorly laid out as there are huge gaps between the paragraphs, more than the first book. I got used to it, sort of. A slightly odd thing is the first person diary entry at the start. That in itself is okay, however another one crops up toward the end of the story and I thought this was a sort of conclusion, but the story continues on. It felt misplaced.

Without giving away specifics I thought it ended in a strange place, with all the build up I expected something big but it just dwindled to a stop quite unexpectedly.

The concept of what a population would do following a collapse of society is an interesting one, and well thought out here, with some interesting ideas of how individuals and groups work through such hardships. Many apocalyptic stories tend to centre around destruction and chaos, zombies, guns, cars that still work years later despite petroleum having a limited life span.

*Afterlight* is different as it looks at things from a realistic point of view, this is evident in the research the author has done. The characters have flaws, even the good guys don't always get it right, and the bad guys

have reasons for their behaviour. It illustrates how some people will strive to help each other and some will act like locusts, consuming and killing.

As with the first book I was dismayed to see the repetitive nature of rape, whether that be actual rape or the intention/implication. I understand it is used to illustrate a point, that of men being dominant over women, using them as objects etc, but it felt forced to the point of "oh, just stop going on and on about rape and docile women and get on with the story!"

Despite these criticisms I thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. Thought provoking subject matter, decent enough characters and locations I could relate to, England, London, East Anglia and so on.

If you want a good read about how people might realistically survive following a collapse then I recommend Afterlight whole-heartedly.

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### **Alyson says**

Post apocalyptic thriller - set after the collapse of the oil industry - Afterlife is the follow on from an earlier work called Last Light which I have not read. This book manages to stand alone although there are a few reference to the earlier work and having read it would probably be beneficial.

The story is told between the two communities of Bracton oil rigs and the surviving group of people in London. The breakdown of society is well told and fully believable and the main characters of Jenni and her daughter Leona are also well drawn, but some of the minor characters are rather one dimensional. Several plot twists keep you reading, although some areas, such as the sections on the London community were rather more plodding.

I did have to withhold incredulity that the scavengers kept finding more containers of food or drink or cigarettes even ten years after the collapse of society and I'd have thought rather more communities would have set themselves up... but hey, this is a novel after all.

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