

# Back from the dead?



Okay, here's a new experiment for me, "real-time" writing.

In this case, my squeaky leather chair (quite annoying) and blog post will serve as surrogates for my chair on a sandy beach and baby laptop.

I can't suggest how successful this may turn out or even how entertaining, but today and tomorrow will be – sort of – the beginning of the middle of the Jeremy Shuttle Adventures, either considered as Book Four of the series or Book One of the second series.

I can absolutely guarantee changes to what you will be reading, possibly wholesale changes, but in the interests of the experiment, I will not go back and change anything over these two posts except for standard spell check and editing.

Also, since it's just possible one or two of you haven't been around for the ride all along and thus have never read my books (come to think of it, considering my sales numbers, it's a *strong* possibility), I'll start off with an abridged backstory to catch you up. Obviously, the real books (should they ever get done) will have a more comprehensive preface.

Okay, then, let's grab those glasses, stretch that back and get comfortable...

**Previously**

Jeremy Shuttle was a smart 12-year old with a smart mouth, both of which could lead him into trouble, since he seldom used the former to know when not to use the latter. Combine this with his occasionally being sighted talking to bugs and it left him with no friends and frequently picked on.

He countered that by staying mostly to himself and spending his time alone, drawing in his sketchbook. Perhaps this was a reflection of his life without a Dad. Although legally declared Dad, his Mom, Teresa, never seemed to truly believe it, so neither did Jeremy.

Eventually, his isolation and drawing attracted the attention of a female classmate, Natalie Carroll. Despite his best efforts otherwise, they become close friends, although it takes some time for him to realize Natalie's more serious interest.

Jeremy notices a strange new/old art store one day on his walk home from school. Inside, he meets an equally strange shopkeeper who, after some weird discussion, gives him a new sketchbook.

Within a short while, Jeremy finds out the sketchbook makes everything he draws in it become real – for a time. He is so thrilled by his discovery he doesn't recognize the danger each drawing places him in. Natalie, being both more observant and more mature, sees everything and tries to talk Jeremy out of using the book.

He ignores her, gets into terrible trouble and she rescues him. Rather than being cautious, he gets bolder still and hopes to use the book to find out what happened to his missing Dad, William. Natalie continues to stand by him, despite her feelings of dread.

Eventually, further adventures lead Natalie and, by now, Teresa, on a series of amazing and amazingly dangerous travels, both through and about the sketchbook. For there are

other persons pursuing the sketchbook and there is the sneaking suspicion that the book may even have a mind of its own.

Ultimately, it is revealed that Jeremy's Dad is still alive and is "brought back" to the real world. In order for that to happen, Jeremy has to travel through worlds both real and imagined, sketching himself into and out of extraordinary danger to reunite his family once again.

A happy ending for all, as Jeremy fully realizes and expresses his love for Natalie, while Teresa and William are together once more after 13 years apart.

Except, the sketchbook is still out there and so are people who want it. With a power to alter reality, past or future, it's a temptation too great for many to resist...perhaps Jeremy most of all.

## **Prologue**

The room was dark. A small light on the desk, its bendable neck turned down into itself gave only a sense of the hunched figure in the large chair. The man's shoulders shook from a vicious cough, but there was no other motion or sound.

Standing just inside the doorway, Pankin was loath to close the door behind him as the light from the hall was his only visibility. He shook the chill feeling that it also provided him his only protection.

*It's an old man in a chair, not a monster.*

Pankin had met many monsters. Most of them were just men. Some, he remembered now, with a return of that chill, were not men. Still, he had already agreed and the money promised was more than enough to cover a few cases of the willies.

“What is it you want, sir?” he asked, closing the door as he entered fully. In the silence of the study, the lock made an audible click as it engaged.

The figure in the chair remained still for a moment longer before the outline shook again to another cough. Then a crackling voice emerged, at once sounding like dry paper or bones scraping against one another.

“I want it found.” DaHurst said. “I want it and I want the boy, too.”

A hand pushed forward a large envelope. Pankin noted with some surprise the hand was steady and far from frail. He nonchalantly leaned in to take the envelope, surreptitiously trying to discern more details of the man in the chair, to no avail.

Pankin heard a chuckle, in that same crackling voice.

“Never mind your curiosity,” DaHurst said. “You’re being paid well enough to mind your own business.”

Pankin had to agree on that account and he took no resentment in the restatement of terms.

“Very well sir,” he said, without a hint of emotion. “The book and the boy.”

As he left, carefully fending his way back to the door, he heard the chuckle again, only this time sounding more like a cackle.

*Yes, not all the monsters were men.*

## **Prologue Two**

The police had worked swiftly to cordon off the area. It was believed that no one had gotten in to see it. In this world of

social media and cell phones, it was close to a miracle they had this contained.

The officer in charge stared at the scene and shook his head. He turned to the park ranger that had discovered the body. In his face, he saw reflected the disbelief that ran through his entire being.

*It has to be a prank. Or some movie stunt. Has to.*

The ranger walked up to him, began to ask him something and then appeared to throw the words away. Finally, he simply asked, "What happens next?"

The officer shook his head. If it were real...but, of course, it couldn't be real, but if it were...

"I guess CSI isn't who we're looking for on this thing. We'd need one of those, what do you call them?"

"Paleontologist," the ranger replied, in a flat tone.

"Yeah," the officer said and then neither said anything for a while. They just stood and stared at what appeared to be the scorched remains of a Tyrannosaurus Rex.