



## Zero Lives Remaining

*Adam Cesare , Frank Walls (Illustrator)*

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Robby Asaro is dead.

And alive.

He's a ghost in the machine, keeping a watchful eye on the arcade where he lost his life two decades before. And the afterlife is good. The best thing ever to have happened to him. But when the conscious electric current formerly known as Robby Asaro makes a decision to protect one of his favorite patrons, Tiffany Park, from a bully, he sets loose a series of violent supernatural events that can't be stopped.

Trapped inside the arcade as the kill count rises, Tiffany and a group of gamers must band together to escape from what used to be their favorite place on Earth...and the ghost of Robby Asaro.

From the author of *Tribesmen*, *Video Night*, and *The Summer Job*, *Zero Lives Remaining* is a masterful mix of horror and suspense, dread and wonder, a timeless ghost story that solidifies Adam Cesare's reputation as one of the best up-and-coming storytellers around. This is Adam Cesare firing on all cylinders—and he's just getting started.

## Zero Lives Remaining Details

Date : Published January 1st 2016 by Shock Totem Publications

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Author : Adam Cesare , Frank Walls (Illustrator)

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**Download and Read Free Online Zero Lives Remaining Adam Cesare , Frank Walls (Illustrator)**

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## From Reader Review Zero Lives Remaining for online ebook

### Andi Rawson says

I originally figured on 4.5 stars, but thinking about it, this book makes me so happy, it needs to be 5. I ordered Shock Totem's limited edition hardcover because it was awesome. I hadn't heard of Adam Cesare but the VHS tape cover and box were too much for this horror geek to pass up. It is, without question, the coolest looking book on my shelf. The second best thing was when the e-book came out and I didn't have to mess with my good copy in order to read it.

"Robby Asaro is dead."

"And alive."

When Robby is baked alive in his favorite pizza oven at FunCave, his life, his real life, begins. Haunting the arcade (not a bad deal if I say so myself), Robby has his favorite games, his favorite customers and the not-so-afterlife isn't so bad. At least until he inadvertently sets off a chain-reaction that results in more than the loss of virtual lives at FunCave. When FunCave becomes a horror cave, is there anything that can stop this supernatural killing spree?

This novella reminds me of a song by Tori Amos called The Glory of the 80's. Adam Cesare has pegged an era and given it all of the nostalgia of a classic 80's movie. It makes me wish (minus the bloodbath) that I had a FunCave in my childhood. I loved reading this and I did finally open my hardcover so that I could read the bonus story at the end, which was also fantastic.

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### 11811 (Eleven) says

"I got a pocket full of quarters and I'm heading to the arcade!" Anyone else remember that song? Anyone?

\*crickets\*

Right. So, this is an awesome throwback to the good 'ol days of loitering around coin machines all day. A wonderful premise. A wonderful setting. Shitloads of nostalgia. Cesare is becoming a fast favorite in the horror realm. Highly recommended.

I received a free copy from audiobookblast in exchange for a review.

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### Michael Hicks says

At little more than 2 1/2 hours, Zero Lives Remaining is a fun, punchy listen chock full of B-movie horror thrills.

Adam Cesare's latest plays with the haunted house trope, placing a group of teenagers in an arcade where a ghost haunts the video game cabinets and everyone's lives are in danger. The ghost in the machine runs rampant along the arcade's electrical wiring, snaring its victims in ectoplasmic tendrils and dispatching the trapped teens one by one. Given its short run-time, the focus here is on the action with the characters only

subtly shaded in but not deeply enough to get too attached to. There's the teenage gaming queen, the schoolyard bully who isn't quite sure how to express his affection for her, the arcade's maintenance man who suffered a stroke that ended his gaming hobby but whose work allows him to still feel connected, and a handful of others that serve largely as bloody fodder.

There's a fun superficiality to the nostalgia-driven proceedings (Centipede and Ms. Pac-Man get plenty of shout-outs), but I never felt terribly connected to the cast even as many of them met their gruesome fates in varied and interesting ways. The creators of Mortal Kombat may want to get Cesare on the line for "fatality" suggestions, as he presents some strong finishing moves against his beleaguered teens. I may never look at a claw arcade game quite the same way again.

Joe Hempel's narration is solid, and he gives his character voices are distinct enough to help separate dialogue during all the calamity. He has a straight-forward, somewhat airy, presentation style that brings a sense of fun and whimsy to the listening experience, and the production quality is perfect.

Ultimately, Zero Lives Remaining is an enjoyable way to kill a couple hours if you're in the mood for bloody mayhem set against the intriguing background of a video game arcade palace.

(Note: Audiobook was provided for review by the narrator.)

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## **Karl says**

This is copy 28 of 100 signed numbered copies signed by Adam Cesare.

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## **David Sharp says**

Robby Asaro died a horrible death. Burnt to a crisp via the slow, agonizing procession of getting cooked in a conveyor belt style pizza oven in the restaurant/arcade where he was employed. That was the 1980s.

Decades later, Robby now finds himself as a literal ghost in the machine. An unembodied spirit that clings to the electrical currents of the equipment and games in the arcade, Robby finds a peaceful afterlife keeping the components of the machines in good working order. Fed up with the treatment of arcade regular Tiffany Park, Robby decides to use his spiritual powers to defend her from a bully. Completely unaware of the true power he possesses, an unstoppable series of violent events will be unleashed, forcing Tiffany and a handful of gamers to band together and survive the night.

Written by Adam Cesare, Zero Lives Remaining is a haunted house/creature feature/siege narrative mash up pre-loaded with copious amounts of nostalgia, violence, and 80s B-movie flair. Like much of his previous stories, Cesare has a way of writing characters with a lot of heart. Although Robby is the villain, sort of, empathy for him is unveiled with each passing beat. Melding the spirits of other characters, as well as a biological threat, there is always something that keeps the story from becoming cliché or obvious. Twists and turns come with each page and every death is a brutal display of artistry, making full use of the story's surroundings.

Released by Shock Totem on eBook as well as one of the coolest limited hardbacks I've ever seen, Zero Lives Remaining is everything a kid that grew up on arcades and 80s cheesy horror flicks could want out of a novella. Cesare is on the top of his game and delivers possibly his best story yet by unleashing a fount of

energy to keep you turning pages and enough horror to make you think twice about touching another arcade game.

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## Frank Errington says

Zero Lives Remaining begins in 1989 and the prologue sets the stage for what would happen down the road.

"In the minutes before the horrific accident that would end his unspectacular life, Robby Asaro was engaged in one of his favorite activities. He as making a pizza."

Twenty-five years later, Robby is still hanging around the arcade of the bowling alley/pizza joint where he met his fate. He just doesn't have a body he can call his own.

Zero Lives Remaining is a bit like a slasher movie where the villain is disembodied ectoplasm and features an ending that is damn near perfect.

Having spent many an hour plugging quarters into Ms. Pac-Man and dozens of other classic games, it was easy to find myself hanging with the denizens of this after school and weekend haunt, even if the actual events did require a certain suspension of disbelieve.

Zero Lives Remaining is available in e-book, paperback, and audible formats from Shock Totem Publications. If you subscribe to Kindle Unlimited you can read this one at no additional charge and if you are an Amazon Prime member you can borrow the book for FREE from the Kindle Owners Lending Library.

Recommended for all the fun of a few hours in a gaming arcade...only with your life on the line.

Adam Cesare is a New Yorker who lives in Philadelphia. He studied English and Film at Boston University. His books include Video Night, The Summer Job, Tribesman, Exponential, and Mercy House.

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## Kaisersoze says

One of the most promising of the up and coming "new-wave" horror authors, Adam Cesare, again delivers what he does best with **Zero Lives Remaining** Namely, a gore-soaked throwback to the days of old. He's previously done much the same with cannibal movies (Tribesmen), horror movie VHS nights with friends (Video Night) and creature features (Exponential). This time round, Cesare targets the old school arcades that were effectively rendered extinct by the combined onslaught of Playstations, Xboxes and PC gaming.

One of the best things about Cesare's writing is he does not waste pages establishing irrelevant character traits that never have any bearing on the plot (\*cough\*King\*cough\*). Instead, he gives the reader just enough to work with per character and then gleefully sentences each of those characters to a grim (and usually messy) death. **Zero Lives Remaining** does not deviate far from that formula, though it could be argued that after a typical prologue which fills in who the ghost in the machine is in this instance, things happen *too* quickly. My major complaint with this one is the way in which events go from Caspar the Friendly Ghost to full on mayhem. It makes a kind of sense within the pages of the novella, but it did not feel earned to me - perhaps because bad, misunderstood boy Chris is painted in strokes which are too broad.

But Kais, I hear you ask, didn't you just say Cesare's ability to quickly sketch in a character is one of the

things you like most about his writing? Yes. Yes I did. But the narrative still has to work even with less detailed characters and I never quite bought into the threat this time around. It went from Point A to B to C so damned fast, my head was left figuratively spinning.

Oh well. Once the mayhem starts, it's pure Cesare all the way. So by the time the penultimate death had taken place, I was back on board and again smiling with satisfaction over what had just taken place.

All of which is to say, this is good Cesare. Better than the disappointing Video Night for mine, but not in the same league as the exceptionally fantastic Exponential.

### 3.5 Stabby Ectoplasmic Tendrils for **Zero Lives Remaining**.

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#### **Marvin says**

Three and a half stars.

While Adam Cesare is usually associated with the Bizarro crowd, I see him a bit differently. He is known to go into the excessive range of surrealist violence and gore which is one hallmark of Bizarro. Yet to me he feels like a bit of a throwback to straight horror and, at the most, Splatterpunk. His writings seem to be more influenced by the hardcore horror writers like Jack Ketchum, Brian Keene, and the early John Skipp of *The Light at the End* and *The Bridge*. For these authors, it is the terror that is the thing as well as the main characters' reaction to the terror.

That is how I view the novels I have read by Adam Cesare and it is certainly how I picture *Zero Lives Remaining*. Set in a video game arcade, it is essentially a ghost story that accelerates into a nightmarish carnival of terror and destruction. The Funcave is a modern video arcade that has a second floor devoted to arcane games like Centipede and Ms. Pacman. Robby Asaro died there due to a terrible accident in 1989 and has since been haunting the arcade games as a spectral electrical force. Still haunting in 2014, He is mainly happy with watching the kids play the games but he seems to have a special attraction to video game geek-girl Tiffany. When she is assaulted by Chris, a awkward and cruel boy, he steps in to protect her and his actions transforms his previously benign spirit into an angry and vengeful one. With the customers now trapped in the arcade center, it becomes a matter of who if any will survive.

There is a certain B-Movie aspect to this which is part of the fun. The particular setting of a video game arcade is also rather unique. Much of the beginning of the novel is drenched in the language of the video game nerd. I had a certain disadvantage, not being a gamer. Even though I grew up with games like Donkey Kong and Pacman, I was never really in the scene. I didn't even know what a Kill Screen was until I read this. Yet Cesare's writing skills flows through all this and we are quickly into the action. And that is what the book is all about: the action. It is descriptive, scary and very spooky in the "ewww!" category of horror. Robby is the catalyst to most of the story and he is quite an interesting spook as we watch him go from gentle spectre to a terrifying force. Tiffany is the strong willed nerd girl and it becomes clear why Robby is attracted to her persona. The other main character is Dan, the regular maintenance man at the Funcave. At first he seems to be the one with strength and leadership but unfortunately it never quite pans out. I liked Dan so maybe I am a little miffed at that. Yet all the characters, if mainly in the B-movie range of development, still works well in this straight-out but tightly structured tale of terror.

Overall, *Zero Lives Remaining* does what it sets out to do; Entertain and leave us with the satisfying aftertaste of being consensually scared. I really liked the ending which of course I won't reveal. The novel may not pave any new ground in the ghost tale/poltergeist genre but it is sure to make you a little nervous

when you see your next Ms. Pacman machine.

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## Hunter Shea says

I always knew I could never trust Ms. Pacman! Zero Lives Remaining is a nostalgic blast for those of us who came of age in the arcade. I almost wish the Centipede I played was haunted by the ectoplasmic-spewing ghost of a dead pizza maker. Cesare has written a thoroughly enjoyable ghost/monster romp that hits all the sweet spots for any true horror fan. Grab a fistful of quarters and get ready to play!

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## Char says

Every once in a while I love to immerse myself in the literary equivalent of B-movie cheese. Something like say, *The Rats* by James Herbert or *The Night of the Crabs* by Guy N. Smith. This book definitely qualifies!

What started out as a nostalgic trip to the video game arcade of my youth turned into something else completely—a creature feature in the highest order of fun! We have a group of kids, mostly good, one bad. We've got a couple of nerdy adults, (still hanging out at the arcade), and a sweetheart of an employee—the stroke ridden Boden. (A shout out to John Boden of *Shock Totem*, I assume.) Then Cesare locks them all up in the arcade, (and that arcade gate coming down—whew that was something else!), sprinkles in some weird electrical and biological mojo, shakes it all up and voila! Pure, unadulterated **F U N**.

If you're in that mood, and you KNOW that mood I'm talking about, where this novella sounds like just what you need right now? You need to snap this one up and spend a little time in the arcade. But beware, even Ms. Pacman can't protect you in here—you have *Zero Lives Remaining*!

Highly recommended for fans of creature features and B movie cheese!

\*I was provided an e-ARC of this novella in exchange for an honest review. This is it.\*

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## Kimberly says

4.5 stars, rounded up for the original h/c casing!!

Robby Asaro met his grisly end while making pizzas in the arcade, Funcave. Somehow, part of his consciousness survived, living off the current in the games around him.

25 years later, enter some new players—including Robby's particular favorite, Tiffany Park. One day, while Tiffany is being accosted by a very angry, dangerous Chris Murphy, Robby intervenes on her behalf.....never expecting the whirlwind of events he would set into play.

Cesare's distinctive writing style is in top form in this B-style horror novel. The arcade games and characters themselves transported me directly to the action. The surroundings are so vividly portrayed, that the energy transference and deaths seemed to be happening right in front of me. The story left me feeling as though I had walked the floors of the Funcave, myself. Adam Cesare is a writer whom I am hearing much more about lately, and his latest books are certainly a testament to that!

A thrilling ride that you'll want to stay on until the very end.

Highly recommended!

\*note: The S/L hardcover comes in the shape of a classic VHS tape, complete with clamshell casing--one of the most original displays I've ever come across!\*

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### **Ken McKinley says**

It's 1989 and Robby is working at the Funcave arcade making pizzas. Some may not think very much of Robby's job, but he loves working there and takes it very seriously. Then, one day, a freak accident pulls Robby into the pizza oven and just like that, no more Robby. Even though his body isn't there, as the years pass, Robby is still around, passing through the electrical circuits of the video games, the wiring, and the machines. Turn the calendar to 2014. Tiffany is now the video game wizard and her favorite game that she has mastered is Ms Pac-Man. It seems so effortless for her as if she gets help from the machine once in a while. Then, one day, she is harassed by a sleezy guy named Chris. Tiffany doesn't like Chris much...and neither does Robby.

Zero Lives Remaining brings back a chunk of my childhood - the Saturday afternoon draining of quarter after quarter in those classic standup arcade games - and melds a tidy little horror story with it. Cesare uses a bit of Wes Craven's Shocker along with grabby doses of ectoplasm, ala Ghostbusters to go along with a world of sights and sounds that those of us who grew up in the 80s know quite well. The storytelling is crisp to go with the memorable characters and unforgettable, over-the-top kills. Good stuff.

4 killer Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Sues out of 5

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### **The Grim Reader says**

The novella is fast becoming my favourite type of read. I managed to snag a copy of the limited edition Zero Lives Remaining and let me tell you it's a thing of wonder! The packaging for this book was superb but that is only half the story. It doesn't matter how good it looks if the story inside is only average. Thankfully, Adam Cesare doesn't know the meaning of the word average when it comes to writing. This read gave me great pleasure for a number of reasons. It's quick, no-nonsense, camp horror and I love it. The word ectoplasm is used numerous times, which is a plus! and the concept of a pizza guy getting cremated in his own oven then becoming a Lovecraftian digital entity is wonderful. I was a big fan of the arcade scene

during my youth and Cesare captures the feel perfectly. From the machines to the music, it's a top draw read. The artwork is spectacular, the story equally so. Do yourself a favour and pick this up. You can thank me later.

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### **Dan Schwent says**

The ghost at the arcade was largely harmless until it had to kill to protect its favorite patron. Now, the soul of a sociopath is melded with its own and the remaining people in the arcade will have to fight for their lives...

As someone who whiled away many Mountain Dew-fueled hours playing video games as a youth, a novella about a murderous video arcade was something I couldn't pass up. Plus, it was on my kindle and I had to read SOMETHING while my tires were getting rotated. What was I going to do, talk to the other patrons?

As I've said before, I think Adam Cesare and I would be best buds if we'd grown up in the same neighborhood. His video game references hit all the right notes for me without feeling patronizing or pandering. The Ghost and Goblins reference was spot on. Fuck, that was one hard game!

Zero Lives Remaining is a survival horror tale set in a haunted arcade. For a b-horror enthusiast like myself, it reminds me of the part of Maximum Overdrive when they're holed up in the gas station. No one can enter, no one can leave, and it's only a matter of time before the next person dies. Some of the characters are surprisingly well crafted for a novella where most of the cast is destined to die horribly. Dan Bowden, in particular, really had me rooting for him.

There's a fair amount of gore but nothing nausea-inducing. I thought I knew who the survivors would be at the beginning and I was way off.

Zero Lives Remaining is a fun horror novella and a perfect way to kill time waiting for your car to get serviced. Four out of five stars.

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### **Glenn Rolfe says**

Another fun ride through b-movie horror with Adam Cesare.

Pretty much everything you'd expect out of a Cesare story.

If you're a fan, you'll dig this one.

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