



I Fail at the Afterlife

Anni Sezate

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A self-deprecating, lovable angel leads Anni Sezate's atypical coming-of-age novel, *I Fail at the Afterlife*.

David does not mind being dead. While he misses his family, he watches over them as a guardian angel. He spends the rest of his time working behind a desk in the Resting Place, where souls go before Heaven. When a powerful demon, Malum, attacks the Resting Place and escapes under David's watch, David feels responsible. He joins a task force to recapture the demon and confronts questions of how far he should go to stop evil without succumbing to it.

Narrated from David's perspective, the story is funny yet poignant, action-packed yet philosophical. Even in the afterlife, David wrestles with self-doubt, expressed with dry humor and commentary. Despite this, David's compassion and desire to do what's right shine through. He uses his angelic influence to guide his family as they grieve and even finds himself falling for not-so-evil Sheila, the demon he is assigned to monitor.

The story masterfully tackles the topic of death, both acknowledging the pain it inevitably brings for those left behind and suggesting that there is peace to be found. It also raises the age-old question of whether ends justify means: the angels wrestle with how far they should go to stop Malum's evil. Their powers stem from light, but they can only defeat Malum by learning to harness darkness, leading to a dilemma: are they justified in using the very thing they are trying to prevent? And is obeying even angelic authority always right? As David confronts such questions, he jeopardizes his angel status.

I Fail at the Afterlife is an action-packed and thought-provoking novel about an angel with all too human problems.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (January / February 2023)

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