



## The Afterlife

By Gary Soto

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A funny, touching, and wholly original story by one of the finest authors writing for young readers today.

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## **The Afterlife** By Gary Soto Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Not many authors kill their main character on page two, but when Gary Soto does in *The Afterlife* the tactic results in a richly textured coming of age story. Chuy is a normal teenage guy, making his way in the barrios of Fresno, California, and hoping to impress a pretty girl. Carefully combing his hair in the restroom at Club Estrella, he only has a few moments to consider his "loverboy" strategy before his young life is (literally) cut short by a knife-wielding stranger who misinterprets a compliment.

Soon Chuy is floating above his bleeding body, embarking on a journey of personal exploration. As he drifts through his hometown (tightening his stomach muscles so as not to get blown off course) he manages to achieve many of the things he didn't when he was alive--recognizing how much he is loved by family and friends, saving a life, punishing a thug, and even falling in love (with a ghost-girl who has committed suicide).

Soto has a knack for particularly apt comparisons ("the sun rose pink as a scar," "laundry hung like the faded flags of defeated nations,"), which brings beauty and clarity to this dangerous world of *cholos* and *cabrones* (and if you don't know what those are, there's a glossary in the back). Aside from a couple plot points left dangling, *The Afterlife* offers a tangibly detailed portrait of a young life worth living. (Ages 13 and older)--  
*Brangien Davis*

### From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up--Soto's twist on the emerging subgenre of narratives in the vein of Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* (Little, Brown, 2002) offers a compelling character in the person of 17-year-old Chuy, murdered in the men's room of a dance hall the evening he plans to connect with the girl of his heart's desire.

Unfortunately for both Chuy and readers, what happens after death is that the teen's once engaged and engaging spirit seems to dissipate along with his "ghost body." He floats around Fresno, CA, making seemingly random sightings of his murderer, local kids, and--only after a couple of days and at a time when his ghost body is beginning to dissolve limb by limb--other ghosts. He finds a new heartthrob in the form of a teen who has committed suicide and is befriended by the wise ghost of a transient whose life he tried to save. Grieving friends and family unknowingly are visited by Chuy, and he is startled to discover that his mother wants violent revenge for his death. This plethora of plot lines wafts across and past the landscape of a narrative as lacking in developed form as Chuy finds himself becoming. After a strong start, *The Afterlife* seems to become a series of brief images that drift off as though in a dream. Soto's simple and poetic language, leavened with Mexican Spanish with such care to context that the appended glossary is scarcely needed, is clear, but Chuy's ultimate destiny isn't.

*Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

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### From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Gr. 7-10. Combing his hair in the dirty bathroom of a club where a dance is being held, 17-year-old Chuy makes the mistake of telling the rodent-faced guy next to him that he likes his shoes. The young man returns the compliment by stabbing Chuy to death. Where any other story would end, Soto's begins. It follows Chuy for several days after his death, as the teenager recounts what he sees and experiences. His parents grieve, and his mother asks a cousin to kill Chuy's assailant; then he goes to his high school's basketball game and sees the effect his death has had on his friends, realizing their sadness will be fleeting. He saves the life of a homeless man, albeit only temporarily, and improbably, he finds his first

girlfriend, Crystal, a specter who died from an overdose. Crystal's character is not as well developed as Chuy's, but their relationship is beautifully evoked, with Chuy grasping every thread of love he can as he slowly disappears. Soto has remade Our Town into Fresno, California, and he not only paints the scenery brilliantly but also captures the pain that follows an early death. In many ways, this is as much a story about a hardscrabble place as it is about a boy who is murdered. Both pulse with life and will stay in memory. *Ilene Cooper*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Barbara Marburger:**

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book entitled The Afterlife? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have some other opinion?

#### **Mable Garza:**

The reason? Because this The Afterlife is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

#### **James Matter:**

Is it an individual who having spare time and then spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This The Afterlife can be the solution, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your time by reading in this brand new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

#### **William Keller:**

A lot of people said that they feel bored stiff when they reading a e-book. They are directly felt that when they get a half elements of the book. You can choose the book The Afterlife to make your own reading is interesting. Your own personal skill of reading talent is developing when you just like reading. Try to choose very simple book to make you enjoy to read it and mingle the opinion about book and examining especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to open a book and go through it. Beside that the e-book The

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