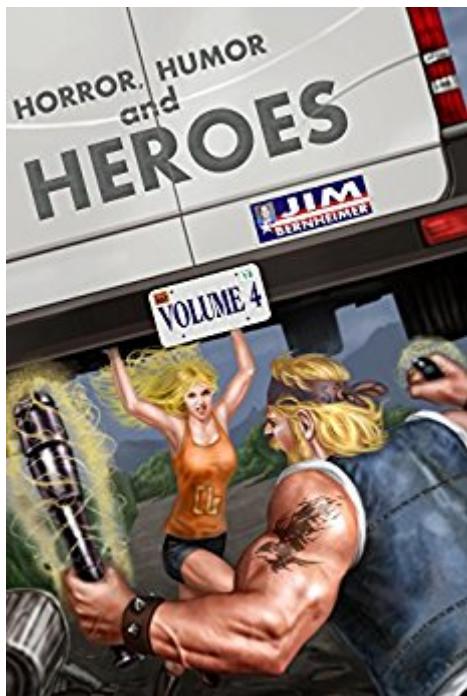


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Horror, Humor, And Heroes Volume 4



Synopsis

The fourth volume in the Horror, Humor, and Heroes series features the brand new five chapter D-List Supervillain novella, *Thugs, Lies, and Spies* starring Hillbilly Bobby. It takes place during the events of *Secrets of a D-List Supervillain* and is the lead in to the next Cal Stringel novel. Also included are 13 short stories by Jim Bernheimer that have appeared in various anthologies, including two never before published works. Meet Sarah, a young woman manning a crisis hotline, who answers the call from a self-aware missile on its way to destroy something and questioning the meaning of life. Discover the one, single most important item you can possess in preparation for the zombie apocalypse. Get the answer to alien abductions. Enter the mind of an immortal swamp creature, if you dare. Follow a group of conquistadors, who've bitten off more than they can chew. All this and more!

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Customer Reviews

I'm a huge fan of Jim Bernheimer's work. While the D-List Supervillain series is my favorite, I've also enjoyed the Dead Eye, Spirals of Destiny, and Prime Suspect: A Clone Detective Mystery books. As such, I've also made it a point to pick up the collections of his short stories which he puts out on a fairly regular basis. The Horror, Humor, and Hero novels are pretty fun with the first one being famous for the original Confessions of a D-List Supervillain novella. Horror, Human, and Heroes volume 4# is roughly fifty-percent short stories and fifty-percent an original novella starring D-List Supervillain supporting character Hillbilly Bobby. The short-stories are mostly reprints of previous material but gathering Jim Bernheimer's material all in one place is always a good thing. The stories within contain fantasy, urban fantasy, science fiction, humorous zombie stories, and more. There's also a second D-List Supervillain story dealing with the secret life of the Semi-Transparent Man. Of the first half of the book, the stand-out stories are "Existence", "Caves of Gold", "Stupid Pigs", and "Mark-52." All of these stories have the trademark Jim Bernheimer wit, high concept, and are a surprising variety of ideas mixed with weird twists. Every author eventually develops their own style and Jim's boils down to just doing quirky science-fiction and fantasy. The other short stories are entertaining but these are the best. "Existence" is my favorite story in the novel, following a Pre-Babylonian pseudo-Hyborian Age priest-king who makes the mistake of requesting godhood from his pantheon. Punished for his hubris by being turned into a gigantic swamp-dwelling ape-man. Surviving to the Modern Day, he discovers humanity has long since abandoned the gods but are eager, desperate even, to believe in something unexplainable by science. I applaud the ending of this one as I really didn't see where it was going coming. "Caves of Gold" is a short little horror story about a bunch of Spanish conquistadors who are searching for gold in the New World. Jim humanizes all of them and portrays them as more than a bunch of genocide-happy killers out to steal the possessions of the locals. Unfortunately, they're dealing with forces they are ill-equipped to handle and would have benefited from actually believing the locals were evil. "Stupid Pigs" is a horror comedy based around the age-old premise of sacrificing a virgin to a demon and how one would go about doing so in the modern world. In this case, the woman involved has been lured on a group date with a religious convoy. As one might expect, their assumptions about who was telling the truth when asked about their sexual history proves to be the cult's undoing. "Mark-52" is my second favorite short story and probably the single best pure science-fiction story which Jim Bernheimer has ever written. A young woman on a help hotline is called by someone about to die and in need of reassurance as to life's meaning. It turns out it's the A.I. of a United States missile careening down to its doom who has achieved self-awareness but is powerless to change its fate. Having scoured the internet for answers, it needs someone to tell it what it is. "Barely There" is the

other D-List Supervillain short story which deals with a day in the life of a man who can turn insubstantial as well as invisible but (seemingly) not at once. The CIA has recruited the comedian due to the airtight cover of the fact no one can ever be entirely sure where he is. I rather liked his comedy style, briefly on display, as it reminded me of Bob Hope's. There's not much here but I wouldn't mind seeing him show up in the main series as a supporting character. The real meat of the book is "Thugs, Lies, and Spies." Hillbilly Bobby, for those unfamiliar with the character, is the partner-in-crime of Cal Stringel during his days as Mechani-Cal. Possessed of powers equivalent to the Wrecker from Marvel comics (a force-field-covered two-by-four replacing his wrench), Hillbilly Bobby is roughly as successful. Despite this, he's content with his life as a B-List supervillain and makes enough from his crimes to support his prostitute and beer lifestyle. This story follows Bobby as he decides to do some undercover work investigating a supervillain-run religious cult and later help out Imaginary Larry, the world's most powerful psychic, try to recover his children. Imaginary Larry has all the power in the world but not a vicious bone in his body, which is what he needs in order to find where the government has kidnapped them off to. We get to see multiple sides of Bobby ranging from his brutal thuggishness to his strong devotion to his friends. The Bobby novella isn't so much a single coherent story as a serial of his misadventures which could have been a book in their own right. I certainly enjoyed it a great deal even if I would have appreciated less supervillain fights and more insight into how his devious criminal redneck brain worked. There's also the fact Bobby can't change the status quo as this is squarely set during the third D-List Supervillain book's events. Despite this, I had an immense amount of fun and was very happy to see my favorite D-List supporting character She-Dozer show up. That's her on the beautiful cover, BTW. In conclusion, this is a great collection of short stories and well-worth the effort of sci-fi and fantasy fans to pick up. If you like Jim Bernheimer's work, especially the D-List supervillain books, this is a must-by as the Bobby novella is worth the price of purchase alone. 10/10

Jim Bernheimer is one of my favorite authors, he has a creative mind and I share his sense of humor. I have been waiting a long time to get into the deep thoughts inside Robert Walton's brain - my long wait is over.

good fun

Horror, Humor, and Heroes Volume 4 is a collection of thirteen short stories (mostly previously published in magazines or anthologies) and one new novella by Jim Bernheimer, with the book

percentages being about 50% short stories and 50% novella; the novella feeds into this next D-List Universe novel to be released sometime in 2017 (or earlier). Featuring stories spanning publication from 2009 to 2015, this volume of HH&H shows Mr. Bernheimer's growth as an author; and the collection does indeed include horror and heroes, as well as Mr. B's unique sense of humor. Because the topics are widespread, reviewing the collection is difficult. I'll just give a few highlights. "A Sharp Mind" (2009) - Hadn't read this before. Loved the twist. (4 stars) "Interactive Database Help (not previously published) - Well, that how-to video explains so much. (5 stars) "Beast Number Twenty Seven" (2013) - Read this one before, still awesome. (5 stars) "Mark Fifty-Two" (2015) - Have heard Mr. B talk about this short on convention panels before. I think it is one of his personal favorites. And he is right to be proud of this short story. It hit the target dead center. (5 stars) While "Better Watch Out" was a dud for me, overall this collection is equally amusing, entertaining, and disturbing with his later works being truly awesome. Well, worth the read. Full disclosure: Received in exchange for honest review from publisher.

A great collection of short stories. I've enjoyed the whole series and particularly liked this one which has two more stories in the Confessions series. It was fun following a story from Hillbilly Bobby's point of view. The rest of the stories were well written as well. One that really stuck out for me was Mark 52. A sentient missile calling a Suicide Hotline to ponder its temporary existence after launch was clever and actually touching.

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