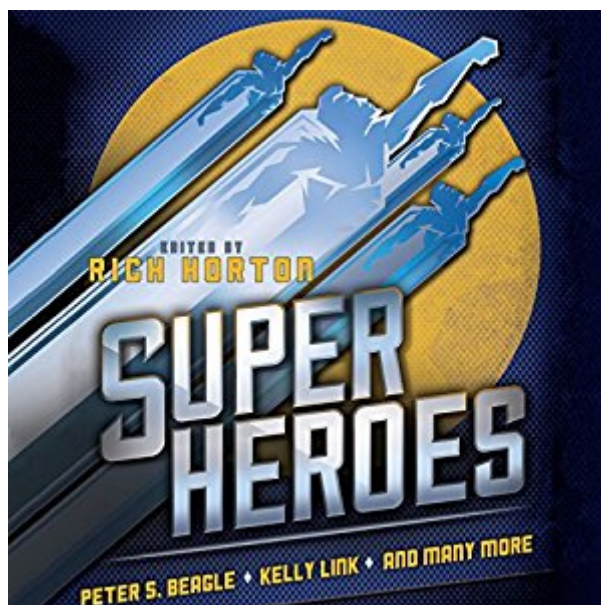


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# Superheroes



## Synopsis

Modern gods and goddesses, remote, revered - and like the pantheon of heroes and heroines of ancient myth - possessing great power tempered with flaws. Now, find within this anthology great tales by gifted and award-winning authors who move superheroes from the four-color panels of comic books to the fantastic pages of fiction, stories that will remind anyone who ever wanted to wear a cape or don a cowl of the extraordinary powers of the imagination!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's interesting how science fiction/fantasy has spun off a subgenre of "Superhero fiction."

Previously, Superheroes were only found in comic books, but sometime during the last ten or fifteen years, superhero fiction has explicitly found its way into prose. Admittedly, in the past, a great deal of science fiction was about superheroes. Mutants are superheroes, for example. Poul

Anderson's *The Sensitive Man* about a person who is trained into superhuman abilities is a story about a superhero. Likewise, Henry Kuttner's *Mutant* was a wonderful cycle of stories about an oppressed race of telepaths long before the X-Men. The modern superhero genre is different somehow in being self consciously aware of its own "kitschiness." It also adheres rigorously to the rules of superheroes - superheroes are noble and brave, they are opposed by super villains, they have cool names and costumes, etc. Where superhero fiction seems to diverge from the comics in spending more time on the nitty-gritty reality of being a real superhero who actually lives. What would it be like to be Superman who is lapsing into a long, long process of dying of old age but

cannot die? What would it be like to be the people on the ground in Dr. Doom's kingdom as it is invaded, yet again, by superheroes? What would it be like to be a superhero who is also the father of a teenage girl? This is an anthology and the quality of the stories vary, undoubtedly according to taste. I found the quality to be uniformly good and the stories entertaining. If superheroes are the kind of thing you like, then this is a book you will like. Here are the stories and their authors:

INTRODUCTION -- Rich Horton  
SUNLIGHT SOCIETY -- Margaret Ronald  
SECRET IDENTITY -- Kelly Link  
THE ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY OF LORD GRIMM -- Daryl Gregory  
TONIGHT WE FLY -- Ian McDonald  
WILD CARD -- Leah Bobet  
HEROIC MEASURES -- Matthew Johnson  
THE BIGGEST -- James Patrick Kelly  
DR. DEATH VS. THE VAMPIRE -- Aaron Schutz  
SUPERHERO GIRL -- Jei D. Marcade  
SUPER. FAMILY. -- Ian Donald Keeling  
THE STRANGE DESSERTS OF PROFESSOR NATALIE DOOM -- Kat Beyer  
DOWNFALL -- Joseph Mallozzi  
DIRAE -- Peter S. Beagle  
GRANDMA -- Carol Emshwiller  
THE LOS ANGELES WOMEN'S AUXILIARY SUPERHERO LEAGUE -- Elana Fortin  
WONJJANG AND THE MADMAN OF PYONGYANG -- Gord Sellar

While this anthology is nowhere near as bad as 'Super Stories of Heroes and Villians' it's still not that good. Apparently the modern superhero story must be dark, nihilistic, wiseass, and most of all, boring. Kind of like being suicidally depressed and being forced to read the Wall Street Journal in a really foul gas station bathroom. I'm very unimpressed with this anthology. Although this one isn't as bad as some it's still not worth ever rereading or recommending to someone. At all.

If you are over forty you may find this collection of short stories lacking. Very little feeling of being taken anywhere. Lots of rote ironies, smug comparisons, and of course, despite rigueur reconstructions, which is now just as hackneyed and cliché as whatever they think they are putting down.

Good sale. But it's friggin' STUPID that I have to write a minimum number of words. Crap. Three more to go.

New Release - I received a copy of this book from Netgalley for the purpose of review. Premise: A new anthology of fiction based around the title theme. From other reviews of this book online, I expected to like it a bit more than I did, but I did still enjoy it. Like most anthologies, this was a mixed bag. The first few, especially, I thought were just fine, nothing too exciting. The last one I found long,

meandering, annoying and pointless. In general, I think the target market for this book are people with a casual knowledge of superheroes, but who aren't really hardcore comic fans. For example, I enjoyed *The Illustrated Biography of Lord Grimm*, which followed the average citizens of a country ruled by a supervillain, and *Tonight We Fly*, about an aging hero, but these aren't any more inventive or interesting than stories that have already been told with Dr Doom or in Astro City. Not necessarily less interesting either, but I didn't feel like new ground was being broken. There were some stories I really liked, though. *Wild Cards*, about a Federal Unit investigating a criminal with a superpower was pretty great, and *Dirae*, by Peter S. Beagle, was tremendously evocative and had lovely prose. Also *Dr. Death vs. the Vampire* and *Super Family* were both pretty solid superhero stories. *The Biggest* had a great retro style. I overall enjoyed this collection, but it suffered, for me, from comparison with some of the great comic writing I've read over the years. Also, I found the foreword highly pretentious and it lowered my expectations for the whole enterprise. Still, some strong stories, some weak, and the majority good but not great.

A couple of decent stories but nothing really original here.

I do love me some superheroes. Granted I can't tell you which Robin was which in what order, or name off every villain in the Marvel universe. But I do enjoy the occasional graphic novel reading or superhero movie. So I was really glad to get to read this collection. But will the review be good? How will Batman get rid of that bomb? What will Hulk smash today? Ahem. Sorry about that. Seriously though, the review. This collection of short stories was gathered together with the theme of superheroes in mind. A theme which scores instant points with me. The fact some of the stories are written by well-known writers (Peter S Beagle of *The Last Unicorn* fame for example.) only serve to give it more points. In the end, what is the score? Read on gentle reader. I enjoyed this collection so much. I admit in many collections there is a story or two I will skip if it doesn't grab my interest. That did not happen here. Every story had interesting characters or an engaging plot to it. A wonderful collection of Superhero short stories that is indeed worth your time and money. So with that gentle reader I go on to my next book. To the bookmobile! RATING: 10 out of 10.

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