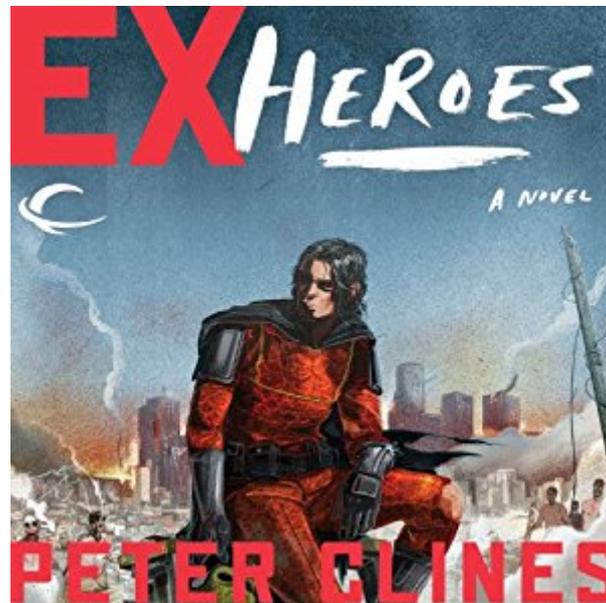


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Ex-Heroes



Synopsis

Stealth. Gorgon. Regenerator. Cerberus. Zzzap. The Mighty Dragon. They were heroes. Vigilantes. Crusaders for justice, using their superhuman abilities to make Los Angeles a better place. Then the plague of living death spread around the globe. Despite the best efforts of the superheroes, the police, and the military, the hungry corpses rose up and overwhelmed the country. The population was decimated, heroes fell, and the city of angels was left a desolate zombie wasteland like so many others. Now, a year later, the Mighty Dragon and his companions must overcome their differences and recover from their own scars to protect the thousands of survivors sheltered in their film studio-turned-fortress, the Mount. The heroes lead teams out to scavenge supplies, keep the peace within the walls of their home, and try to be the symbols the survivors so desperately need. For while the ex-humans walk the streets night and day, they are not the only threat left in the world, and the people of the Mount are not the only survivors left in Los Angeles. Across the city, another group has grown and gained power. And they are not heroes.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 2 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: May 10, 2011

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00502PFS0

Best Sellers Rank: #77 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Horror #120 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science Fiction > Adventure #177 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Action & Adventure

Customer Reviews

Ex-Heroes, the debut novel from Peter Clines, offers a new spin on the typical zombie story. Set in modern times, a zombie outbreak has ravaged the earth and only a handful of superheroes have kept the situation in Los Angeles from deteriorating into total chaos. Reeling from losses in their own community, a band of heroes has established a fortified safe zone in Hollywood to help whatever survivors they find. Unfortunately so has a much larger group of gang members, who have some

deadly tricks up their sleeves. Now, mixing superheroes and zombies isn't an entirely new concept, but unlike *Marvel Zombies*, *Ex-Heroes* takes the idea seriously and is a story you can actually believe. *Ex-Heroes* reads like a mix of *Watchmen* (or maybe *Heroes*) and *Land of the Dead*. It's more of a big screen movie type story than the typical tale of survival horror, but I mean that in the best possible way. Clines's story of very human, very flawed heroes trying to maintain order in a post-apocalyptic situation seems very realistic and would make a terrific movie. I love how the book is split between "then" and "now" chapters, with the "then" chapters told from the perspective of a different hero and chronicling the developing crisis. Clines has come up with a fascinating cast of characters who, despite being superheroes, all seem like real people. I also loved the pace of the book, the believable dialogue, the black humor (a running contest to see who bagged the most famous zombie, for example), and the unexpected plot twists that never seemed forced or clichéd. I'm already anxious for a sequel. *Ex-Heroes* is a fantastic superhero novel, a fantastic zombie novel, and just a great story altogether. You know those books where you're only a few pages in and you realize "oh yeah, this author knows what s/he's doing"? They're few and far between, but *Ex-Heroes* is definitely one of them. If you're a fan of superheroes or zombies (or better yet, both), *Ex-Heroes* is a must-read.

It's always potential fun when someone tries to tie two popular genres together, but often time the fun ends once you get to see the end result and realize that what you have is a mishmash of ideas that never really mixed well. Not so here, with *Ex-Heros*. Peter Clines has created a very plausible set of superheros facing the zombie apocalypse and doing what they do best: saving the world. It's certainly a struggle for them, as there is no way to stop the zombie menace, but they've focused on creating a safe haven in Los Angeles at Paramount studios, aka The Mount, which is the most easily defensible place where they could bring hundreds to thousands of survivors. Opposed to them are the Seventeens, an old LA Gang that essentially controls the rest of LA, with their mysterious leader. The story is told by switching back and forth from the present to the past, with each flashback done in first person and told from the perspective of a particular superhero. The story is given the opportunity to slowly reveal itself this way and had a flavor of *Watchmen* to it that really worked in this setting. Our superheros aren't perfect-often they are sullen and none too happy with the people they are protecting, who don't necessarily trust them. In addition to this, some of the superheros have fallen to the Ex virus, which started the zombie apocalypse in this story, and while they are not quite as powerful as they once were, they still present a sizable threat to both the human and superhero population in the story. Clines does an excellent job of creating unique and

believable hero's for this tale, with The Great Dragon leading the pack. They may be studs physically, but there are plenty of warts that are revealed during the story, giving us some surprises along the way that impact the story dramatically. I think this is one of the best genre cross-over stories I have read in some time and Clines, who indicated that many of the superheros created here came from his and friends childhood visions, clearly has a passion for both genres, and has created a very unique genesis to the zombie in this story that makes perfect sense and lands like a sledgehammer on the reader towards the end of the story. There is no doubt that Clines could make this into a series, or just pull off a sequel, if he chooses. The characters are rich and involving and there is certainly much more to be revealed about all of them. Definitely recommended for the zombie and superhero fan alike.

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