



The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World

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The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World Details

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From Reader Review The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World for online ebook

Shhhhh Ahhhhh says

It's taken me some time to understand that the entire Stainless Steel Rat series was written at a time when a lot of the tropes we have in sci fi weren't common to the genre. In fact, it may have been one of the inspirations for it. There was a distinct lack of the same feeling of "The hero always win through a feat of daring do" and more of a feeling of "holy crap, he got lucky". I enjoyed it thoroughly as a time travel nerd.

Michael Hancock says

3.5

Rasmus Skovdal says

While I can see how this series has some lasting appeal, this particular book isn't that great.

It's a mildly inventive time travel story, with a hero that shifts so violently between progressive and regressive (a 40-year-old sci-fi book with some issues about women? Shocking!) attitudes that he'll end up giving himself whiplash and who, while supposedly from a wildly advanced technology, solves 90% of his problems with "sleep gas grenades" and seems to generally not be all that advanced, from neither a tech nor personality perspective. So, it's a 60s/70s bit of sci-fi, basically.

Picture an odd mixture of 60s Batman, James Bond and Doctor Who with all the charm and subtlety of a rampaging rhino, and you're about there. Which, admittedly, is amusing in small doses, but this will never be more than a curio when read at this point in time. In all fairness, the author does have a degree of awareness of his own hero's shortcoming, and there are broad attempts at satire here, but sometimes it's not played for laughs. The character is often deliberately made to be a bit of a bumbling fool, but then at times he just is one, because 60s sci-fi author attitudes, and it's all a bit rubbish.

The writing is decent, sometimes quite good but at other times a bit of a disaster. When just applying his neutral voice to the main character everything is fine as far as narration goes, but when, for example, the main character time travels back to the 1970s and has to engage with a "criminal socio-economic group" and the slang starts pouring out, your eyes will begin to roll.

There are some clever lines on occasion, and it's a fun enough read, so as a product of a time and genre, it's not a slog to get through. Also, you'll get to enjoy a bunch of slightly flubbed lines that just don't sound quite right, like: "...I said, gun in hand and a clip of explosive cartridges in the butt." Yes, he has clearly loaded his gun with explosive rounds, but come on. Phrasing.

Stephen says

Within the **pantheon** of endearing, **morally-deficient** scamps and scoundrels, James “**Slippery Jim**” Bolivar DiGriz (aka the Stainless Steel Rat) is up there with **Bugs Bunny**...except not quite so nasty.

Jim is one of those characters you just want to hang out with and he's always good for a few laughs and an elevated level of happy. This series is your basic literary pick me up.

For those unfamiliar with the world of the *Stainless Steel Rat* series, allow me to brazenly pimp out my previous review of book one: Steve's blatant vote whoring link to his earlier review. Go on, take your time and check it out...the rest of us can pass the time looking at a couple of random funny pics until you get back...

...

...

...great, we're all caught up now.

PLOT SUMMARY:

In his latest escapade, Jim is called upon to pretty much save the universe from a group of time traveling criminal butt stains who've traveled into Earth's distant past (the 1970's) to wipe out the Special Core as a prelude to taking over the future (circa. 36,970...give or take century). The Special Core is the elite police force and spy agency of the 350th Century, made up mostly of former criminals like Jim.

Before the last of the Special Core goes poofing out of existence, they arrange to toss Jim back to 1975 where he can undue the damage down to the time stream. Before you go too far down the rabbit hole, let me warn you that if you try to form a straight line of the brain-pretzeling logic behind the various time jumps in the story, you risk nervous exhaustion and possibly even an aneurysm. I advise you to just go with it.

The main bad guy is **He-Who-Will-Take-Over the Universe** or simply “He” (no relation Haggard's She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed). He (i.e., He) is a whacked out **nutbag** with a short temper and a several large handfuls of surly. He's also 9 feet tall and red as a fire truck.

The rest of the story is Jim popping from 1975 to 1805 then 20,000 A.D, etc. all in an effort to thwart the criminal shenanigans of He and his gang.

THOUGHTS:

To Harrison's credit, he makes it pretty easy to roll with the whole time travel/paradox/fate vs. free will/cause-effect conundrum loop and I thought he did an admirable job not allowing it to overly distract from the story.

This is certainly the wackiest of the Stainless Steel Rats' adventures I have read so far and it was also my least favorite. I still thoroughly, and I really do mean thoroughly, enjoyed it, but not quite to the same torrent of joy-gush that the first two books inspired in me. I think the muted enthusiasm is attributable to two primary aspects of the book.

First, I listened to the audio version which is, for the most part, excellent. However, one of my gripes was the annoying Jersey/Scottish accent and jargon used when Jim was in 1975. This may not be much of a detractor for those reading the print version but it was forks on a chalkboard to me listening to it. Luckily, it didn't last more than about 20 pages.

Second, I am just not a big fan of time-travel stories that go beyond a simple one jump plot device. I'm fine with man/woman from future visits past or vice-versa, but once you start getting all time paradoxy on me, I usually find myself feeling confused like a child who accidentally walks in on their parents for the first time while they're **"cuddling"**..... (whoa....major traumatic childhood memory flashback).

Still, the Stainless Steel Rat series is an absolute gem and even this weaker installment is worth reading. If you haven't sampled any of them before, start with the first two books (duh) and I am pretty sure you will find a full dose of cozy, mood-enhancing comfort food to lift your spirits. These are great stories when you are having one of "those" days.

3.0 stars. Recommended!!

Timothy Boyd says

Another in the stainless steel rat books. They are all quick reads with alot of humor in them. The stories remain fresh and new. Very recommended, especially to teen readers or someone new to SiFi

John Loyd says

It was explained pretty quickly that stainless steel rat was a metaphor. In this future the galaxy is fairly peaceful and bland. James Bolivar "slippery Jim" DiGriz had a choice in life to go with the flow or to stir things up, get some excitement, live on the edge, making a not honest living. He's the rat, and the stainless steel is the type needed in this space age.

The plot follows sort of a pattern of Jim explaining what he's going to do, and what he expects will happen. A few unexpected things happen, things get worse, he thinks himself out of the jam, or gets outside help, things get better, and so on. Sometimes Jim holds back some of his plan, so that the reader doesn't know the outcome ahead of time.

There is a lot of action, the characters aren't very deep, even Jim seems to be straight from a 1940's or 50's Private Eye novel, with the slight twist that he's not law abiding and he's placed in a future galactic civilization. The novels are fun, and even with the small print in my edition the reading didn't bog down.

Wanda says

Synopsis:

"Someone was tampering with time, altering the past to eliminate the present, fading people out of existence into a timeless limbo. One of the victims was Angelina, the wife of James de Griz, better known as the Stainless Steel Rat."

My thoughts:

Another adventure of one of my favourite sociopaths. Well before there was Dexter, there was Slippery Jim DiGriz. He is completely incapable of being straight forward, even with his beloved Angelina, the reformed psychopath.

As per usual, Jim & Angelina are just barely sticking to the path set out for them by the governmental body which recruited and "reformed" them. (They go off the rails frequently, but always get welcomed back because they are the best at solving criminal cases--who would understand criminals better than other criminals do?) While attending yet another disciplinary meeting, Jim's boss suddenly goes transparent, then disappears. While using the opportunity to help himself to expensive cigars, Jim also determines that some criminal mastermind has relocated to the past in order to change the present and Jim's world is disintegrating as a result.

Now Slippery Jim is very fond of his life, so he allows the company scientist to fling him back in time 20,000 years to the ancient date of 1975, to a place called Dirt or Earth or something. There is a certainly amount of amusement to be gained from his interpretations of what was contemporary life when the book was written.

These books are rather formulaic--and I know that I have whined about that with regard to the Elric series--but somehow, Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat manages to remain charming, perhaps because there is a strong dose of humour injected into every adventure. I also enjoy Angelina, who saves Jim on a regular basis and obviously tolerates his chauvinism for reasons of her own.

David King says

"The Stainless Steel Rat Saves The World" is the third instalment in Harry Harrison's light hearted science-fiction series, "The Stainless Steel Rat". In this novel, Slippery Jim diGriz finds his fellow members of the Special Corps suddenly disappearing around him. It soon becomes clear that somebody is changing the past to affect the future which is resulting in the disappearances. Luckily, there just happens to be a time machine available which Jim uses to travel into the past so that he can undo the damage done to the time line.

Without doubt this is the most ridiculous book to date in this series, with paradoxes all over the place and a convoluted story with multiple jumps in time. In a way this wackiness distracts a bit from the witty banter and humour that have been the real selling point to me of this series. At least this is the only reason I can think of as to why this book just didn't grab me in the same manner as the previous two. Don't get me wrong, it was still enjoyable with some quick pacing and plenty of humour evident throughout the novel but it just felt a little bit weaker. I suppose, another reason could be that this type of amusing time travel adventure has since been done better on the movie screen, with Back to The Future and Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure being the first two films that come to mind.

One thing I did enjoy seeing in the book, was Jim's attempt to adjust to life in 1975 on the strange planet of Dirt (aka Earth). Harrison has done a reasonable job of trying to show us the funny side of things as a time traveller attempts to cope with and understand contemporary life or at least contemporary life as it was when the book was written. Unfortunately this section of the novel is over far too quickly before we can really get into it, Harrison has whisked Jim and the reader away to another period in time.

Overall, whilst this is the weakest novel so far in "The Stainless Steel Rat" series it is still an enjoyable and funny adventure that should appeal to those of you have who have already read the previous novels. Yes, this type of time travel adventure has been done better, but Slippery Jim diGriz is still probably the main selling

point of the novel.

deilann says

Originally posted on SpecFic Junkie.

After frustration with other time travel books (think Blackout/All Clear) I'm reminded that time travel stories can be fun. Granted, *The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World* is pointing out how ridiculous time travel stories can be half the time... so maybe it's not the best example.

Time travel is being used as a weapon, and the Special Corps are being wiped out. It's up to Slippery Jim to save the day (and of course, save Angelina). However, he quickly finds out that time travel is complicated and after he goes back to one spot (on the fabled Earth, of course) he has to go to another spot because that spot was a trap and they knew because time travel.

Things go on like this for a bit, but eventually our intrepid hero ain't getting out of this one. Of course, it helps that he has a wife as skilled at crime as she is beautiful. Angelina shows up to save her husband (with their twin six-year-olds). Naturally, it takes some work, but they eventually get it done.

The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World had never been one of my favorite Stainless Steel Rat books, and looking back, I think I can sort of see why. Right now, it's a refresher after reading too many time travel stories, but when I read it as a kid, I either wasn't fed up with them (likely) or wasn't reading as many of them (also likely).

I certainly had a good enough handle of scifi at that point to understand a lot of the parody, but I don't think most of it hit home. Especially for this book.

I still think this is definitely one of the weaker books in the series, but still absolutely worth every moment. (It's short, so that probably helps.)

Annoying side-note:

So, like I've stated before, pretty much all of these books are out of print. You can get compilation versions: *The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat* and *A Stainless Steel Rat Trio*, which are the first three books and the first prequel books respectively. However. There are four books that are not covered in these two compilations, not counting *The Stainless Steel Rat Returns*, which isn't out of print yet, I don't think, or the CYOA book.

So do check your libraries and used book stores. They do pop up, and they've lovely.

Matias says

Cuando compre este libro no esperaba encontrarme con que en definitiva, solo puede ser llamado un "diamante en bruto". Es una novela que, a pesar de ser la numero 6 de una saga, me atrapo al instante. Es verdad, empieza y no entendes nada. Segun parece hubo un robo y acusan al personaje principal del delito. Pero, "Oh sorpresa!", la historia toma una un giro inesperado y nuestro personaje tiene que viajar al pasado para salvar el futuro.

Muchas veces uno piensa que ya conoce todos los artefactos que emplea la ciencia ficcion y, personalmente, me resulta muy placentero cuando encuentro un autor que me sorprende gratamente con su historia. La verdad es que no esperaba que el libro tuviera tanntos conceptos “novedosos” de ciencia ficcion. Drogas, artefactos ingeniosos, bombas/granadas de bolsillo, jetpacks, etc.

Ademas, me parecio muy original como el personaje principal no es el tipico heroe, sino que tiene un lado “caotico neutral” (if you know what I mean) que hace que no sea tan cliché, agregando dialogos divertidos y por momentos muy elocuentes.

Definitivamente tengo que conseguirme el resto para averiguar que paso antes.

Thom says

Two of my favorite genres - time travel and the Stainless Steel Rat. No explanation of why characters just "fade out" at the beginning of the story, and clearly no "parallel dimensions" hypothesis, but good fun regardless. As an aside, some good clean fun poked at 1970s Earth, the US in particular.

John Defrog says

I've been aware of the Stainless Steel Rat series for a long time, but I was never really motivated to try it. My motivation for trying this one was driven partly by it being a cheap used copy, and partly by recently reading and liking Make Room! Make Room!. This is the third installment of the life and times of Slippery Jim diGriz, a master thief in the far-flung future who is recruited by Special Corps, an intergalactic law enforcement agency that recruits criminals like him. In this episode, someone has gone back in time to erase the Special Corps from existence, and diGriz must go back 32,000 years to the planet Dirt (or Earth, or something) circa 1975 to stop them. The story is textbook romp as diGriz adapts to mid-70s Earth society, hunts down the culprits, and encounters one obstacle after another as his plans don't exactly pan out. It sounds like fun, and it's meant to be, but I confess didn't get much out of it. The time travel bits are clunky, the villain speaks comic-book dialogue, and diGriz himself is a bit too flip about the whole thing – or maybe not flip enough. I realize none of this is meant to be taken seriously, but I just felt Harrison wasn't having as much fun with this as he could be – or at least not as much fun as I'd hoped. Which is my problem, of course, not his. And I don't know how it compares to other books in the series – maybe this wasn't a good one to start out with. I'd like to try more Harrison, but I'll skip the other SSR books for now.

Linda Isakson says

Slippery Jim is back, and this time he saves the world from a time traveller named "He". After Special Corps employees begin rapidly disappearing, Jim is sent back to 1975 earth, translated "dirt", to stop "He" from conceiving his evil plan to destroy Jim's planet. Jim is thus sent on a wild goose chase, full of time loopholes and paradoxes, to track "He" through time - eventually catching "He" in Napoleonic France, in time to prevent Napoleon (which is actually "He") from winning the war against the British. As all the Stainless Steel Rat books, this is witty, satirical and a whole lot of fun to read.

Simon Forward says

By this stage in our journey, we should have a clear understanding that the Stainless Steel Rat is actually a little on the fluffy side, with only the rare and occasional glint of a harder edge cutting in here and there. This, advertised with the words TIME-JUMPING RAT emblazoned on the back cover, is perhaps like the giant rat in Doctor Who's Talons Of Weng-Chiang: a touch too cute for its own good.

Weighing in at what feels like the length of a Target Doctor Who novelisation, it's as fast and light as a MacDonald's salad – which is, I understand, the bit that a lot of people remove from the burger before consuming. As a read, it's better than that makes it sound, being seasoned with goodness and Harrison's customary ability to entertain but it misses a trick or two along the way and uses one familiar trick once too often.

The latter amounts to having Mrs Rat, Angelina, show up out of the space-time blue and rescue our hero when all seems lost. Has to be done, since the author left Jim no way out, but it strikes as particularly weak and unfortunate here. Maybe though that's only because by this point in the story I wasn't feeling engaged by the usual twists and turns and instead it's just been a simple game of temporal hopscotch.

Harrison has great fun with the Stainless Steel Rat encountering the world of the good old US of A, circa 1975, and then with a Napoleonic French-occupied England and it's all wittily and breezily delivered, but it's all just a circular chase, with the ending much the same in each time zone. A promising mystery surrounding the deranged enemy known only as He is scuppered by the reveal that it's all part of a closed temporal loop, similarish to what we were served up in Technicolor Time Machine but somehow less satisfying.

It's the sort of thing that's been done many times before (and after), possibly too many, and Back To The Future, Bill & Ted and Craig P Kelly's Time Gentlemen have all done it better.

Not a waste of time and, as I say, generally entertaining, but feels more like an intermission in the series. So the next time I read about a time-jumping rat, let it be Rizzo as a companion to Gonzo in Muppets Doctor Who.

Kat Hooper says

ORIGINALLY POSTED AT Fantasy Literature.

Slippery Jim DiGriz is back. Back in time, that is. The evil villain who calls himself "He" has been using time travel to try to rid the world of the Special Corp (including Jim and Angelina) by eliminating them before they were even born. As his world is quickly fading in front of his eyes, Jim jumps back to a planet called "Dirt" (that's Earth) in their year 1975 so he can kill He before He can work His evil plan. Before the adventure is over, Jim ends up fighting He-possessed Napoleon Bonaparte who has occupied London (the history is a little different in He's time warp).

Don't worry about the mind-boggling impossibilities and plot holes here — just go along for the ride and, if you can, do it in audio. I don't know how the Stainless Steel Rat books come across in print, but in audio format, with their quick pace (less than 5 hours) and Phil Gigante's wonderful voices, they're immensely entertaining. In this installment, Mr. Gigante gets to show off a few more of his brilliant accents. This time it's British, French, and Gangsta. Even when the plot gets a little slow for a few minutes, Gigante carries it

along with his fabulous narration.

C. Bella says

This book is terrific, amazing and well edited.

Connor Lennard says

it's not exactly the swashbuckling galactic adventure that I expected after reading the other stainless steel rat books. but Jim is snarky and clever and fun. definitely worth the read.

Ian says

Can't even try to follow time travel stories, but it remains light, charming fare.

James says

Slippery Jim diGriz is getting told off by his boss, Inskipp, for stealing while on a previous mission for the Special Corps. Although, staffing a secret inter-galactic space police force with hardened ex-criminals is never going to be plain sailing I'd have thought. While he's being told off two things happen – firstly Jim surreptitiously helps himself to a number of Inskipp's expensive cigars, and secondly Inskipp suddenly disappears. He isn't the first either, a number of people are disappearing from Special Corps headquarters. In true *Back to the Future* style, somebody is changing the past (present) and causing people to disappear from the present (future). Luckily, there are just enough people left to fire up the time machine, that we didn't know about in any of the previous novels, and fling Slippery Jim, the Stainless Steel Rat, into the past to fight He and return time to its normal course.

What we have here is a Time War. Instead of Time Lords and Daleks it's between Slippery Jim diGriz, and his family and friends, and He, and his nefarious forces. The "He" name gets a little cliched at times. Both our hero and He himself seem to adopt the name without any real agreement. But, it does give Harrison an excuse to play games with He as a name and a pronoun in various forms. It did feel like he was still enjoying it more than me by the end of the book though.

The ending gets a little silly, with lots of people crossing lots of time-lines and creating all sorts of paradoxes left, right and centre. But it's important to remember that this isn't supposed to be a serious work of science-fiction where the time paradoxes are resolved in a way that actually makes sense. Instead this is supposed to be a humorous boys-own adventure, a bill it more than lives up to. Most of the humour is provided as Slippery Jim tries to adjust to life in the 'past' of 1975 on the strange planet of Dirt, or Earth, or whatever it's called (another joke that Harrison doesn't tire of). His attempts to describe everyday things, like TV adverts, are all the usual fun of the 'traveller out of time' trope.

Johnny says

James “Slippery Jim” diGriz, aka “The Stainless Steel Rat,” was one of Harry Harrison’s most beloved characters. At times, the wicked humor just popped into Harry’s head when he was typing on his word processor (I guess his PC came later). Each “Stainless Steel Rat” story feels like a marvelous imaginary romp where Harry thinks up absurd obstacles, nearly melodramatic situations as in the old movie serials, and then, finds (usually funny) ways out. The solutions don’t always make perfect sense. In fact, in *The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World*, *there is not one but there are two, very literal, deus ex machina rescues. Yet, both are certain to bring a chuckle to almost every reader’s throat and both have a kind of perverse logic to them, given the premise of the book.*

The premise is a “time war.” Yes, the premise is rife with the opportunity for temporal loops, identity paradoxes and universal annihilation. In a sense, “Slippery Jim” doesn’t just save the world, but largely saves the universe. Oh, is that a spoiler? I figured the title itself gave that one away. It isn’t the terminus of the adventure that is interesting here, it is the itinerary. And a very fine itinerary it is! Temporal cul-de-sacs, futuristic prognostication, environmental warnings, and clever dialogue—they are all present. What is particularly telling is Harrison’s concern about climate change in a book that was published in paperback in 1972.

If you are the kind of person who counts the ammunition use in an action film, avoid this book at any cost. There are definitely times when you ask yourself, “Where did that weaponry come from?” Harrison made a definite effort to keep the inventory straight, but there were times where you just shrug your shoulders and keep reading. This isn’t intended to be a far-future Tom Clancy novel; it’s more like Dr. Who meets James Bond with a mixture of Harry Mudd (apologies to those who aren’t first generation Star Trek fans). Harry knew how to have fun with his writing and it’s very surprising that no one optioned one of these books for its motion picture rights (I know there was a board game and I know there was a planned computer game that fell apart—not to mention the scenarios for Galactic Gladiators that Harry didn’t sue me for—but I don’t recall a film deal. Maybe it’s not too late!)

What I most enjoy about these adventures is that, as perfect as Jim’s spying and thieving skills are, he often needs help from elsewhere. Sometimes, he makes alliances with those you expect to be his enemies and sometimes, from his family. In this volume, we only see the formidable Angelina as potential help, but James and Bolivar (Jim’s sons) are growing up and I know from later books in the series that they provide much needed assistance. And, since the title gives away the final result, let me just assure you that Jim and family are as incorrigible and essentially recidivist as always. This isn’t great literature or particularly thought-provoking science-fiction, but it’s well worth reading.
