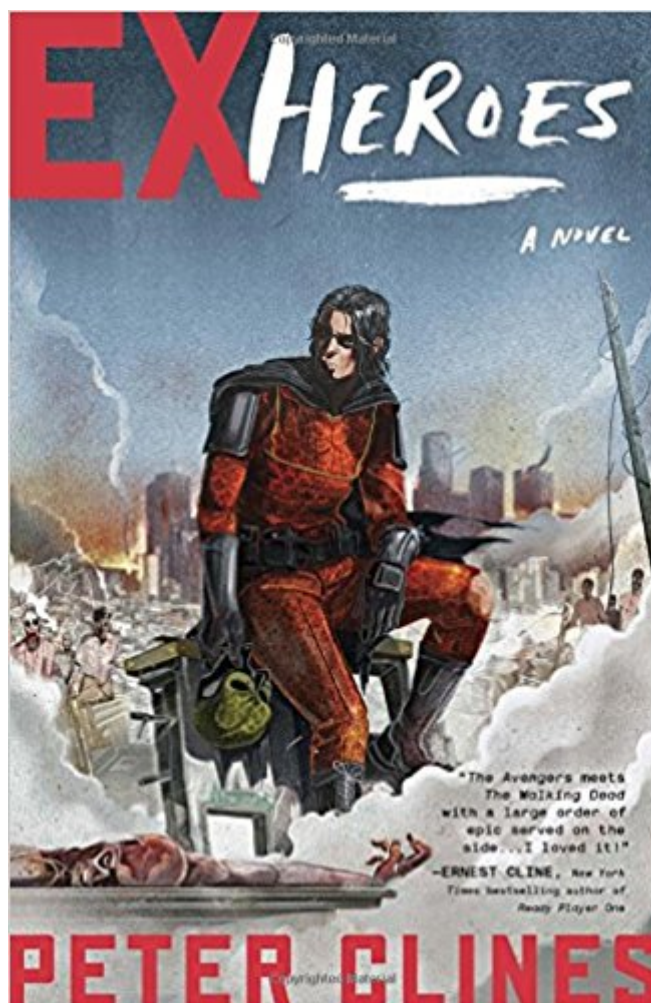


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Ex-Heroes: A Novel



Synopsis

The first novel in Peter Clines' bestselling Ex series. Stealth. Gorgon. Regenerator. Cerberus. Zzzap. The Mighty Dragon. They were heroes, using their superhuman abilities to make Los Angeles a better place. Then the plague of living death spread around the globe. Billions died, civilization fell, and the city of angels was left a desolate zombie wasteland. Now, a year later, the Mighty Dragon and his companions protect a last few thousand survivors in their film-studio-turned-fortress, the Mount. Scarred and traumatized by the horrors they've endured, the heroes fight the armies of ravenous ex-humans at their citadel's gates, lead teams out to scavenge for supplies and struggle to be the symbols of strength and hope the survivors so desperately need. But the hungry ex-humans aren't the only threats the heroes face. Former allies, their powers and psyches hideously twisted, lurk in the city's ruins. And just a few miles away, another group is slowly amassing power . . . led by an enemy with the most terrifying ability of all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Q&A with Peter Clines Q. You grew up in Stephen King territory in Maine, yes? Did that make you into a zombie fan at an early age? A. Well, I was at the southern edges of Mr. King's fallout zone. It's a little town called Cape Neddick, a little tourist place on the coast, and someone told me once that the population was ten times bigger in the summer than in the winter. And to be

honest, I was terrified of everything as a kid. Land of the Lost gave me nightmares. Heck, there was an episode of Fantasy Island that gave me nightmares. I was right there when King's career really exploded, but his books terrified me. I finally worked up my courage to read one of his short stories, "The Boogeyman," when I was twelve or so, and to this day I can't sleep with the closet door open. The original Ghost Rider comics were my first tentative steps into horror, and even some of those freaked me out. My love of the genre really blossomed in college.

Q. Have you always wanted to be a writer? A. Well, to quote George Carlin, not in the womb, but right after that . . . yeah. I can remember making scenes with my Star Wars figures and adjusting them all each night as their story progressed. In third grade I hand-wrote a "novel" that I called Lizard Men from the Center of the Earth, which was about . . . well, guess. Once I discovered my mom's old Smith-Corona typewriter it was all over. I spent all my free time writing comic books and some truly awful Boba Fett fan fiction before there was such a term. I even made some early attempts at novels. One of the great tragedies of American literature is that our garage flooded in high school and all of that was destroyed. (It's not really a tragedy . . .)

Q. It sounds like you were no offense kind of a comic geek when you were a kid? A. When I was a kid, yeah. And a teenager. And a college student. To be honest, writing comic books was my big goal when I was little. My first rejection letters are from Jim Shooter then Marvel's editor in chief because I would send him some of those (in retrospect) really God-awful stories every other month. With cover art. This is back when I was maybe ten or eleven. He was amazingly polite to a stupid kid. On one level, Ex-Heroes was my chance to finally write the kind of heroes I grew up with.

Q. Do you have a favorite superhero? A. I'm a long-time Spider-Man fan. I started collecting The Amazing Spider-Man when I was about nine or ten and kept with it for years. I've got one of those big longboxes just filled with issues. I finally got so frustrated, though, with Marvel's big "Civil War" promotion, and especially how they resolved it. When Spider-Man made a deal with the devil to erase half his life, including his wife and best friend . . . well, I was done.

Q. It sounds like you're not really interested in comics now, though. What do you think about mainstream comics these days? A. Tough question. I am a bit disillusioned with the big two comic publishers. To be clear, I don't think there's a problem with using the medium of comics to tell more dramatic, adult-themed stories. The Sandman, The Walking Dead, Unknown Soldier these are all fantastic stories by great writers. My problem is when this sort of storytelling gets pushed onto characters like Spider-Man or Superman or Captain America, because "dramatic" becomes shorthand for "really messed up." I think it

detracts from these classic characters to push them into molds they weren't meant to fill, and those stories tend to just come across as pointless melodrama. Characters have six-page soliloquies about the nature of heroism rather than just doing something heroic. I've seen people try to do "realistic" stories with the Hulk . . . a character who got his powers by standing next to a nuclear bomb when it went off. These elements can be a nice polish on a story, but there's also a point where they have no business being used. I don't think it's a coincidence that the industry has been struggling so much since this type of storytelling became the norm. Q. When you moved to California you ended up working in the film industry for almost fifteen years. What kind of work did you do there? A. I was a property master—the person who deals with hand props—on a lot of television shows and movies. I worked on a lot of cult things like one of the Beastmaster movies, Veronica Mars, and a bunch of lesser-known stuff. I'm actually the murderer in Psycho Beach Party for most of the movie. I prop-mastered Helen Mirren's directorial debut, and she told me I looked like the type of person who should be sitting on the porch of a southern plantation writing novels. Also, I was writing scripts on the side. People looked at some of my feature scripts and television episodes, and I made the final round in a bunch of screenplay contests. All this industry experience led to a job writing articles for Creative Screenwriting magazine, which I did for several years. I interviewed George Romero, Kevin Smith, Sylvester Stallone, Orci & Kurtzman, and dozens and dozens of other writers and directors.

"Bound to appeal to fans of zombies and superheroes alike | If ever a book had the potential for a Hollywood blockbuster, this is it. SF Signal "I was completely floored by this book's ingenuity and charm...exemplifies the real meaning of a page-turner. Fantasy Book Critic "I loved this pop culture-infused tale of shamed superheroes struggling to survive a zombie apocalypse in the ruins of Hollywood. It's The Avengers meets The Walking Dead with a large order of epic served on the side. Ernest Cline, New York Times bestselling author of Ready Player One "Zombies? Check.

Superheroes? Check. Awesome? Check. Ex-Heroes has it all. You're in for a treat! Mira Grant, New York Times bestselling author of Feed "A novel that will take you on a wild and heart-warming ride...[A] creative zombie story, with in-depth characters, and filled with humor, action, and gruesome fight scenes | the final clash made my heart race in ways seldom accomplished by a book. Wired.com

A friend recommended this to me since I have a love of two things: Marvel and Zombies. I was not disappointed. The story centers around a world that's rapidly changing, people are suddenly so much more than just people, but with the gift of superheroes there is always a price, only this one is more than anyone wanted to pay. The novel, while in some ways very typical of a zombie genre book, full of gore and violence and all those things, had some twists that were utterly shocking, things that caught me completely off guard. It also took the time to explain the why. As an avid reader and movie-goer, the one thing I have always hated about theme movies and books is that no one ever takes the time to ask the big question, and it's never explored. You have heroes. You have zombies. But unless it's X-Men or a radioactive spider or the rare Resident Evil series, no one ever takes the time to explain not only the why but the how. This book does not fail in that regard. It offers insightful history and explanations, and does so in such a mind blowing way.

The potential of this book is amazing but unfortunately it wasn't tapped. It's a good book, but it could be a whole lot better. The story line is really good with a few minor flaws but which are easily overlooked. Great action and suspense with good fighting scenes. The ex hero characters are built solidly and their backgrounds are explained to an extent. But what this book lacks in is visualization. Mr. Cline describes the ex heroes but because of the very descriptive details they are hard to imagine in your head. I would love to see the characters on paper or pages, preferably in a comic book format. This book would be awesome! I don't mean a thin paged comic book but like on the lines of Joe R. Lansdale's "Drive In" or Robert Kirkman's "Walking Dead" series. Looking at the ex heroes and seeing them in action would give the story line a whole new spin. I first read "Drive In" in a book format and the story was good but then I bought the book in comic book format and it was absolutely awesome! Again the visualization gave a whole new meaning to the book. Ex Heroes is still a good read, but it would be nice to see the characters and in action.

I am ashamed to say it, but this review should have been written in March/April of 2010. I bought Ex Heroes in paperback back in March of 2010. I loved it! Zombies & Superheroes! I thought it was a different take on the zombie storylines. As others have mentioned, I didn't want the book to end. I wrote to the publishers and told them how much I liked the book, but it just slipped my mind to post a review. Since I got my Kindle last Aug, I have posted many reviews. When Ex Heroes dropped in priced to \$2.99 on the Kindle I jumped at it. This is one of only TWO books that I have double dipped on (the other being "First Blood" by David Morrell). I am busy right now reading two

other books on my Kindle, but I will find the time to squeeze in a quick re-read of Ex Heroes on my Kindle. Then after that I will head out and pick up *Ex-Patriots* (Ex-Heroes Book 2). That book has the superheroes, zombies, and now: super enhanced soldiers! If you are into zombie books at all (and who isn't?), then you will enjoy reading Ex Heroes!

This was a book I had a hard time putting down. It's not as complex a story as say a 1970's or 80's Stephen King book, but it was a good amalgamation of "The Walking Dead" and "The Justice League." It's nicely paced and the 2 big reveals add depth. You will recognize some of the hero archetypes, but that's a good thing.

"Ex-Heroes" was a surprisingly enjoyable book combining zombies (which I love) and Super Heroes (which I like in some forms). This is set in LA sometime in the near future, shortly after the appearance of the first Super Heroes and the beginning of the Zombie Apocalypse. No spoilers from me: The story is told through chapters set in the "Now", always in narrative, and in "Then", from the viewpoint of a different Super Hero. The main focus centers on a small group of survivors who have taken up residence at Paramount studios, which has been turned into a fortress and nicknamed "The Mount". The remaining Super Heroes, lead by the shadowy (and aptly named) "Stealth" and supported by "The Mighty Dragon" (AKA St. George), do their best to protect and provide for the remaining people. Like all good Super Hero stories, there are interesting secret identities, improbable origins, great villains, and fantastic battles. Making the story even better is the addition of zombies!!! Having read a LOT of new zombie novels recently, I can tell you that what I appreciate the most about this one is that it has a good story plot line, interesting character development, and it is actually very well written. Recommended! CFH

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