

Book Name: Double Lives (Johnny Wagner, Godlike PI)

Author: Matt Cowper

Page Count: 380

ISBN: 9781547134878

Genre: Science Fiction/ Superhero/ Crime

Review Summary: This is the captivating debut story of Johnny Wagner, a retired superhero who is trying to make a living as a private investigator. Johnny is investigating the death of Captain Neptune, a respected superhero. The killing was caught on camera and happened in front of many eyewitnesses, but all is not as it seems.

Matt Cowper has done a great job of bridging the gap between comic books and novels. The story reads well, and quite often I found myself imagining I was reading a comic book, with the banter between characters written in word-bubbles.

It was a good book, I enjoyed it, and look forward to reading more about Johnny Wagner and the trouble that follows him.

Rating: 90%

Review in a bit more detail:

Johnny is investigating the death of Captain Neptune, a respected superhero. The killing was caught on camera and happened in front of many eyewitnesses.

But all is not as it seems.

The same can be said for Johnny Wagner. 'Godlike PI'; so named thanks to his quasi-godlike super powers, granted by the god who lives in his right arm. He's trying very hard to fly under the radar, and not be recognised as Daring Destroyer, his old super hero alter-ego.

Sounds intriguing? I thought so too.

Oh, and Johnny is also having women troubles. Three or four women troubles.

And... every hero or villain in the city is trying to interrupt his investigation. Most of them want to interrupt by killing him.

Double Lives is written in first person, so all the action happens 'on camera', from the perspective of Johnny Wagner. As I mentioned in the summary, in places Double Lives is written a bit like a comic book. I really liked this aspect. If you can imagine a multicoloured comic book panel, a soldier dressed in yellow with a megaphone saying, "We are the Gridlock Grenadiers, the strike force of the Z City Department of Transportation!" From that perspective, it's quite well done.

There are a lot of supporting characters, who interact with Johnny on his journey; some incredibly quirky, not the least of which is the co-star, Dakroth'gannith'formaz, or 'Dak' for short. Dak is the god in the arm, and is a great sidekick. Although, of course, he does not consider himself as the sidekick...

The rest of the support cast (many of whom have some wonderfully corny super-names, such as Captain Neptune, Wave Rush, Befouler, Deathrain...) all have unique personalities that fit in well with the story as it unfolds. Some of the villains are a little the 'same-ish' in the way they try to end the existence of Johnny & co, but again, it is a superhero story.

BOOK REVIEW

I'd recommend this to comic-book fans, or anyone who enjoys fast-paced action with a sci-fi edge; and a crime to be solved.

As I said at the start, I really enjoyed the book. It kept me engaged and turning the pages to the end.

Pete Diggins

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