



A Stainless Steel Trio

Harry Harrison

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Beloved intergalactic rogue Stainless Steel Rat aka Slippery Jim DiGriz had to start his criminal life and training somewhere. Here the multi-talented expert in karate and fast-change fast-talk artist narrates three great exploits. *A Stainless Steel Rat Is Born* describes how the lad graduates from Bit O'Heaven porcuswine farm to jail, finds and rescues a mentor, stowaways to slavery, then helps interplanetary League Navy Captain Varod defeat medieval Capos. Conscripted again in *The Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted*, he tries to help a planet of peace, inspired by the philosophy of logical robot Mark Forer IV, defend against the invading army, led by the sadistic killer of his mentor, The Bishop. In *The Stainless Steel Rat Sings the Blues*, Jim, disguised as a futuristic rock-and-roller, must retrieve a missing alien artifact or lose his life.

A Stainless Steel Trio Details

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Author : Harry Harrison

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From Reader Review A Stainless Steel Trio for online ebook

Christian Schwoerke says

I read one or two of Harry Harrison's novels in the 60s and early 70s, and I recall them being humorous, slightly anarchic, a bit tongue in cheek, and irreverent, attributes in science fiction that were in short supply in that era, but attributes which perfectly synched up with the period's anti-establishment, anti-authoritarian mood. Alas, I had read no Stainless Steel Rat novels at that time.

After Jane Smiley's *The Greenlanders*—a book of incomparable depth of emotion and scope—I sought a respite from its grimness in what I anticipated would be the simpler world(s) of the flippant SSR. I was not disappointed, and I whizzed through the three novels that compose this volume in short order, relishing the the gee-whiz, slam-bam, yuk-yuk thrust of the narrative and Jimmy DiGriz's persona as unflappable ne'er-do-well.

A SSR is Born is the first of the three, and it laid out the origins of Jimmy DiGriz's identity as the universe's most notorious good-humoured bad boy. His first adventures in crime bring him into contact with a mastermind of criminal—the Bishop—who until his death mentors DiGriz. In the second of the trilogy, *The SSR Gets Drafted*, DiGriz seeks vengeance for the Bishop's death and infiltrates General Zennor's invading army when it sets out to take over a planet that lies outside the League. This planet's pacific governing principles prevent the natives from fighting back, and the SSR manipulates those principles and works the natives to outwit Zennor and his invading forces, being saved at the last minute by League forces. In fact, the League authorities are on hand in all of the novels, prompting Jimmy to work more for larger altruistic purposes than simple plunder.

In the final episode, the League tricks Jimmy into working for them by injecting him with a poison which will kill him in 30 days. Assuming the guise of interstellar rock star (with band) that have been convicted of drug running, the SSR ends up on a convict planet where it is his mission to find an artifact which appears to have been left by a race antedating mankind. A series of adventures and revelations later, SSR finds the artifact, which turns out to have come from the future.

It's all good fun, and the insistent high good humour worked to keep doubts from disrupting the necessary suspension of disbelief.

Bill Yancey says

Three novels in one book. All deal with the early career of Jim diGriz: his formative years, the Bishop, and his first solo adventure. Great fun if you know and enjoy the Stainless Steel Rat.

Bruce Lowther says

Three book set. First two were fun, the third was a bit laborious. I believe it was ...Gets drafted.

John Deardurff says

One of my favorite series growing up. This book is an anthology of books 6, 7, and 9 as they were released or books 1-3 in the chronological life of Slippery Jim DiGriz. We start off by finding out how The Stainless Steel Rat was born. Jim has turned seventeen and is bored on his planet. He wants to become an apprentice in crime. But where can he learn to become a master criminal and who can teach him? The mostly likely place is prison, so Jim robs the local bank with the hopes of being arrested. But getting caught is a little more difficult than he thought. Yes, these books are meant for young adults. But sometimes we need to remind ourselves to be young and read just for the fun of it.

Robert G. Taylor says

I read the earlier published Stainless Steel Rat books as a teen and I remember really enjoying these. Coming back to this character after more than 30 years, these stories just don't hold up. Maybe they are better suited for the teenage me. Each book in this trio gets slightly worse. Slippery Jim, I loved your stories as a youth, but I think we've parted ways.

An Odd1 says

"A Stainless Steel Trio" (SS Rat #0,6,7) by Harry Harrison follows honorable tradition, cover picture has nothing to do with early years of narrator intergalactic rogue Slippery Jim diGriz. From porcuswine farm on Bit O'Heaven to karate combat disguise techno-wiz light-fingered fast-talking stowaway, slave, conscriptee, band leader, mentored by famed retired thief The Bishop, rescuer of innocents and worlds lost to civilization. Trapped, sentenced, bold, lucky, the thief escapes certain death repeatedly, via brain, brawn, colleagues, and preparation instilled in Boy Sprouts.

The three action tales are: A SSR is Born, The SSR Gets Drafted, and The SSR Sings the Blues, filled with creative names, animals, and inventions. Author experience drafted for WW2 lends versimilitude to Yuk-E rations, verbal lashing, general inhumanity common to institutionalized confinement, knowledge of Esperanto believable lingua franca. Subtle innuendo averts when womanly Bibbs extends gratitude "in a very husky voice" p185.

Death and sacrifice are minimized; lives and financial returns maximized. More bloody noses and threats of torture than actual. Exaggerated religious beliefs point out their failings, stretches boringly into male mythology. At first, an Alphamega appears to be a deus ex machina, but wily James solves the mystery of the Survivalists too. A rousing chorus of "Nothing's too bad for the Enemy" beats elvish rhymes any day.

I skimmed the heavy philosophizing and focussed on the fights and tricks. I root for the hero, like Laumer's space diplomat Retief, every time. Nobody can do space cowboy idol for girls or boys like Harry Harrison, much missed.

(view spoiler)

Typos:

p83 die for dye

p250 strenghten for strengthen

Michael Drakich says

Foreshadowing is a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. The word must not be in Harry Harrison's vocabulary. Never will you find an author who throws in more plot bombs, changes in direction, and out of left field entries into a novel than Harry does. It's what makes his novels so endearing. That, and a uncanny wit that ridicules everything you know.

This collection of three books which introduce Jim DiGriz, aka The Stainless Steel Rat, to readers (actually written as prequels to his other novels) is full of the surprises and comedy Harry Harrison is known for. With descriptions of the origin of humanity from some planet called Dirt to a mockery of Shakespeare, "To was or not to was..." These books meet all the expectations of his fans. If you are looking for serious science fiction, move on, this stuff isn't for you. But if you want to revel in the fast action hilarity of it all, then join in as this stuff is fast reading, end to end hijinks by slippery Jim DiGriz.

Because his earlier works now known as The Adventures Of The Stainless Steel Rat are even better, I limit my rating to 4 stars. If I am to rank them, the second novel - The Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted is the best of the three and alone would be 5 stars.

Teresa says

Wow, that took a long time to get through. Finally finished A Stainless Steel Trio. If this had been my first exposure to the series I definitely wouldn't be going any further. I never felt like I got to know the main character, Jim, at all. It just went from one action sequence to the next with only a cursory look at motivation and emotional reactions to events. Considering these are the first three books in the series time-wise I expected to see some growth, but Jim was the same from start to finish. I'll give The Stainless Steel Rat a try because I remember enjoying it and then decide if I want to read the remainder of the series.

Paul says

In the early 60s Harry Harrison published The Stainless Steel Rat, which introduced the character of James Bolivar DiGritz to the world. The novel was still in print in the late 70s when, at the tender age of ten (or thereabouts), I laid my hands on a copy and was blown away by DiGritz' adventures. I was neither the first person to discover this character nor the only one and, over the years, Harrison has published many more Stainless Steel Rat novels expanding the character (slightly) and filling in some of his backstory.

The three novels in this collection detail Slippery Jim's early adventures and attempt to explain how such a character could come into being.

Not too heavy on the plot and often very dependent on a lucky (or unlucky) coincidence do feel a bit dated now, but still manage (cor the most part) to remain a fun, pulpy read.

East Bay J says

Having read *Bill, The Galactic Hero* not long ago, I found myself thinking about the Stainless Steel Rat series. I'd read most of it and remembered enjoying the books so I thought I'd start at the beginning and do it all over.

A Stainless Steel Trio collects the first three books in the series; *A Stainless Steel Rat Is Born*, *The Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted* and *The Stainless Steel Rat Sings The Blues*. Jim DiGriz is the Stainless Steel Rat, a man who grew up in humble surroundings and turns to crime for adventure, excitement and good ol' income. Reading three volumes in a row reveals a certain formulaic quality. All three books start with DiGriz attempting to pull off a crazy caper, getting caught and being plunged into some nigh impossible mission. Regardless, Harrison's writing is tight and funny, his characters are colorful and well written and the story moves along at a good clip. These books are a lot of fun to read and it's been a pleasure getting reacquainted.

Note to Tor Books: This is one of the finest examples of nothing to do with the story cover art I have ever born witness to. Congratulations! You have really outdone yourself with this one.

Donald Wunder says

Harry Harrison is an Author although not hailed as much as Isaac Asimov in sci-fi was a pretty legendary and respected fella and he wrote the first book series i actually even read seriously starting from this prequel trilogy collection

Fantastic writing, fun characters, clever adventures and overall just a really enjoyable journey through the life of a thief

You can check out my video dedication to Mr Harrison and this book series in particular

<https://youtu.be/uUVAxQsjpYM>

Felicia says

Well, this cover is ridiculously bad. I mean, the kid is supposed to be like 17?! And why is he in a Hawaiian shirt with cross eyes? Is he supposed to be Magnum PI's developmentally challenged assistant?!?

Ok whatever. This is a classic series of Sci-fi adventures. Nothing deep here, the prose is kinda dated, but it has an infectious nature to it that I couldn't put down. Particularly good for teen boys, the main character is relatable and fun to go on an adventure with. I remember my brother loving these books as a kid, so I decided to give them a shot for a change of pace, and I enjoyed these books immensely! Thank goodness for the Kindle and no cover art though, SHUDDER!

Patrick says

I read two of these as a kid, and one was new to me. I still enjoy the “caper” nature of the stories, but the dialog is terrible and the philosophy lukewarm. It makes me long for Locke Lamora, which (if you read my reviews of that series) will show you how I satisfied I was with my reprise of the stainless steel rat.

Sverre says

James Bolivar DiGriz is a unique weirdo, a mastermind criminal, a desperate trickster, an implausible strategist, a martial arts practitioner, an ingenious escapist and a self-deprecating humorist. He has an aversion to killing. He is generous to accomplices and loyal to his own standard of justice and ethics.

A Stainless Steel Rat is Born: 4 stars

We are introduced to a very young Jimmy diGriz, after he has been thrown out by his parents, porcuswine farmers, as he robs a bank on his planet Bit O’ Heaven. After considering job opportunities, Jimmy has decided that a life of crime looks to be the most profitable and the least boring. He plans his bank robbery in order to get caught and get sentenced to jail so that he can mingle with criminals to learn the trade from the inmates. But their caliber of expertise is rather lacking so he chooses an accomplice and escapes. He later encounters the kingpin of criminality, who goes by the name The Bishop, who has the knowledge Jim craves. The reader soon gets involved with their schemes and there is never a dull moment.

The Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted: 5 stars

As this story begins Jim is hanging by his fingernails in an elevator shaft in a prison block. Eventually he makes his escape with the indomitable female prisoner Bibs. Later he bribes a ship’s captain to take him to Nevenkebla where he can find the person responsible for the death of The Bishop who had become The Rat’s close friend and accomplice. Jim’s objective is to avenge his friend’s death. Eventually, incognito, he gets caught and drafted into the Nevenkebla army then gets chosen to be part of an invading force to a peaceable governed by Individual Mutualism, invented by a Mark Forer who turns out to be a computerized thought force. There are many twists and turns in this story which is thoroughly entertaining.

The Stainless Steel Rat Sings the Blues: 4 stars

Here Jim is attempting to steal Interstellar Credits from the Mint on Paskonjak. When he gets caught, Captain Varod of the Interstellar League makes a deal with him to lead an expedition to Liokukae, a planet to which the worst criminals and degenerates are exiled. The Rat’s mission will be to infiltrate Liokukae’s malicious tribes of primitives to discover the whereabouts of an ancient relic wanted by the League for scientific research as it is thought to have been developed by a prehistoric race. To infiltrate Liokukan society Jim forms a band called the Stainless Steel Rats which can cajole the inhabitants by its magical music. Thus he hopes trust can be developed and secrets revealed that can lead him to the artefact. But things are not that easy. This story has many intriguing features, including an electronic dog Fido who can walk on the ceiling and Jimmy’s in-the-jaw concealed walkie-talkie.

Jim is the first-person narrator. This work is not heavy on unnecessary scientific mumbo jumbo. Being a man with strong social conscience, Harrison manages to insert social, political and religious commentary on the sly. Humour is a literary device he uses skilfully. The plots are full of surprises. The only sure thing we know

is that The Rat will somehow get out of his predicament and more often than not keep a good portion of the prize.

Ironically, as I just found out, I read this book immediately subsequent to Harrison's death August 15, 2012. These novels were written to be prequels to his previous books featuring Jim diGriz, aka The Stainless Steel Rat. I bought this 3-in-1 book because I had previously read his excellent "anthropologic primitive humanity" Eden trilogy (not sci-fi) which is now out of print. Sadly, many of the Stainless Steel books are also out of print but a few are available and I intend to get them. In time they will probably all be reprinted because they are that good.

Jeff Stevens says

One of my happier memories of academic life is of preparing for the AP English exam. The exam had an essay question that could be answered using "any important or notable book written in English." It was one of the rare times that students at my high school had been asked about their opinion or to use their judgement. My teacher explained that any of the books we had been assigned over the course of the year qualified as "notable" but that we were free to choose any book whose merit we were willing to defend. We were all giddy at the prospect of writing on a book we hadn't been forced to read.

Since the question related to satire one of my friends announced that he was going to write on a book by Harry Harrison called "Bill, The Galactic Hero." Bill, the Galactic Hero It was, he told me, a brilliant book about violence, lies, and human insanity. Harrison had also written some others, he went on to say, but none were anywhere near as good.

The Stainless Steel Rat stories comprise Harrison's other, not as good, books. None of them qualifies as either notable or important, but when I read them I liked them immediately. The prose is bad, indistinguishable from that found in the pulp magazines and "boy's best adventure series" books that have cast a shadow over sci-fi from its inception, but the main character, the Rat himself, is tailor-made for his outcast, awkward, and generally unhappy audience. He's a thief in a sanitized future when crime is all but impossible, criminals having been run out of town by perfected surveillance and security technologies. Like his lonely teenaged male audience he has been squeezed by society to the edge of the room and then further out into the wainscoting. The Rat's world has become cold, hostile and horrifically clean. A stainless steel world, he reasons, requires a stainless steel rat, and thus adapted he undertakes the sort of adventures that remind you that the world may be divided into black hats and white hats but usually such symbolic headwear is little more than a fashion statement. The Rat's the kind of predictably drawn but vaguely likable anti-hero that Moorcock pioneered and Donaldson gave substance to. These aren't great literature, but if you remember what it was like to fight your way around and through the margins of high school society, and you don't insist on taking them too seriously, you may get a kick out of the Rat.
