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Matt Myklusch, Marcos Calo

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The second installment of the action-packed fantasy thrill ride that began with *The Accidental Hero!*

Jack and his fellow students are now well into their School of Thought training and are “sidekicking” for official, card-carrying super heroes. But even though Jack feels more at home in the Imagine Nation, he’s still hiding secrets from his friends Skerren and Allegra.

Jack is busy trying to find out how far the Rüstov sleeper virus has spread, working to find a cure, and striving to avoid the dire future that Revile warned him about. Meanwhile, Jonas Smart is working just as hard to discover what Jack is hiding from everyone. When a rogue Secreteer—the protectors of Imagine Nation citizens’ secrets—starts selling info to the highest bidder, Smart is ready and waiting. If Jack is going to help prevent a second Rüstov invasion, keep Smart from discovering his secrets, and find out what a shadowy, half-mad Secreteer knows about his long-lost father, he’ll need to learn to trust his friends and find the true path toward becoming a hero himself.

The Secret War Details

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From Reader Review The Secret War for online ebook

Kasey Thacker says

It was pretty good. There was some slow parts in it. The middle meanders quite a bit. The story picks up nicely towards the end though and has a really gripping ending. It looks like the last one will be the best of the bunch.

Valerie Craven says

Book 2 in the trilogy. My preteen loved it and so did I! Quick read for adults, great book for kids. We enjoy the author's play on words and great imagination. Highly recommend for girls and boys. Easy enough for 5th grade and up but still had enough to entertain older teens.

Hannah Belyea says

A year has passed since Jack defeated Revile and gained the trust of Imagine Nation - but a recent message intercepted by Jonas Smart leads him and his friends into a race against time to find out what the Rüstov are planning for the city...and how it connects to the growing lies Jack forces himself to give to those he cares for. Myklusch gives another exciting and action-packed entry with this fun adventure that will shock readers for sure! As the clock ticks on and Jack furthers himself from his allies, the fate of the city, and the world, hangs precariously on the balance.

Jessica says

Okay, it's official. I'm declaring it to all of you now. Jack Blank is my new favorite hero. Move over Harry Potter. Once again Matt Myklusch managed to capture my heart, and my imagination with the second book in this wonderful series! The Secret War was everything that I was hoping it would be plus so much more.

For those of you who haven't yet had the privilege of traveling to the Imagine Nation, let me fill you in. Take a moment to go back in time and remember when you were young. When the world held infinite possibility, and magic was a reality. Are you there? That's the Imagine Nation. Full of superheroes, villains and futuristic technology, this is a world that is a pleasure to get lost in. In my opinion, it's the most fantastic world I've ever visited in a book and I can't wait to go again.

In this installment, Jack Blank is a little older, a little wiser, but still the same kid that I fell in love with before. Strong, witty, and full of incredible potential. However The Secret War also brings a different light to Jack's life. This is a darker book, full of plenty of twists and turns to keep you reading on. Jack has secrets. Deep, dark secrets that he can't seem to share despite how much he knows he should. What he soon learns is that the more secrets you hold, the harder it is to dig yourself out of the pit that they become.

For me, Jack in this book was even better than in the first. Having to battle with the parasite inside him, the

secrets that he keeps, and trying to live up to his potential really takes a toll on him. We see Jack at his lowest points and yet he still manages to be inspiring. He's a real person on these pages. Best of all, The Secret War brings in tons of new characters to love. I won't spoil, but I will tell you that one of the characters I liked most makes a come back. I almost laughed out loud with joy.

The lessons in this book are amped up as well, but once again they blend in beautifully with the overall story. You will laugh, you will cry, and you will all the better for it. Let me tell you, this is fast becoming my favorite series of all time. If you haven't started already, please do. A role model of the highest kind, Jack Blank is a vivid character who will steal your heart!

Asia Peterson says

Oh snap!! ??

I have no words.....That was so twisty, I feel like I'm on a very long spiral staircase and I haven't reached a landing yet....."Oh snap, well dang!" are the only words that come to mind.....But yay, Jazen's back!!!?

Garrett Smith says

Once again, another amazing book in the jack blank series.I love this book! I love all the action and the Imagine Nation. I like Jack's connection between revile, how he is always hiding something from everybody, and how Jack is always in some type of trouble even when he doesn't try to. The Jack blank series is just as good or even better than the Micheal Vey series! I love how Jonas Smart is always wanting to put Jack on trial for something he didn't do or try to do. This is the best book in the series so far, I can't wait to read the next book! I love how they added more kids into the school of thought. Something that I would like more of is cliff hangers at the end of a lot more chapters. But overall this book is amazing so far!

Marlana says

Delightfully interesting with more plot twists than I could've foreseen.

The Secret War also ends nicely setting up the final book in the series.

I would be interested in reading more by Matt Myklusch.

Scott says

Simply amazing . If book one the accidental hero was good then hang on book 2 is twice as much fun. Lots of twist and turns . Our hero Jack finds himself on a journey that forces him to do some serious soul searching. Lots of fun great read. If you are 6 or 60 you will like this series. cant wait to read the remainder

Elise says

JAZEN!!!!

Robin says

In the sequel to *The Accidental Hero*, young Jack Blank has five days to save the world. And yet he wastes most of that time trying to keep a terrifying secret that could instantly transform him from the hero who saved the Imagine Nation to an enemy who cannot be trusted. Kids and their priorities!

If you've followed the Jack Blank trilogy thus far, you already know that the Imagine Nation is a secret floating island populated by the world's superheroes, androids, ninjas, medieval warriors, futuristic types, and aliens from outer space. Basically, they're all the folks about whom comic books are meant to educate the world. They live together on a hovering island of green crystal peaks, fringed by waterfalls, in a diverse and fantastic city, and all of it shielded from normal people's sight until the world is ready to accept them.

A year ago Jack found his way there from an orphanage in New Jersey, and discovered his own superpower—controlling machines with his mind. Although he defeated the evil cyborg Revile and embarrassed the power-grabbing supergenius Jonas Smart, he still has worries. Revile is only the forerunner of the Borg-like Rüstov: a race that spreads by infecting organic life-forms with a nano-chip virus that converts them into robot-zombie warriors. Revile has done worse than predict that Earth will fall to the Rüstov. Before Jack defeated him, he revealed that he *is* Jack—a future, super-Rüstov version of Jack who came back in time to kill himself before he could destroy countless other worlds. It would be bad if everybody in Empire City found out about this. They would never believe that Jack is determined to fight the possible future represented by Revile, to pilot his fate in a different direction, to be a hero to humanity rather than the worst villain ever. They would insist on the same thing Revile wanted: killing Jack, just to be on the safe side.

Obviously, Jack doesn't want this to happen. So you can understand his need to keep this a secret. His self-interest happens to coincide with a more important reason to protect his secret. With his special aptitude for technology, Jack may be the only hope of curing *another* Rüstov virus, a spyware program that turns infected Mechas (technological life-forms) into unwitting spies for the enemy, and that could, in the worst-case scenario, turn every electronic device in the world into a Rüstov fighting machine. Jack doesn't want this secret to come out either—for the more noble reason that the resulting panic could lead to violence between factions of the Imagine Nation. He needs time to work on a cure for the spyware virus, and he needs to protect his secrets in order to buy that time.

But lo and behold, a rogue member of the Clandestine Order of Secreteers—mysterious people with memory-altering powers, who protect the island's most delicate secrets—has announced to all of Empire City that the Rüstov will conquer Earth in five days, and resistance is futile, every entity for him/her/itself, and he is ready to sell everyone's secrets to whoever will contribute to his going-on-the-run fund. Suddenly Jack's top priority is getting to Obscuro, partly to protect his precious secrets, and partly to extract from him the knowledge he needs to perfect his cure code for the spyware virus. But while Jack and his super-friends are running around the city trying to catch Obscuro, or possibly his supervillain accomplices, he emphatically

isn't in the lab cracking the cure code. The countdown to Earth's defeat is ticking away, and Jack's personal agenda more and more gets in the way of doing what he really needs to do to save the world.

As secrets beget lies, and lies beget betrayals, and betrayals beget humiliating disasters, Jack finds himself losing the trust of the people who really deserve to know the truth. Jack's mistakes, and the consequences he bears for them, are an instructive lesson on the trouble with using villainous means to pursue a heroic agenda—or using plans to "make the world a better place" to justify sneaking, deceiving, double-crossing behavior.

While Jack takes this lesson to heart in a painful way, his bitterest opponent—rich, ambitious inventor, media magnate, and politician Jonas Smart—illustrates another very timely lesson for our society today. Smart represents the type of leaders, or would-be leaders, who divide people against each other in order to weaken any possible opposition to themselves; who promote themselves through a special relationship with the media that blurs the line between journalism and propaganda; and who exploit the people's fear to bully them into accepting "security" measures like spying on everybody, burying inconvenient people in secret prisons, and using a private police force that operates outside the law. In brief, Jonas Smart is a poster-boy for all that is wrong with totalitarianism. It's perhaps the most amazing commentary on political issues in youth fiction since the Ministry of Magic storyline in Harry Potter.

This is especially remarkable coming from an author whose most significant prior experience was producing a series of Spring Break specials for MTV. Clearly his talents have only just started to be put to their proper use. Now that he is writing full-time (a career change that went into effect with this book), I am excited to see what directions his talent will grow in. So far the only indication of this is the third book of the Jack Blank trilogy, titled *The End of Infinity*—which, moving ahead from this book's cliffhanger ending, will establish once and for all whether Jack is Earth's best hope or worst nightmare. Ambiguous as his destiny may be, one thing is not ambiguous to anyone reading this series. We care what becomes of Jack. And after this wild, weird, thrill-packed installment, we will be on the edge of our seats until we find out.

Mark Buxton says

My name is Jack, and a sleeper agent has announced the Rustov are planning another attack on Imagine Nation in five days. He also mentioned a conspiracy leads all the way to the Inner Circle, but which leader could possibly be involved. The truth about a spyware virus infecting the Mechas has come out even though I haven't completed my secret project to create a cure-code. The virus would allow the Rustov to take control of the androids and use them as tools or weapons. It's hard trying to prevent the invasion, while Smart continues to attack me with accusations that I'm helping the Rustov. He also keeps saying he's going to unveil the SmarterNet to stop them, but people should be concerned when Smart is this excited about something. He says he's the smartest man on Earth, but sometimes he's really stupid.

You should read *The Accidental Hero* first. This book continued Smart's efforts to prove Jack was a Rustov spy, and the complications it created for Jack. Some of the accusations were true, and Jack wasn't sure if he might be forced to assist the enemy. Having the virus speak inside his head only added to the conflict, as it seemed to reinforce a possible loss of control. An unexpected twist regarding his virus popped up near the end. Jack's character fell into the common hero problem of trying to cover up problematic secrets only to create bigger problems along the way. He even admitted during the resolution that all of the conflicts and difficulties in the plot might have been avoided if he had told the truth in the beginning. However, it would have created a boring story! This book added a couple more students to the plot, and Jack was able to work

with a team. This cooperation was very shaky due to Jack's decisions and added to the suspense of the whole book. Jack's alliances seemed to come and go like a yo-yo. There was an anticipation that everything was going to fall apart at some point, probably at the worst possible time. On a pleasant note, a surprise character joined the fray during the book's climax. I'm looking forward to reading the last book in the trilogy, *The End of Infinity*.

Denae Christine says

There were a few places that were simplified or made too easy, but otherwise I was satisfied with the plot and characters. I don't think there was anywhere where I was impressed by the story until the ending. I got quite annoyed with Jack as he did a lot of shirking his duty and ignoring things that needed to be taken care of. Also, whenever he finally did tell the truth, it seemed like people (Trea) forgave him rather quickly. Oh, and Jonas Smart is not smart, except that everyone thinks he is (and is too dramatic). That really bugs me when authors talk about how smart someone is when they aren't smart at all.

Randy Escobar says

In the Matt Myklusch book *The Secret War* the protagonist Jack Blank, a hero who can control machines with his mind is part of the Imagine Nation, a secret floating island populated by the world's superheroes for example androids, ninjas, medieval warriors, and aliens from outer space. Their goal is to help the world but not let them know of their presence, but then all of the sudden he has found out he has five days to save the world, and yet he wastes most of that time trying to keep a terrifying secret that could tarnish the image of the hero who once saved the Imagine Nation to a traitor who cannot be trusted. In the beginning it seemed that Jack could not keep his focused on his objective. He worries because Revile the forerunner of the Borg-like Rüstov: a race that spreads by infecting organic life-forms with a nano-chip virus that converts them into robot-zombie warriors. Revile predicted that Earth will fall to the Rüstov. Before Jack defeated him, he revealed that he is Jack, a future super-Rüstov version of Jack who came back in time to kill himself before he could destroy other worlds. To summarize it would be very bad if anybody in Empire City found out about this. He believes they would never believe that Jack is on their side fight the possible future represented by Revile, he tries to change his fate towards a different direction, to be a hero to humanity rather than the worst villain ever. In my opinion the author uses imagery to set and describe many settings like how he described imagine nation, a hovering island of green crystal peaks, fringed by waterfalls. Even though this book is 2nd of a trilogy he does a great job with the backstory so even if you haven't read the first book you can still understand the story and what's going on. Matt Myklusch does a wonderful job making cool and intriguing setting like the great city of imagine nation, the fact I could clearly imagine where the characters were kept me hooked on the story. I would personally recommend this book to people who like sci-fi and fantasy. If you would like a book like this I suggest reading *Ender's Game*

Anna says

This series is one of my favorites now, I will have to get them all.

Joy (Cheery?Reads) says

"The true greatness of the Imagine Nation isn't found when times are easy; it's there when the moment is hard and we rise up as one to meet the challenges we face. When we cast aside differences and triumph together in a way we never could when standing apart."

If the quote above didn't already say it all, I don't know what else could. The Jack Blank Adventure series is such a gem. There are so many positive and motivating messages incorporated in it. Although it is categorized as a MG book, it is more than that. Matt Myklusch does a very good job delivering the actions, tense moments and greatest of all, the surprises that I definitely don't see coming.

Jack Blank and the characters of the Imagine Nation are very good teaching subjects. They teach all of us so many of the values in life that we tend to take for granted as we grow older. It frustrates me that everyone expects so much out of Jack as though he is some accomplished adult, never realizing he is just 13 y/o and have come a long way. They should give him a break but Jack realizes his mistakes and is humble and quick to admit and rectify them. He is such a courageous and brave boy after all that he's been through.

This sequel to Jack Blank and the Imagine Nation or known also as The Accidental Hero, is a must pickup and will remain as one of my favourite series.

More at my blog: cheeryreads.blogspot.com
