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Kynetic: On Target



Synopsis

Sometimes you're the hunter. Sometimes you're the target...The amateur superhero Kynetic knows what she wants: her own vigilante license from the government and to be partners with Failstate, both as heroes and romantically. And what Kyn wants, she usually gets. But this time, she's facing an obstacle, namely Failstate's girlfriend, Charlene. If only Kyn could get her out of the way...When a trio of supervillains known as the Hel's Belles offer to help Kyn take out a more powerful criminal, she knows they can't be trusted. But Kyn recognizes it as a way to not only advance her career, but drive a wedge between Failstate and Charlene. Kynetic could get everything she's ever wanted, but only if she can remain on target.

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Customer Reviews

QUICK HIT " In this short story, John Otte returns to New Chayton to further flesh out the series he's created. Kynetic: On Target reads like just another day in the life of your average high school aged vigilante. It's a fun and quick tale, a great way of getting in Failstate's world between full-length novels. A few years ago, Marcher Lord Press (now

Enclave Publishing) signed on this Lutheran pastor named John Otte with a story about a teenage superhero wannabe who gets his chance on a reality show. In the world of Failstate, superpowers exist, though not all superpowers are created equal. In a Sky High meets The Incredibles kind of way, Otte weaved a fast-paced fun YA comic book style tale that was a solid debut. Fans demanded a sequel and they got one with Failstate: Legends. But between those novels, Otte tested the waters with an ebook short story called Gauntlet Goes to Prom. Takes about a half hour to read, just a way of reconnecting with the characters between the full-length novels and a great way to flesh out the world he's created. It must have been a rousing success, because now that book three, Failstate: Nemesis, is planned, he's now released another short called Kynetic: On Target. The basic premise is that Kynetic, a super with her eye on gaining her vigilante license, has also turned her other eye toward gaining Rob Laughlin, aka Failstate. Kynetic is a troubled soul with a dark past who has no problem using her powers for her own purposes. Of course, her lifestyle vastly conflicts with Rob's, leading to an inevitable crisis of identity. Kynetic's story takes center stage as Failstate appears only as a supporting character. The redemptive storyline is very well done, though the subject material (sexual and physical assault) is a bit darker than Failstate's previous tales. Otte handles it well, only alluding to situation, but I do feel it bears mentioning, as it's a deviation from previous novels. If you have young children reading the series, then I feel discretion may be needed. Overall, I'm absolutely loving the Failstate world and really enjoying these small tidbits of backstory between full-length novels. It's an excellent way of deepening the world, continuing the story, and keeping readers immersed in the universe.

While John W. Otte's superhero trilogy centers on his original hero Failstate, he has given readers more insight into secondary characters through the release of short novellas between each installment. This latest one focuses on a female superhero introduced in the second novel. It largely succeeds as a fun romp in between his larger stories. The Failstate novels are solid YA territory, and this novella continues in the same vein. Teenage romance and problems at school all circulate around the larger issues of the fight between good and evil. Fortunately Otte keeps his focus squarely on the ordinariness of these issues and their impact on the characters rather than cheap, melodramatic angst. These young people aren't overburdened; while they do face serious problems, they also have a lot of fun. While the writing is solid (albeit a bit sparse), Otte excels at creative world building. His love for superheroes really shines through with the different unique abilities he gives his characters, the names of villains and groups, and the overarching structure

required to make these competing powers work in our world. Even the more mundane aspects of his world are filled with life. The reader is pulled into Kiesha's story, her desires and needs, her drive to succeed, her fear of failure. She's powerful and ambitious, yet just as muddled in exactly how to grow up as any teenager. Her interaction with Charlene Gardner, Failstate's girlfriend, fleshed out a character we had formally only seen through the lens of her effect on the hero. The brevity of this story weakens it. There's simply not enough time to really explore how Kiesha's past has made her the person she is now. We get fed backstory through a contrived conversation and confession, and the heroine's transformation from selfish to selfless felt a bit rushed. It's a testament to Otte's firm grasp of his characters and world that despite these flaws, I still felt fully immersed in the plot and eagerly anticipated how it would conclude. If you're already a fan of Failstate, you'll definitely want to read this novella. Readers who are new to the series may need a little explanation to fully appreciate some of the character's actions, but will be able to follow the story. If Otte should decide to give us another Kynetic adventure some time down the road, I'd be glad to dive in.

This is the first book I've read from John Otte (besides a sampling from "Numb"). I didn't realize that it was a novella when I got it and don't usually care for the shallowness of typical novellas, but this one was worth it. It had a great voice, written from the viewpoint of a high-school girl with superhero powers. It left me wanting to read more and guess what! There are three other books in the Failstate series! My only detractor would be that it was somewhat predictable, but one can only expect so much from a novella. I'm hoping the full-length books are a little more developed. Overall, it is a fast, easy, entertaining read and I would recommend it.

I'm glad John Otte knows how to write a good story. It appears that, even with a short story, he knows how to make it dense with a necessary, entirely unclichéd story arc central to a character and make a bridge from one main entry to the next. It was also a decent breath to see things from someone else's view other than Failstate. What truly got me nerding out was 3 side characters whose names, when it hit what their names were coming from, I realized John went for an Old Norse myth angle. The Old Norse, compared to the world's other myths, gets my interest the quickest. Sure, the Hel's Belles may not come back after this (after this, I have doubts), but it was great seeing those names. Not to mention the story itself had its trademark Failstate quirk-centric humor, teen awkwardness, and deep philosophy hidden within dialogue. The ending of this short REALLY got me laughing at how it ended, one of the best endings in a short story I've read yet.

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