

Soon I Will Be Invincible: A Novel

By Austin Grossman

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Doctor Impossible—evil genius, would-be world conqueror—languishes in prison. Shuffling through the cafeteria line with ordinary criminals, he wonders if the smartest man in the world has done the smartest thing he could with his life. After all, he's lost every battle he's ever fought. But this prison won't hold him forever.

Fatale—half woman, half high-tech warrior—used to be an unemployed cyborg. Now, she's a rookie member of the world's most famous super-team, the Champions. But being a superhero is not all flying cars and planets in peril—she learns that in the locker rooms and dive bars of superherodom, the men and women (even mutants) behind the masks are as human as anyone.

Soon I Will Be Invincible is a wildly entertaining first novel, brimming with attitude and humor—an emotionally resonant look at good and evil, love and loss, power and glory.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
The realm of comic book heroes and villains gets a dose of realism in this whimsical debut from game design consultant Grossman. The story shifts between the perspectives of Doctor Impossible, a brilliant scientist turned world's greatest menace, and Fatale, a lonely cyborg and the newest addition to the venerable group of heroes known as the Champions. Though he's been out of commission for a while, Doctor Impossible hatches a scheme to knock the planet out of orbit ("As the Earth grows colder, my power becomes apparent, and the nations submit," he reasons). Meanwhile, Champions leader Corefire goes missing, and Fatale has to learn the ropes of superherodom as the conventional climactic showdown (at Doctor Impossible's secret lair) draws near. However fantastical, the characters (including a "genetic metahuman" and "an elite fairy guard") are thoughtfully portrayed, with Fatale—stuck in a perpetual existential crisis—bemused over the Champions' purpose, and Doctor Impossible wondering "whether the smartest man in the world has done the smartest thing he could with his life." Grossman dabbles in a host of themes—power, greed, fame, the pitfalls of ego—in this engrossing page-turner, broadening the appeal of an already inviting scenario. *(June)*
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From Bookmarks Magazine
Austin Grossman, Berkeley grad student, game designer, and comic-book connoisseur, offers a fresh take on the hidden realm of contemporary superheroes. Critics compare the novel favorably to Jonathan Lethem's *Fortress of Solitude*, the prime-time, sci-fi soap opera *Heroes*, and the animated big-screen hit *The Incredibles*. Although the plot and Grossman's sense of humor wear thin for some critics, *Soon I Will Be Invincible* is certainly a worthwhile diversion, a flight of fancy with heart, and the perfect vehicle for a sequel. Even Impossible's voice has the ring of truth-in a world-weary, villainous sort of way, of course: "Once you get past a certain threshold, everyone's problems are the same: fortifying your island and hiding the heat signature from your fusion reactor." Impossible's aphorism contains as relevant a metaphor for life as a reader is likely to find anywhere these days.
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From Booklist
Riding the current wave of enthusiasm for superpowered mutants in film and fiction, Grossman's first novel peeks intimately inside the psyches of both superheroes and supervillains. Alternating first-person narrators recount the intertwining adventures of computer-enhanced female cyborg Fatale and the most intelligent and possibly the most evil man on Earth, Doctor Impossible. After battling criminals undercover for the CIA, Fatale becomes the newest member of the recently reunited superhero team, the Champions. Their latest mission involves locating their missing colleague, CoreFire. Not surprisingly, when CoreFire's nemesis—Doctor Impossible, of course—escapes imprisonment for the twelfth time, he becomes the likeliest suspect in the superhero's disappearance. Yet not only is the evil doctor clueless as to CoreFire's whereabouts, he is now preoccupied with hatching his latest master plan, intended to overthrow the world by means of four utterly mundane objects. With remarkable ingenuity, Grossman assembles an entire menagerie of superheroes and criminal masterminds completely from scratch. Costumed-crime-fighter mavens naturally attracted to this latest rendition of superheroic derring-do may wind up itching to see it on the big screen.
Hays, Carl
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dorothy Marsh:

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Jackson Ponce:

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Richard Riggins:

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Frances Drury:

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