



Secret Origins

James Riley

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Bethany travels to a new fictional world to rescue her father in this third book in the *New York Times* bestselling series, *Story Thieves*—which was called a “fast-paced, action-packed tale” by *School Library Journal*—from the author of the *Half Upon a Time* trilogy.

Owen and Bethany have sworn off jumping into books for good. But they didn't make *any* promises about not jumping through strange portals that lead to a comic book world.

Jupiter City was once filled with brightly costumed superheroes and villains, but nowadays, there's nothing left but the Dark. Even the villains are terrified of the Dark's shadows, and most of the heroes have either disappeared or been lost to mind control. The one hero who might have stopped all of this, Doc Twilight, has been imprisoned by the Dark.

But who is Doc Twilight really? And how can Bethany and Owen defeat the Dark without superpowers of their own? They'll definitely need the help of some old friends and new allies to bring the light back to Jupiter City, and find out the truth behind the Dark.

It all comes back to Bethany's own secret origins. What really happened when her fictional father disappeared years ago? Who is Nobody, and why is he writing these *Story Thieves* books? And what kind of supervillain name is The Rotten Banana?

Secret Origins Details

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Author : James Riley

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From Reader Review Secret Origins for online ebook

Kayleigh says

It was amazing! All the plot twists in this series are what make it my favorite. Keep writing, James Riley!

Terryann says

Gr -4-6

Bethany, who is half fictional, and her regular friend Owen have sworn not to go into the fictional world any more. It is dangerous and the evil Nobody, a man without a face, has threatened them if they come back. But when Bethany discovers a mysterious man watching her house, she is determined to track him down and find out why. And she just needs a *few* tools from the fictional world to help her. When they arrive at the man's house, they discover a portal into a comic book world, several superheroes and supervillains, one of whom just *might* be Bethany's dad. Find out who Nobody is, who Bethany's real dad is and how she and Owen save Jupiter City from the Dark. Riley doesn't disappoint in this thrilling continuation of the Story Thieves series. Full of pithy puns, plays on words and lots of action, kids are sure to enjoy the latest installment.

-Terry Ann Lawler, Phoenix Public Library, AZ

Mark Baker says

It's been two months since Bethany last jumped into a book, and she's started to notice a man sitting in a car across the street. Owen thinks Bethany is overreacting to things, but as the friends follow him to his house, they make a startling discovery. Have they stumbled upon Bethany's fictional father?

This book overs things to the comic book world, and I found this setting to be lots of fun. The plot twists out in some surprising and fun directions, and the cliffhangers at the end of each chapter kept me turning pages. The characters are strong as well, and we meet some great new ones along the way. Just watch out for the cliffhanger at the end of the book.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Mina B says

In Secret Origins, I was surprised that the author, James Riley, actually incorporates himself into the book as a villain. The whole series is based on the idea that there is a nonfictional world and a fictional world. The fictional world is where all the characters from books live put their stories. James Riley writes in a unique perspective because when you read the book, you are reading from the view of a fictional person.

***Ramya* says**

Oh my god. I NEED the next book! I cannot wait for the next book! I do hope we'll see more of Kiel and Owen x Charm (I ship it!) but I really, really, need the fourth book-now!

Engel Dreizehn says

First of all, wondering if there is going to be another book to tie up a few things and big kudos for the shout out to Ben Hatke's "Zita the Spacegirl". It felt very appropriate for an "origin story" for the entire series to be motif-ed along the lines of a superhero comic (with comic panels too nice!). Love again how the lines between fictional/non-fictional are being absolutely, sureally messed with int his series.

Melina says

AHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

tHE FEELS I AM FEELING.... ITS TOO MUCH...

combusts

Molly Jeanne says

A lot of nonfiction books prompt you to ponder the never-ending questions of human existence. *Story Thieves: Secret Origins* does it just by being fictional. Like its predecessors, the third book in the five-book-long Story Thieves series is funny, entertaining, a bit meta at times, and a lot of fun to read. In this book, Owen and his book-traveling friend Bethany find out about a comic named Doc Twilight, its darker and edgier reboot, and a man who is using portals to arrive in the comic's world, called Jupiter City, whom Bethany realizes is (view spoiler) her long-lost father. Together, she and Owen, along with Charm (a character from Owen's favorite series, Kiel Gnomenfoot, whom he had met in the first book) and Gwen (also known as EarthGirl, a fictional superhero that Bethany had become friends with), must go into Jupiter City, give themselves superpowers, defeat the Dark – the supervillain of the Doc Twilight books – and find out the history of Bethany, her father, the authors of the comics, and the mysterious Nobody, who's been writing the Story Thieves books that Owen is so creeped out by.

One of the things that makes a good story is a good villain, and the Dark fulfills that criteria extremely well. He can control the shadows of Jupiter City, who infect the citizens by pushing themselves into the people, almost like the Dementors in the Harry Potter books. Once infected, the citizens' anger is multiplied, and they become agents of the Dark. When Bethany is first attacked by the shadows, she describes it as such: "One by one, the shadows slowly pulled at her fingers, and all she wanted to do was attack them, fight them, pull them apart. She felt her vision begin to turn black, but she didn't care. She wanted revenge on these things, to show them that she wasn't afraid of them, that she wasn't afraid of the Dark, and she'd tear them to pieces..." This shows how even a kind character with a little feistiness, like Bethany, can fall victim to these creatures. It's taken up a notch in the climax, when Gwen and Charm are infested with the shadows. Charm, who's the snarky comic relief of the bunch, is blinded by the shadows, yelling "I've always hated you" at Bethany. However, Gwen is still the sweetheart she always has been. The text describes it as such: "Of course the shadows hadn't affected EarthGirl. They needed some kind of anger or fear to latch onto." As

scary as the shadows are to read about, they're really interesting characters, and the Dark is a compelling villain with an interesting backstory: (view spoiler).

The books become even better when read as a book in your hands, so be sure to get a copy. The characters are dynamic and fun, the plot keeps you on the edge of your seat, and the cliffhanger at the end will make you not be able to wait for September and the next book, *Story Thieves*: (view spoiler). The book is excellently written by James Riley (read: Nobody), and it's definitely one that will stick with you even after you've put it down. These books are extremely interesting to read, and in a way, they change the concept of reading – and for the better.

Violet says

I'M FEELING THINGS

THIS BOOK HAD ME HOOK LINE AND SINKER THE WHOLE WAY THROUGH

takes a deep breath I still can't believe I finished this in 7 1/2 hours...

Basically, Bethany sees someone watching her house so her and Owen decide to investigate and then they see a portal leading to a comic book world so they get Charm and Gwen to help them and it makes me feel a whole lot.

Things that gave me feels:

- OWEN AND CHARM MY BABIES
 - BETHANY EXPLODING INTO LIGHT (That was some Eleven stuff right there)
 - BETHANY'S PARENTS MEETING
 - DOC TWILIGHT CALLING CATHERINE MAA'M (Like Lucy and Wyatt in TIMELESS)
 - CHARM BEING THE SASSY PERSON SHE IS
 - OWEN CALLING CHARM PRETTY
 - NOBODY'S BACKSTORY
 - THE DARK TURNING OUT TO BE BETHANY'S FATHER
 - KID TWILIGHT
 - BETHANY ADMITTING THAT SHE MISSES KIEL
 - OWEN BASING THEIR GROUP OFF THE TEEN TITANS
 - BASICALLY EVERYTHING ABOUT IT
-

Yapha says

At the end of *The Stolen Chapters*, Bethany and Owen said they weren't going to jump into fictional worlds any more. However, it now appears that someone is watching Bethany's house. When she sets out to track him down, Owen feels obligated to come with. The mystery man leads them to a strangely small house that contains a glowing portal to a different world -- the fictional world of the Doc Twilight comic books. Owen is thrilled to be entering a comic book world. Comic books are his thing and he understands how they work. Together he and Bethany gather some old friends from past adventures in order to defeat The Dark that has taken over Jupiter City and find Bethany's father once and for all. Full of adventure, snarky humor, and

comic book villains, this book will keep readers paging through the chapters and wishing that they could jump into the story as well. Highly recommended for grades 4 & up. (I suggest reading the series in order.)

eARC provided by publisher via Edelweiss

Brendan Creecy says

Amazing!!!

James Riley is a genius. This really blew me away. Just when I thought he couldn't do anything better than the last one, he proves us wrong. Can't wait for the next one!

Deseret News says

See full review here: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/86...>

"Story Thieves: Secret Origins" is the third book in a planned five-book series by James Riley. In this installment, preteens Owen and Bethany team up again in the ongoing search for Bethany's father.

In the previous books, we learned that Bethany has the ability to jump into books and enter their worlds. She has been doing this in hopes of finding her missing father, who she believes isn't in the nonfiction world anymore.

When Owen catches Bethany, he convinces her to take him into his favorite book series to keep him from sharing her secret. This leads to many adventures in solving wars between worlds, making fictional friends and traveling through many tales.

"Secret Origins" picks up with Owen and Bethany on hiatus from jumping into stories because it's causing too much trouble. But Bethany has been sneaking visits and now a mysterious man is watching her house. When she and Owen follow the man, they find out he's called Doc Twilight and his house holds a portal to another fictional world, this time the comic book world of Jupiter City.

Bethany believes a villain named the Dark has taken her father, and she's determined to end this once and for all.

Riley returns with his comedic wit and ability to hide secrets within his stories, but adds a new dimension to the series by leaving classic tales and science fiction and jumping into the world of comics. Just as Owen enjoys the world of Jupiter City because he loves comic books, fans of graphic novels will enjoy the homage to the battle between good and evil and accidental heroes.

The villain is refreshing because it's a shadow which can inhabit your mind and make you act against your will. While there are other villains to fight, this idea, along with the lesson that words have power, is well-learned and organically written.

With an ending that both gives answers and opens a world of possibilities, Riley writes a strong story that

should keep readers waiting for the next book.

"Secret Origins" is interspersed with comic book sketches that enhance the experience and bring the characters to life.

Neurocomp says

60 pg remaining....took me a while to get into this 3rd book though...begining 10pgs was a bit confusing (was it a dream?) ...ended up reading 2 other books instead. But i'm glad i didn't put this book off any further.

Definitely a great continuation to the story if not a bit weird...thought the author was gonna write himself into the Story after book#2. Its not as good as the first 2 books which put the series up high, and because of the weird start: 4 stars...and the ending was a bit shotty

Which is a disappointment cuz the notion of where Owen ended up is really cool.
or maybe i should have reread the ending to book#2.

Originally enough, it starts book#4, which will hopefully be better than book#3 and on par with 1 & 2. ...so 4.5 stars if i could.

--- i like the originality of the series

* book#1 jumping into the books (2nd time i've seen it , first was Funke's Inkheart)

* book#2 the acknowledgements was fantastically written

* book#3 Where Owen ended up during the book.

hope book #4 introduces something novel ...

though maybe turning a written serise into a "choose your own adventure" is novel

Abby ~Sign Please~ says

OK..... Wow..... Wow..... Wow!!!!!!!

Originally, half way through the story, I was gonna rate it three stars, but then, that ending!!!! Oh dear god that ending was... Well, I'm speachless.

I'm just gonna finish this review with three simple words:

Read. This. Book!

Alright, five more:

Give. Me. The. Next. Book!

Pietra Ibrimovic says

james riley did it again everybody! this man is an absolute mastermind and he sure knows how to continuously surprise his readers. i gave this book four stars instead of five because i felt like everything that happened up until the real action started taking place, was just there as a placeholder and it didnt hold my attention for too long. maybe that's why it took me more than a month to finish this book. or maybe im still on a reading slump. who knows.

i cant lie, i actually teared up a little when i thought kiel was going to join us again for this journey but he didnt and i was a tiny bit disappointed because i miss him and his winks quite a lot. however i had lots of fun having charm back and i dont remember her being like that but my god, her personality spoke volumes to me because she's basically who i aspire to be in life.
