



Heroes Die

By Matthew Woodring Stover

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Renowned throughout the land of Ankhana as the Blade of Tyshalle, Caine has killed his share of monarchs and commoners, villains and heroes. He is relentless, unstoppable, simply the best there is at what he does.

At home on Earth, Caine is Hari Michaelson, a superstar whose adventures in Ankhana command an audience of billions. Yet he is shackled by a rigid caste society, bound to ignore the grim fact that he kills men on a far-off world for the entertainment of his own planet--and bound to keep his rage in check.

But now Michaelson has crossed the line. His estranged wife, Pallas Rill, has mysteriously disappeared in the slums of Ankhana. To save her, he must confront the greatest challenge of his life: a lethal game of cat and mouse with the most treacherous rulers of two worlds . . .

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Heroes Die By Matthew Woodring Stover Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After two fantasy novels (*Iron Dawn*; *Jericho Moon*), Stover combines fantasy and SF in this vigorous adventure story. Our world has developed a hyper-rigid, occupation-based caste system in which the reading of freedom-based philosophy, from John Locke to Robert A. Heinlein, is punished. For entertainment, people participate vicariously in recorded Adventures from the Overworld, an other-dimensional realm of sword and sorcery with its own repressive government. On Earth, Hari Michaelson is the most popular Actor in Adventures; in Ankhana, with its rich palaces and criminal slums, he is known as Caine, the Blade of Tyshalle, famous assassin and warrior. Tired of killing, Hari agrees to return to the Overworld, driven to save his estranged wife, Pallas Ril?Actor and sorceress, unable to return to Earth due to a powerful spell?and ordered by the Studio to kill the tyrant Ma'elKoth. Stover's writing throughout is unoriginal but vivid, and his story is well plotted (though relentlessly violent), with numerous noteworthy secondary characters, from Hari's father to Kierendal, the non-human manager of a vice-den in the Overworld's Alien Town. Hari begins as a stereotyped cold-blooded killer but develops credibly, gaining a sense of moral responsibility and realizing that his true enemies are not on the Overworld but within the Studio that directs his life for its profits. Stover's fans and those who like their fantasy/SF tinged red should enjoy this energetic tale. Author tour.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Dubious sf/fantasy hybrid from the author of the paperback *Iron Dawn*. Stover's future Earth is run by and for the entertainment networks, with society locked into a rigid and unforgiving caste system. Coexisting with Earth but in another dimension is planet Overworld, with its stereotypical medieval sword-and-sorcery fantasy scenario. Entertainers from Earth can be projected into Overworld, their adventures then relayed back for vicarious VR enjoyment. So on Earth, Actor Hari Michaelson does what his boss, Arturo Kollberg, chairman of San Francisco Studio, tells him; on Overworld, Hari becomes Caine, a dreaded and highly successful assassin. But now also on Overworld, the Emperor Ma'elKoth, together with his henchman, the supernally skillful swordsman Count Berne, has achieved supreme power by mounting a successful pogrom against ``Aktirs," thus threatening Earthly profits and the engineering of new dramas. Kollberg therefore orders Hari back to Overworld, where his mission will be to kill Ma'elKoth and rescue his ex-wife, the Actor Shanna Leighton, trapped on Overworld in one of her two identities, as the revolutionary Pallas Ril or the resistance fighter Simon Jester. Unfortunately for Hari, Ma'elKoth is already aware of Caine and Pallas/Simon and has devised his own plans accordingly. So, can Caine kill his enemies, survive a voyage of painful self-discovery, and win back his lovely wife? Shallow and unsurprising, a furious, gory hack-'em-up witheven for this subgenrea high expletive count. Stover does, however, work hard to develop his characters. (Author tour) -- *Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"DAY OF THE JACKAL MEETS LORD OF THE RINGS . . . A marvelous conspiracy thriller of worlds within worlds, where no one is necessarily who or what they seem."

--SIMON R. GREEN

Author of the *Deathstalker* series

"Vivid . . . Well-plotted . . . [A] vigorous adventure story."

--Publishers Weekly

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Ellis:

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Jacqueline Carter:

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