



Forging Hephaestus

Drew Hayes , Amy Landon (Narrator)

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Gifted with metahuman powers in a world full of capes and villains, Tori Rivas kept away from the limelight, preferring to work as a thief in the shadows. But when she's captured trying to rob a vault that belongs to a secret guild of villains, she's offered a hard choice: prove she has what it takes to join them or be eliminated. Apprenticed to one of the world's most powerful (and supposedly dead) villains, she is thrust into a strange world where the lines that divide superheroes and criminals are more complex than they seem. The education of a villain is not an easy one, and Tori will have to learn quickly if she wants to survive. On top of the peril she faces from her own teacher, there are also the capes and fellow apprentices to worry about, to say nothing of having to keep up a civilian cover. Most dangerous of all, though, are those who loathe the guild's very existence. Old grudges mean some are willing to go to any length to see the guild turned to ash, along with each one of its members. Even the lowly apprentices.

Forging Hephaestus Details

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Author : Drew Hayes , Amy Landon (Narrator)

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From Reader Review Forging Hephaestus for online ebook

Cloak88 says

Villains like you've never seen them before. Villains of the Code. 4.5 stars

Tori Rivas, is stubborn, intelligent and a truly independent minded. Imbued with the power to control fire and a technical mind to rival any genius. Even so she knows, she's but small fry, in a world where Legendary Heroes and Infamous Villains could destroy whole cities in their fights. Now living and working as a smalltime thief to fund her own tech-projects, things go wrong in the most horribly interesting way. During her last heist she's caught while breaking into a vault of the Guild of Villains. There she receives her last and only offer: Prove you're worthy of becoming one of us....or die!

Forging Hephaestus is a quiet and unique take on heroes and villains. In this novel Mr. Hayes creates a world full of incredible powerful characters, while still showing their humanity. All their flaws, and quirks show true and make for a slew of interesting characters. Told in a Multi-POV style, the story is complex and multifaceted. Be prepared to be entertained for quite a while though. With a page-count of 700+ pages (at least on my Ereader) the story takes its time to build, slowly building up steam for the grand finale. Characters get their time to grow and expand, all the while showing you more of this world where rival guilds train, live and work on opposite sides of the law.

In all this novel left me well satisfied. With Hayes usual humour and good spirit, this novel felt lively and packed with plenty of good action scenes. I would recommend to any fan of Hero-fiction and interests in unique worlds. A novel well worth reading.

** I received an Advanced Reader Copy in exchange for a fair review**

Carla Enright says

I loved this book. So, so very much.

When I found out Drew Hayes was writing a novel about villains, I'm not going to lie; I was a bit concerned. My primary concern was that it was going to take away some of the magic that is Super Powered, and that a lot of villain novels tend to follow a similar formula.

Forging Hephaestus not only proved me wrong on both accounts but also seriously exceeded any expectations that I had for a new Drew Hayes novel.

In a world where "meta-humans" are created from accidents, it's easy to see the appeal of becoming a hero. That is until you look at "The Alliance of Heroic Champions" a little closer. Heroes that are more focused on politics than saving people make you start to question the way "evil" is fought. Enter "The Guild of Villainous Reformation". A group of villains who have their code of conduct they adhere to, to not mess up villainy for everyone.

Now the by far the most significant difference between this and other villain books is that code of conduct. They get away with a bunch of evil stuff, but hey, these guys have standards.

Then you get into that actual story, past the basic concept.

The characters are funny, unique and are all completely flawed correctly and realistically.

The comic relief scattered through the pages makes a book that could be super dense considering the size of

the thing, into a book that is super easy to read and so freaking enjoyable. Hell, it's why I read it in less than two days.

The scenarios that are on the books are weird and fantastic, and it's tough to figure out where the book is going to end up.

Then, there are the fight scenes. Holy hell, the fight scenes. Whenever I read these scenes, I get this crazy feeling of excitement in the pit of my stomach. They are fun and witty, and I feel like yelling out and egging on the characters.

All of those things combined with the fact that the book is long enough for extensive character development in it makes it one of my all-time favourite books.

By far the most exciting part, if the trajectory of the Super Powered series is anything to go by, is that the series is only going to get better as you become more attached to the characters. I'm very, very excited to see what's to come.

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Douglas Debner says

This review deserves an "executive summary" because, while Drew Hayes is an excellent author, this is not his best work and my full review is a lot of complaining about that. This is a better than average book that makes some mistakes Mr. Hayes doesn't make in his other books. Those mistakes are (1) using stupidity to move the story forward and (2) a ridiculously convenient ending that just so happens to set every thing up for a second book.

As for the stupidity, the main character, Tori, fails to believe the criminals she's working with when they tell her that they will kill her. She is clearly smarter than that so all of this text undermines the story. Also, one of the secondary characters who is a hero stupidly trusts a villain for no real reason other than he wants to. So, basically the villain organizing the destruction of the heroes and the villain's "guild" is not smart. He just found a hero stupid enough to believe him for no reason. Still, Hayes is one of the better authors working and I don't regret taking the time to listen to this book. However, Mr. Hayes' performance in "NPCs" and "Superpowered" is significantly better than here and anyone who hasn't read those should do so first.

What follows is my original review which is essentially a poorly written rant but which I am retaining for the specifics contained therein: Read on if you wish but nothing below should be taken as contradicting the opinion that the book, while flawed, was still worth the read.

I'm a Drew Hayes fan since he writes two of the best series it has been my pleasure to read (NPCs and Superpowered). Therefore I was tempted to run out and immediately buy "Forging Hephaestus". What stopped me was the story line. "Join me or die" is just stupid. Saying such a thing just insures there can never be trust between the parties and removes any element of surprise when the "or die" aspect comes into play. I was so skeptical I didn't even immediately check out "Forging Hephaestus" when my library got it. But then I read "Superpowered Year 4" (in beta on Mr. Hayes' website, as I'm writing this review you'll have to wait for publication to read it now). Year 4 was so fantastic I could not imagine Mr. Hayes doing anything sub-par ever. Unfortunately "Forging Hephaestus" has brought me back down to earth.

Oddly enough, Mr. Hayes deals with my concern about the "join me or die" scenario. The blurb I read made it sound like a group of super villains recruited that way. It is a secret group of super villains but this group (the "Guild") has government and super hero approval. In return the Guild controls the really bad villains who would destroy the world (the world being where Guild members keep their stuff). (Reminds me of how, in Terry Pratchett's early Discworld books Lord Vetinari relied on the Thieves' Guild to regulate crime which they did because robbing the same guy twice means the second robber gets nothing and some other guy goes un-robbed.)

My problem with this book is, I was 6.93% in (I did the math) and the rationale for villains not killing the main character, Tori, was exhausted. Tori is told repeatedly she has to perform or die and she repeatedly fails to perform. So much so that a special apprenticeship is arranged for her. Why not kill her? Because the Guild is getting too many violent types in the younger generation and so it needs to put extra effort into recruits like Tori who are just rebellious. Fine, as far as that goes, although it fails to explain why the Guild isn't just killing the unwanted overly violent recruits- they are villains with a retirement to protect after all.

Tori's initial efforts in the book, which gets her into the guild, makes it clear she is extremely intelligent and competent but once in the guild time she is pretty much being nothing but stupid and whiny. I got fed up (6.93% in) when she's being pissy about having to work as a corporate intern. Like the idea of a cover identity is completely new to her???? So much for her being smart. Worse, she can't seem to grasp that fact that her life is in danger. When she can't even be bothered to do the simplest thing, like buckle her seat belt, without being made to do it, I honestly could not understand why the Guild would continue to waste time on her. Then she has to be made to attend an important meeting, which she whines about, then she has to have it explained to her that the Guild has other apprentices because she couldn't figure that out??? Then she has the big revelation that The Guild of Super Villains has bad people in it who really would kill her??????????

Finally Mr. Hayes' abilities reassert themselves and the book becomes quite good, with the notable exception of Tori realizing FOR THE SECOND TIME THAT THE GUILD OF SUPER VILLAINS REALLY WOULD KILL HER. (It comes after a very well written group test of all the guild's apprentices.) Then an insanely convenient scene occurs where robbers force their way into the corporate office where Tori and her mentor, Ivan, work. As if that isn't convenient enough, one of their co-workers recently became a "meta" but has kept to himself. And if that isn't convenient enough, a coffee shop employee from across the

street also recently became a meta. And, if that isn't convenient enough, coffee shop girl is actually in the corporate office to cater an event.

Then the book gets good again for a long while until the conclusion. If you do not wish to risk SPOILERS skip to the last paragraph.

Given his children are the absolute focus of his life it is bizarre Ivan didn't have them better protected. How did the bad guys find them? And why hadn't Ivan, whose best friend is the genius leader of the Guild, figure it out first and guard against it? It was also stupid how Ivan decided his kids were dead- he just assumes the bad guy attempting to kill them wouldn't screw up. What was that based on? We see little of that bad guy's powers except in the finale, where he pretty much screws everything up. Apparently Ivan's kids don't have cell phones so he couldn't even attempt to call them?? But, wait, they did because we are told a silly story of how his daughter is constantly losing her cell phone charger. Plus Ivan isn't that close to ex so it seems likely he wouldn't have been told if his kids had stayed home sick (making them absent for the attack on their school). In short, Ivan, who has been an intelligent character otherwise, acts like a complete moron throughout the climax, really just to allow Tori to shine.

Back to the super-geniuses (literally) behind both the Guild and heroes, neither of who were very smart. They both saw this coming, had wealth, armies and tech at their disposal and the best plan they could come up with was to let it happen? From the story as told they never even attempted to bug or infiltrate the bad guys. Plus, how stupid is it that when the crap hits the fan the super-geniuses big plan relies on their heavy-hitter, Lodestar, answering her cell phone? (Which Lodestar doesn't.)

Apollo, the superhero protagonist, is beyond belief stupid for trusting this world's mash up of Joker and Dr. Strange. Basically his reasoning is "I don't like criminals so I'm going to put my trust in the worst criminal I know to bring in a bunch of people I think of as criminals but really aren't since they haven't been caught committing any crime".

If it were possible to be worse than Apollo, then Lodestar would win. After all, she's known for years that something would eventually come up that would require her return to crime fighting, and yet she had no plans in place in case of emergency. As a result Lodestar's arrival is delayed by a crucial ½ hour WHILE SHE GETS A BABYSITTER?????

The hero's genius even knew who was going to betray them but FAILED TO PREPARE FOR THE BETRAYAL IN ANY WAY. This is specially exasperating given the betrayer proposed a city-wide test of the hero's defenses, a set up that SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS TO THE HERO'S GENIUS WHO SHOULD HAVE, AT THE VERY LEAST, ARRANGED FOR BABYSITTING FOR LODESTAR IN ADVANCE.

The ending was too convenient and is clearly contrived to pave the way for a sequel. Also, it seemed bizarre to me that the heroes, after having a lot of their bacon saved by the villains, decide that now is the time to stop tolerating the Guild??? This is particularly bizarre since they weren't really tolerating it in the first place since the HEROES HAD NO EVIDENCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY BY THE GUILD.

BOTTOM LINE: While far from Mr. Hayes' best work still an okay read.

Superbunny says

This was awesome. Well written and not a boring minute! For someone who usually gets bored 15 minutes

into an audiobook, believe you me that this one is as exciting and interesting as they come. I listened to all 26 hours and 58 minutes of it. If you're ever interested in reading about superheroes and super villains this is the book for you. I can't wait for book 2!!!

Lukas Lovas says

5/5, 10/10...this book was great any way you look at it. Surprisingly original /considering how saturated the market is with the superhero themed stuff these days), thoroughly enjoyable, and an absolute pleasure to read through. I'm very much looking forward to the next book in the series.

Robert Maxwell says

Super villains, super heroes, robots, magic, dragons... what more could you ask for? Fantastic

Becky says

I honestly think Drew Hayes can do no wrong. (If you're reading this, Mr. Hayes, well done!)

I wasn't sure about this one at the beginning. It took time for me to bond with Tori and Ivan and the rest. But, with a book this long, there was plenty of time to get attached. By the end, I was wanting more and was sorry it was over. Now I can't decide which of this author's series I want him to hurry and work on next, because there are so many, and every one of them is golden. (Get to work, Mr. Hayes, get to work!)

Linda says

An addictive intricately woven fantasy in a world of villains and heroes!

“Sooner or later, they’ll realize that having one spider in the house kills a lot of the lesser insects.”

Forging Hephaestus by Drew Hayes was an addictive intricately woven fantasy set in a world of villains and heroes. It was a given that I’d pick up this listen as soon as I saw it because I’m a sucker for super hero tales. Also, my appetite for more books by Drew Hayes had been previously whetted by another of Drew Hayes’ fun, witty and fascinating books - The Utterly Uninteresting and Unadventurous Tales of Fred, The Vampire Accountant. Look for my review of it soon!!!!

Forging Hephaestus was told mostly from the villains’ viewpoint. Readers quickly find that there’s a fine line in defining a villain versus a hero, i.e., there’s heroes within the villains and villains within the heroes. As a bit of history, some villains who prized their freedom realized that they needed to set some bare bone rules so as to ensure that they remained jail-free. Those villains formed The Guild of Villainous Reformation and enacted a code that all metas who joined their Guild had to ascribe to. The same occurred on the other side of the fence, as the heroes formed The Alliance of Heroic Champions commonly referred to as the Capes.

As the story opens, we find Tori Rivas, a meta-human, in the process of breaking into a secure facility when she's caught by the vault's owner, Doctor Mechaniacal. Given a choice of being taken out or joining the Guild, she smartly chooses the Guild (duh!) where she becomes an apprentice. Ivan - formerly known as Fornax, a super powerful and supposedly dead villain - becomes her mentor to oversee her schooling in the ins-and-outs of villainy. We then follow assorted supers, Tori and other apprentices as they face perils galore. There's infighting and outfighting and, of course, those who don't follow the rules... Oh my!

There's a diverse array of heroes and villains. Some of their name choices were absolutely hilarious. A case in point: Johnny Three Dicks. I was pulling for Donald, who becomes a Cape. He was a quiet nerdy geek bigly into video games who becomes a meta able to manifest weapons from those same video games. He has a thing for Tori and I hope he gets more attention in a sequel. Another was a caterer who could turn various common sayings such as "liar, liar, pants on fire" into reality. Imagine using that talent in a fight... Another villain was a she-dragon with multiple colorful forms and associated capabilities. Even though all the characters were supers, they were excellently written to be oddly relatable and surprisingly believable. Sounds crazy, but it's true.

Following please find a few of my favorite quotes from Forging Hephaestus:

"There may come times that you will regret not just dying when you had a chance."

"Try not to let them scare you too much. But, don't forget, that they are scary people."

Ivan, task handled, lowered his hand, pausing only to pop his knuckles. He turned to face his apprentice. He cleared his throat, and took one quick glance over his shoulder where the angry giant robot stormed across the desert, before addressing Tori.

"That was satisfactory."

"To put it as simply as possible, I ate a god."

Amy Landon was the narrator for the audio edition of Forging Hephaestus. She did an exemplary job bringing this tale to life. Her voices for each character were distinct, memorable and consistent. She exuded the proper emotions with the appropriate nuances. I would also mention that she did an extraordinary job fitting voices to the characters as some entities are more machine than human-like and the voices she used for each seemed to perfectly fit their physical forms. The performance was polished and professional. Forging Hephaestus was the longest audio I've ever listened to at twenty-seven hours, yet I was incredibly disappointed when it ended as I wanted more! I am beyond impressed that for as long as this audio was, I never once lost interest and was never ever bored.

If you require a bit of romance in your reads, then you should look elsewhere as this listen was 99% bereft of romance. The lone exception was Donald's aforementioned shy crush on Tori. I actually didn't have time to miss it as the story's action-packed plot line and dangerous stakes at every turn kept things busy! Forging Hephaestus was fun, humorous and well-written with intriguing, well-developed characters and on-point pacing. I can't wait to read more stories set in this world. Hopefully, soon!

My full review is posted at Reading Between The Wines Book Club. Please check it out there:

<http://www.readingbetweenthewinesbook...>

Trevor Sherman says

A surprisingly deep book about superheros and villains. Drew is great at taking a silly premise and making you really care for the goofballs though, So I shouldn't be surprised by this one. I will try to get a full review up on my blog <https://thebloggoblin.com/> soon but for now this is well worth the 5 stars

Lindsey says

So we get a villain story in a world of supers!

Tori is meant to be a too difficult apprentice in the big baddies guild. In the villains guild the ever important code is more important than doing crimes. This is one aspect that makes you question how bad these baddies are as they have to get their crimes approved to ensure no loved ones on either side of the good or bad field are hurt. Anyways Tori has been bucking against her teachers and it comes down to either death or taken under the wing of a single mentor. This was really less dramatic than I was hoping as she and Ivan(mentor) go through some guild training. It isn't like the hero training in the Superpowereds series. Tori has it hanging over her head the whole time that one bad move equals death.

You also get some fun...

With surprisingly less evil undertones!

One of my favorite aspects about this female lead, very little focus on romance and she is far from sexualized. Tori isn't just gifted with powers of fire but a natural brilliance. I can't find the exact line but I will update when I do... She acknowledges she may not be the most brilliant like whoever came up with the wheel. But she can certainly improve on it's function by creating the first axle. Love it!

My favorite aspect of Mr. Hayes writing is the depth glimpsed in minor characters. For example there is a baddie who is a dimensional hopper, Nexus. That dude is not just bonkers but brings about plot details that make you insanely curious. But he isn't at any point really a part of the plot, well mostly. Then you get like maybe 3 brief glimpses at one character, Kristoff and it is obvious you would certainly read a separate story on him. And to say anything about Kristoff ruins the surprise! Or Xelas the robot who freed herself from a hero's sex slavery. No, that point of slavery is not explained just covered that she won her freedom so no worries if that freaks you out.

I did get an advance copy of this book in return for a review. I was going to buy it no matter what though. I will probably still get the audiobook because why not?! <3

GaiusPrimus says

Holy crap... I don't even know what to say about this book. Might have to take a few days to make something out of the awesomeness spinning around the brain right now.

If you get the choice between written or read, take the read. It might take longer to get through it, but the narrator was spectacular.

Is there anything Mr. Hayes can't write about? At this point in time, I think I would read technical manuals for routers if he wrote them. I would read scientific papers about the growth scales of mollusks. Hell, I would read fridge magnet poetry.

Well done Mr. Hayes, well done.

Barbara Douglas says

Drew Hayes does it again! Forging Hephaestus is emphatically a Drew Hayes novel. It is long -- it took me three days to read. The tone is light-hearted, the language is fairly colloquial, the plotting is complex, and the cast of characters is large. The over-all plot, discounting the details, is bordering on the formulaic, so, if you want formal, poetic language, read Patrick Rothfuss. If you want to have no idea where the plot is heading, also read Rothfuss. But for all it was clear where the plot had to go, getting there was a lot of fun. Hayes draws characters that are believable and loveable, creates situations that are all the more fun for the fact that you see them coming, and peppers the whole with highly entertaining snarky observations. For instance, in the middle of what can only be described as a 'boss battle' involving fireballs, this observation occurs: "His undergarments survived, thanks solely to the fact that a life in villainy had taught him the importance of extra-durable boxers, "

And of course, brilliantly entertaining action sequences.

So, this is a classic Hayes set up: a world with superheroes and villains, here organised into two rival guilds, each with a training program and a set of expectations. Tori, the main character, is a petty thief with tech and fire abilities (one might say she is over powered, but when so many characters are it becomes irrelevant) drawn into the villains' guild; she makes friends with a programmer who acquires an ability of his own and becomes a hero. Conflict between the groups inevitably ensues, with all the attendant chaos.

I recommend this book to anyone who likes superhero stories, and I sincerely hope that it sell well enough to prompt Drew to get the next volume out as quickly as is consistent with quality. In fact, though I received an ARC, I will be buying a copy to share with my son as soon as I can.

Timothy Boyd says

Very good superhero novel. Drew Hayes always gives you an interesting and fun read. I was interesting comparing this story to his magnum opus superhero series Super Powered. Very enjoyable. Recommended

Mikhail says

Drew Hayes is sort of my version of an airport novel. Villain's Code isn't the most innovative book out there, but it's solid and fun and keeps my attention. If you like superheroes, definitely worth a read, though I suspect the plot would be a bit lost on someone who doesn't know the superhero/villain tropes very well.
