



## Rising Stars Compendium

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Launched in 1999, *Rising Stars* is about a group of people who are born with special abilities after a mysterious light appears in the sky. Parallels have been drawn between this series and *The 4400* TV series on USA Network and *Heroes* on NBC.

This new collection includes all 24 issues of J. Michael Straczynski's run on *Rising Stars*, as well as all three spin-off mini-series written by his protégé, Fiona Avery.

## Rising Stars Compendium Details

Date : Published March 1st 2009 by Image Comics (first published December 29th 2007)

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Author : J. Michael Straczynski

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## From Reader Review Rising Stars Compendium for online ebook

### **Lirio Dendron says**

Very good!

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### **Leigh Ann says**

Loads of exposition. Loads and loads of it.

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### **Aaron says**

good story. good characters

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### **Molokov says**

The complete Rising Stars collection is in this volume - all 24 issues plus sundry spinoffs and specials - but they've subtitled it "Volume 1" which indicates there's a volume 2 coming? Weird marketing decision. This is a great comic series by jms giving some humanity to his super-powered "specials" as they grow up and work out why they think they have this gift in the first place.

Only other problem is the binding on this very thick book isn't great, and after a single read, I can tell that some pages are going to fall out very soon...

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### **Aaron says**

This is one of the coolest superhero comics I have read. It is a very powerful look into the what if people got powers all of a sudden. How would we react, how would they react. What could/would they do for us as a people. This story makes me realize why hollywood is relying on the comic industry for its stories. This is a great story that could easily be made into a movie/series.

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### **Keith Irwin says**

This is the very complete collection of an epic about a group of people given superpowers. First let's talk about the main series. It's a big story which contains many little stories. This has the opportunity to both tell a large epic, but also to really flesh out some of the stories of individuals. I don't feel like it really lived up to its potential. The little stories were a mixed bag. Some of them connected emotionally. Others felt trite.

And the big story had some good parts, but so much of it was told in narration that it lost a lot of its punch. Plus some it got difficult to believe at parts. Obviously, it's reasonable for the author to expect the reader to accept the basic premise of the story and that requires a certain level of suspension of disbelief. But in the last third or so of the story there were some weird bits which relied upon things which seemed hard to believe. A couple of these were some dodgy science unrelated to the main premise. And in general, there were shadowy conspiracies at several points in the plot and the shadowy conspirators were all really good at being shadowy conspirators in a way that doesn't feel realistic. And the ending relies on a bunch of characters being way more trusting all of a sudden than they have been before then. I also found the main part of the ending pretty unsatisfying.

So, on the overall, I liked reading the series. The action was easy to follow and it was an interesting take on the idea of superheroes. But I didn't love it.

The collection also includes some bonus stuff like the #0 issue and the #1/2 issue. Most of this was pointless. There was one of them that I quite liked, but the rest didn't really seem worth reading.

There were also three spin-off series which told the stories of particular characters in more detail. On the whole, I liked these. They were able to get more in-depth with several characters who hadn't been fleshed out as well in the main series. However, I did find that with two of the three that the time-lines from the original series and the spin-off didn't feel like they quite meshed. You had something which seemed like, say, a decade in the main series, but then it only felt like a couple of years in one of the spin-offs. I can live with that, but it was odd. In net, I quite liked all three spin-off series (although the Matthew Bright one less than the other two) and was glad they were included.

In total, I liked the collection, but things just didn't come together in total quite as well as I would have liked. I felt like it had a little more potential than was actually expressed in practice. I sort of wonder if it would be better suited to be a television series where you could count on actors to help breathe more life into some of the characters via their performances and you could maybe have a little more time to delve into individual characters and their relationships.

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## **Mark says**

Story = 5 Stars

Production value of product = ZERO - pages started falling out the first time i opened it

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## **Cheese says**

3.5 stars.

This compendium contains the main story and then individual stories about some of the specials that you wish you knew more about in the main story.

I think there are four single stories, the one called *untouchable* and the ones called *dead bodies* are very good the others are a bit slow.

Overall it's a great story, starts off very slowly but comes up with some good ideas like 'what if there were people with powers?' What would they do if they actually existed?

They say this book is what heroes the TV show was based on, but don't let that put you off, because it shows no relation to it at all.

The artwork is good, but there just weren't enough interesting characters to keep my interested.

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### **Albert Yates says**

Rising Stars tells the story of a group of children who all received powers when a flash illuminated in the sky when they were all still in-utero. The story follows the kids as they grow up, as they learn the use their powers and trust themselves.

Each of 113 children have different powers that they learn to control at a government run facility.

You can see where this is going now can't you? Government doesn't trust them, they don't trust the government.

Surprisingly, none of the kids turned to the dark-side through out most of their lives. I found this odd that they accepted their roles in life and mostly did good things when they could. Though some of the lesser powered members attempted to lead a normal life in the suburbs.

What you don't expect from this book is such an engrossing story. I got lost in this world, when the book ended after the 24 issues were over, I was fully satisfied. The story had come to a wonderful conclusion that left no doubt in my mind that it couldn't have ended any other way.

The rest of the omnibus contained other related stories that filled in some of the gaps in the events from when the kids were first learning about themselves.

They released 2 mini-series: 1 about Lionel and his ability to interact with ghost, and another about the mysterious past of Laurel and her dealings with the government after she graduated.

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### **Russell says**

I read *Rising Stars* in its serial format years ago and always wanted to revisit it. Reading the *Rising Stars Compendium* was the perfect way to do so, because now I could read all of the extra series and issues along with the 24 issues written by J. Michael Straczynski.

I've read a lot of JMS' work in comics (Amazing Spider Man, Supreme Power), but *Rising Stars* is my favorite. There is just something special about this story, something primal and hopeful and sad. It's also completely original, despite some of the comparisons of other works in tv etc.

This is the story of the Pederson 113, or the Pederson Specials, as they are more commonly referred to. It tells the story of 113 children born in Pederson, IL after a cosmic event hits their hometown while all of them

are in-utero. As the kids grow up they begin to exhibit abilities, wide-ranging and amazing. Some can fly and have super-strength, some can speak to the dead, some can mesmerize people with their singing voice...and so on. Their powers are as varied and complex as the colors of twilight horizon at sunset.

The story is told by one of the specials; John Simon...also known as Poet. His narrative begins with the backstory, but eventually leads to a crisis. Someone is killing Specials off, but no one knows who or why. He then embarks on a mission to unearth this mystery. Of course, this is where some *Watchmen* comparisons derive, but I think it's where they begin and end. The killer is revealed and then the terrible spiral of events begins in earnest for the Specials. You meet Ravenshadow: a crime fighter, Flagg: a superhuman who is a corporate figure-head, Pyre: a man who is composed of living flame, Clarence Mack: who can walk into your dreams and become part of them and Laurel Darkhaven: who has a special form of telekinesis that can only affect tiny objects, like a marble or smaller...but could be the most deadly of all of the Specials. There are many others as well, and JMS does an incredible job of showing you that although special, they are humans too, with prejudices, love and hatred.

There comes an impasse, later in their lives and John convinces them that most of them have been wasting their powers. His message to humanity is this: **Change the world, or we'll do it for you.** The Specials invoke their power worldwide, and do amazing things, in part because one of them is elected President of the United States...but not all stories have a happy ending. However, sometimes they can still be filled with hope.

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### **Primo Flores says**

I started reading/buying this comic back in the early 2000's when I was working at Kobey's Swap Meet selling books, I met a guy there we all called "Waldo" (or Millhouse?...something like that, man, time flies...), his name is Gabriel. Gabe was the one to introduce me to some of my favorite shit ever, like Preacher, or Lord of the Rings (He lent me his book and I never returned it), among these recommendations he also talked about Rising Stars, I remember how hyped he was while pitching it to me so I decided to "Gabe" it a go (...get it?). I bought #8 I think, and my mind was blown with this gimmick I'd never seen before in a comic book, still I didn't finish the whole thing until this year (long compendium, 1100 pgs), 15 years later.... MIND BLOWN again.

Not gonna tell you about the story 'cuz really, What is there to say about a superhero comic book?, if you want a reference I would say "Watchmen + that Shitty "Heroes" TV show, but done right..."

...So back to the gimmick, there's this guy who can talk with the dead ('cuz comic books), he lives isolated 'cuz he's fed up of dead dudes showing up with their problems... the story goes on, blah blah blah, superhero shit, adventures, etc, and by the end of this episode you see the dead talking guy sitting down on a couch, this left me wondering what the fuck, right?, what a dumb way to finish a perfectly good chapter, but then you start turning the page and you notice that the stuff on the back is now visible, and what do you see?, yep!, a

bunch of dead dudes talking to the guy, it was a really cool way to play with translucency.

Anyways, Thanks Gabe, wherever you are, I tried locating him to give him the LOTR back and you know, to get more recommendations, and then I heard from a mutual acquaintance that he's lost in drugs, possibly heavy drugs, anyways, Gabe I hope you're all good, man, take it easy and I still have your book in case you want it back...

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### **Marquis says**

This story of 100 plus children gaining super powers and growing into adulthood with varying personalities is very exciting! Filled with surprises, betrayals and gripping storytelling, anyone who loved Stand By Me, Sleepers or the X-Men will love this story about people who just happen to have powers!

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### **Darth says**

Really huge and rich series! Think Freakangels, but instead of seeing just a snippet of their lives at a critical junction, you explore every stage. Rather than being tedious, you get a more faceted picture typical superhero tropes. And there's an ending! An actual direction and some sense of meaning behind why the Specials exist--one of the things that's always bugged me about worlds that take superheros just as a given. There is so much potential for spin-off, and the writers give you enough space to explore what-ifs.

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### **Curtis Schofield says**

Amazing story - Incredible work.

Terrible Binding - the publisher's binding is absolute crap.

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### **Neville Wylie says**

This is an excellent series, loved every minute of it.

Its an amazing idea that I fell in love with straight away and the characters are well written and well fleshed out. Its inspired TV shows and you can see why although none of those shows live up to this ... highly recommend

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