



My Name is Legion

Roger Zelazny

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He did not exist...or did he?

He had destroyed his punchcards and changed his face. There was no credit card, birth record, or passport for him in the International Data Bank. His names were many...any he chose. His occupation was taking megarisks in the service of a vast global detective agency. His interworld assignments were highly lucrative, incalculably vital, and terrifyingly deadly. And more often than not, his life was a living hell!

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- 65 · 'Kjwalll'kje'k'koothailll'kje'k · na An Exaltation of Stars, ed. Terry Carr, Simon & Schuster, 1973
- 141 · Home Is the Hangman · na Analog Nov '75 (Nebula Award for Best Novella, 1975)

My Name is Legion Details

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From Reader Review My Name is Legion for online ebook

Gaby says

Yeah. I really didn't get into "My Name is Legion". Our protagonist is a James Bond type who managed to avoid having his info in this futuristic Google/Scandinavian personal data system, and who creates new identities to go solve mysteries. There are three stories in total, and the premises actually sound cool enough: stopping sabotage, clearing the name of dolphins unrightfully accused of a crime, saving people from a robot from outer space. But I simply didn't like Zelazny's writing. I can't put my finger on it. It was hectic, disorganized, ranty, and the characters and dialogue were meh at best. An example:

"I think I might be in love with you."

"Then, for gods' sakes, let me talk to you later. I have lots of things to think about, now."

"All right."

"You're a dumb broad."

"I don't think so."

"Well, we'll see."

...

By the time I reached the 3rd Frankenstein-esque story, which I later found received an Hugo, I was half skimming through it. I partially blame myself- I had other books lying around that I was eager to start reading, so perhaps I should just have waited until I was in the mood for this. Unfair as it may be, I can't give this more than one star.

A Librería says

Tenemos, por tanto, una obra con forma de novela de acción y aventuras, pero inconfundiblemente de ciencia ficción por su temática. Tiene un toque de fantasía en su estilo y un importante trasfondo de reflexión filosófica, que tal vez nos pueda pasar desapercibida a algunos lectores en medio de las conspiraciones y misiones de nuestro endurecido protagonista. Es una obra entretenida en la que apenas tienes un momento de descanso, pues la tensión es casi constante, si bien puede resultar un poco complicada de seguir. Esto se debe sobre todo a la forma de narrar, que recuerda al fluir del pensamiento siendo un tanto caótica. Como lectora, hubiera agradecido que el autor profundizase más en ciertos aspectos morales del mundo que crea y en algunos adelantos técnicos y nuevas formas de poblar el planeta como las "ciudades- burbuja" (asentamientos submarinos), sin embargo el resultado es bastante satisfactorio.

Crítica completa en: <https://alibreria.com/2017/08/28/%E2%...>

Dan Schwent says

Eve of RUMOKO: Someone is attempting to sabotage the RUMOKO project, a project that creates volcanoes on the ocean floor for the purpose of creating more land for an overpopulated Earth. Albert

Schweitzer, an engineer, tips to what is happening. Only, Schweitzer's not an engineer and doesn't even exist at all...

For a story written forty years ago, the tone is pretty relevant today. The man with no name, the protagonist, is a former computer programmer that erased himself from a global database so he couldn't be tracked and goes around doing good deeds for exorbitant sums of money. Although the future of 2007 isn't quite accurate, the undersea domes, for example, the idea of a huge database containing every bit of available data known to man seems spot on. Our nameless hero seems like he might be an inspiration for Repairman Jack. The story itself isn't fantastic but I'm a big fan of the ideas presented within, both the creation of artificial islands (didn't Stephenson do that in *The Diamond Age*?) and the man who doesn't officially exist.

Kjawlll'kje'k'koothai'lll'kjr'k: Two men are dead and it looks as if a dolphin is to blame. Our nameless hero begins poking around, leading him into a plot involving adultery, diamonds, and questions about dolphins and their culture...

I didn't enjoy the second story as much as the first but it was still good. While the plot wasn't spectacular, the conjectures about dolphins and their society and/or religion made up for it. I didn't expect Martha Millay to play such a prominent role when she was introduced.

Home is the Hangman: An artificially intelligent planet exploring robot, the Hangman, has returned to earth to exact vengeance on his creators. Or has he...

This was quite a yarn. For a novella, it sure had a lot of twists. Our nameless hero continues taking megarisks for his client, Don. The Hangman's creators were an interesting bunch and, as I said, it had enough twists to rise above its seemingly simple plot.

While *My Name is Legion* isn't my favorite Roger Zelazny book, it's also far from my least favorite. I'd recommend it to fans of spy novels, since the nameless protagonist is more of a spy than anything else. The man with no name reminds me of John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee at times and Repairman Jack at others. He should be a well-received character by fans of either.

Ann says

Het las als een ineen geflanste reeks verhaaltjes.

Michael says

I have been in the mood to re-read Roger Zelazny books lately. I'm currently re-reading *My Name is Legion*. The hero who, like Zelazny, worked for the government. I believe Zelazny got the idea for this character while working for the Social Security Administration. His character is able to completely wipe out any record of his existence from the new "world data base" that he was involved with creating and programming. As a result, he is also able to create new lives for himself at will. He uses this tool to become a sort of super-spy trouble shooter for hire on "impossible type missions". This book has three related stories or missions. All are superb...

The first is "The Eve of RUMOKO" about a plan to use nuclear explosives to create artificial islands but

there is a saboteur on the project that he has been hired to identify and stop. "'Kjwalll'kje'k'koothai'lll'kje'k" is about a diver who has been apparently killed by dolphins at a research station in the Bahamas and our hero has been hired to clear the dolphins of wrongdoing and find the real culprit.

"Home Is the Hangman" is about a space-exploration robot lost in space years before who has become sentient and has returned to Earth to apparently kill his creators. Our hero must find the Hangman and stop it with time running out. This is the best of the 3 stories and won a Hugo and Nebula Awards for best novelette.

Jim says

A surprisingly engaging trilogy.

The prose was a little choppy at times, and sometimes a bit disconnected, but not too bad. Reminds me a bit of Steven King.

Voss says

Tre racconti con protagonista il tecnico-mercenario senza fissa identità.

Non dei grandi racconti, ma gradevoli. Ci si interroga su cosa sia la persona, cosa ci renda ciò che siamo e cosa sia l'intelligenza e tutti i soliti interrogativi della fantascienza, dagli anni sessanta del Novecento in poi. Il protagonista è poco credibile, ma penso sia la parte meno importante dei racconti :)

Evgeny says

There was a guy who completely erased himself from literally everywhere. According to all imaginable records he simply did not exist. Because he had to make his living somehow he played a secret agent for a big detective agency. He was very much like James Bond aka 007, only the latter always mixed up with high society wearing a tux

while our unnamed hero (he remains unnamed throughout the book) had to play a blue-collar worker.

The book consists of three novellas about different cases untangled by MC.

Eve of RUMOKO. Somebody was sabotaging RUMOKO project. The goal of the project was to create volcanoes in the middle of the ocean for the purpose of ultimately creating new land mass to ease the overpopulation problems.

Feat not, our guy is on the watch. Unfortunately he had no clue about the consequences of his actions...

Kjawlll'kje'k'koothai'lll'kjr'k. I challenge anybody to pronounce this word, or even memorize its spelling. Anyhow a couple of people were killed and it looks like dolphins are to blame.

A rich person decided to protect the name of highly intelligent mammals and the nameless guy had to risk his

life yet again.

Home is the Hangman. Zelazny did his damned to avoid using the word "robot", but this is the exact description of the creation playing the main role in this one.

A highly intelligent deep space exploration robot was trained by four people (basically it amounted to it creating copies of their brains). For some reason it never occurred to anybody that mapping four different brains in one place is a sure way of creating schizophrenia, and in the end it looked like exactly this had happened. To make the problem worse the robot came back to Earth. Deep space exploration ready meant it was practically indestructible, so it was up to the nameless guy to stop it.

The first surprise that came to me during the reading and stayed through the whole book was that it was still very much relevant, more than 40 years after its publication. The MC preferred to retain privacy while modern people cheerfully give it up to save a couple of cents on groceries, or to annoy their friends with their pictures of their cats on social media. This was just the most obvious idea; I am not spoiling the book revealing the rest. Great science fiction writers *indeed* predicted the future.

This was not the best from Zelazny, but not the worst either. Zelazny's "not the best" is miles ahead of an average science fiction work. Good fast-moving stories with great predictions of the future equal to 4 stars in my rating system. I usually hate the mixture of science fiction and spy novels or mysteries, but this time it worked.

Jim says

This is a collection of 3 stories with a central character, a man with no name. Sound familiar? Well, it's not a Clint Eastwood western, but it is a fun set of SF-Mystery stories. I get the impression that Zelazny was wondering about some things, kind of thinking out loud.

In the first story, "Rumoko", we meet the head programmer of the world bank database. He decided that the system he labored on so long, a database that contains every fact about every person on Earth, might not be such a good thing, so he drops out of the system & becomes a wandering troubleshooter. He's tough, smart & can be anyone he wants to be thanks to his backdoor into the database. He takes on interesting jobs such as protecting a project which is creating a new island chain by blowing holes in the Earth's crust with atomic weapons. But should he?

The second story has an unpronounceable name, "Kjawlll'kje'k'koothai'lll'kjr'k", & explores dolphin intelligence, philosophy & possibly their religion.

The last story is "Home is the Hangman" which was also published as a separate novella & with some short stories in another book. A deep space exploration robot is more intelligent than its creators counted on.

All in all, not his favorite work of mine, but a good read.

Michael says

My Name is Legion is an interesting trilogy about a man with no identity. Sure, the content is interesting, but what makes it so fascinating is how the quality of the three stories are so different. You have one amazing story, one average story, and one that is best to be swept underneath the carpet and never heard from again.

The Eve of Rumoko is the carpet sweeper. The dialog is a mess, the story is a mess and is incredibly ranty. Seriously, my eyes glossed over several times and I was reading during the day with what I thought was good sleep. I almost felt like this was taken from Zelazny's high school days when he was starting to find his gift.

Kjwalll'kje'koorthai'lll'kje'k (don't ask me to spell that ever again) would be the average story. Actually any story that involves dolphins is probably average at best. It's almost a progression from the last tale. The dialog is slightly better, the rants are still pretty bad but this time we have content which leads to a decent conclusion.

Finally, we have Home is the Hangman. The amazing piece, the one that won a Nebula, the one that won a Hugo too. From the first page, it is easy to see that this story jumps off the page, right into your lap and nuzzles up to you for the hour, hour and a half that you will read it. The dialog is perfect and the few rants actually make sense to the story. The ending is well thought out and it's one of the best short stories I have ever read. It probably is the best "novella" length story I have ever read. Why it hasn't been made into a movie is beyond me.

Thankfully, Home is the Hangman is available elsewhere like Volume 4 (in Hardback) of the Roger Zelazny collection of stories. (Last Exit to Babylon) That way at least you don't have to go through two stinkers to get to the good parts. Amazing, even. But, much like life...sometimes you have to go through something awful to get to something good. Enjoy.

Frank Hood says

A marvelous book. Roger Zelazny's 3 tales written some 20 years apart featuring the same character. All 3 are enjoyable adventure yarns. The first is only that, the second, written years later adds much more interesting speculation and emotional depth, the last, again written years later, is so good that the first page makes you lean back in your chair and exhale mightily and the theme is worthy of the wonderful style--a yarn truly worthy of its Hugo. Rarely does one get the chance to see the growth of a writer demonstrated so clearly.

Thomas says

19 of 25 people found the following review helpful:
Almost great stories, August 25, 2008

My name is legion is a collection of three stories by Roger Zelazny.

- * The Eve of RUMOKO - three stars
- * Kjwalll'kje'koothai'lll'kje'k - four stars
- * Home Is the Hangman - five stars

The stories revolve around a mercenary secret agent that has erased his identity and makes a living doing dangerous investigative jobs using fake names. He can basically assume any identity (legion--many names).

The first story is set in the year 2007. The technology in 2007 is quite astounding with cities on the Ocean bottom, advanced space exploration, and the existence of truly intelligent super robots (the hang man). At the same time as the story is referring to tape drive and punch cards. Predicting the future is difficult. This is a little funny from a 2008 perspective. However, this is to expect. When people attempt to make predictions they typically extrapolate current technology and make the assumption that existing technology will be extremely advanced in the near future (in the 30's people said all cars would be flying by the 1970's). At the same time it is near impossible to predict entirely new technologies.

In the first story the agent is trying to solve a mystery regarding terrorist attempts against the project RUMOKO in which nuclear bombs are used to blast holes in the Moho layer below the Ocean bottom to create artificial volcanoes that will create new land (like Surtsey, Iceland) to mitigate earth's over population problem. Even though the story itself was not bad, I had a few problems with its context that I could not easily accept.

First, creating artificial land by having magma bubble up from the Ocean bottom is most likely counter productive since the magma below the Ocean surface is likely to push away enough water to reduce the coast line land area in excess of the tiny land you gain from the new Islands. To gain land the average depth of the Ocean must actually increase (because the Ocean water will not vanish). Let's make a calculation.

If we put 100 cones that are 5km tall and has a bottom radius of 50km in 4km deep water (crust is thin in deep water, like the Atlantic crust) then the amount of water pushed away is $100*(50^2*5*pi/3 - 10^2*pi/3) = 1,298,525$ km³ of water. 50km radius at the bottom makes a steep slope (10%) so this is probably an under estimation. Reality would likely be worse. The Ocean surface is around 361 million km² so we get that the Ocean rises $1,298,525/361,000,000 = 0.0036$ km = 3.6 meters. According to GIS statistics the World's coast line is around 900,000km. Since it is flat coast land that will be flooded, not the fjords of Norway, it is the flat coast land we should consider. If we assume 200 meters rise on 100 km for flat land (actually not very flat) we get 0.15 degrees. 3.6 meters (12 feet) divided by the sine of 0.15 yields 1.375km and assuming half of all coast line is flat land we get a land loss of $1.375 * 450,000 = 619$ thousand km² (size of Texas). If we use the formula for the lateral surface of a cone (the 100 volcanic cones we added) we get that we just added $100*315.7$ km² of land area to the world which is about 20 times less than what we lost on the coast line.

Secondly, exploding nuclear bombs on the Ocean floor and allowing massive amount magma to flow up into the Ocean cannot be good for the eco system of the Ocean, and the people living on the Ocean bottom (the Ocean bottom cities) are likely to complain.

Thirdly, you can much more easily create new land by building floating cities which will not push away lots of water, and you can irrigate the Sahara desert and other deserts. New volcanic islands have to be made fit for life anyway. Allowing this to happen naturally will take a very long time. These other approaches would be cheaper, quicker, safer, and not likely to be counter productive (in the sense described above). So why would anyone choose this silly and dangerous approach? I don't buy it. I say three stars.

The second story "Kjwalll'kje'koothai'lll'kje'k" was beautiful, thought provoking, and philosophical. This

story revolved around the sentience of dolphins and whether they can compose ideas or music or have a concept of spirituality, and also whether they are capable of murder. If you love Dolphins you will love this charming story, but I found the story to be a little bit too "dreamy" and speculative for me. If you love Dolphin salad you will not like this story (since it humanizes Dolphins).

The third story "Home Is the Hangman" was my favorite story. The "Hangman" was a space robot possessing what seemed to be "real autonomous intelligence" and perhaps self awareness. Having worked in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence myself I had a few objections, but not anything that most readers would care about. The story was believable (if set in the year 2057 or 2107 instead of 2007), and very exciting. The story took a few unexpected turns that took me by surprise, and explained the story at a deeper level. I love that sudden moment of dawning comprehension that explains what is going on and makes the story better. It shows that the plot was very well thought through.

Overall this was a good book, but not good enough to go on my list of favorite classic Science Fiction, and the author does not match up to Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, James Blish, and Robert Heinlein in my opinion. Well, I have only read one Zelazny book, so far, so that may be a hasty judgment. The book is recommended to hard core Science Fiction fans but not recommended to those looking for only the best of Classic Science Fiction.

Devero says

Originariamente pubblicati come tre racconti separati dello stesso personaggio, qui vengono raccolti come se fossero un romanzo. Fantascienza in parte datata e in parte invece attualissima (telepresenza) resta una lettura più che gradevole.

Ron says

Three stars is a gift. Better than most Zelazny, which isn't saying much. "Home is the Hangman" is the only novella of the three that is worth reading.

Despite writing this forty years ago, Zelazny avoided the obvious technology and historical problems.

Hard to believe the Brothers Hidebrandt did that insipid cover art.

Timothy Boyd says

An excellent selection of short stories by one of my favorite writers. Great reading if you need something for short periods of time. Very recommended
