



# Legends

*John W. Otte*

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## **Legends** John W. Otte

A young superhero.

A legend reborn.

And a whole mess of zombies.

Failstate (a.k.a., Robin Laughlin) thought his life would get easier after he'd earned his superhero license. But now a legendary superhero has returned from the dead...along with a horde of shambling horrors who want to eat his brains.

New Chayton's other licensed heroes are indisposed, meaning that the whole weight of protecting the city has fallen on Failstate. And nobody thinks he's up to the challenge. At least he has help from his older brother, Gauntlet, and his best friend, Veritas. Or does he?

As if the zombie apocalypse weren't enough, complicating things are not one but two beautiful girls vying for Failstate/Robin's affections—and his own powers are doing something...interesting.

In the superhero business, interesting is bad.

Legends walk the streets of New Chayton. If Failstate can somehow survive the next few weeks, he could become one of them.

## **Legends Details**

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## **From Reader Review Legends for online ebook**

### **Eileen says**

It had to have zombies! I didn't care for that and almost threw it down (except it was in my NOOK). But it turned out to be pretty good. Failstate is still the underdog of superheroes, but has matured considerably in this book. I love the characters, and it really was a good story. Great for teenagers/young adults.

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### **Carol R. says**

teens will love it! great sequel!

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### **Maryclare Fawver says**

Funny!!

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### **Gretchen says**

#### **Solid superhero sequel**

Failstate is an ideal superhero role model for teens. He's an awkward teenager with the powerful but somewhat (okay, really) unrefined ability to destroy things.

In Failstate Legends, he's the holder of a superhero's license but the governing authorities are none too excited that he's the city's protector.

Superheroes from around the country converge on New Chayton as a crop of zombies show up on the scene. Among the undead is a very alive Prohibition era superhero; Sarge has been brought back to life, but is he who the city needs for the 21st century?

Failstate has his doubts and that puts him at odds with his superiors.

Out of his superhero alter-ego, Robin deals with normal teen stuff like rivalry with his older, cooler brother, Ben aka Gauntlet, a strained relationship with his best friend, Mike aka Veritas, and a cute new redhead, Charlene.

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### **Chris says**

John has done it again with the follow-up to his first Failstate novel, which I may like even more than the first. This time around Robin is dealing with a host of problems, not the least of which is zombies. The book is jam-packed with mystery, excitement, romance, new super heroes, and everything you need to have a good story. And, as other reviewers have noted, these books aren't just for kids! John is one of the more skilled authors I've read in the past few years and I can't wait to see what he's got in store for us in the next

book.

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### **Gillian Bronte Adams says**

In *Legends*, John W. Otte pens a slam-bang sequel to *Failstate*. I sat down to sneak a quick peek into the story and didn't get up until I'd finished it. With a plot that keeps twisting like your favorite roller coaster ride, zombies on the loose, and *Failstate*'s superpowers doing some surprising things, there's never a dull moment in *Legends*.

Reading about *Failstate*, *Gauntlet*, and *Veritas* felt like hanging out with old friends. And I enjoyed meeting the new cast of characters as well.

For a superhero, life's often a non-stop cycle of saving the world from one major disaster after another, but sometimes it's the little things that count. I loved the way *Legends* demonstrated this. *Failstate* does his fair share of world-saving, but it was in those little moments of humility and those little acts of service, that he really shone.

I definitely recommend both *Failstate* and *Legends* for any fan of superheroes! Now I'm eagerly awaiting the next book in the series.

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### **Matthew Sampson says**

After a five-star review for *Failstate*, I have mixed feelings about *Legends*. I must admit, I've never really been impressed with the *Failstate* villains or situations, which I believe to be the series' biggest drawback. The concept of a teenaged Christian superhero with a deforming power *works*—but the weakest part of *Failstate* was definitely the big bad's identity. *Legends* has a better villain, probably the best in the series so far, but unfortunately that's not saying much. The conflict also feels contrived, as if a number of disparate elements have been tied together with a weak explanation, and the villain's rapid assumption of new powers left the heroes with no other way out than *deus ex machina*—new powers all around.

I ended the book feeling confused about the resurrection technology that sparks the plot. Is the character called Sarge really the original Sarge? While he is introduced as sharing the original Sarge's traits and memories, the original Sarge was a revered superhero, and I can't reconcile the two opposing images in my mind. An alternative option is mentioned by one character, who states that Sarge has been "animated by dark forces"—so he has been corrupted by the resurrection technology, and now is willing to do villainous things even though he is still the same person? That doesn't sit right with me. Perhaps I could accept him as a clone, but again, traits and memories don't necessarily pass to a clone. I would have liked to see more explanation of this for better closure.

(By the way, people shouldn't accept resurrection that easily, even—*especially* in a superhero world. Hast thou ever heard of changelings, oh ye S.H.I.E.L.D. renamed? Illusionists? Animators? There are a myriad of ways to fake resurrection, and it's not even addressed?)

Those are the weakest parts of the book. The best part of the book? Etzal'el. Though he's present only in a

few scenes, he carries each of them brilliantly. He's a thoroughly compelling character, and I hope to see more of him in the next book; also, I would definitely read a standalone with him as the protagonist, an idea I've seen floating around in other reviews and on the author's blog. I also enjoyed seeing recurring characters: Ben/Gauntlet, Mike/Veritas and the eponymous Robin/Failstate, whose character development over the last book was extended in this. I particularly liked seeing Gauntlet and Failstate as a team and I would like to see more of that relationship.

Rating: A diffident three stars. I've criticised more than praised in this review, but I did enjoy *Legends*, and I plan to read *Nemesis* soon.

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### **Stephanie C says**

[Sarge showed up and I pictured Chris Evans. But he sure didn't act like Captain America! (hide spoiler)]

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### **Tom says**

Cannot wait for the third and final book!

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### **Jill Williamson says**

Teen superhero Failstate thought life would get easier now that he'd earned his superhero license. But when a legendary superhero returns from the dead and brings with him a horde of zombies, Failstate is a bit flustered. Dozens of professional superheroes come in from all over the world to help, and most of them are treating Failstate like a kid when New Chayton is HIS town to protect!

Nobody thinks he can get the job done. Plus his older brother, Gauntlet, and his best friend, Veritas, aren't helping like they could; two beautiful girls are vying for Failstate's affections; and his own powers are going wacko. What's a superhero to do?

The Failstate series might look like books for kids, but like so many other young adult titles out there, these are fun for grownups too. The humor, rousing action, and mystery is totally addicting! John Otte is going to be a major figure in science fiction and fantasy. Do yourself a favor and read these books. You won't be disappointed.

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### **John Otte says**

I loved it! Best book ever! I mean . . . wait, this isn't kosher, is it? ;)

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## **Adam Graham says**

The teenage superhero Failstate (Robin Laughlin) won his Vigilante license as a result of a reality TV show and returns to his hometown of New Chayton facing a brand new challenge: the emergence of zombies on the streets of New Chayton.

Unfortunately, while New Chayton is allotted several licensed heroes, Failstate is the only one available. His liaison officer with the government agency that regulates costumed vigilantes invites a swarm of licensed heroes to New Chayton to assist in the challenge. Can the sixteen year old stand up in the company of legends (including the most legendary hero of all?)

The book works quite well, but is perhaps best in the character development department. Failstate, unlicensed heroes Gauntlet (aka Robin's brother Ben), and Veritas (aka Mike) all were in the first book. All three characters are changing but in a realistic and believable fashion. It's great to see how the relationship between Gauntlet and Failstate evolves throughout the book.

I also have to give kudos to Otte for a couple new characters. I loved the vigilante Kynetic (Kyn) and Etzal'el was a character I thought I wouldn't like but I actually found to be really fun. Either one of these would be great for a spin-off book.

The story itself is very well-written and fast-paced with a lot of plot developments on its way to the final conclusion. Failstate: Legends has everything you'd expect in a superhero story and all of it well done with plenty of battles, intrigue, and a good deal of suspense get thrown into the mix.

I'm not a fan of zombie stories usually, but the zombies in Legends were a macguffin for our heroes and villains to have a plot around rather than the central point of the story.

The negatives of the story are few. We find out that Failstate's name is a bit of a misnomer as his power doesn't actually create a Failstate, which I guess would be kind of like finding out Spider-man had been bit by a radioactive ladybug. I'll also admit the set up for the final battle between Failstate and the main villain did stretch suspension of disbelief a little bit, but the stunning conclusion to the story more than makes up for it.

Finally, some people will have a problem with the fact that (without giving away the ending) the VOC (the agency that regulates superheroes in Failstate's universe) was really incompetent and poorly managed, with the left hand not knowing what the right is doing, power is abused, and government funds are embezzled and mismanaged with little to no oversight. However, I merely give the book points for realism.

Overall, Failstate Legends is a well-crafted story that continues the coming of age saga with a likable hero, a great supporting cast, and a well-done plot which provides a couple good life lessons along the way.

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## **Rachel says**

It was fun reading about Failstate again and meeting more heroes. I especially liked Dr. Olympus (she was so funny). I also liked Etal'el, who had some great advice. Failstate learning more about his powers was a treat because I had been wondering if more would be discovered. I also liked how the story brought in "history" of

the heroes, which was creative and added to the world of the superheroes. The story was a bit more grown up (maybe even a little dark) in one spot, such as stopping drug lords who also did other crimes. Even though the story was good, I felt it was a bit slow at times and that some of the side stories could have been mixed a little more with the main story. A couple of times it seemed like to big a break between events with the zombies. But, the story was interesting and I think Failstate, as well as some of his friends, learned some good lessons.

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## **Becky B says**

Though he has his superhero license from the VOC now, Failstate is still struggling with feelings of inadequacy. Many in the superhero world still treat him like a wannabe because they feel that winning a license on a reality tv show isn't really earning it, and there's a widespread feeling that cognits (those who have mental-based powers) are second rate superheroes anyway. Failstate keeps plugging away to keep the town safe though, but when he runs into real live undead zombies not once but twice. The town decides it is time to call in some help from any and all superheroes willing to make sure the dead return to their appropriate hang out zones, aka graves. Superhero protocol says that all of these visitors should be looking to Failstate, the local superhero, as their leader in this, but his VOC liaison seems to dislike Failstate so much he ignores protocol and Failstate's ideas. Soon Failstate finds himself pushed to the edges of any plans, and were it not for the encouragement of his mentor, Meridian, and help of some of his friends he might have missed out on finding the source of the zombies. His success gets overshadowed by two things, the disappearance of the mastermind behind the zombies and the appearance of a long-dead superhero. While others are only too willing to blindly let this hero of the past take over, Failstate eventually realizes all may not be as wonderful as it appears and he must take an unpopular stand for what is right. (view spoiler)

I had a harder time finishing this book than the first. I think because I've seen enough superhero-type movies I knew exactly where the plot was headed so this didn't hold many surprises. It was still a creative and mostly fun read. Otte did a better job of blending Failstate's spiritual and superhero lives this time. It didn't feel disjointed like in the last book. It still had an important lesson for Failstate to learn, but didn't feel as preachy either. Which makes it easier to envision non-Christians reading and enjoying this one, while Christian parents can still be sure their kids will be getting some quality teaching in the midst of their superhero fun. My only complaint with this book is the repeated copied descriptions of people/places. (Ex. the food court at the mall is passed several times in both books and it is always described as smelling greasy, never describes the look or anything else really. Just greasy smell. And the description of the youth pastor was pretty much just copied and pasted in this book from the first one.) I don't know, I just feel that if an author has created the character/place they should be able to describe them from multiple perspectives.

Notes on content: No language issues. A couple kisses, but nothing beyond that in sexual content. Being a superhero book, it has several superhero battles and thus superhero violence. And in that vein, hardly anyone gets seriously hurt though they all get their fair share of fists and kicks and such.

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## **Anne Hamilton says**

Four and a half stars.

What a fun romp. Some spoilers follow.

Failstate is a teen with superpowers. He's won a reality tv show to become America's next superhero. His superpower? Hmm... apparently, breaking things.

It's thought he can split the molecular bonds in matter - causing its solid state to fail. Hence his somewhat unfortunate name.

He's got a superhero bro, Gauntlet. Charming, handsome, a winner with the girls, flashy costume - especially compared to Failstate's daggy camo outfit which looks like it came from a reject shop. Failstate has to keep his hood down and never show his ravaged face. It's such a mess, even hardened superheroes want to puke on seeing it.

Failstate discovers that his liaison officer, Agent Sexton of the Vigilante Oversight Committee, despises him. The town needs a real hero in Sexton's eyes, not a rookie wannabe. So, when on his first night of active duty, Failstate reports a weird zombie attack, Sexton dismisses it as a feeble attempt to cover his ineptitude as a real crimefighter. Half the neighbourhood has been trashed - but, c'mon, none of the great supervillains of the past have ever succeeded in reanimating the dead. All evidence suggests it can't be done.

When the zombie threat turns out to be serious, superheroes from all over the country are called in. Some of them have superegos to match. Some of them are just simply super scary, in a way some supervillains aren't.

Failstate's mentor, Meridian, encourages him. So does Failstate's son, Veritas, a truth-detector. But every relationship Failstate has is strained due to past issues. Well, maybe not because of past issues with Failstate's - no, with alter ego Robin Laughton's - new girlfriend. She's a stunner named Charlene who goes to his church. She just happens to despise superheroes in general. And Failstate in particular.

If he doesn't have enough personal troubles, our superhero does in fact track down the zombies to their lair. A lab run by Dr Floyd Ayers - a biochemist heartbroken over the loss of his wife to cancer.

In the course of destroying the horror lab, Failstate discovers that Dr Ayers has all but perfected the revivification process. Failstate releases the most stable model yet - resurrected from the DNA of the most revered superhero of this world's past: 'Sarge'.

With the nation's most celebrated hero reborn and ready for duty, there's not much room for a rookie with erratic powers like Failstate. The entire country is thrilled - oh, maybe one or two supervillains aside.

Sarge brings all the superheroes together to form a single band - dedicated to cleaning up America.

There are just one or two things niggling at Failstate about Sarge's vision of a new morality for the good ole US of A. Sarge has virulently racist attitudes, long gone from civil society. And his confrontational approach to any problem seems, to Failstate, much more likely to incite violence rather than quell it.

Great story!

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