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The Rising Of The Shield Hero Volume 01



Synopsis

Naofumi Iwatani, an uncharismatic Otaku who spends his days on games and manga, suddenly finds himself summoned to a parallel universe! He discovers he is one of four heroes equipped with legendary weapons and tasked with saving the world from its prophesied destruction. As the Shield Hero, the weakest of the heroes, all is not as it seems. Naofumi is soon alone, penniless, and betrayed. With no one to turn to, and nowhere to run, he is left with only his shield. Now, Naofumi must rise to become the legendary Shield Hero and save the world!

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Customer Reviews

"He was clumsy and rude, but he was a good person. His eyes were dark and filled with hatred and sadness. He was violent, angry and vulgar. He was scary. But he understood pain, and at his heart he was kind. Yes, he is the person Rifana and I longed for... the Shield Hero."-Raphtalia

Were you expecting another generic fantasy harem with the done-to-death "ordinary guy transferred to an alternate world" premise? The "alternate world" part is true, but "generic fantasy harem", The Rising of The Shield Hero is anything but. This is a story about how it feels to be an underdog who is ostracized by society, the subsequent distrust, anger and hatred towards said society, and how finding just one person who believes in you can change everything. I'll admit, One Peace Books' synopsis makes it sound as if the word "generic" was invented for series like these; it simply does not do The Rising of The Shield Hero justice. The Rising of The Shield Hero is neither Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon, Sword Art Online, Accel World nor Log Horizon. You will neither find an obligatory

harem, a stupidly dense/overpowered protagonist nor a godly tactician here (as of volume 1, anyway). Instead, you will find an averagely intelligent human being. He's also pretty pissed at everything, if i hadn't mentioned that. So before you scream "generic", bear with me. Naofumi Iwatani is a college student and one day, through means which are still a mystery, he was summoned to an unknown world. The first 6 chapters are relatively slow and uninteresting; they mainly serve to introduce the basic characters and setting for the story. Up to this point, there is really little to distinguish The Rising of The Shield Hero from its peers. However, chapter 7 is when those similarities come to a grinding halt. What really sets the story apart is its eerily human protagonist, unique plot progression and character development. Naofumi, who appears to be an uninspired goody-two-shoes, transforms into a walking mass of malice and anger. He despises the world which summons and grossly tramples upon him. Chewed up and spat out by the world, Naofumi is left with only his shield, his wits and his rage. The reader, to some degree, will sympathize with Naofumi: he has every right to be angry, to loathe the world after how it treated him. Note that Naofumi is by no means an incompetent idiot. He is much more intelligent than your average light novel protagonist; he quickly adapts to and exploits whatever the environment around him has to offer, in order to compensate for what he hugely lacks in strength. Throughout the story he can come across as morally ambiguous at best and morally defunct at worst; his actions do not agree with his words. One thing that is apparent though, is that no matter how much he wants everyone to drop dead, at the core of his being, Naofumi is still a good person. His character was executed in a such a way that even while blinded by hatred, traces of the former kind person he once was still shines through. For the sake of not revealing too many elements of the story, Naofumi is all I can write about. The entire story is told through his cynical and bitter perspective; he is the highlight of the story for me. That is not to say though, that Naofumi is the only well-developed character, or that the rest of the story is non-existent. There are plenty of other characters with various pasts, motivations and personalities that are distinct from one another. I daresay its characters is this novel's strongest point: they are realistic and relatable. Readers will definitely find that some characters resemble those they already know or will know in life. The plot is not lacking either; it moves at a relatively fast pace, fast enough to keep you reading. There is also a fair amount of world building and action. If the first volume doesn't intrigue you with its world and story, it will make you sympathize deeply for its well-developed characters (especially the protagonist). However, I am aware that such a protagonist is not for everyone; I can imagine many being put off by Naofumi's pessimistic and scornful disposition. I'll also acknowledge that some plot points may make certain readers uncomfortable, due to the moral implications that they bring. Rest assured though, that many of

these issues will iron themselves out by the end of the book; readers will find themselves sympathizing heavily with Naofumi, in spite of themselves. Volume 1 manages to wrap itself up with a heart-wrenching and satisfying climax: the kind where cascades of emotion come crashing down; the kind which resembles the vertical drop after a long ride up a roller coaster hill; the kind that haunts your mind and makes you want to go back and read it over a few more times just to soak up every last drop of emotion that oozes from each sentence. As a bonus there are two extra chapters at the end which provide greater insight into the personalities and backstories of two major characters of the story. One thing to keep in mind though, is that the author is an amateur. The Rising of The Shield Hero originated as a web novel, which the author updated with chapters every single day for the past few years until a publishing company picked it up. Therefore if the writing seems amateurish in this first volume, the author will most likely improve in the later volumes. Complimenting the story are great illustrations and character designs. Even by light novel standards, the illustrations are very well done and impeccably depict various scenes. What I liked the most was how they perfectly captured Naofumi's facial expression: you can feel his anger seeping through every corner of his perpetual frown, through every nook and cranny of his dark, glaring eyes. Now, onto the quality of the translation and publication itself. The book had 300 pages but each page was smaller and had less words than books by other light novel publishers. However, I researched and found that the original Japanese tankobon had the same page count, so I'll assume that One Peace Books' is not guilty of toning any printing quality down. There were some typos and questionably worded sentences I noticed throughout the book. Furthermore, dialogue can get confusing sometimes when there are three or more characters talking at once. Although I am disappointed to say that One Peace Books' translation is mediocre at best, it gets the story across. It wasn't anything bad enough to ruin my enjoyment of the story, although I really hope they step their translation game up in volume 2. However, as stated before, this was written by an amateur author so some kinks in the writing quality here and there might not entirely be One Peace Books' fault. On a side note, the quote at the start of this review is a direct quote from their translation which I particularly like. I look forward to volume 2 of what seems to be a deeply promising series with a protagonist one just can't hate. (Originally reviewed on Goodreads, then revised and posted. Also, thanks for the images, kind imgur user).

First off, before you read anything else, this is the only English version of this book. If you want to read it, the issues I talk about are just things you're going to have to put up with. I'm giving this 4 stars for the story, not the execution. The execution is horrible. What happens to the main character,

how he deals with it, and his unique "dark" take on everything happening around him is what makes or breaks this story. Get past the main character's uniqueness, and everything else is about what readers of the genre (otaku gets thrown into a game/fantasy world) will expect. Aside from that, Aneko Yusagi has some very poor writing habits. Any time there is a detail that they feel the reader needs to know about, but which wasn't mentioned earlier, instead of editing things so that that information shows up where it should, the author just has Naofumi break into whatever else he was doing to say: " By the way, such and such means such and such" or "For your information, I did this other thing earlier." Another thing that really bugs me is that whenever anyone says anything are there ever any direct indicators as to who is saying what. There's no He said,"blah blah blah" or She asked,"What the blah?" You have to infer who is saying what every single time. This is manageable with two people or less, but becomes impossible in most instances where three or more people are talking. Also, for some reason the publisher decided every instance of "Naofumi-san" needed to be changed to "Mr. Naofumi", even though the book is rife with Japanese-isms. Also typos. Plenty of them. A quick read-through by a fluent speaker before sending the book to the printers should have caught them. Guess they couldn't be bothered.

• The Rising of the Shield Hero • is the first light novel I've ever read. While I'm still not sure what the difference is between such a book and any novella you'd find written for young adults in the West I suppose the definition of the medium doesn't really have much bearing on this review. I guess I just felt I should preface this review with that opening remark in case any of my criticisms turn out to be standard practice. There was so much that was wrong with this book. For starters, and probably one of the greatest offenses of THIS issuance at least, the thing was lousy with typos and punctuation errors. I've never read anything else by the publisher, One Peace Books, but this book left me imagining their offices as a solitary, barren room populated by only four people. Proofreading was sorely lacking here. I'm not sure if they ever didn't spell •adventurer• any way other than •adventure•. I also regularly noted strange floating quotation marks at the beginning or end of paragraphs with no opposite quotation leaving me to go back and figure out if what I just read was dialogue or narrative. While I'm on the topic of dialogue I have to mention how difficult, at times, it was to tell who was talking. You'll go half a page or more with some back and forth between what is seemingly two characters and at the end of the exchange you find out 3 or more were involved. All I could do was go back and try to suss out what line was coming from who and finding the whole affair to be fruitless. Fortunately this wasn't often but it happened too many times for my liking. At this point with •Sword Art Online• building on

ÀçÂ Âœ.hack//,ÀçÂ Â• ÀçÂ ÂœLog HorizonÀçÂ Â• following in the wake of ÀçÂ ÂœSAO,ÀçÂ Â• and now this title proceeding ÀçÂ ÂœLog HorizonÀçÂ Â• it might be safe to file all these under a burgeoning sub-genre. One in which the events of the story take place after a group of people are trapped in a virtual online game world. I will credit TRotSH with doing something different, at least seemingly as of the end of volume one. While those other titles blatantly take place in a game world TRotSH is taking place, again let me say seemingly as I've only read this first volume, in another reality. However, in this world, part of the magic system involves a type of sensory magic that all inhabitants can use that emulates the HUD of an MMORPG. On top of this the legendary weapons that the four heroes wield are able to absorb the materials of the creatures and enemies defeated to upgrade themselves to give the hero more power and new abilities. Lastly the characters all have levels connected to their experience and ability. As they fight they gain experience and level up. This is where this series relates to ÀçÂ ÂœSAO,ÀçÂ Â• ÀçÂ ÂœLog Horizon,ÀçÂ Â• andÀçÂ Âœ.hack//.ÀçÂ Â•Now it is the fact that this series is so heavily inspired by these other titles that lead to my largest complaint with this first volume. The motivation of the four heroes to participate in the adventure of this story. It seems that either the author just fell back on the hope that everyone knows this concept and do not need or want the explanation or he phoned it in in the beginning. When the four heroes are summoned to save the world it is only a matter of minutes, and with no questions asked and no explanation received, they simply accept that they are in an alternate reality and must be there to save the day. Sure it allows the story to jump right into things but it is nonsensical and corny. Aside from the the lacking introduction the main character falls into a number of anime/manga tropes. The main character is a moody, emotionally underdeveloped 20-something. Granted his story involves some major betrayal and being dealt a crappie hand, but his rationalizations seem to ignore sense and reason. I will say however that I did like how dark his intentions became as the story went on. He goes on to take on a slave as his party member and early on in their relationship he essentially threatens her with pain. With all of these complaints you might wonder why I've given this book such a high rating. Even with everything wrong with it, this book trumps all of this in one regard. It's just a really fun read. I rarely will finish a book in a single day, no matter what the length, but I kept finding myself setting it down at the end of a chapter only to find myself, after walking away for a minute, that I wanted to go back and read on. The pacing was perfect and each chapter felt almost like a short story. I found very little, if nothing, that felt like filler. Every chapter seemed to progress the story. That's not to say there weren't some loose ends at the book's finish, but there are many more volumes to follow. Sure it's full of errors and some amateur writing in parts, but it was a good time and an interesting spin on an idea that, at this point at least,

is becoming almost novel. Like I said I've not read a light novel prior to this but I enjoyed it enough that I've now pre-ordered the future installments and even picked up two other series. Maybe my tastes haven't been tempered in this medium but I don't believe that would change how enjoyable this was. I'd recommend it as someone's first light novel.

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