

The Depresso Trilogy

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The Depresso Trilogy is a fun, thrilling, and humorous superhero riff.

O. W. Láav's three-part fantasy novel *The Depresso Trilogy* follows the exciting, funny, and provocative adventures of a unique superhero.

The Depresso Trilogy contains the novellas *Depresso Begins*, *Rise of Unkillable*, and *War on Drugs*. The first entry opens as Owen consults with a psychiatrist following his failed suicide attempt. What begins as a drama about mental illness and failed treatment takes an unexpected turn when Owen stumbles into a bank robbery in progress.

As the bank robber discovers, Owen is no ordinary depressed young man. He is immortal and has incredible powers of healing. As he tells a friend later in the story, "I can't die....I've tried everything." But he's also skinny and weak, making his an unusual superhero tale. Owen, who adopts the nickname Depresso, maintains his death wish, alongside a nihilistic sense of humor and a sarcastic attitude. Throughout, he remains fully aware of the absurdity of his situation.

Then Owen meets Dinah, a police captain who's struggling. She has union troubles, faces brutality accusations, and contends with threats to defund the police. Meanwhile, she's dealing with a city full of criminals whom she can't apprehend without help. Though he's reluctant, Dinah talks Owen into using his bizarre gifts for the good of humanity.

Láav's storytelling is entertaining. His tales are dark and witty, and also poignant when it comes to Owen's plight; emotions reverberate throughout the trilogy. The characters are true to life, and act and talk like real people despite the improbable situations they face. Dinah is world-weary but has passion and strength; her predicament as a woman in the traditionally men's world of policing is drawn with empathy and realism. And Owen may be depressed and suicidal, with a worldview as dark as that of his favorite Winnie the Pooh character, Eeyore's, but he also has a heart. While he no longer cares for his own safety, he is moved to action by the suffering of others.

The prose is brisk and to the point. And despite the fact that Owen cannot die, there is a good amount of suspense that comes out of his encounters with criminals, as there are innocents around who are not immortal. In addition, Owen feels pain, and it is hard not to wince as he is shot, beaten, and stabbed. And when Depresso meets Unkillable, an adversary with powers that rival his own, humor is interjected to tame the confrontation: they interrupt their battle royale with a philosophical digression, discussing the futility of life.

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MATT BENZING (February 4, 2022)

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