



Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World

Pat Pujolas

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PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW): Jimmy Lagowski, a young man with a bad burn scar and a rich fantasy life, is the centerpiece of a complex set of interwoven short stories that deal with loss, love, family, and tragedy. Separately, the stories examine intimate moments, such as a father's struggle with sobriety and his wife's possible affair; a girl considering taking the morning-after pill; a shooting at a coffee shop; and a tragic accident that claims the life of a child. Taken together, they paint a larger narrative of justice that readers will find extremely appealing. Pujolas's writing is strong, and he has a gift for subtly letting readers into a character's private moments. It's initially difficult to see how the stories are related, but readers will quickly embrace the tale and celebrate Jimmy's attempts to articulate justice as one of the qualities that can elevate humanity. Once readers see the way the narrative pieces fit together, they'll be glad that they stuck around until the end.

Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World Details

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Author : Pat Pujolas

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From Reader Review Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World for online ebook

T.L. Sherwood says

This book is so well written, well plotted, and has such fantastic characters and circumstances. The more I read, the more I loved.

Christopher says

DISCLAIMER: I know the author. But that's ok, I liked his book anyway. I kid, I kid.

This is a book that's less about what happens and when, and more about who is involved and what they feel. At a specific time. Mr. Pujolas is very good at pulling the reader into these moments. They end abruptly, but sometimes the immediate aftermath doesn't really matter.

It was a quick read and it left me wanting more. But of course I realize that sometimes it's best to end at edge of the cliff instead of watching to see if someone can fly or not.

I've never read a novel twice, but I'll definitely read this one again soon.

David says

This book wasn't exactly what I had been expecting, but I think I liked it better than what I had been expecting. My first impression was that the stories evoked some wonderfully tender emotions, but the situation became much more complicated as each of the stories started sending out beams that reflected on all the other stories. They're linked more than most linked short story collection are. More than just individual stories, they are interdependent portions of a larger, beautiful story. I liked it very much.

Meg Tuite says

Pat Pujolas delivers a phenomenal novel-in-stories that is unforgettable!!! If you haven't ordered a copy of this collection then GET ON IT!! "Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World," is one of those books that you don't want to put down and never want to end!!! Pujolas gives us memorable, incredibly visual scenes and characters that prove the most powerful when they direct our vision back to ourselves! We find out more about who we are through these beautiful and tragic characters.

I wish I could give it more than the five stars. It is a galaxy of brilliance that you won't ever forget!

Barbara Dzikowski says

A talented writer who yanks you in by the throat. Thought-provoking and well done!

Levina Goon says

*Received through Goodreads-First reads program

**Review also posted at [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com) and [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World was a collection of short stories that evoked feelings of sadness, empathy, and hope for humanity. The stories eventually revealed how the characters related with each other further into the book which made the read worthwhile. I enjoyed the stories involving the title character, Jimmy Lagowski, the most, including one where his thoughts were revealed answering a question about the value of life. At times, I found the stories moving in their plain honesty and Pujolas writes with a masterful hand in describing some heart-wrenching situations. Overall, a great read from a fresh voice.

Molly Bridgeforth says

This book is smart and heartfelt. It is a perfect weekend read that will stick with you for much longer than that. I am going to steal a line from the interview with the author and then apply it to his own work; reading this book will "enrich your experience as a human being." Because, quite simply, it delves into our humanness. The stories within The Story are well developed, but leave you wanting more. The best chapter, in my opinion, was "The Accident in Question" because of lines like this: "From the air, this valley system resembles a jagged, gaping wound, as if the earth's soft underbelly were torn open by the talons of a giant, mythical raptor; and its tempting to think of it that way, even for a geologist such as myself." (Aside: it seems Pujolas is a fan of semi-colons). Most of all Jimmy Lagowski is imaginative and real, all in the same stroke.

Jill says

I received this book from the giveaways that Goodreads provides. Thanks goes to the author, Pat Pujolas for sending and autographing his novel. I have to say that usually I enjoy reading books that have happy endings, but I'm learning that I need to explore other types of novels. I was intrigued by the name of this book, Jimmy Lagowski Saves the Day, and happily surprised when I won

Pat Pujolas writes about ordinary people in Midwest America who have undergone heartbreak, loss of loved ones, tragic accidents. It was also about people who had to learn how to cope with changes in their lives. Even though this wasn't a book with a nice happy ending, it was a book which

Sue Bridehead (A Pseudonym) says

When you read a friend's writing, you never know what to expect, and even less so how to react. I was pleasantly surprised -- downright thrilled, actually -- that I enjoyed this collection as much as I did.

Pat Pujolas has a transparent way of building scenes so you feel like you're actually there in the environment, lurking as an observer. I found myself admiring the clearness of his imagery. In one story, a bonfire party at a trailer park is so expertly wrought that I could smell the food, hear the music, see the people milling around, feel the joy. At times, reading "Jimmy Lagowski" feels as familiar and effortless as watching a film.

The people are similarly wrought; most of the characters in "Jimmy Lagowski" feel and sound like real people you might have met. I admire the way Pujolas gives small characters small thoughts; these little grace notes make the work seem both fresh and studied, the contributions of a writer who has spent a lot of time observing, thinking, and looking for ways to tell real, human stories about the small moments that change everything.

If I have any critique to offer, it's that the book could have been longer, the ties between the stories tighter. This may just be a personal preference on my part. I wasn't entirely sure what the big picture statement was, though I know it's there. I think this calls for an interview with the author.

Mary Dockery says

This book follows some of the most intriguing characters I've had the luxury of meeting. What works so well about this book is that there is a mystery surrounding each story - we get most of the story, but not all of it - and that mystery is what makes you keep reading. The reader gets to fill in the blanks, and the unanswered questions do not leave you hanging. Instead, the stories work together to create a unique world of self-discovery. It's about healing, moving forward, and understanding where one belongs. The stories are humorous, but also dig deep into the darkness of human emotion.

Hill says

A nice compilation of short stories where the characters are interwoven towards the end of the book. All the characters were very well written with rich, distinct personalities and voices. Some flawed, some tragic, some funny. By the end of the book, I was left thinking about how specific moments in our lives can define who we are, how our complicated lives interact with each other, and whether it all means anything in the end. Basically, a pretty good read.

Rose Gowen says

I love this book.

Pat was one of my first important writing friends. Thus, I'm sure nostalgia and fondness affected my reading; but, I am (unfortunately) congenitally competitive and skeptical, and I'm sure those qualities affected my reading, too. Perhaps my rosy glasses and jaundiced eye cancel each other out? Therefore, my review is perfectly objective!

I love this book. It is not quite a novel (it lacks the continuity and unity I expect from a novel), but it is not exactly a story collection either-- some of the pieces (like, "State Park Resort" and "A Jury of our Peers", my favorites) are complete stories that stand on their own, others ("In Memoriam", "What the Prosecutor Said") function as connective tissue. The effect is of a jigsaw puzzle with a bunch of pieces missing-- there are enough to see the image, but there are gaps too.

I haven't ever read WINESBURG, OHIO, but I think it must be a model for the structure of JIMMY LAGOWSKI. JIMMY is also set in Ohio, in and around Akron (I think). The characters are connected by a crime; many of them serve as jurors at the trial.

The book is about love and sex, and violence and aggression (especially in men-- one story is called "The Violence of Men"). Also, the brain. This book is quite interested in the human brain; but it seems to say that as sophisticated as our ability to map the brain may be, love and aggression are elemental forces that rip through us beyond our control.

Lori says

Read 10/5/13 - 10/8/13

4 Stars - Strongly Recommended, 'specially to fans of interconnected stories

198 Pages

What initially appear as fun, and sometimes quite odd, unconnected short stories soon begin to cross paths with each other and weave themselves into an even more fun, and incredibly more odd, novel-in-stories.

You can tell Pat had a lot of fun building this world in which a horribly burned and suicidal young man finds himself saved by jury duty, of all things, and very possibly possessed by an alien entity which resides millions of miles away from Earth. Kickstarted by a seemingly random act of violence, we are thrown, time and time again, into and out of the townspeople's lives, sneaking a peek here and there, as Pat sees fit, until the individual stories comes crashing together in an ending that will make you thank your lucky stars you hung in for the long haul.

Jules Hucke says

“We have art in order not to die of the truth.” –Frederick Nietzsche

“Jimmy Lagowski Saves the World” is art.

The nihilists tell us we come from nothing before birth and will return to nothing after death, which means

we must determine for ourselves what value there is in existing at all when we're faced with the cold, hard truth that we will end, likely before we're ready for it.

Each character in these interwoven stories—all of them poetic, beautiful, insightful and laced with humor—grapples with this truth. The stories hang together on the shared experience of a murder trial seen from multiple angles. We hop in and out of characters' lives: Henry at age 12, equal parts hunger and embarrassment, then beer-bellied hungover Henry in the jury box trying to put together the puzzle pieces of the previous night's blackout. Jimmy as a child, Vice President and Treasurer of the Douchebags, a club he starts with his best (only?) friend Dagmar, then Jimmy as "fat dying virgin" who is the voice of dissent in judging the actions of possibly-murderer Davis (poor Davis). Julie as a high-schooler on her first day of work at Starbucks, then Julie as a college student faced with a life-changing decision. Doreen, aging baby boomer caught like a teenager between who she thinks she is and a surprising version of herself drawn out by a chance encounter with a former classmate; later, Doreen struggling to fit her new identity into her calcified worldview. Davis, trapped in the impossible frustration of dealing with a toddler while nursing the sickening realization that his wife may be cheating on him; later, Davis as murderer; and again, Davis as witness to a shocking and grisly event that would shatter any parent.

In addition to the cohesion of the murder trial, an interesting insect motif runs through many of the stories. At the beginning of "State Park Resort," 12-year-old Henry is admonished by his father to learn to control himself when a mosquito bite is driving Henry nuts. At the end of the story, Henry sits on a beach towel and quietly watches a bee crawl over his skin, bringing the short glimpse into his life full circle and showing via poetic balance and subtext how he has changed. Jimmy, gruesomely fire-scarred, feels inside as insectoid and inhuman as Kevin033, an alien responsible for deciding the fate of Earth and looking for a reason not to destroy it (beyond the trilateral symmetry and intoxicating taste of ripe bananas). A whirlwind of angry honeybees drives a Staffordshire terrier into a misguided act of aggression.

The book is also scattered with dollops of data that engage without slowing the pace. In "The Accident in Question," a park ranger offers a tour through the geological history of the Cuyahoga Valley, wrapped around the book's most horrific moment and yet winding up in a place as beautiful as where it started. In "Report #0673543," Kevin033 offers an explanation for why humans are such a "hot mess" (blame asymmetry). My favorite, though, is the essay Jimmy Lagowski writes in response to the question, "How could some people be worth more than others?" As much biology lesson on the brain as it is existential pondering, the essay ultimately answers this question and more, opening the reader's eyes to what Kevin003 actually is: not an insectoid creature trapped in the minutiae of his endless quest to find the Murphy01 event that will justify the continued existence of Earth, but rather Jimmy's id, ego and superego rolled into one, the ultimate decision maker on the matter of whether Jimmy jumps off the Coleman Memorial Bridge at the X he scratched into its railing.

All told, this sucker gets six out of five stars for its simple audacity (alien sex? the zoomorphic gods of the Adena tribe? A violent old man's urinary troubles? Yes, to all, if they're written by Pat Pujolas!), for engaging the reader on multiple levels, and for its compulsive readability. Pujolas shows people who do unlikeable things but remain vehemently likeable, taking a dark premise (Will Jimmy kill himself?) and turning it into a narrative laced with deep hope and a determination to make the most of it all, despite the inevitable pain and bullshit of being human.

Mark says

Great book. Individually, each of the chapters/stories are brilliant on their own. But what makes this entire book engaging is not just how Pujolas manages to weave those stories together—but how that interplay is so nuanced. The fact that everything informs everything else never feels like a gimmick or a device. It never cheats the characters or the story. He respects the intelligence of his audience to put it all together and find meaning for themselves. And the effort is well worth it.
