



Rationality Zero

J.M. Guillen

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The world is not what it seems.

Michael Bishop is an Asset of the Facility- a job that comes with many strange perks. He is a man who never gets ill, who never pays taxes. He is effortlessly fit, and has a different woman every night of the week.

That is, when he is not on assignment.

When activated, Michael becomes Asset 108, an enhanced human who stands against the strange darkness that lurks at the edge of our world.

Armed with equipment that most would find impossible to comprehend, he is sent on missions both strange and deadly. Each dossier pits him against irrational creatures and beings- most with the power to unravel his sanity, or reality itself. It's never a simple job.

This job, however, is more complex than most. Mysterious unknown targets are fracturing reality, somewhere in the middle of the Mojave desert.

The Facility has no other Assets in the area, and their telemetry is spotty at best. Without knowing what to expect, Bishop is activated, assigned to a cadre, and sent to the middle of nowhere.

What he finds there is both the beginning and the end.

This is a stanza from THE PAEAN OF SUNDERED DREAMS.

Rationality Zero Details

Date :

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Author : J.M. Guillen

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From Reader Review Rationality Zero for online ebook

Geli says

Are you a Fringe fan?

If so, you have a very good chance of liking this book.

Michael Bishop is an Asset, a sleeper agent. Most of the time he lives his life without knowing anything about his real job or even wondering where the money in his accounts comes from. When he wakes up and his called... well, it is then he also remembers why forgetting might be a nice thing. Assets are sent to deal with everything that is not Rational. That includes kids with supernatural abilities or eldritch monsters searching for their next breakfast.

The book has a fast pace, the action scenes are well described and the world feels vast, complicated and real. Something I immensely like. Though, the setting reminds you sooner or later of a computer game.

The characters remain a bit one dimensional. It is clear that Michael Bishop is a very well trained agent, but not only does he barely mention anything significant about himself (though that might be a result of him being an Asset) he also does not mention things like his former training or abilities. For example, why would someone who carries often enough a Katana into battle not be trained in sword-fighting?

His two friends who from his 'cadre' have more character and personality. I started to like them slowly, maybe slower than strictly necessary, but surely.

All together, I liked the book, but it left me feeling like I just read a prequel of a story or series.

3.5 stars. But because I am hungering for more, I round it up to 4 stars.

Michael says

I've been a fan of JM Guillen's writing since I first read his dark fantasy novella *The Herald of Autumn*, and the reason is simple: Every book of his that I've read so far has been SO FRELLING GOOD! *Rationality Zero* is no exception.

While "science fiction espionage horror tale" might initially sound like there was an explosion at the genre factory, it's a fitting label for an excellent combination: Cybernetically-augmented special forces agents with no memory of who they really are when they're off duty; Rationality-bending "irrationals" whose existence threatens to break reality in Lovecraftian fashion; Artificial places hidden in side-pockets of space and time; Otherworldly horrors eager to break into our world, or to capture us in theirs.

Guillen introduces us to this world--ostensibly our own, with secret terrors lurking on the edges--in a way that's perfectly paced and through the eyes of Michael Bishop, an asset of a place known only as "The Facility." From the moment he's awakened from his off-duty life, both the reader and Michael are drawn into an experience that spirals further and further into a danger greater than Michael has ever experienced.

As always, Guillen's writing grips the reader with its palpable style and poetic edge. There were moments

when it felt as if I couldn't have stopped reading if my life depended on it, pulled by the intrigue of what might be next and driven by the horror of what had come before.

As it's a novella, there are only few characters in *Rationality Zero*. Guillen constructs each in a way that makes them all real (even as said characters are pulled into situations "outside" of their own reality). Furthermore, the setting is a character in itself, and a pleasure to explore. Seriously, I would love to play a Deus Ex-style computer RPG set in this world. It just works so well.

My only nitpick is that there are one or two brief spots when it felt like there was just a little bit too much detail in terms of the workings of the characters' cybernetic augmentations, or their ways of measuring changes in reality. But understand, that really is a minor nitpick, especially as such situations only came about because I was so eager--and anxious--to find out what would happen next.

If you like sci-fi, especially with clandestine elements of cosmic horror, you really need to read *Rationality Zero* before writhing tendrils swarm their way into your pores for you to live in terrifying cosmic unity with the thing that lurks on the other side...

Robert Defrank says

James Bond vs Cthulhu

To all appearances, Michael Bishop lives the life of a playboy, but in reality he is an Asset, cybernetically-augmented super-agent, armed with near space age weaponry and part of a highly-classified agency called 'The Facility,' tasked with protecting this world's integrity from the eldritch forces beyond. At any moment he may be called into action.

So in a few words: James Bond meets Lovecraft.

What struck me first was the use of jargon and concepts that the reader must quickly adjust to as the operatives employ their advanced tech and discuss various terms for alien entities and eldritch events. Fans of Tom Clancy will get a kick out of the tech-speak.

The adventure kicks off to a breakneck start and doesn't let up as the adventure takes Michael and two fellow assets into the deserts of Nevada to investigate strange goings on. They find more than they bargain for as alien realities have begun impinging on our own. The alien conspiracy they find will test them to their limit of their abilities and call for every weapon in their arsenal.

An inclusion of another genre and style into the Irrational Worlds saga.

Lilyn G. | Sci-Fi & Scary says

Rationality Zero, written by JM Guillen, was an interesting listen. Joel Richards has a voice that is definitely easy on the ears (think he could read me the dictionary and I'd be happy), and he was able to give each of the characters distinct voices so even when three people were talking at once I never lost track of who was saying what. The downside to this, though, was that even though his male voices were pleasing to listen to,

the pitch he gave his voice for the female voices set my teeth on edge. Depending on how you look at it, since the females really were not the most likable of characters, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, as it adds to the base dislike of the characters. Narration-wise, this is a solid 4 out of 5.

As for the story itself, *Rationality Zero* was an interesting introduction to the multiverse its set in. (That it is a multiverse is made clear within the first few minutes of the audiobook introduction.) It is set sometime in the future, so the surroundings are identifiable when Asset 108 is at Rationality Zero (which means things are just as they should be, with no freaky stuff happening.) When Asset 108 ends up in a different area, we are given just enough information to know what is going on, without being deluged with unnecessary detail. (I can see people thinking there's not enough, but it was just the right amount to fire up my imagination.)

The tech of this multiverse is fascinating, as is the twist Guillen gives to 'sleeper agents'. The bad guys are definitely a bit Lovecraftian in nature. There was this tentacle scene that was just...ewww. The pace is perfect, and at 166 pages (if you choose ebook or paperback), it is the perfect length for a quick action-packed afternoon read. If you choose the audiobook version, it'll definitely please you for several work commutes, as it comes in at just under 6 hours long in length.

Overall, the story and narration were well-done, and the series is interesting enough I wouldn't mind revisiting it. It definitely kept my stress-levels down on some stress-inducing drives to work. I'd recommend it to people who liked Peter Clines' *14* or *The Fold*.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book free in exchange for an honest review.

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Laura Ruetz says

A little bit cyberpunk, a little bit Philip K Dick, and a little bit Lovecraftian and you get this book. This is a great blend of technology, otherworlds and action. The integration of all, including the characters is well done and really helps draw me in. There is a lot going on with this book, and all of it good. If you enjoy your sci-fi with a dash of cyberpunk and weirdness, you will be as engrossed in this book as I was. I really enjoyed this book and would absolutely read more by this author and with these characters. It packs a lot of information in, so this isn't a fast read by any means, but all of those details are what really brings this book alive, especially as they are describing the other worlds/locations and the technology so you can almost picture it.

I received a free copy of this novel.

J.P. Cane says

Rationality Zero, by J.M. Guillen, is a sci-fi novel where a team of agents investigate and eliminate creatures from another reality. While on mission, the agents are cool, calm and deadly; but when they are off the clock, they lead ordinary lives, unaware of the covert assignments they had performed, their memories having been wiped.

The opening was a little precarious for me (due to my unfamiliarity), but once I found my stride, I was immersed in this sci-fi story. It follows our protagonist Michael Bishop and his teammates Wyatt and Anya as they take on a mission given to them by the Facility. They are to travel to Nevada and look into strange readings pinging out there. The mission takes on larger proportions than anticipated, and lacking backup and resources, the team finds itself facing horrors that threaten their sanity, if not their lives.

Each agent is equipped with something like cybernetics and performance-enhancing drugs. Through the Facility's Lattice, a sort of communications network, each agent is able to send thoughts and receive dossiers and other mission-pertinent information. The access point is a crown of one of his or her teeth. Agents can select among a number of skills and reality-pressing abilities to slot into themselves.

The Facility charges its agents with confronting beings that come from a different reality. These realities have their own physics and logic. Agents can perceive weaknesses in our reality where these creatures can push through. Rationality zero represents our ordinary experiences; the further from zero, the weirder things get.

(The world that Guillen has created reminded me of the Technocrats from the role-playing game, Mage: the Ascension.)

Guillen deftly describes Michael's immediate world - his gear, the investigation, the horrors. There is confidence in the writing, supported by the shop talk and jargon the characters employ without explanation of their meaning, relying on context of the story to carry that. It's done well. As is the eeriness, other-worldliness, of the creatures Michael and his teammates encounter. The moments are vivid and suspenseful.

But what gave me trouble in the beginning was the vagueness of the mundane world. When are we? My sense is it is the present or near enough. Is the technology that Michael has access to known by the general population? The horrors the team fights, what is their purpose? Are they simply animals living in an ecosystem that borders our reality, and somehow tear through in some aimless way, or is there intention behind their incursions, and if so, what? In the wider world, what have these creatures done to warrant teams like Michael's to be formed and take action? Is the Facility a government entity or some shadow organization?

The book would have benefited from a longer look at Michael's civilian life to give the reader answers to these questions.

Nonetheless, I enjoyed reading the story and would be up for reading more about Michael's adventures as long as I get a wider view of his world next time.

Debra says

Really enjoyed this story, and looking forward to reading more about Asset 108! Very reminiscent of Simon R. Green's Nightside series.

Subere23 says

I love Cyberpunk/Post Cyberpunk, I love Lovecraftian horror, and I love mysterious special agents... Somehow J.M. Guillen has blended all of these things together in a book that does not feel like patchwork. And on top of that, through Irrational Worlds is creating a world that it tied together through multiple timelines.

It's a big and complex undertaking and I really hope that J.M. Guillen continues building this world out.

Bonnie Dale Keck says

kindle unlimited but must have gotten it on freebie day...cross between lovecraft, shroom trip, and reminds me a bit of Ian Dex books from John Logsdon...and that is 'good' and that is 'bad', js {have read all of his so really, js}.

The world is not what it seems. Michael Bishop is an Asset of the Facility- a job that comes with many strange perks. He is a man who never gets ill, who never pays taxes. He is effortlessly fit, and has a different woman every night of the week. That is, when he is not on assignment. When activated, Michael becomes Asset 108, an enhanced human who stands against the strange darkness that lurks at the edge of our world. Armed with equipment that most would find impossible to comprehend, he is sent on missions both strange and deadly. Each dossier pits him against irrational creatures and beings- most with the power to unravel his sanity, or reality itself. It's never a simple job.

A living weapon. An attack on the laws of reality. One chance to save the world. Michael Bishop is Asset 108, a bioengineered and technologically augmented living weapon. He stands as humanity's protection against the horrors that lurk beyond our reality. Now, mysterious radicals are fracturing the laws of physics within the Mojave Desert. As the very material of existence begins to unravel, madmen with incomprehensible powers hunt Bishop and his crew, driving them into an alternate horrific dimension. When Bishop delves deeper into labyrinthine mysteries, he is hurled into a conspiracy of inhuman intrigue—one that threatens the survival of every man, woman, and child on Earth.

Rationality Zero (The Dossiers of Asset 108)

The Primary Protocol (The Dossiers of Asset 108 Book 2)

A Grasping Darkness: The two first stories of Asset 108

Aberrant Vectors (The Dossiers of Asset 108 Book 3)

Cascading Error:Critical (The Dossiers of Asset 108 Book 4)

Meenaz Lodhi says

A very exciting plot. A mix of Sci fy/ Fantasy, techno thriller, all in one. I was a bit confused with all the tech terms, but it's fun to read too.

Susan says

Michael Bishop has a cushy life complete with female companionship. That is when he's not on active

assignment as Asset 108. The Facility uses it's cyberenhanced humans as it will. Now Bishop and his little cadre are on assignment in the Mojave desert. It's not what they expected. It's much worse, involving monsters that assault their sanity as much as their physical bodies.

This was a fun, brain candy kind of cyberpunk with Cthulhu monsters story. It's fast paced with little character development but lots of monsters and tech. Bishop gets the most screen time and he's fun, having both brains and brawn. Wyatt is a bit of a loose canon cowboy who also happens to have some serious cyber skills. Anya is their coordinator and spends most of the book on overwatch. She's monitoring the situation and feeding them intel as it comes in. She can also upload packets of info & skills to them, allowing their cyberenhanced bodies to take on new weapons with full aptitude.

While much of the story is just action, Guillen has the basis for something really good here. Who doesn't want to witness a big throwdown between cyberpunk warriors and Cthulhu minions? There's plenty of creativity on display here. I would like to see the character personalities expanded and deepened. This is probably a bit tricky since Michael Bishop doesn't retain his memories from his Asset 108 assignments. Still, I have faith that this author can do it. Wyatt and Anya could use some deepening too. I wonder what Wyatt does when he's not being used by the Facility? Perhaps he runs a kangaroo & capybara ranch in Utah.

I really liked that the monsters were both strange and deadly. There's some tentacle action in a few scenes which makes me wish I was safely sealed in a big environmental bubble! There's no reasoning with these monsters. You can't bargain with something like this.

It was fun and I look forward to Book 2 in the series. More Cthulhu monsters? I can only hope!

The Narration: Joel Richards was a good match for this book. He is Michael Bishop, Asset 108. I also liked his feminine accent for Anya. He also makes a good old boy Wyatt.

Michael Smith says

Parts of this book were very entertaining and made me want to read the next books in the series. Other parts of the book were overly chauvinistic, lacking multi-dimensional characters, and over-explained. Overall, I'm happy I read it, but it left me thinking that this was an amazing world with a great plot, but not all that well executed.

Grace Troxel says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Books Without Any Pictures:
<http://bookswithoutanypictures.com/20...>

In Rationality Zero by J.M. Guillen, James Bond meets H.P Lovecraft as a secret agent attempts to save the world from invading eldritch horrors. (The dictionary on this computer suggests I change the word "eldritch" to "britches," which is not at the same, although depending on whose britches could be equally as terrifying.)

Michael Bishop is an Agent of the Facility. Most of the time, he has the perfect life. He's physically fit, even though he never exercises, there's always money in his accounts, and he spends his days living the good life

with sexy ladies. Until, of course, he is activated, and the machinery embedded in his brain allows him to remember his other life, where he is a cybernetically enhanced operative who protects the world from deviations in Rationality. In essence, all of the human world operates at Rationality Zero. Psychic events, eldritch horrors, monsters, and other weird shit cause the Rationality level to deviate. It's all very mathy, and I love it.

In his latest assignment, Michael is dealing with a threat that's unlike any other deviation from Rationality that he's experienced before. Usually, the creatures he fights are low-level and kind of stupid. But this time, they're intelligent, and they know that Facility Agents are coming. They lie in wait for the opportune moment to strike...

If you are new to Guillen's work, it's best to explain that Rationality Zero is a part of two different series. The first is *The Dossiers of Agent 108*, which is the story of Michael Bishop, which is presumably set on our own planet. The second is *The Paean of Sundered Dreams*, which is a larger shared universe comprised of different worlds which are each undergoing their own struggle with impending doom and darkness. The stories in *The Paean of Sundered Dreams* encompass many different genres, but each world is going through its own version of the same calamity and must respond to it. I'd recommend *Rationality Zero* as a good starting point, because like *Slave of the Sky Captain*, it has a lot more context and explanation than some of the other stories in the universe. However, unlike *Slave of the Sky Captain*, there are already sequels, just waiting to be devoured...

Neal Leffler says

This is an introduction to a whole new world, different than any other I have read before. Somewhere between Cuthulhu and Portal with some ninja James bond thrown in for the fun of it. It stars off a little dense in explanation with the payoff of several engaging scenes of action. The inventiveness of the story drew me in and I can't wait to read more.

Anchit says

The book is set in an extremely imaginative world. I'm 31 and I had trouble grasping what's going on in the world. There are way too many new concepts which are just mentioned as if it's normal everyday language with little explanation. It was fascinating at first until it started becoming annoying because you don't understand what the hell is going on. All the new concepts started becoming too much for me. so I had to drop the book.

but I can't give it anything less than a 4. It would be a sin to do that because so much effort has been put into it. I was really impressed by how imaginative and thought-out his world is. Maybe some day when I get some leisure time I'm going to re-attempt this.

The "about the author" page has been written very very brilliantly. Very articulate in his writing and a bit of humor mixed in in that page. If anyone gets a chance to pick up this book I would highly recommend that you read that page definitely.
