



# The She-Hulk Diaries

*Marta Acosta*

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JANUARY 1

*CURRENT STATUS: No job, no boyfriend, no permanent place to live, no car, and most of my clothes are held together with staples and duct tape. Bank account almost wiped out. Many of my former associates have expressed a desire that I never darken their doorways again for legal and financial reasons.*

*She-Hulk got us got us kicked out of the Avengers Mansion. People keep posting videos online of her New Year's Eve shenanigans: twirling, flaming telephone poles in Times Square, climbing the Empire State Building while dangling Anderson Cooper...*

Saying there are two sides to Jennifer Walters's personality is an understatement. When she hasn't morphed into a 650-pound, crime-fighting, hard-partying superhero, she's a single lawyer trying to get her act together. Hilarious and action-packed, *The She-Hulk Diaries* tells her story, as she juggles her intense legal career by day with battling villains and saving the world by night. Maybe bad guys will stop trying to destroy the planet so she can have a real social life and even meet a guy who isn't trying to take over the universe.

## The She-Hulk Diaries Details

Date : Published June 18th 2013 by Kingswell

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Author : Marta Acosta

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Genre : Fiction, Comics, Superheroes, Fantasy, Sequential Art, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Humor

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## From Reader Review The She-Hulk Diaries for online ebook

### Yolanda Sfetsos says

OMG. I loved this book! She-Hulk is a character that I've always been interested in but haven't read enough about. So when I found out about this book I was *very* interested in checking it out. Glad that I did!

Jennifer Walters starts out the year with no job, no prospects, no apartment, and no boyfriend. She also has a problem with her clothes being ruined. So when someone gives her a journal, she decides to start a diary and set goals for herself. Of course, Jen isn't your average girl. She happens to transform from quiet lawyer to party girl Shulky. She's a superhero, but the others don't want to have anything to do with her.

She-Hulk is fearless, careless, and leaves a trail of destruction behind her.

However, when Jen gets a job with a top firm, things start turning around. Even though she runs into the one guy she really cared about and he's engaged to a Hammerhead. LOL. And it takes her forever to find an apartment. Plus there's a new villain in town: Superbrat.

I had a lot of FUN reading this book. There was a bit of everything: superhero antics, pesky villains, alluring men, great friendships, romance, action, and a cool twist. I loved seeing the tender, caring side of both Jen and Shulky. It was also really cool to see her transform in so many ways and realise that one of her most important goals was self-acceptance of both sides of the same woman.

Like I said, this was great. It's funny, quirky, fun and made me love She-Hulk. She honestly rocks!

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### Kate Lynn says

It takes a lot for me to give a book one star, but this one deserves it. The book contains adult themes, but is written like it was meant for a young reader residing in 2009 (it was published in 2013). The ending was honestly horrible and had almost zero setup. I could go on and on about everything I disliked. I had high hopes, because this is a Marvel book, but I now know to steer clear of their other book publications.

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### Yodamom says

It all started with a separation of self, a bad reputation, and a long lost love.

Chick flick meets superhero comic loving nerd reading. I went into this book expecting action Jackson type comic level reading. What I got was a well done mix of superhero fun with romantic drama and a lot of laughable moments. I found myself snickering and enthralled after the first few pages. I had to stop so many times to share what Jen/Shulky were up to with my family. It was too good not to pass on. I had a lot of fun reading it, laughed out loud, and still find myself giggling over a few sections.

The evil villains were a bit disappointing. I thought there would be some huge battle and perhaps a few superhero types would jump in to join her. No, but there was one super duper, nasty, wicked, lawyer, hammerhead villain that made even the bad guys look good. Oh, she was so easy to hate. I didn't understand

why the other villains were up to their shenanigans. What was the purpose of the water bomb or the fat making fashion show ? They seemed thrust into the story to fill a need for evil.

Jen aka Shulky is really messed up. Shulky has torn up the town and made herself a pariah with the Avengers. They threw her out and told her to get help, psychiatric help. Jen is a top lawyer, and Shulky is hearty party girl.

The two don't mix well and that causes major problems. She also has love problems, she was dumped, or not and holds some serious grudge against him when they meet up again. She might be a superbeast but she's all human in the lack of communication area.

I enjoyed the ride and plan on reading more superhero chickflick reads in the future.

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### **Chantaal says**

I'm going to melt into a puddle of rage and disappointment and forget this book exists.

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### **Christy Stewart says**

Here is a quote from someone who gave a positive review to this book, "Don't let the comic book beginnings fool you, this is definitely a book for a mature and decidedly female audience. This book is classic Marvel meets Sex in the City."

Besides placing quote marks around "mature" and "female" this pretty much sums up why I'm giving it a negative review.

By the way, Marvel, a huge part of your fan base is female and so you don't need to pander to what marketing companies tell you women are like by changing our favorite characters.

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### **Stephanie says**

(Originally posted on my blog, Misprinted Pages.)

Earlier this year, I expressed skepticism toward The She-Hulk Diaries and Rogue Touch — specifically, about authors scribbling down superhero adventures without the pretty pictures to match and, more importantly, with what seemed like a “romantic” spin (that turned out to be false).

I love comics, and removing their visual element would be like neutering them. The physical prowess of female superheroes, especially, is what grabs your attention; it's the artist's job to convey that. Then the writer steps in and uses that moment to communicate their emotional and mental strength as well. These three traits complement one another. I wondered if a novel could properly re-create that power. Since so much of a superhero's identity is rooted in action and visuals — perhaps even more than words — would these characters even translate well into novel protagonists? Or would She-Hulk and Rogue become shallow versions of themselves?

The answer is different than what I expected — at least in She-Hulk's case (I have yet to get around to Rogue). After reading Marta Acosta's fun and very juicy *The She-Hulk Diaries*, I decided that a) yes, superheroes have enough thoughts buzzing around in their heads to fill a novel but b) the whole superhero action thing is what comes across poorly.

Acosta takes She-Hulk, aka Jennifer Walters (although, in this book, they're two separate characters who cohabit the same body) and makes her a character worth knowing outside of comic books. I'm a nerd and stickler for accuracy and faithful portrayals, but she pulls it off.

But as someone who doesn't write for comics, Acosta loses stride when delivering big action. She restricts most of She-Hulk's crime-fighting efforts to trashing petty thugs who are also cartoonish — and not in a good way. In a cheesy, '60s comics kind of way.

It half works with the story. The Avengers have ostracized She-Hulk, and she's not getting all the cool, intergalactic gigs anymore. So she's stuck picking loser bad guys off the streets.

However, the whole time, I was waiting for at least one super-villain showdown. Acosta does include one — sort of. To leave one out would have disappointed a lot of readers, but what she ends up with isn't handled with the same finesse and drama as what you'd see in comics today. It's a little outdated and campy. I found this to be the weakest part of the book.

I'm reluctant to put a label on *The She-Hulk Diaries*, but this very much does seem like chick-lit to me. (Marta can fight me in the comments if she'd like.) But that's good news because I find chick-lit to be very fun, and hey — it's definitely not romance.

What's most impressive is how Acosta writes Jen/She-Hulk in a way that would make any modern, feminist-minded woman proud. Jennifer stands up for herself. She doesn't jump into a relationship (or bed) although she courts some very different suitors. She doesn't have the best history with men, either. She's normal, but at the same time, she's a little wiser than some of us.

She isn't a flawless character, though. Pretty much anywhere outside the courtroom (Jen's a lawyer), she struggles with self-confidence. She's got some anger issues, deep down. But I love her for being honest and so dedicated to her work, which is all about doing good. I love her for treating her friends with just as much importance and care as her career — and while finding a relationship is important, she doesn't degrade herself to get there. She's not going to change who she is.

To say that's an important message for young women and girls today would be an understatement.

By the end, I wanted more of Acosta's writing because it was so enjoyable, but she does leave readers hanging about a few minor plot threads: the circumstances surrounding She-Hulk's split from the Avengers, for example, and how Jen feels about her mother's death.

At the same time, the overarching story — which connects the “antagonists” (I'm lumping them in a very general group) together and keeps She-Hulk (and lawyer Jen) rather busy — isn't as compelling as the little

details: the everyday thoughts and actions of these two characters.

The book pours on the romance more heavily later on, when Jen has to choose between several love interests. And I can't help but feel like her union with Mr. Right was a little mushy.

Complaints aside, The She-Hulk Diaries is a light, funny, and emotionally cathartic read that breaks expectations.

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## Wendy says

This is the first novel that we've read for our Ladies Comic Book Night book club, but the decision to read it should be an obvious one.

Apparently, the She-Hulk Diaries as well as Rogue Touch, are Marvel's attempt to "target women readers with stories of dynamic female super heroines who split their time between fighting villains and searching for a decent guy to date." [X]. I can't say this concept impressed me, any more than their attempt to bring in Black female readers by marrying Storm off to Black Panther [X]. But for the sake of my ladies at the club, I was willing to overlook my dislike for anything chick-flicky in nature in order to read this book. Thankfully, I wasn't disappointed. I can't say it was the greatest read ever and I would love to read more like this, but it was pretty entertaining.

We also had the opportunity to interview author Marta Acosta on Twitter at our recent meeting. [View the story "LCBN chats with author Marta Acosta about The #SheHulkDiaries" on Storify]

First of all, if you are a previous She-Hulk fan you might find this a bit disconcerting. Acosta chose to separate the She-Hulk and Jennifer Walters personalities, with the greater focus being on Jen as she tries to sort out her personal life and career. I only vaguely knew She-Hulk before reading this and decided to check out the new She-Hulk #1 by Charles Soule to see if my recollections of her were correct. As in, I was certain I remembered her being all green, all the time, which turns out to be the standing canon.

Shulky makes appearances from time to time as the unapologetic party girl who's antics have gotten her kicked out of the Avengers Mansion. The bifurcated personality is addressed in visits to a psychiatrist, where Jen adamantly refuses to accept that she and She-Hulk are the same people.

We were pleased with Acosta's decision to split the personalities when she explained her rationale:

"It was also commentary on internal conflicts women have. Society gives us mixed messages & punishes women who don't conform. The more I thought about She-Hulk, the more I saw her as Jen's superego, being the woman we're told NOT to be. She-Hulk is big, loud, sexual, funny, strong. She's not a nice easy to manage little girl but a powerful woman."

The opportunity to spend more time with Jen is handled well as she manages her social life and her career. The latter collides with her love life when she comes face to face with a former rock star flame who has apparently been crooning his love to her since their weekend of romance, but is now engaged to Jen's new nemesis, Amber. Amber is my biggest complaint in the book, as she comes off as the one-dimensional bitch queen archetype. Still, the rest of the book is engaging enough to overlook this. It's particularly fun when Jen does let Shulky out to play. Although she's been banished from the Avengers Mansion, she's still called on to handle the menial criminal tasks and of course, the Jade Goddess will party hard afterward.

As I said, this was an entertaining read. It didn't impress itself upon me as a female reader, since it's not really my style, but it has successfully introduced me to a new character whom I'm now regularly reading in her comic form. I'd say that's a win. Well played, Marvel. Well played.

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### Callie Rose Tyler says

She Hulk is my favorite Marvel character, I love her witty ironic comics from the 80's and totally fell in love with her during the series written by Dan Slott She-Hulk, Vol. 1: Single Green Female.

I made it through the first 2 chapters, barely, then I realized that this is not the She Hulk that I know. See the great thing about She Hulk is that she is a character that retains her femininity while still kicking ass and never becoming a sex object. Unfortunately this story seems to have very little ass kicking and a whole lot of *'I need to find myself a man'*. **UH NO YOU DON'T, YOU'RE FRICKEN SHE HULK!**

Also, is this story solely about Jen? That's like writing about Bruce Wayne and never Batman, they would never write that story for their male demographic so what makes them think that women want that story?

Here's the thing, you aren't going to draw women readers toward Marvel with this approach, because the women who read this genre are waiting for the next Bridget Jones or some other book with shoes on the cover. Maybe this type of book would work with a character like Mary Jane (see also Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane, Vol. 1, Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane, Vol. 2. These book were actually enjoyable because her whole purpose is already set as the romantic interest.

I was still going to give this book a try but the end of chapter 2 proved to me that I should call it quits:

***"Because while all the other superheroes are saving the world, I'm looking for a job and an apartment, and no one is inviting me to any parties either"***

Well, gee that really makes me want to keep reading....said no comics fan ever.

So disappointing.

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### Jenn says

I had somewhat mixed feelings when it came to writing this review; not because I didn't enjoy the book (I really did; more on that in a minute), but because the actual creation of particular imprint makes me a little uneasy. As a fan of both comic books and chicklit, I'm of course delighted by Marvel's decision to publish these fun books based around their female superheroes; but I'm also aware that it's often very difficult for women to be taken seriously as comic book fans, and the creation of a special series for female readers in

which the characters worry about shoes and boyfriends is not really the way to further make them part of this world. A lot of female comic book fans that I know expressed anger when I told them that I was reading this book, and inclusivity does not come from singling out female fans of comics, then giving them a frothy, specifically girly novel to read. So while I'm now going to talk about how much I enjoyed *The She-Hulk Diaries*, and how excited I am about embarking on the other book from this imprint - *Rogue Touch* - I wanted to show an awareness that this is a complicated area, and I'm not completely comfortable with this idea of female-oriented superhero chicklit.

Having said all that, this book is utterly *delightful*. It's fun, it's likeable, it's periodically laugh-out-loud funny, it has action, mystery and lots of romance. I'll admit here that my knowledge of Jennifer Walters and her big, green alter-ego is somewhat limited - although this book has made me order her more recent comics series, so that's about to change - but whether you're a casual film watcher/comics reader or a more hardcore fan, I think there's something here for both; lots of specific knowledge isn't required for reading enjoyment, but there are fun nods in there for people who know more. And, well, while Tony Stark doesn't ever actually appear in this book, references to him often manage to be wonderfully scene-stealing!

The content is a superhero novel mashed with a chicklit novel, keeping the best tropes of both. Jennifer wants the usual things - a job, an apartment, a boyfriend, to periodically get out of the house and do something that isn't work-related - but she's also got to contend with She-Hulk, her superheroic alter-ego who makes it virtually impossible to keep any of the above things! On top of all this, the Avengers have relegated her to the sidelines, the press are hounding She-Hulk's exploits, and her nemesis is being just a little too quiet... If you're looking for non-stop action, this takes a while to get going, but the different aspects of the plot are woven excellently together and come together for a brilliant climax with a few things I didn't quite see coming! There's also a brilliant scene at a fashion show that I won't spoil for you, but I'll never look at Karl Lagerfeld the same way again.

So maybe it is a little sexist, with a plot that centres around boyfriends, fashion, smoothies and self-actualisation. But the writing is good, the characters are strong, and I think the trick here is not to take it too seriously! I've given this book five stars because it was absolutely everything I wanted out of superhero chicklit: fun, nerdy, exciting, and almost ridiculously enjoyable. I'm now going to run to the other book in this imprint, and I can't wait!

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## Sam says

*Thank you to Hyperion and NetGalley for an ARC of this book. My opinions are my own.*

*The She-Hulk Diaries* is a book of potential, but doesn't entirely work. I wanted to love this book more than I did, but while the writing style is whimsical and informal, the story itself is shallow, superficial, and full of lists. In fact, the lists may have been the most excessive part of the story.

Perhaps I'm a purist, but I wasn't sold on Acosta's version of Jennifer Walters. The character never felt consistent (yes, I recognize she has two identities). One minute Walters is trying to be a tough woman who desires to be taken seriously, then two seconds later she's a cheerleading valley girl. The superficiality of Walter's character really rubbed me the wrong a lot of the time. She always felt friendly, but never realistic in the slightest.

I also didn't appreciate how easily everything is wrapped up in this story. It seemed like every situation was more of an "oopsie" than a really, full blown conflict. Perhaps that part of the problem with the story -- nothing really every felt like it was happening, and when it was, I never felt connected because Walter's narrative voice was constantly rubbing me the wrong way. I love the confidence, no nonsense, Jennifer

Walters, not the hyperactive teenage fangirl who says "OMG" every few pages. It didn't help that a lot of the characters felt so hollow, so insignificant, even though Walters goal is to find an awesome boyfriend and make new friends. To be honest, that was the whole plot and it was just very irritating and *boring* to listen to Walter's inane thoughts. Why does having the perfect boyfriend matter so damn much? Please, answer me this question, because it's always a huge topic in romance novels.

The editing in this book is also a bit sloppy. There's a lot of lines that sound really awkward when read aloud, or phrases that are broken or spaced the wrong way. May be it was my eReader, but I found this very distracting.

While I love and I appreciate the idea of this novel, I question as to whether the diary format worked to begin with. I felt like She-Hulk could have been an intriguing to follow around, but I wish Acosta did not create such a bland, superficial interpretation. Maybe I shouldn't have had such high expectations for this idea, but how can you not with the premise? I suppose as a fan of her character in the Marvel-verse I was expecting more, but was disappointed over all. Those who can tolerate the choppy writing style and the fact that Jen Walters is quite the party girl, will likely find enjoyment for this novel. Those seeking a great twist, may find themselves quite disappointed by the overall results.

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## Navessa says

**\*I received this ARC in exchange for an honest review\***

To be honest, I didn't expect to like this book as much as I did. I thought it would be a fun read with some action and drama and some sort of crazy evil villain trying to take over the world.

What I didn't bargain for and what I was pleasantly surprised by, was how frigging hilarious it was. No really. This book was ~~LOL~~ ~~no LMF~~ ~~AO not extreme enough...~~ ~~ROFLMFAOOHMYGODMYRIBSHURT~~ funny. Don't let the comic book beginnings fool you, this is definitely a book for a mature and decidedly female audience. This book is classic Marvel meets Sex in the City.

~~One thing you should know about me is that I am into comic books, secretly wish I was a superhero, get into legitimate arguments about why Star Wars is infinitely superior to Star Trek and work with dudes that make Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory look like a social extrovert~~ am sort of "nerdy".

If you're looking solely at that then it would make sense that I loved this book, however I also have a lot of literary pet peeves. I'm pleased to say that this book was surprisingly free of the tropes and stereotypes I expected to find.

Our main character is the decidedly non-Mary Sue-esque Jen, aka She Hulk, aka Shulky. Her life is in shambles because of her alter-ego, she's dateless, jobless and sometimes even a little spineless.

Her best friend is a foulmouthed horndog of a pixie named Dahlia who vaguely resembles an anime character with her propensity to match her contact lenses to whichever color her hair is currently died. Their friendship was so refreshing. They give each other good advice, rely on each other and trust each other implicitly. I'll say it again; HOW REFRESHING. And every time the two of them were together I was gigglefittin'. Their back and forth was truly hilarious...and dirty, in a good way.

Then there's Ellis Tesla, one of the loooooove interests \*waggles eyebrows\*. When he walked back into

Jen's life this book went from giggling funny to choking on laughter funny. Jen has this incredible self deprecating sense of humor that I absolutely LOVED. Oh God, it was so awkward. There's just the small problem of his shark of a fiancé Amber, whom you'll hate. And that brings us to the other love interest. Dr. Morigi of the beautiful face and the dubious character. I've come to fear all mysterious doctors that I meet in the Marvel world and with good reason. Nuff said.

The book follows Jen through her resolutions to make her life better, her confusion over Ellis, the trial she's working on in support of her client Dr. Morigi and against the organ cloning company ReplaceMax, and her investigation into the identity of a mysterious new villain and a mysterious new hero.

Will everyone love this? Hmm...me thinks not. There are quite a few story lines in here. There's Jen's love life, Jen's work life, Shulky's 'work' life, Shulky's social life, the emergence of mysterious new bad guys, the strange and ominous 'Happy' that seems to be infecting all residents of NYC (which prompted me to assume: THE END IS NIGH!) and also the innumerable name drops of other Marvel characters that you almost need to have read the comics to really understand.

Because of all this the book might come across as all over the place to some people. It didn't bother me. I was too engrossed in what was going to happen next on all fronts and with so *much* going on the story never had time to drag. It was continuously interesting or hilarious or awesomely awkward or action packed.

Then there's those pesky Marvel purists. I'm sorry. I love the classics but I don't want to read the same shit over and over and OVER again. I want new, I want fresh and this book was both of those things for me.

Purists however, are purists and this book is a deviation from what you've previously seen of Jen and Shulky. So be warned.

One last thing. I originally rated this book two stars because there's a body shaming scene 4/5ths of the way through that really irked me. Since it's been a while since I read it, I've calmed down enough to edit my original review and remove the rant concerning this scene. Just be forewarned that it's in there so if you have issues with body shaming you may be annoyed.

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## Eric Klee says

Reading THE SHE-HULK DIARIES was more painful than a green-fisted punch in the stomach by ol' "Shulky" herself. I also bought and read ROGUE TOUCH about the X-Men's Rogue and was similarly disappointed. What should be fun young adult books geared toward getting more teenage girls into comic books and superheroes is just a waste of paper.

I'm not sure who Marvel thinks these books are geared towards? Teenage girls? Adults? Comic fan boys? If it's young girls, then the main character shouldn't be an adult lawyer who randomly hooks up with guys. If it's for comic book fans, then the writer should actually be familiar with the character. Instead, in this book, She-Hulk has a secret identity, unlike the comics. In this novel, she also has two separate, distinct personas: Jennifer Walter, attorney, and She-Hulk, big green superhero. And never the two shall meet. The "diary entries" are written by Jennifer, and when she's referring to the She-Hulk, it's always (negatively) in the third person. This is very disjarring for fans of John Byrne's Sensational She-Hulk series from the 1980s and Charles Soule's She-Hulk series of today. Basically, she's not the She-Hulk I know...or have ever known.

Just who is author Marta Acosta and why was she chosen for this writing assignment? Has she ever read a She-Hulk comic book in her life? Did Marvel Comics not prep her on the character and her background? I think they just told her that She-Hulk is casually referred to as "Shulky" and to please use that a lot. (You'll soon tire of seeing it on the page.)

All of that aside, the book was still pretty crappy. It was directionless and never once held my interest. The book summary should read: "Attorney Jennifer Walters gets a boring case while trying to avoid the man with whom she had the greatest sex in her life, while also dealing with her inner demon of the trampy She-Hulk."

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## **Katy says**

As a She-Hulk fan I am disappointed but sadly not surprised by this offering from Marta Acosta.

My major complaint (that Jen and She-Hulk are NOT different entities) was actually addressed late in the piece, but the fact remains that Jen never saw 'Shulky' (a nickname I tired of immediately) as separate from her.

The reveal about Sven and Amber made me roll my eyes as the use of Doom here felt lazy and obvious. And leaving one of his clones running around? Not even the bratty OOC She-Hulk masquerading as my favourite superhuman lawyer would be so irresponsible.

This book might have worked as a romance about a shy lawyer re-meeting her steamy science-rockstar-good-with-kids one night stand, I just wouldn't have read it. As it stands, Marvel allowed one of my favourite female role models to be distorted and reduced to a scattered ditz, and after she was unceremoniously killed off in the recent Age of Ultron event it's even more galling. Not to mention the fact that the only other female super hero even mentioned ONCE was Black Widow, meanwhile I couldn't go five pages without reading about Tony Stark. Jen is one of a pantheon of wonderful female characters who are consistently misused at best or ignored at worst.

Your female audience expect and deserve better, Marvel.

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## **Heather V ~The Other Heather~ says**

3.5 stars, definitely.

I'm a comics enthusiast but had the benefit of knowing relatively little about Jennifer Walters/"Shulky" canon going into this book. From many of the other reviews here I gather that was a good thing. It allowed me to just enjoy Acosta's funny yarn about the mousy lawyer who has Bruce Banner as a cousin and whose bad habit of turning into a giant green party monster got her in hot water at the Avengers HQ, among other things. Had I approached this story with previous knowledge of the oneness that defines Jen and Shulky - an idea bucked here - I can see how I may have found it maddening.

But luck was on my side. THE SHE-HULK DIARIES was my first true foray into the Walters/Hulk dichotomy. And I found what Acosta did with it amusing and entertaining.

It's set up in the ol' Bridget Jones format, even starting with Jennifer making resolutions in her new journal (they're a Valentine's Day project here, rather than Bridget's Christmas-crisis beginnings). The diary includes

many of the idiosyncrasies from Helen Fielding's huge hit, like strikethroughs as Jennifer constantly self-edits her thoughts, and many of her resolutions are similar to those of Bridget, too...including finding a (preferably non-superhero) boyfriend. Some eyebrow-raising references are made to Jen's romantic history with playboy Tony Stark, a.k.a. Iron Man, right off the bat, so we immediately know Jennifer has a colourful past (and it's more than just green). She's relatable and charmingly self-effacing from the moment we meet her, and the diary format really works here; I don't know that we'd have gotten to experience her wry sense of humour the same way if this had been a straight-up third-person novel.

What makes SHE-HULK DIARIES rise above the syrupy chick lit it might've otherwise been is the overwhelming message that, the more time that passes and the more she writes, the more she begins to realize that "getting a boyfriend" is the icing on her cake, not the cake itself. We get to see her focus a lot on her law career, her friends (mostly well-written women; I took a shine to BFF Dahlia right away, though Jennifer's nemesis is a bit of a cookie-cutter "ice queen" type - that was a grating element of the story), her interactions with her superhero colleagues - familiar Avengers characters to even casual Marvel fans - as well as those in her day job... All of the resolutions she makes inform her \*whole\* life, not just the singular facet of wanting a man.

There's a lot of humour in these pages, inherent in the idea of a professional woman who "Hulks out" (she resolves, for instance, to upgrade her wardrobe so her clothes can better withstand the shredding effect of becoming Shulky). Sometimes it feels as though the wit is acting as a distraction in order to camouflage an occasionally thin plot. But overall it's a light, funny read, exactly what it was meant to be, so it scores points for that.

Were I to take a more critical look at this book and consider why Marvel commissioned such a girly, stereotypically ditzy tie-in just to lure female readers, I'd probably Hulk Out myself. But taking Acosta's novel at face value, I was charmed by its levity, its quick pace and its likeable protagonist. Rating it just on the merits of the story alone is how I came to a 3.5 star review. I might feel differently upon deeper reflection, but for now it served my desire for an easy read that kept me smiling.

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## **Paxnirvana says**

Being female does not automatically grant one entre into the world of "chick-lit". Personally, I loathe the genre, mostly because, in the hands of callous writers, it reduces the essential human search for companionship and understanding to shopping trips and make-up advice beneath veiled catty quips. But that's my view, and I'm well aware many others don't share it. --

So I was afraid, at first, that this book was going to end up just being chick-lit for one of my long-neglected superhero friends, She-Hulk -- but, thankfully, it wasn't. Despite the initial "diary" format (and the quirky hairdresser friend -- who I ended up liking far more than I thought I would at first. Dahlia'd stand up in Marvel's world, she would; she knows who she is and isn't afraid to be herself.), it quickly became far more. And a clever, thoughtful, engaging bit of world-building set within the greater Marvel universe. I've always had a soft spot for the "ordinary" parts of the Marvel universe -- how the average people deal with superheroes duking it out in Central Park every other Wednesday. This book dealt with that cleverly --- while still making it clear that while the Marvel Universe may superficially resemble our world, it very distinctly is NOT our world.

But it was the conflicted Jennifer Walters who made this. Barely dealing with her own duality as She-Hulk, her life goals, career, the longing to not be alone, all with a hefty side-order of superhero-ing and food-cart surveying, she was an engaging, interesting protagonist. I was pulling for her to get her self together again,

particularly since, as a long-time Avengers fan, I'm well aware of the horrible way she was written out of general Marvel circulation for a very long time. (Vision! Wanda! the FF! argh!)

This was a fun, engaging read, with lots of call-outs to Marvel characters and the greater mythos, without being completely inaccessible to someone who doesn't read comics regularly (or at all).

Give Jen a shot; Shulky will wow you.

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