

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat*
AUTHOR Harry Harrison
PUBLISHER Berkley
COPYWRIGHT 1961 et al
PRINTING 1978

This omnibus collection consists of the first three novels in this popular series: *The Stainless Steel Rat*, *The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge* and *The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World*. The first story introduces us to James Bolivar DeGriz, alias the Stainless Steel Rat. He is a thief with honor and morals and steals with impunity – until the Special Corps catch him in a neat set-up. The Corps is an elite group who track down the worst criminals in the universe. The Corps need brilliant criminals like “slippery” Jim DeGriz to accomplish this. Of course our hero succumbs to the greater need and works with Corps – of course he still manages to steal his way to La Dolce Vita along the way.

The second tale is an engrossing one where the Rat is on the trail of Kraj – a ruthless bloodthirsty character bent on conquering world after world – and goes deep undercover.

The final romp is a wonderful time travel adventure, where the rat bounces around chasing the evil alien to Earth's past and elsewhere.

What makes the Rat series so wonderful is the effortless first-person narrative Harrison writes. The dialogue is snappy and the pacing is just quick enough to keep the stories moving along. The other area Harrison excels at is making you think the protagonist is going to get the better of the villain and then gets caught himself. Even though it happens several times in each story but it never seems contrived or stupid.

These stories are fun to read and can give popcorn a run for it's money – get all you can find in the used book stores and enjoy!

I give it 4 rings of Saturn.