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Shadowrun: Spells And Chrome



Synopsis

SR: Anthology Vol. 1 - Spells & Chrome

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the Shadowrun fan without a gaming group, this is a fantastic reintroduction to the world of Shadowrun, and the things that may have occurred during a hiatus from the series. Easily approachable to new readers and hardcore fans alike, it's a worthy collection, perhaps even more so than the last run of novels. The stories skip across all parts of the Awakened world and touch on characters in all sorts of positions, from the retired soldier to the crazy surgery addict, from Seattle to the deepest urban jungles of Africa. While not all stories needed to occur in the world of Shadowrun, they fit in pretty well, especially as a vehicle to introduce new technologies such as the wireless Matrix. And hey, who knew the otaku/technomancers would start finding their place in the world? Bottom line: if you're a fan, you're going to like this. If you're curious about Shadowrun, it's not a bad selection to whet your appetite.

I have been a longtime Shadowrun novel fan having collected and read most of them (publications prior to 2005), and I was thrilled to see that they decided to publish some more stories in the Shadowrun world. I was a bit disappointed as it seems most of the writers have little past involvement with the Shadowrun world (i.e. game rules, etc) that would have given them more of a firmer grasp of the world. Some of the stories range from good to decent to bad. The biggest gripe I

had was none of the Shadowrun vernacular or slang made its way in any of the stories. I understand these take place past 2052, but the writers seem to want to distance themselves from the Shadowrun of past. I am guessing the current Shadowrun games are maybe like this, but I liked it when the deckers were called deckers and you fragged this or drekked that. Oh well, to each their own. If you are new to Shadowrun and are curious I recommend trying to find "Shadowrun 07: Into the Shadows (v. 7)" which was a great braided novel that gave you a great variety of stories from various authors that tied into a weaved plot line or anything by Nigel Findley (may he rest in peace). See you in the shadow chummers.

This book is a sharp reminder of why Shadowrun was the incredible success that it was back in the 90's. If you played in the second or third editions of the game then there is a bit of culture shock, but worth the read. Great stories most, bite sized journeys into the dark corners of the corporate mean streets and the shadows that cut their way through the sodium and neon glows.

Not all of the stories here are winners but it does my heart well to know that after all of these years they are still publishing Shadowrun fiction. Some of the tales are surprisingly short but fun while others (feel like) they are much, much longer. One thing longtime fans will note is the replacement of certain Shadowrun idioms as "chummer", "drek", etc. with their modern day counterparts that I can't repeat here. All in all it's a nice way to take a trip back into the sixth world, although don't be surprised if you find yourself skimming over a few of the stories.

I enjoyed the books since they brought out a lot of the subtle details you might not think about when trying to play the game. (AR overlays, sensors at a fast food place, alerts and alarms about mages, etc...)I hope that there will be more stories like this in the future :).

It was an enjoyable anthology that plumbed the well of material available. Particularly enjoyed Snake in the City, how it showed how a good runner team can turn a bad situation around. The one story I took exception to was the Dirk Montgomery piece wherein Dirk himself claims to have no cyberware, when in past novels written by the late Nigel Findley, it was rather clearly and brutally established that Dirk had lost an arm in an incident involving one of the major threats of the SR universe, and summarily had it replaced. In general, though an enjoyable story. Looking forward to more SR stories by these great writers!

So I was trying to get my head back into the Shadowrun genre and I started flipping through the book options. I came across Spells & Chrome and thought, "Great! This will give me a good taste of 2070+ as well as immerse me in the attitude of Shadowrun!". Well... that depends on the author. And with short stories you don't really get immersed in anything. Overall I have enjoyed the book, but several authors decided to concentrate on otaku, one decided to concentrate on a chrome dome whose brain is losing a grip from too much cyber, there were a couple great stories that were simply too short... so in the end, my idea backfired on me. This is not a good way to get a good taste of the new world (post-Crash) and each author brings a very different style to the book which is somewhat jarring. I think those familiar with the milieu of Shadowrun will get more out of Spells & Chrome than I did. Some of the authors were fantastic and really drew me in, which I like from a literary standpoint but not from what I was looking for with my experiment.

Not normally a reader of game-related fiction (AD&D, SR, etc) I was drawn to this book because I am trying to get back into running Shadowrun games (I did 2nd ed way back in the day) and wanted some inspiration for settings, background, and plots. I was not disappointed. It is a nice collection with varied plots, settings, and characters, all true to the Shadowrun universe. Most the archetypal characters are in there - street samurai, hackers, technomancers, mages, shamen, etc. For someone wanting a wide variety of short fiction related to Shadowrun, this collection fits the bill. Can't wait for volume 2.

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