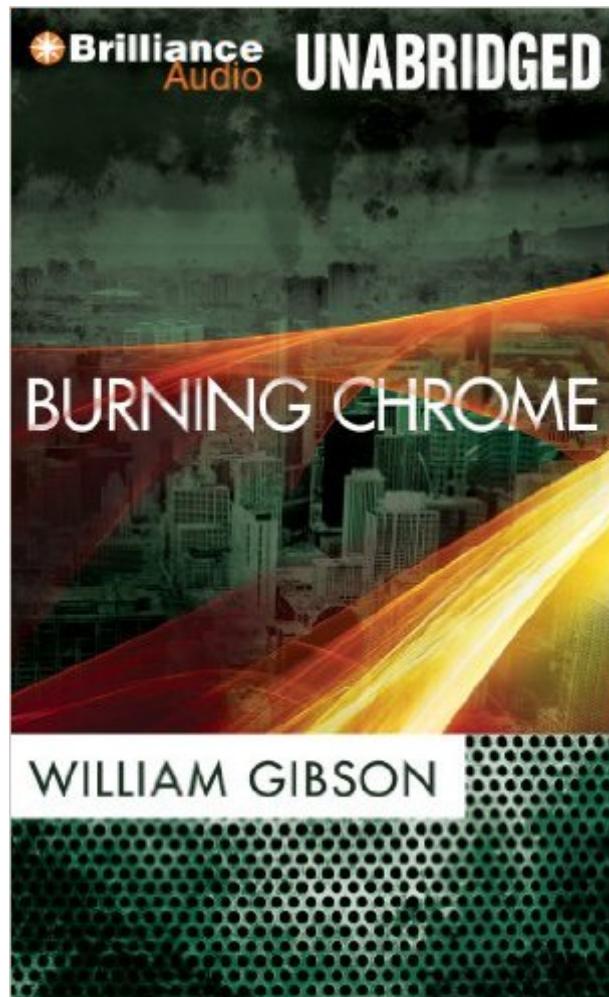


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Burning Chrome



Synopsis

William Gibson's dark visions of computer cowboys, bio-enhanced soldiers of fortune, and hi-tech lowlifes have won unprecedeted praise. Included here are some of the most famous short fiction and novellas by the author of Count Zero and Neuromancer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I think William Gibson is probably the best pure *writer* that I have read for years. I don't think, on the other hand, that his fiction is the best that SF has produced--but his deliverance of the stories is his strong point. His prose has been polished to the point that it sparkles and contains more than a good deal of poetry. Not only is his language poetic, but also are his images, especially his depiction of cyberspace with all its colorful towers of data. As far as Gibson's fiction is concerned it is always interesting, often relevant, and on occasion cathartic. Most of his stories seem to take on the same sort of tone, that stemming from the "hard-boiled" tradition. Stories like "Johnny Mnemonic" and "Burning Chrome" best exemplify this particular brand of story. But Gibson also pulls a few surprises out of his hat and delivers stories that are highly experimental and center around character study rather than high-tempo, action-packed adventure stories. "The Winter Market" in particular struck me as especially brilliant. His focus in the story was not the neat gadgetry that was represented by the "exoskeleton" worn by one of the characters, it was how this shaped this character and effected her life. But Gibson doesn't stop there, he gives us a cast of strong characters and plenty of interaction between them. And this is what really made the story interesting for me. The sf elements are there, but the story has a great deal of universality in its portrayal of real people in situations we

can relate to.I also thought that "Hinterlands" and "The Gernsback Continuum" were very interesting stories.

A lot of people who read Gibson bash his writing because of the superficial nature of his characters. They're missing the point. One of the overarching themes of cyberpunk is the idea that technology, while revolutionizing our world, is also slowly stripping us of many of the things that make us human. Cyberpunk is a dystopia, not a Star Trek style utopia. The people living in the Sprawl, in Gibson's world, are superficial, because that's all that they have. It's professionalism taken to an unhealthy degree, and it mirrors many people that I know. Not everyone in the world has a deep, complex personality. I dare say a significant number of them don't. That being said, Gibson truly shines as a short story writer. As a fan and practitioner of the short story, the sparseness of plot and space in general is one of the strong points in cyberpunk. The genre is about impact and style, and the shorter the story, the stronger the impact has to be to justify the experience. Burning Chrome is a book with ten such impacts. The first story, Johnny Mnemonic, probably has the best chance to be known by the general public, and has the hardest reputation to overcome. It's great scifi, albeit far from the best story in the book. As other reviewers have said, it does introduce Molly and gives a great taste of the Sprawl. The killing floor is also one of the best examples of culture in Gibson's world. The Gernsback Continuum is one of those stories that border on the incredibly bizarre. I didn't care for this story as much as the other (it's probably my least favorite), but it's still bizarre enough to be entertaining. Fragments of a Hologram Rose if I remember correctly is one of Gibson's first short stories, and it sets the stage beautifully for his style of writing.

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