

Seattle Noir

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Brand new stories by: G.M. Ford, Skye Moody, R. Barri Flowers, Thomas P. Hopp, Patricia Harrington, Bharti Kirchner, Kathleen Alcalá, Simon Wood, Brian Thornton, Lou Kemp, Curt Colbert, Robert Lopresti, Paul S. Piper, and Stephan Magcosta.

Early Seattle was a hardscrabble seaport filled with merchant sailors, longshoremen, lumberjacks, rowdy saloons, and a rough-and-tumble police force not immune to corruption and graft. By the mid-50s, the town had added Boeing to its claim to fame, but was still a mostly blue-collar burg that was infamously described as “a cultural dustbin” by the Seattle Symphony’s first conductor. Present-day Seattle has become a pricey, cosmopolitan center, home to Microsoft and Starbucks. The city is famous as the birthplace of grunge music, and possesses a flourishing art, theatre, and club scene that many would have thought improbable just a few decades ago. But some things never change—crime being one of them. Seattle’s evolution to high-finance and high-tech has simply provided even greater opportunity and reward to those who might be ethically, morally, or economically challenged (crooks, in other words). But most crooks are just ordinary people, not professional thieves or crime bosses—they might be your pleasant neighbor, your wife or lover, your grocer or hairdresser, your minister or banker or lifelong friend—yet even the most upright and honest of them sometimes fall to temptation.

Within the stories of *Seattle Noir*, you will find: a wealthy couple whose marriage is filled with not-so-quiet desperation; a credit card scam that goes over-limit; femmes fatales and hommes fatales; a delicatessen owner whose case is less than kosher; a famous midget actor whose movie roles begin to shrink when he starts growing taller; an ex-cop who learns too much; a group of mystery writers whose fiction causes friction; a Native American shaman caught in a web of secrets and tribal allegiances; sex, lies, and slippery slopes . . . and a cast of characters that always want more, not less . . . unless . . .

Seattle Noir Details

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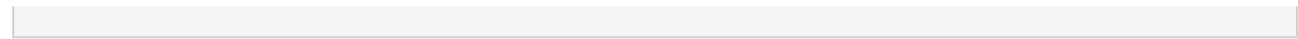
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From Reader Review Seattle Noir for online ebook

Elizabeth says

This book is a series of stories set in Seattle that are at least moderately dark and by local-ish authors I'd never heard of. The stories weren't really cohesive. They were divided into 4 parts, but I didn't really understand what the stories in a part had to do with one another either.

If you're really into stories set in Seattle, or northwest authors, this book might be worth a read (check it out from the library, it's not worth buying).

Chris says

The rain doesn't even factor in these stories-merely a minor mention. So much for the omnipresent rain of Seattle. However, there are some good stories in this volume that are the typical noir types you would find in any city: married couple hiring a PI to protect each of them from the other partner who is going to kill them; dirty cops setting up a punk; affair for murder of the husband and then the set-up. Some news ones though with a red tide poison from the Puget Sound Native Americans and the triads of China murder in Chinatown. A nice mix of interesting stories set in Seattle, past and present.

Larisa says

As with any short story collection, some are better than others in this collection that takes readers on a tour of the seamy underbelly of several of Seattle's neighborhoods. The writing in a few seems forced, but there are a few that took some wonderful surprise twists and one that made me laugh out loud at the end. My favorites were the stories by Simon Wood and Curt Colbert--if all the stories were on that level I would have given the book an extra star. A good, quick, fun read overall.

Lara Seven says

pretty solid short story collection.

Michael says

Mystery short stories are hard.

There's not enough room to really develop characters or do an interesting plot, so they mostly end up being a 10 page setup for a twist ending that becomes pretty easy to guess after the second page.

There might be good mystery short stories out there, but these ain't them.

They do take place in Seattle, and I love reading stuff that takes place in Seattle, so it gets the second star from me. Not recommended.

Lulu says

After just returning from a road trip to Seattle and the Olympic Peninsula, I found this book quite entertaining. The locations and references to native populations of the area were fresh in my mind, making it easier to picture the situations in these short stories. I'm continuing the Noir series, albeit intermittently and it's interesting to see the difference in the caliber of writing between the authors.

Christina Mitchell says

Saw this little gem of a book at Metsker Maps in the SEA-TAC airport. I am participating in Turner Classic Movie's Summer of Darkness film noir study (Summer 2014) and had to have the book when I saw it. This book of short stories by Seattle writers brings Seattle old and new alive as a place of shadowy nooks and crannies exuding questionable morals - and, really, isn't that *just* Seattle? The various protagonists may not always have a happy ending, but that's the point of noir. One story even brings Sherlock Holmes and Moriarity (sort of) to Seattle. I think I will take the book with me on my next trip up and visit the settings of the stories.

If your interested, this volume is one of a series. Also available are Baltimore, Bronx, Brooklyn, Chicago, D.C., Dehli, Detroit, Dublin, Havana, Istanbul (can anyone say, "Maltese Falcon"?), Las Vegas, Manhattan, Miami, New Orleans, Paris, Portland, Queens, Rome, San Francisco, Toronto, Trinidad, Twin Cities, and Wall Street collections noir.

P.S. Metsker's, if I can plug, is a wonderful Seattle map store of which I am very fond. They have all sorts of cool maps and map-like treats. They are a Seattle original located near Pike's Market and worth your patronage.

Rhonda Gilmour says

It's difficult to rate a collection of short stories by different authors. My favorites in this collection of dark, mystery-ish tales set in Seattle were "The Magnolia Bluff" by Skye Moody, "The Wrong End of a Gun" by R. Barri Flowers, and "The Best View in Town" by Paul S. Piper. IMO, there were a few clunkers in this collection, but enough good, creepy fun to please any lover of this genre. Worth a look.

Brendan says

It's a mixed bag. 3 1/2 stars over-all, with individual stories ranging from 2 to 4 stars.

Favorites:

"The Center of the Universe" (Robert Lopresti)

"The Taskmasters" (Simon Wood)
"What Price Retribution?" (Patricia Harrington)
"Paper Son" (Brian Thornton)

Two of the weaker stories were overly political. A couple others were set up well but finished weakly.

Audrey says

A collection I wish would've been better. A handful of good stories -- Bharti Kirchner's "Promised Tulips", "The Best View in Town" by Paul S. Piper and Robert Lopresti's "The Center of the Universe" -- get practically buried in among a lot of mediocre stories that veer between sacrificing Seattle in the name of noir or vice versa.

You have to hang on til the bitter end to catch the anthology's two really outstanding stories, "The Magnolia Bluff" by Skye Moody and GM Ford's "Food for Thought", both of which are quick, clean and wonderfully terrible.

While it helps with most of the stories to have some familiarity with Seattle, those last two do a grand job of telling the city's story on their own merits.

James Eastwood says

I've read some of the other collections in this series (at least Brooklyn Noir, if I recall correctly) and have been satisfied with them, but. . . maybe Seattle crime writers just suck? I stopped after five or six stories because not only were they plotted poorly and most of them were written with the facility of a creative writing student, none of the stories I read really captured the blackness of the *noir* that I was seeking.

Aaron VanAlstine says

Several decent stories but most would likely not be published elsewhere.

Donna Davis says

No doubt, as many others have observed, it would be fairer to rate each writer individually here, because this is a very mixed bag. I enjoyed the anchor pieces that began and ended the collection, and it was the presence of a relatively brief piece by GM Ford that made me go looking for it. I liked the story set in Chinatown, as well as the lampoon of the very-elite Magnolia by new-to-me writer Skye Moody. I understand that the writer with the Nordstrom-this and Nordstrom-that is an award winner, but I would not give an award for this particular story, which became so pretentious and tedious that I skipped to its ending once I was halfway through and saw how much was left to go.

I had to laugh when I noted that though quality had been compromised to represent most parts of the city, all

of Rainier Valley (the 25% or so south of Chinatown and the Central District, long considered the wrong side of the tracks) went entirely unacknowledged.

I emerged relatively cheerful though, because I read it free. A family member had it on a kindle and let me have a couple evenings alone with it, and so I felt good about it. Had I paid for a hard cover copy, I think I would have felt robbed.

Get it cheap or free if your heart, like mine, is in Seattle. That way you can read what seems good and skip the rest.

Harris says

I have probably spent more time in Seattle than any other city outside the Twin Cities, and I definitely regard it fondly and look forward to any chance to visit. While the Pacific Northwest shares some cultural traits with my home in the Upper Midwest, the coast and the mountains give it an entirely different feel. There is a grittiness along the steep, mist drenched streets of Seattle that can not be found in Minneapolis-St. Paul, though perhaps may be found a bit in Duluth. In any case, there is much material to draw upon along the shores of Puget Sound for noir tales, and I was looking forward to reading about the human drama found under the shadow of the gleaming white Space Needle and the distant snowy form of Mount Rainier.

Unfortunately, I found that this title in the Akashic Noir series had the weakest evocation of the setting of any of the series I've read so far. There was something lacking in a lot of the stories in this collection, sadly. The city of Seattle seems merely incidental in a majority of these tales, and for the most part, they seem to stick to tired, well worn noir cliches, with few surprises. Corrupt cops, homeless PIs, mysterious murders- nothing that really sticks out; even the 1940s and 1880s period pieces lacked much of a sense of place. There was also a rather unfortunate element of racism in a few of the stories as well, especially What Price Retribution? There were a few stories that stood out, though, in particular Paper Son (an interesting multicultural story set in the 1880s), Center of the Universe (a story highlighting Seattle's quirky people), Wrong End of the Gun (which, while not drawing much from the setting had an interesting twist), and The Magnolia Bluff (which had some of the best characterization in the collection). The rest of the stories were, at best, okay. I'd recommend Portland Noir as the superior Akashic Noir title focusing on the Pacific Northwest.

Jodi says

3-1/2 ??
