



Wireless

Charles Stross

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Science fiction guru Charles Stross "sizzles with ideas" ("Denver Post") in his first major short story collection.

The Hugo Award-winning author of such groundbreaking and innovative novels as "Accelerando, Halting State," and "Saturn's Children" delivers a rich selection of speculative fiction- including a novella original to this volume- brought together for the first time in one collection, showcasing the limitless imagination of one of the twenty-first century's most daring visionaries.

Wireless Details

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Ian says

Stross writes engaging SF, and this is a collection of his longer and shorter short SF. A range of sometimes related stories, most of which I would like to see in a novel. Complicated, a second read would be worthwhile just to work through all the permutations. Normally, not a fan of the short story, but willing to make an exception here.

Steven Cole says

Wireless is a quality short-story collection by Stross. Quick reviews:

Missile Gap: This is the story of a late 1950s earth whose crust has been peeled off our globe and stuck on an even larger flat plate, what that means to the people who live there, and how that influences the tensions of the Cold War. It was fascinating, weird, and fun. The concept was oddly original. 4 of 5 stars.

Rogue Farm: A weird concept of extreme body modification (to the extent of creating communes-in-a-body), and the back-to-nature crowd. I know I read (or heard) this one before, but I'm not sure where. 4 of 5 stars.

A Colder War: Late Cold-War meddling with Cthulhu-esque powers. Interesting, but ultimately just a Lovecraft tribute. 3 of 5 stars.

MAXOS: Flash fiction in the form of a letter to Nature. This was cool. I can't really say much without spoiling it (it **is** flash after all), but it's about the first messages received from space, and what they're **really** going to be about. 5 of 5 stars.

Down on the Farm: It's a Laundry story! For those not familiar, Stross has a series of novels starring Bob Howard, an agent for a British spy organization called "The Laundry" whose area of expertise is mathematical thaumaturgy. (Or, in other words, dealing with critters from beyond reality.) This one's good, but not great. Cool steampunk-like robots, though. 4 of 5 stars.

Unwirer: Written with Cory Doctorow, this one is the story of those who make networks, in an alternate history where the Internet was effectively made illegal in the 1990s. It **feels** like a Doctorow story, with his counter-culture sensitivities. 4 of 5 stars.

Snowball's Chance: A deal-with-the-devil story, where our protagonist is actually more evil than the demonic representative he's meeting with. Fun, but the logic is twisted, and I'm still not sure I followed it right. 3 of 5 stars.

Trunk and Disorderly: An attempt at high-British upper-class humor that mostly falls flat. Ultimately, it's an experiment in preparation for Stross' later novel "Saturn's Children". 3 of 5 stars.

Palimpsest: Time travel done **right**. This story was awesome. I keep comparing all time travel stories to Leiber's, "The Big Time", which won a Hugo back in the 1950s (and which I hated)... This story has a lot of the same themes (plus a more up-to-date grasp of technology), done in a fashion that really made me sit up

and take notice. 5 of 5 stars.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4* of five

The Publisher Says: Science fiction guru Charles Stross "sizzles with ideas" (*Denver Post*) in his first major short story collection.

The Hugo Award-winning author of such groundbreaking and innovative novels as *Accelerando*, *Halting State*, and *Saturn's Children* delivers a rich selection of speculative fiction- including a novella original to this volume- brought together for the first time in one collection, showcasing the limitless imagination of one of the twenty-first century's most daring visionaries.

My Review: As always, I'll rate the stories individually:

--"Missile Gap": 3*; ~meh~

--"Rogue Farm": 4.25*; I regained hope for the remainder of the collection about here

--"A Colder War": 2.5*; who the hell is this story about? It's littered with characters and I don't get to know any of 'em

--"Maxos": ?; I can't even rate this because it's just not a story, it's an article and it clangs like a cast-iron pot lid on a cheatin' husband's head

--"Down on the Farm": 5*; subject, characters, and voice all came together perfectly

--"Unwirer": 3.5*; alternative history in short form always frustrates a little bit, but this one overcame the inevitable and left me wanting more

--"Trunk and Disorderly": 2*; humor? Not for me

--"Snowball's Chance": 2.5*; anyone who doesn't "get it" instantly probably has one digit in their age, and absent any sense of suspense, so what?

--"Palimpsest": 5*; glitters with the glamour of everything being in precisely the right place

Tom says

Not too bad a collection, but not the career-defining retrospective that I hoped to read. None of the stories *really* blew me away. But they were all fairly solid science fiction.

Missile Gap - A bizarre kinda-alternate-history story, with a Big Dumb Object thrown in. Lots of cameos from historical figures, and a weird story-telling structure, make this pretty compelling.

Rogue Farm - A rather funny—and kinda creepy and repulsive—story about baseline humans clashing with post-humans in a strange future.

A Colder War - A very bleak Lovecraftian alternate-history story that I would have liked a lot more if it didn't completely rehash **Missile Gap**'s structure. Has an incredibly depressing ending!

MAXOs - Very short and funny; presented as a scientific paper on the decoding of interstellar signals.

Down on the Farm - Not the best *Laundry* story I've read so far, but pretty solid. Bob Howard investigates the Laundry's own psychiatric hospital for its former agents... Not all is well in the ward.

Unwirer - Maybe the best story in this collection. A really interesting tale about paranoia and subversion in an alternate USA where wireless internet is illegal. Has a great ending!

Snowball's Chance - A mean-spirited little Faustian tale with a climate-change spin.

Trunk and Disorderly - Another great one. A positively wacky story that reads like a *Jeeves and Wooster* story set in a decadent, *Futurama*-meets-*Hitchhiker's-Guide*-meets-*The-Culture* universe. There's also a Dalek, because why the hell not! Riotously fun.

Palimpsest - Went on a bit long and was confusing in places, but this is mostly a clever novella about humanity's expansion through deep time, as mediated by a time-travelling organisation called Stasis. The reveal near the end as to what the Opposition is up to makes this great science fiction.

Guy Haley says

There is no denying Stross' credentials. He holds twin degrees, one in pharmacy, the other in computer sciences. This colours his work to a great degree, in a positive way. There are precious few writers out there who can convincingly utilise the terminology of both biology and IT; there's deep science in what Stross writes.

However, there's a degree of narrowness to his concerns. Many of his stories obsess over Cold War style spy-jinks, codenames clutter the prose whether he's giving us a Lovecraftian pastiche or a straight-up SF tale. There's also a cul-de-sac viewpoint to his protagonists, like they're stuck at the end of a long a bag peering out at small circle of the universe, not really a part of it. The story 'Unwirer' (written with Cory Doctorow) is a good example, where the activities of one band of geeks in one branch of technical endeavour is paramount in shaping our world. You could look at today, from a certain viewpoint, and say the same, but what about all else that happens around it? There's a sense of detachment to these stories, they feel ungrounded. Stross sets the stage for his ideas, then has mouthpieces deliver his point in long dialogues. Character is not much of a concern, nor is reader experience. These are lectures thinly coated in narrative.

Of course, Stross is not alone. Many SF writers have done and continue to do the same. SF is about ideas after all, but this focus on them to the exclusion of all else is peculiarly old school. While there is a lot to admire about Stross – and when he is good he is very good – his work is not for everyone.

*****Dave Hill says**

I grew up reading SF short stories, mostly from the Gold and Silver Age. That was the primary form of the medium, then, fostered by a healthy SF periodical biz. Now short stories are a lot more uncommon, with novels (and, more importantly, novel series) the primary medium.

Stross demonstrates why that's unfortunate with this 2009 collection of some of his shorts (and an introduction that analyzes quite nicely why the form is so wonderful). While not every tale is a hit out of the

park, it is full of some lovely meta-speculative stories where the meaning and reality of what's going on slowly peels away like an onion, often revealing things both wonderous and awful beneath. There's also the ridiculous to go with the sublime, including a Jeeves-like story that became the trial run for *Saturn's Children*.

Good stuff.

Amy says

All very thought provoking stories. Some of them took me a while to get my mind around, but I did enjoy every word of this book. "Missile Gap" is a particular mind-blower, with the Earth somehow being transported to a flattened disk, outside the Milky Way and in the far future. "A Colder War" has inspired me to put Lovecraft on my "to read" list. I think my favorite was the last, "Palimpsest." A palimpsest is a scroll or book that has had the text scraped off so that it can be reused. In the context of this story, it refers to time travel, going back again and again, trying to fix an event in the past that went wrong. A time travel agency is trying to save humanity from extinction by reseeding Earth with populations from earlier epochs.

Krbo says

Odlična zbirka priča ovog stvarno nadarenog autora.

Dobre zbirke nam omogućuju da na brzinu vironemo u stilu i način pisanja, a mislim da je raznolikost ideja (SF, fantasy) vještina kojom to Stross radi kao i fina ironija zainteresirati mnoge.

Jedna fina rečenica i preporuka da "onjušite" odgovara li vam.

Bryan says

So what rules does Charlie follow to ensure maximum Strossness in his writing?

I think I've sussed out a couple:

- 1) Introduce at least one new thing every page.
- 2) Never explain any of these new things.

Let me elaborate on what I mean by these rules.

Ever hear of the van Vogt rule of writing? Referring to A.E. van Vogt, of course. His particular style was to introduce a new idea (or a new detail that helps unravel the plot) every 800 words. Damon Knight called this the "kitchen sink technique", but I prefer how James Blish termed it: "recomplicated".

James Edwin Gunn explained that it didn't necessarily mean that a totally new idea needed to be thrust upon the reader, but that a new revelation of old ideas was needed at this pace to ensure that the plot was moving forward, keeping van Vogt's readers engrossed.

Stross certainly accelerates this pace. His works are quite literally bristling with ideas. He admits that he likes to take as many ideas as possible, mix them as in a blender, and see how much the result can affect a mainstream-thinking mind.

When I read Stross, I often find new ideas coming with each page. Mike Brotherton says this is actually one of the reasons why science fiction is not so popular, because the general public is not ready for such density. Brotherton uses a metaphor of a shelf on which the reader stores new ideas, and stresses that each reader has his own individual shelf size. Steady SF readers have large shelves, and authors like Stross revel in the chance of writing for such an audience. But mainstream audiences quickly find their shelf filling up, and any new ideas push the old ones off, and the book is quickly dropped as it becomes incomprehensible.

So do you like new ideas? At such a steady pace? Because Stross can certainly deliver. And, as I said in the beginning, he really doesn't like to explain them. You have to wait a bit (not 800 words like van Vogt, but you still wait) until Stross is ready to peel away another layer of the onion. In the end, you can usually decipher what Stross was detailing, and you get the (dubious or delightful) pleasure of going back to reread it now that you know what's going on, to see if it makes more sense the second time.

Does it always work? Not always. Now we're talking about Stross' craft, having dissected his art. Is Stross a masterful storyteller? I've had mixed results when I've read his work, and this collection reveals yet another mixed bag. There may be a tiny bit of dross in your Stross...

Some stories are quite wonderful. And some stories are disappointing, because after working that hard, you want to feel rewarded not cheated. I still have to go back to the opening story "Missile Gap" to be sure I understood it completely. And I doubt I'll ever reread "A Colder War", even though I found it fine the first time through.

Recommended to Stross fans, and those who follow science fiction writings that truly strive to do something new within the genre. (And that's a good thing!)

Details on each story:

"Missile Gap" - novella

One of the best in the collection, this one also frustrated me the most. It's a great idea - similar to Spin by Robert Charles Wilson - some advanced power has messed with earth. In Stross' story, the surface of the earth has been peeled like a grape and spread flat on a disc. Imagine a giant 45 record album in space, with a total surface area exceeding our existing planet by billions of times. It's not Larry Niven's Ringworld, it's not a Dyson sphere, it's the next new thing! (Admittedly, with some problems as to why it doesn't gather into a sphere with that much mass.)

But Stross doesn't capitalize on that. Is he a savvy storyteller, or did he just learn how to use the cut and paste feature? Because he's got all this background in textbook format, and he doesn't put it at the beginning of the story. You get to muddle along until more than 1/3 of the story has ambled by, and then you get to find out

what really happened to the Earth.

I liked the story, and loved the ideas, and I'll give it 4 stars. I do have to go back and see if the ending can make a little more sense to me, as I think I missed some significant revelations right at the end.

"Rogue Farm" - short story

One of the stronger works, and one of the easier reads in the book. Start here if you're used to more linear narratives. I found this story to be a lot of fun, even if the ending wasn't the biggest surprise. 4.5 stars

"A Colder War" - short story

The writing style is uncomfortably similar to "Missile Gap", but the story is quite different. I enjoyed myself in the early stages, discovering what the story was about, and then the story quickly coalesced into a devoted homage to Lovecraft. Interesting but not the best work here. Give it 3 stars.

"MAXOS" - vignette

A neat joke, telegraphed by the reference to the University of Lagos in the opening lines. I've seen something very similar in an issue of Analog (or perhaps Asimov's) from somewhere in 2007 or 2008. Short enough to enjoy and earn 3 stars.

"Down on the Farm" - short story

The "Laundry" story in the collection, which fits into the series Stross is developing in novels such as The Atrocity Archives, etc. Again, a more linear narrative makes this an easier read. Also, because it's fantasy, it's less dense with new ideas, and you can relax a bit while reading. It's still Strossian canon, though, so be prepared to be perplexed along the way from time to time. I give this one at least 3.5 stars.

"Unwirer" - short story (collaboration with Cory Doctorow)

Honestly, for me this is the story that feels the most out of place in this collection. Not that I didn't enjoy it - I thought it was great. But it reads like Doctorow, and had I read it blind (with no author identification), I'll still pick it as a Doctorow story. Nothing that I'd term as recognizable Stross here at all. But a very good story - 4 stars!

"Snowball's Chance" - short story

This very short story strives to be fun and smart, and achieves at least some of that. The old deal-with-the-devil has been done so many times, but here's a different twist that most writers don't use. 3 stars.

"Trunk and Disorderly" - short story

Most other reviews on goodreads pan this story. I didn't find it so bad. I don't know why there needed to be a dwarf mammoth, as it didn't make the story more believeable (or consistently silly enough), and it didn't get enough laughs, either. And it really wasn't that crucial to the final resolution. Overall, this may have been the weakest story, but I didn't find it as bad as did some of the others here. 3 stars

"Palimpsest" - novella

Along with "Missile Gap", this story represents Stross at the height of his power, writing in his own inimical style. So it's lots of work to read. It's really a good piece of work, and well worthy of its Hugo win. But like Missile Gap, it's something that I will need to read again, and fairly quickly before I forget the somewhat tenuous sense I made out of it the first time through. As other reviewers have said - this story takes some traditional time-travel rules and stands them on their heads. Recommended reading! 4.5 stars from me!

Overall, the book earns a nice average of 4 stars.

Terence says

I defer to my GR Friend Sandi's review here: <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

She pretty much nails it on the head in my own reactions to the stories in this collection.

"Palimpsest" was definitely my favorite (easily 4-5 stars). Finally, a time-travel story that squarely faces up to the "grandfather paradox"! I almost wish Stross could expand it into a novel as his afterward notes. It reminded me of Asimov's The End Of Eternity SFBC 50th Anniversary Collection, another story about a nearly all-powerful time-traveling organization that tries to "fix" things.

"Missile Gap" and "A Colder War" were pretty good but I found it annoying that he kept injecting real-world characters into the storyline. It came off as "cute" (or "twee," an Anglicism that came up in a Friend's review recently - we Americans should use it more often, IMO) and annoyed me. 3 stars.

I couldn't finish "Trunk and Disorderly," a homage (I guess) to P.G. Wodehouse and his *Wooster and Jeeves* books. Further evidence that hard SF and humor are like matter and anti-matter - they shouldn't mix and, when they do, it's catastrophic.

I think I liked "Snowball's Chance" more than Sandi - Another first: A rationale for why the Devil bargains for souls. It's always bothered me in stories of this genre that the Devil needs to make pacts for the souls of people who are going to Hell anyway. Now we know why :-) (I have my own rationale if I could ever find the wherewithal to write a story in this genre but I'm afraid it would get me condemned as a heretic ;-)

Skip "Maxos" and "Trunk and Disorderly" but, otherwise, worth a look.

De Jan says

Ovako: Sad mi je dosta!

Prijevod! Je sve!

U ovom slu?aju katastrofa!

U nekom djelu, pored pisca, druga važna stavka je prevoditelj.

Nažalost imao sam prilike 5,6 puta susresti (sudariti) se sa prijevodima Marka Fan?ovi?a. Iako sam isto toliko puta rekao sam sebi "Nikad više", kad bi video njegovo me kao prevoditelja, eto opet njega... A tako sam se radovao Strossu... I pomislih da je ?ovjek ipak nakon 20 godina svladao koliko-toliko zanat. A ne. Nevjerica, ljutnja, bacanje knjige kroz prozor (skoro). ?ak sam pomislio da Stross ne zna pisati...

Srednjoškolske re?enice, osmoškolski dijalazi? Na stranu šlampavost, o?ajno slaganje re?enice, nehrvatske

rije?i, srbizmi itd. krivica nije samo njegova. Ovo izdanje nije vidjelo ni lektora ni korektora (znam, radio sam u izdavaštvu 10 godina).

Na kraju zbirke, koja je mogla biti vrlo dobra, stvar je malo spasila Milena Benini s normalnim prijevodom Palimpsesta. Što me je navelo da Charliea probam na engleskom. I uop?e nije tako loš, ali sumnjam da ?u se više latiti njegovih djela. Tako mi i treba! Hvala ti Marko F.

Više od ?injenice da mu u ZG Nakladi i dalje daju da prevodi, ?udi me da se više ljudi ne žali na njegovu "kvalitetu" prijevoda (a nisam jedini). Ipak, 20 godina ?ovjek "briljira"...

Zaklju?ak:

Preveo: Marko Fan?ovi?=NO WAY! EVER!

PS. Ako neko želi popis djela koja je preveo a treba ih ?itati na izvornom jeziku, rado javim. Na žalost, imam ih previše.

Crabby McGrouchpants says

A real head-stretcher, this collection of stories will put you in the mindframe of thinking of many things at once: Sort of like surfing the Internet to find out an indie label's history while getting your new browser to work like an air conditioner you have to smack on the side to get right, or TV whose picture keeps rolling until you thump it. Sound confusing? It isn't; it's just that the multilayered world we live in calls for a Strossian (which is, to my mind, post-Pynchonian) integration of all elements whether it be job duties or relationships or technology upgrades or lost histories of Earth or pop-culture flotsam. The headache comes from *not* reading stuff like this, and getting acclimated to it for pleasure, and then wondering why you-and-yours are all crabby all the time.

The letter he actually got published in *Nature* rewards a re-reading or two to get through its couple-'a pages; he gets the lingo technically correct, and it throws off some lay readers (see disgruntlement mentioned above). It's a hilarious revision of the old Twilight Zone episode climax: "I've translated the rest of *To Serve Man* ... it's a cookbook!" DA-DUM! This is all you get? This is all you get. Sorry folks, alien sentient species are alien *sentient* species, no more no less, with motives not necessarily all that different from our own, what else could you expect? Ha-ha.

Vivone Os says

Zbirka kratkih SF pri?a. Odli?ne!

Titus Fortner says

Stross mentions that he likes writing short stories as a way to experiment with style and format to see what works. That being said, I think the raw density of Stross' ideas make it difficult for me to get a handle on the story he is telling before it is over.

There are only two stories in this collection that I especially enjoyed.

The first is "A Colder War," which is the only duplicate with Stross' *Toast*, which I haven't read, and am not sure if it is a priority for me any longer.

The second story I enjoyed was "Down on the Farm," which is set in the Laundry Universe. I'm sure that a main reason I enjoyed the story is because of the background and history I already have with the characters and setting.

Another story worth discussing is *Palimpsest*, which won the Hugo Award for best novella in 2010. It is one of those time-heavy books that reminds me of the movie *Primer*. I should have liked it more than I did, and I think I would have if I hadn't just read *The End of Eternity*. The overall story is sufficiently similar in broad strokes that I can't help but make an unfortunate comparison.

Stross' story progresses by throwing out all kinds of scientific pseudo-explanations and descriptions and tossing about complicated rewrites of events. Stross' books focus more on ideas than real explanations, and there seem to be many unnecessary elements included just because they are interesting. The character development is shallow, mostly due to the confusion that the characters seem to be in most of the time (and the reader for that matter).

Asimov's story on the other hand is a masterpiece of elegance and beauty. There are still plot twists, but Asimov intentionally avoids complicated time paradoxes. His story is much simpler, and he lets the characters move the story forward more organically.

It feels like Stross took Asimov's story and tried to make it more realistic with more in-depth (and potentially more 'realistic') ideas about how things would actually go. It obviously appealed to many (like the Hugo voters), but to me it merely underscores the brilliance of Isaac Asimov.

Steven says

WIRELESS is brilliant from cover to cover. The first story/novella, "Missile Gap," is my favorite. The ideas! What if a vast alien intelligence, without our noticing, instantly "peeled the Earth like a grape" and transferred it to a colossal deep space disk large enough to contain a billion Earths? What's on all those other continents that came from somewhere else? Is this real, or is it a simulation? Stross has done some deep thinking here.

Jim says

I didn't 'like' many of these stories, but they were well written with wild landscapes & interesting points. The first few were plain depressing, others were funny, & the last one just pains me in its complexity. Not what I expected, but fascinating. I can't say I really look forward to reading more by him, but at some point will probably read *The Atrocity Archives* since one of these stories was in the same universe. Anyone who can blend SF & Lovecraftian horrors together this well deserves my attention.

“Missile Gap” (One Million A.D., 2005, edited by Gardner Dozois) was quite long, but good. The Earth has been moved, stretched out on a new surface, & people are dealing with it in a Cold War Era. Multiple points of view that slowly reveal the truth. Very weird, but interesting.

“Rogue Farm” (Live Without a Net, 2003, edited by Lou Anders) takes tech to a new, strange level. Really good, although a part near the end didn't make sense. (view spoiler) Still, it was chilling.

“A Colder War” (Spectrum SF 3, 2000) available online, is another Cold War scenario, but taken into the 1980s, an alternate timeline, Lovecraftian horror, & more. Several public figures take part. Again, really good & chilling.

“MAXOS” (Nature, 2005) available online is very short & hilarious about messages from space. Well done!

“Down on the Farm” (Tor.com, 2008) available online was weird & wild, an urban fantasy with no need for any monsters. Computers & people are enough.

“Unwirer” with Cory Doctorow (ReVisions, 2004 edited by Julie E. Czerneda and Isaac Szpindel) is about a grim future where the Internet is under government control. Timely back when it was written, even more so now.

“Snowball's Chance” (Nova Scotia: New Scottish Speculative Fiction, 2005, edited by Neil Williamson and Andrew J. Wilson) is a deal with the devil story. Great fun & especially well narrated since I had trouble understanding the MC at times. (You'd think with my last name, I wouldn't have any trouble, but I do. I don't like bag pipes, either. Good thing my family immigrated here.)

“Trunk and Disorderly” (Asimov's Science Fiction, 2007) is an SF version of Bernie & Jeeves. The afterword by Stross was great. He mentions how often comedy fails & how difficult it is to write.

“Palimpsest”; winner of the 2010 Hugo Award for Best Novella is a time travel story of immense proportions & mind-blowing complexities. The logic behind it makes my head hurt, but it was still quite good.

Chris says

Good collection of scifi short stories, including one from the Laundry Files (which I'd already read as a separate ebook). Some of these were mindbending. As always with Stross, I skimmed all of the technobabble and jargon. :)

Sandi says

It's really hard to give a star rating to a short story collection, especially one by an author who is as hit-and-miss as Charles Stross. I've read two of his novels. I hated one and really enjoyed the other. That's kind of how I feel about the stories in *Wireless*.

Two of the stories, "Down on the Farm" and "Palimpsest" would have rated 5 stars. I especially liked "Down

on the Farm" and will be checking out his novels featuring The Laundry, The Atrocity Archives and The Jennifer Morgue. "Rogue Farm" was an interesting story that reminded me a bit of some of Ian McDonald's stories. It would rate 4.5 stars.

In the truly awful category, we have "Trunk and Disorderly", a really lame attempt at humor that is absolutely disgusting. It's filled with vomit, drunkenness, and a really nasty dwarf mammoth. "A Colder War" also missed the mark for me. It didn't stick with any of the characters long enough to connect with them. As a result, the end didn't have the impact it should have. "Maxos", a letter published in "Nature" magazine was incomprehensible and didn't fit in a short story collection.

Somewhere in the middle, we have "Missile Gap" which is kind of like a "Twilight Zone" episode; "Snowball's Chance", a story about a devil; and "Unwirer", an alternate history that wasn't very plausible.

Overall, I would give this book 3.5 stars. I tilted it to 4 stars because I liked more of the stories than I disliked.

Laura says

Wonderfully dense introduction to some of Stross's flavors. Loved Trunk and Disorderly (a Jeeves and Woosteresque romp through future from the point of view of a truly dense high society boy who does not understand just why he was sent that butler that day). Quite enjoyed the Lovecraftian fan fiction. Was disturbed by the hard core science fiction.

A recent episode of Geeks Guide to the Galaxy, <http://www.wired.com/2014/08/geeks-gu...> made the point that much of "realistic" fiction isn't realistic at all because it's written as if we're not orbiting one of billions and billions of stars among billions of galaxies. Nothing in these stories suggest that Stross doesn't know that, all the way down.

Well worth the time.

Danijel says

Britanski autor Charles Stross u ovoj antologiji kratkih priča u integralnom obliku konačno se prikazuje hrvatskoj publici. Bio je dosad objavlјivan u Monolithu, kao i Siriusu B (tu sam prvi put naišao na njega s pričom Bit Rot - Propadanje bitova). Autor sam priznaje da ima "nezdravu sklonost Lovecraftu i egzistencijalnom užasu općenito"; a tu je i dašak kafkanijanizma (kukci, birokracija, egzistencijalni užas), te mješavina specifičnog tipa horora i SF-a.

U "Missile gap" ljudi otkrivaju da se nalaze u savršenoj kopiji njihove Zemlje, samo što je ona razvijena na ravnu plohu, a sve se to odigralo nakon kognog dana kada je Gagarin stupio na Mjesec. Eh, da, jedan od likova je i sam Gagarin (istražuje ovu opscenu travestiju od ravne Zemlje), a Hladni rat i dalje traje.

"Overtime" je međupriča iz njegovog serijala o Vešeraju (Laundry), mješavina humora, birokracije i Lovecrafta, luda priča (naime, iz dubina svemira vratila se gladno i udovište poznato kao Santa Claus, a samo se obični namještenik iz odjela za paranormalno tijekom noćne smjene može suočiti s njim).

"Bit rot" je kao "resident evil" u svemiru, gdje su gladni zombiji - strojevi! (tako?er jedna od me?upri?a izme?u njegovih romana Saturnova djeca i novog koji tek dolazi).

Charles Stross mi je zaista jedan od najomiljenijih SF autora novog milenija, uz Paola Bacigalupija i Chine Mievillea.
