



## Raygun Chronicles: Space Opera For a New Age

*Bryan Thomas Schmidt (Editor) , Mike Resnick (Contributor) , Keanan Brand (Contributor) , Peter J. Wacks (Contributor) , Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Contributor) , Sarah A. Hoyt (Contributor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Brenda Cooper (Contributor) , more... Robin Wayne Bailey (Contributor) , Allen M. Steele (Contributor) , David Farland (Contributor) , T.M. Hunter (Contributor) , Milo James Fowler (Contributor) , Paula R. Stiles (Contributor) , Jenny Schwartz (Contributor) , Jennifer Campbell-Hicks (Contributor) , Michael S. Roberts (Contributor) , John Cook (Contributor) , Rob Mancebo (Contributor) , Shaun Farrell (Contributor) ...less*

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A school teacher who moonlights as an assassin, a corporate agent kidnapped and faced with a man she never wanted to see again, galactic knights and pilots defending the spaceways, a black bear who wants to be a priest, and a time traveler who discovers he was born a prince - these and more tales await you inside *Raygun Chronicles: Space Opera For a New Age*, a collection of new tales in the Golden Age style. With larger than life heroes, rayguns, space ships, robots, pirates, romance and more, here come 25 new tales of great fiction from top names like Seanan McGuire, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, A.C. Crispin, Allen M. Steele, Mike Resnick, David Farland and more. Strap in, set your weapons, and get ready for a fun ride!

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## **Raygun Chronicles: Space Opera For a New Age Details**

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# **From Reader Review Raygun Chronicles: Space Opera For a New Age for online ebook**

## **Stephanie says**

Before I get to the stories in this anthology I have to comment about the poor quality of the printing. The ink was very shiny and if the light was on it directly the glare made the text unreadable which was exacerbated by the thin font.

Now to the stories: overall a very weak collection of tales. I was quite surprised by the mediocrity of the work by some of the better-known writers. The majority of these stories were just scenes of battles or meaningless dialogue between flat characters. for those who like that sort of thing there is plenty of it in the collection but i found myself not finishing several of the stories because they were so dull..

Two stories stood out for me:

The Silver Dollar Saucer by Lou Antonelli - A time travel yarn set in the old west and while odd at times, it had a nice twist ending and the dialogue was very entertaining. It actually seemed out of place for this collection which may be why it was the best story in my opinion.

Last, Full Measure by A. M. Roelke - Another time travel story that dealt with sacrifice and hard decisions with a great twist. Not much humor but great story and solid character development for a short story.

So there you have it, in a book about ray guns and space opera the only stories I liked were about time travel.

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## **Andrew says**

Space Opera is one of great original sci-fi subgenres. Authors in this genre try to focus a little less on precise scientific accuracy and instead aim for excessive amounts of fun. It is perhaps the only subgenre of sci-fi that anyone can enjoy. Raygun Chronicles: Space Opera For a New Age states this is “a collection of new tales in the Golden Age style.” I was eager for just such a collection and was granted a review copy by the editor, Bryan Thomas Schmidt.

Schmidt has collected 25 tales from 24 different authors, and he has ensured there is something for every Space Opera fan here. I found the majority of the tales to be fun one time reads. There are a handful I will reread and one or two I am giving serious consideration to giving a Hugo nomination.

There is so much here that I cannot cover everything. Instead, let me highlight the best (and worst) this Anthology has to offer.

The Anthology starts off with “Frontier ABCs: The Life And Times Of Charity Smith, Schoolteacher” by Seanan McGuire. This was a wise decision as McGuire wrote one of the best tales in the volume. McGuire captured an atmosphere similar to Firefly in her story, and took us on a ride as a very dangerous woman tries to balance her past with the life she’d rather have.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch kept the strong start going with Rick the Robber Barron, a story about a female

space pilot who had a bad experience with the titular captain. This story confirmed my belief that Rusch is physically incapable of writing anything that isn't at least very good. This isn't her best, but even her average is wonderful.

The next two, "To The Shores Of Triple, Lee!" by A.M. Stickel and "The Silver Dollar Saucer" by Lou Antonelli started slow but ended great.

Then we had a great story by Sarah A. Hoyt called, "Around The Bend". Here we see a woman come across a dangerous stranger and has an adventure with him. Hoyt wrote a tense story with great atmosphere. This was easily one of the top three tales in the collection.

In my opinion, the weakest story in the collection followed. "Sword Of Saladin" by Michael S. Roberts went a little too over the top with the 'strong warrior woman' theme and, in my opinion, it negatively affected the story. The captain felt so absurd that Roberts had me rooting for the 'bad guy' in the story. Given my strong reaction to the tale, I'm probably not the intended audience Roberts was shooting for.

"Malfunction" by Jennifer Campbell-Hicks was just fantastic. Great concept, great execution—I loved it beginning to end. If it wasn't a reprint I would give it a Hugo nomination. It really is that good.

We are treated to two stories by the prolific Mike Resnick: "Catastrophe Baker And The Ship Who Purred" and "Catastrophe Baker In The Hall Of The Neptunian Kings". Both are great, Golden Age styled fun with Catastrophe Baker, a macho man going on outlandish adventures. Bravo sir.

Two other longtime authors, A.C. Crispin ("Twilight World") and David Farland ("Saint Orick") give us stories set in universes they created in other books. Both are of the highest quality, which is exactly what readers expect from these two authors.

"Can Giraffes Change Their Spots?" by Jenny Schwartz and "Captain Quasar And The Insurmountable Barrier Of Space Junk" by Milo James Fowler are back to back humorous stories slotted near the end of the book. Both were definitely funny and helped break up the serious narrative flow.

The rest of the stories were of good quality but may have suffered from a little drag. A Cardinal Sin in Space Opera is to be boring, and a couple of these unnamed stories do skirt dangerously close to that territory. However, all the writers of these somewhat dragging tales do redeem themselves with strong endings.

It is also worth mentioning that there is quite a bit of the 'strong woman' trope within this volume. I felt that a few of these were forced characterizations, as if the author said, "Well, I have to include a strong woman here somewhere..." but the majority of the time the characters fit and the story works.

Whenever I read a short story collection I find there are a couple stories which featured editing issues. Maybe a tale doesn't go anywhere, another stops abruptly, or I find a small number of grammar or spelling mistakes. None of that is present here. Schmidt has done an impressive job of not only acquiring 25 good stories, but ensuring his anthology is free of irritating editing problems. On top of that, Schmidt did a great job structuring the overall flow of the Anthology so that the reader doesn't get bogged down in a specific type of story too many times in a row. This is an underappreciated skill and is to be commended.

Overall I was very pleased with the volume. Schmidt has done a magnificent job picking stories that capture the sense of adventure and downright fun readers want in Space Opera. Even though some stories are

stronger than others, everything is well written and I found the vast majority quite enjoyable. There is no reason why any reader with interest in science fiction should pass on this volume.

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## Cathy says

I was looking forward to reading this book for a long time. I first heard about it when the table of contents was announced on SF Signal. That seems to be how I hear about most of the anthologies I read these days. It sounded like a lot of fun, but it was a kickstarted book so I wasn't sure if it would be available at my library. But I put it in my calendar to check when it was supposed to be published and lo and behold, a year or so later, after I checked at the library for a few months, it showed up, I was so pleased. And it pretty much lived up to my expectations. It was nice to read a book that was all fun stories. Most anthologies swing around from nice to pretty grim. Because the authors were trying to tell a space opera in a short story, which is normally a form that requires several books to tell a solar system or galaxy spanning adventure, they all had to stick pretty tightly to the adventure aspect of the stories and just try to figure out a clever twist or show us a clever character portrait or something like that. I started out taking notes on each story, but I petered out after a few because they were, well, not too similar exactly, but didn't have enough going on that felt compelled to take notes. They were fun. I just didn't need to analyze them, enjoying was enough. There were only two that I kept my notes on.

Seanán McGuire's story, *Frontier ABCs: The Life and Times of Charity Smith*, started the book and it was just top-notch. I don't think I've read a science fiction story from her before, but it was as terrific as her stories always are. What a neat character, it was so easy to imagine her sharp-shooter frontier schoolteacher flying around the solar system for three hundred years meting out her version of justice in the name of the children she'd made herself the protector of. The seeds. The story felt complete by itself, but I could also easily see McGuire writing more stories about this character or this world. What she established in so short a time feels so real and established now, it's out there and waiting if she ever wants to go back. I'd definitely want to go back with her. But if not, that's fine too, because I know that Cherry is still there, taking care of things, whether we're getting reports about it or not. It was a great story and quite distinctive compared to the other stories in the book relative to character and settings.

Then there was Mike Resnick's story, *Catastrophe Baker and the Ship Who Purred*, which was appalling. Apparently this spacefaring scoundrel is a classic character of Resnick's, which just makes it worse. If this story had been written sixty years ago maybe I wouldn't have been so surprised at the total cheeseball schlock but it was just dumb and offensive on every level, not funny, not cute, just dumb. Even without the parts with the female ship having orgasms just from him touching her buttons, every part of the story was just dumb, dumb dumb dumb. It felt like a parody of an old-fashioned story but I'm pretty sure it wasn't, I'm pretty sure this is what he and lots of other people think is fun. I'm too confused by it. His second story about the same character was just short, dumb and porny, I don't know what the point of that was. It should have been a quicky in Playboy. I don't understand any of it. I like fun and funny characters, big broad humorous silly stories. Throwbacks can be fun. But this is just bizarre to me.

And moving on... A.C. Crispin's stories were quite good. I liked Brenda Cooper's story a lot too. A.M. Roelke's was good, though not a space opera, just a time travel story. And ending the book with Kaolin Fire's poem, *The Legend of Rae Raygun*, was the perfect ending and the perfect bookend to Seanán McGuire's Cherry Smith story. And the cover is great! Paul Pedersen did a wonderful job with that, people who bought the book got a absolutely super cover for their shelves. Oh, and a small thing, I really like that with the author bios in the back it lists their stories and the page numbers underneath their bio, it's very nicely done. I

prefer bios after the stories instead of at the back of the book, I want to read about them and look them up to find more of their work right away after I've read a story. To me learning about the author is part of the fun of reading an anthology, but that's my quirk I guess. But that one little detail in the back is something I haven't seen before and it really works well, it looks polished and makes the book more functional at the same time. And that brings me to congratulating Bryan Thomas Schmidt for pulling it all together, it's a great accomplishment. It was clearly a labor of love, so it's nice to be able to be a tiny part of something like by saying that I enjoyed it. It's a fun book, and everyone who had a part in pulling it together should be proud.

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## **Bryan Schmidt says**

Library Journal - RAYGUN CHRONICLES: Space Opera For a New Age  
Reviewed on DECEMBER 1, 2013 | SF/Fantasy

Space opera has been likened to Westerns in space, with their emphasis on high action, "science" that is sometimes over the top, and galactic battles between good and evil. This collection of contemporary space opera brings together 24 stories, a poem, and an essay (several of the pieces were first published during the six-year run of Ray Gun Revival Magazine). Authors include Robin Wayne Bailey, A.C. Crispin, Seanan McGuire, and Mike Resnick. VERDICT Fans of sf should enjoy this stylistically varied homage to a genre as old as the fiction of E.E. "Doc" Smith and as classic as the stories based on the "Star Wars" films.

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## **Joe says**

Up Front - I won this book on Goodreads and was shipped a copy from the publisher with autographs from the authors.

One of the things that I love to read are anthologies, such as Analog. This is a pleasant surprise to me because I had no idea that there was a publication called Ray Gun Revival which had stories about space tales. The closest thing I can think of to describe it would be stories that take place in the Firefly television series.

I won't go in depth about this book because it did take me a few months to make it through the book out of the fact that it was the book I read right before bed, so I probably had 10 minute spurts into the book for only a couple of nights a week. The stories here are very entertaining. There's a bit of nonsensical behavior, which is very amusing. Then there is a bit of serious space dangers, which had me rooting for the people to escape from their situation.

Overall, I enjoyed this book and plan on reading it again because the stories in there are fun and light-hearted. A few I could see as becoming a novel, but as the book is it stands well on its own. I enjoyed it very much.

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## **Fred says**

I'm required to disclose by the terms of the giveaway that I won this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway. Unfortunately, I feel like I'll have to spend the rest of the review that I write justifying the five star rating now and that's too bad because this is a book that truly and absolutely deserves it.

All the time, I start books of short stories and end up semi disappointed because despite having these titles like "The Year's Best Science Fiction" every other story in it is lame as can be and sucks and seems to have been chosen more for the writer than because the story was really any good. This book was definitely NOT one of those. There wasn't a single story in this book that I didn't like. Every one of these was at least good enough to hold my attention and to keep me reading but most of them were really, really, good.

Whoever it is that chose these stories and decided what it was that should be included in the book deserves to have a job doing it full time because he's better at it than just about anyone I've seen with the exception of maybe Harlan Ellison. Dangerous Visions was actually the last book of short stories that I read that kept me entertained as much as this one did.

Read it. Buy it if you must. But read it.

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### **Made DNA says**

FIVE STARS - The space opera genre has always had a place in my heart. It represents that dashing, daring knight-in-shining-armor side of my ego that hopes someday I'll dive headlong into an adventure of epic proportions. Raygun Chronicles is a masterpiece by editor Bryan Thomas Schmidt featuring twenty-five fantastic new tales by both familiar and indie authors alike to tickle the space-exploration-adventure ego. This isn't your father's sci-fi (exciting as it was), this is a grand new take on all that fun with room to boot to surprise readers.

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### **Jen says**

This was a lot of fun to read! I recommend it for fans of space opera, sci-fi, Firefly, and good short fiction.

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