

Noir

K.W. Jeter

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In his acclaimed novels *Dr. Adder*, *The Glass Hammer*, and the *Blade Runner* books, K.W. Jeter masterfully re-created the grim and gritty world of Ridley Scott's classic science fiction film masterpiece. Now Jeter returns with a startling and stylish new vision of the future as only he could imagine it, a dark and disturbing universe that can be described with one word...

Welcome to the Pacific Rim, the new center of the civilized world. As the rest of the planet sinks toward economic and social disaster, the cities on the coast have become a neon-lit, high-tech paradise. Chief among them is Los Angeles, a sparkling metropolis attracting lost souls from across a shattered continent.

But beneath the sleek surface lies a labyrinthine underground feeding on the darkest human desires. Here the wealthy seek forbidden thrills through an anonymous on-line computer system that makes use of prowlers--masked simulations of human users programmed to delve into the most taboo of the hard-core sexual underworld and bring back exotic and erotic experiences to their safeguarded users. For most people, the prowlers are a way to indulge in their wildest sexual fantasies. But for others, they are something far more dangerous.

When a young executive of one of the world's most powerful corporations is found brutally slain, a retired ex-cop is called in to find his missing prowler. The corporation believes the young man's prowler is still "alive" and they want it found, but they don't care to reveal why.

McNihil was an information cop forced into early retirement. He knows he is walking straight into a trap, but he has no choice. He must descend into the noir underground, his only companion a ruthless female operative named November who has a desperate agenda of her own. Together they will uncover a web of evil far more extensive than McNihil ever imagined...a vast conspiracy that threatens to blur forever the line between the sane safety of the daylight world and the dark, dangerous world of noir.

Noir is K.W. Jeter at his very best, a dazzling and inventive futuristic drama of mystery, menace, and sexual terror set in a society of glitter and sinister darkness in which no one can be trusted and everything is far worse than it seems.

From the Hardcover edition.

Noir Details

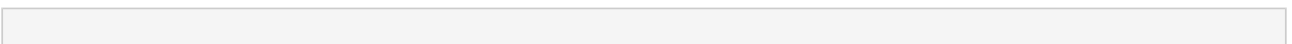
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From Reader Review Noir for online ebook

Scott Holstad says

Not great, not bad. Not much to say, sorry.

Philippe Lenain says

Noir de K.W. Jeter

Roman policier-SF, Noir plonge le lecteur dans un futur qui ne paraît pas si lointain, où les droits d'auteur ont acquis une importance cruciale au niveau économique. Chacun a désormais acquis le droit de protéger ses œuvres, quelles qu'elles soient. Pourquoi ? Pour protéger toute œuvre, toute création, qui représente le fruit d'un travail, tandis que les pirates se multiplient et que le trafic devient plus présent. Pour lutter contre cela, le « bureau de recouvrement » a été créé, ayant carte blanche pour arrêter toute tentative d'infraction ; pas de jugement, pas de présumé innocent. Et les « asp-ions », dont le personnage principal, McNihil, faisait partie, ne font pas dans la demi-mesure. Le traitement du pirate est donc violent : abattu, une partie de son cerveau (encore capable de ressentir, et surtout de souffrir) est ensuite insérée dans un objet qui servira de trophée à l'ayant droit : traitement exemplaire aux résultats mitigés, puisque de nombreux pirates continuent de sévir. Et pas à un mot sur le coût de cette mise en scène (je suis sûr que l'artiste préférerait recevoir un bon chèque plutôt qu'un grille-pain permettant de faire souffrir son pirate...).

McNihil donc, au passé sombre, à la femme décédée... tous les clichés du genre sont tout naturellement réunis ; mais il possède une particularité, deux implants dans les yeux qui lui permettent d'échapper au quotidien, et lui font voir le monde en N&B, comme un film policier des années 50 (adaptation des personnes rencontrées aux vêtements de l'époque, décors, immeubles, odeurs). Mais parfois, face des objets technologiques, ou bien au creux d'un reflet, la réalité surgit dans son univers personnel.

Dernier élément remarquable de ce futur, quand vous êtes mort, vous n'êtes pas encore au repos. Ceux qui ont encore des dettes à l'heure du trépas ne lèguent donc pas leurs problèmes à leur descendance, mais sont maintenus en vie partielle, isolés à l'extérieur de la ville, à faire des petits boulots, pour rembourser les emprunts/dettes/intérêts. Pour les plus chanceux, c'est l'enterrement/crémation. Vous pouvez ainsi rendre visite à vos proches, qui sont particulièrement détachés de votre monde, puisque dans le leur (à la porte de la ville pourtant) TOUT s'émiette, se détruit. Les morts ont pourtant un avantage (en plus de rapporter de l'argent) : ils perçoivent différemment le monde, et peuvent informer les vivants sur ce qui les touche, leurs avenir possibles, véritables Pythies infernales.

Dernier point remarquable (si si), ce monde virtuel, également décrit comme un univers de polar ; pour rechercher des informations, vous n'utilisez plus de moteur de recherche (pour les plus fortunés), vous utilisez un « errant », une sorte d'humain virtuel, sans conscience véritable mais entraîné à connaître vos recherches, centres d'intérêt etc. évidemment, tout n'est pas si simple, puisqu'il y aura davantage de conscience que prévu dans ces logiciels (on pense à la Cité des permutants, de Egan) ; pour se connecter, vous retrouvez votre errant dans un bar « spécialisé », où ceux-ci se retrouvent entre 2 missions.

Le scénario ? Un homme meurt au sein d'une grosse société, DynaZauber, et McNihil se charge d'enquêter ; il fera bien sûr face à ses démons intérieurs... mais aussi à toutes sortes de résistance. Il tombera dans des pièges plus gros que lui, ne résistera pas aux charmes fifties des femmes qu'il rencontre... Dit comme cela, cela fait très déjà vu ; effectivement, la seule « nouveauté » de cette histoire est son univers poisseux, où l'homme n'est plus qu'une parodie d'humain, transformé en machine en pièces détachées, corvéable sans que personne n'y trouve rien à redire – c'est comme ça. Les relents de Blade Runner sont très forts, donc,

avec une ambiance évidemment noire (oui, il doit y avoir un lien avec le titre...). Malgré des lourdeurs répétées, une action très lente, l'humour (noir, faut-il le préciser ?) apporte une légère touche de couleur (pastel plutôt) bienvenue.

Coquille Fleur says

K.W. Jeter has a really cool, edgy writing style that makes this cyberpunk tale read like electric poetry. McNihil, the story's main character, has implants in his brain that cause him to see the postmodern world and its inhabitants in the dark and rainy night of a noir movie. I watched the Matrix again while reading this and really noticed the Noir scenes in that movie. This book was published right around the time the Matrix came out. While the stories are quite different, there are similarities. Noir is a mystery set in a crazy corporate world similar to that in Neal Stephenson's Snow Crash. The end of this book is just crazy, I won't spoil it, but I will say the classic noir gunpoint confession happens in a rather interesting situation. Another interesting point Jeter makes in this book is how copyright infringement should be punished - very creative...

Noiresque says

I really did not enjoy this book (guess the 1 star makes that clear enough).

There is a fair probability that I am not intellectual enough to enjoy the many subtexts here. If you can call them subtexts. The plot feels like it exists just to exhibit outrageous things masquerading as intelligent comment on issues.

I would only recommend this for people who already know they like Jeter.

Woody Chandler says

I fell behind in my reviews thanks to the impending end of SY2017-'18. I am currently working as a day-to-day substitute teacher & I get some of my best reading done at work. There is usually 30 minutes of independent reading time built into each school day & so I indulge while the children are reading. As the end of the school year approached, I found myself wanting to read more & type less before the opportunity closed.

I bought this on BetterWorldBooks.com simply based on its title, but unlike the previous book, this was a worthwhile read.

The premise in this one was not: "The future's so bright that I gotta wear shades" but instead, "The dystopian future is so f**ked (or connected) up that I gotta have them modify my eyes so that I don't have to take in full-on reality". OMFG! Bleak, bleaker, bleakest. This book gets my nod for dystopian future crown. Virtual reality goggles? No, we'll embed V/R in your eyes & hard-wire it to your brain. A scrolling LED in your palm will keep you apprised of just how deeply indebted you are to DynaZauber. Thinking of committing copyright fraud? Good luck! Even the protagonist was aptly named: McNihil, as in nihilism. This made me thankful that I am 53 y/o & on the backstretch. Doomed, we're doomed, I tell you! Why do I think this way? Let us turn to p. 149, in which McNihil takes in a Disney-esque animated film in which "The animated

uterus, speckled with bright cartoon blood, was perched on the young hero's shoulder, dispensing its feminine wisdom." (!) This was p. 149 of 388 with much greater levels of depravity to come. Understand, I am as hardcore as they come, but this vision of the future left me unsettled. YMMV.

Neilometer says

One of the worst sci-fi novels I've ever read.

Deren Kellogg says

This one was effectively disturbing, but I didn't feel like it had anything else. Unlike, say, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" it didn't have the characters or plot necessary to hold my interest. I often enjoy dark novels and stories, but JUST being dark isn't enough.

Scott Rhee says

Remember when cyberpunk was edgy and provocative? I'm talking pre-"Matrix" cyberpunk, the cyberpunk of writers like William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. Back then it was dangerous. Today it's... uh... well, reality. I mean, seriously, who knew that this Internet thing would be so popular? (Besides Gibson et al...) Jeter's novel "Noir" was written near the end of the cyberpunk movement, just before the Internet explosion. Set in a near (enough) future, "Noir" follows an investigator named McNihil (how cool is that name, huh? Kind of a great little sucker punch to the vapidness of our consumer culture...) who is investigating the murder of an executive of a mega-corporation that produces virtual reality devices that allows everyone to live out their wildest fantasies at home or at work or even in their car or... you get the idea. Sounds pretty unbelievable, huh? Oh, and the popularity of these products has created social problems galore: workers doing half-ass jobs, students screwing up royally in school, marriages failing, churches and volunteer organizations losing members, the poor getting poorer, the rich getting richer, etc... WTF!? As if a single technology could be responsible for such chaos... It's weird to think Jeter wrote this in the '90s. Eerily prescient, alarmingly subversive, and f***ing cool as hell, "Noir" is a damn good read, especially for us geeks that still remember the good ol' days of cyberpunk...

Nathan Burgoine says

I tried to get into this, I tried to like it, and I failed miserably. It's a dark future science fiction novel, where the protagonist - and I use the term lightly - is basically a kind of corporate assassin who had a surgical job done on his eyes so that he could "see" everything the way a black and white 20s gumshoe movie would appear. On that level - the world building is fascinating, and you get this strange "half-seen" view of this dystopic future.

The plot is confusing and confounding but not in a way that made me want to figure it out. The main character I found totally unlikable, and I just couldn't care whether he survived. That's my failing - a I know

a lot of people enjoy a misanthropic character or anti-hero, but I felt a lack of anyone I could connect with. This just wasn't for me.

Alan says

Back at DynaZauber headquarters, he knew, some computer in the accounting department was humming almost silently to itself, deducting the minor cost of the girl's death from the corporation's stock of pollution credits, specifically on the urban misery index. Every year, DZ's PR division planted along the roads enough seedlings—most of which died or grew into no more than toxin-stunted weeds—to more than counterbalance necessary operating deaths. Which proved that the system worked, if you let it.
—p.53

The main thing I remembered from my first reading of K.W. Jeter's 1998 novel *Noir* was McNihil's eyes, which—although they turn out to be a relatively minor plot point—are still one of the coolest gimmicks ever set to the service of an SF story. The trick is simple to describe, though it would probably be a real bear to implement: although McNihil lives in a 21st-century dystopia straight out of a David Cronenberg film, his high-tech eyes show him a dynamically-filtered view of that reality, making it seem to him—and to him alone—as if he were living in the black-and-white world of a *noir* film from the 1940s.

McNihil likes it that way... and I can see why he'd want to hide from the world he's in. Hordes of murderous, self-replicating drones called "Noh-flies" have made air travel impossible. Outside the Pacific Rim, bound together by its Ouroboros ring of railways going right around both North and South Poles, civilization seems to have utterly collapsed. Even inside that charmed circle, conditions are not much better... the remaining coastal corporations have wholeheartedly embraced the Denkmann philosophy (which can be quickly synopsized as "never give the customer—or your employees—an even break"), and it's possible to get so far in debt that your corporate masters won't even let you die—you become "indeadted" instead, zombie labor like McNihil's late wife, sifting data for DynaZauber well after her official demise simply to serve the interest on her debt. And McNihil let it happen.

As you could probably tell solely from the protagonist's name, *Noir* portrays a very mannered, stylized future—perhaps even Mannerist, if I'm reading that Wikipedia page correctly. *Noir*'s narrative is labile—both the characters themselves and the world they're in are presented as emotionally variable, unsteady underfoot, liable to turn on you at any moment. Like the late-Renaissance Mannerist painters, Jeter favors "compositional tension and instability rather than the balance and clarity" one might expect from a more sober work of extrapolation.

The dialogue isn't natural, either. The polysyllabic word "connecting" has somehow become a curse (which makes E.M. Forster's dictum "Only connect" into something rather different), and several times characters exhort each other to

"Wake up [...] and smell the burning corpses of your dreams."
—pp.251, 283

Who the hell talks like that? But it's all of a piece with the milieu Jeter has borrowed from the past and injected into the future like a shot of morphine... these characters talk to each other as if they had a

scriptwriter handling their conversations, but it works. It works. The black-and-white flicker of McNihil's vision fills the screen, shoving aside any qualms about the unreality of the world he sees—or the world he *would* see, if only he were to turn off his monochrome gaze.

Jeter himself appears to be something of a copyright maximalist, and this uncomfortable little snippet from McNihil's philosophy seems like a slice of the author's own wish-fulfillment:

There's a hardware solution to intellectual-property theft. It's called a .357 magnum. No better way for taking pirates off-line. Permanently. Properly applied to the head of any copyright-infringing little bastard, this works.
—p.201 (emphasis in original)

Although the essay on copyright linked at the back of *Noir* no longer seems to exist online, there are hints on his somewhat more current personal website that this is still Jeter's stance.

However, this attitude—indeed, McNihil's entire profession as an "asp-head," one of the hardest of hard-nosed enforcers of intellectual property in Jeter's brave new world—is undermined by the very dystopia in which he operates. In which he's trapped. Neither McNihil nor Jeter seem to realize it, but the owners of most intellectual property are... corporations, not people. His vocation exists in the service, and at the sufferance, of the very corporate entities he despises.

But the fact is that the contradictions in McNihil's makeup—the self-hatred that he feels for putting his wife into indeadtedness, for serving the corrupt, for putting himself in harm's way on behalf of hopeless causes—are what make him interesting, far more so than the things he sees with his altered eyes. Despite its fragmented appearance, *Noir* ultimately provides a coherent portrait of a man who knows what he wants, and who will achieve it, though all the vicious machinery of a broken-down world be arrayed against him. He won't escape without scars... but you know that in the end he will walk out of the fire.

Courtney says

I don't get the focus of this book's narrative. On one hand, it's a bit too on the nose with its title of *Noir*. There's the hardboiled detective who literally sees the world like a noir movie. And he has a buddy who is an actual author of noir books. They even discuss how things are going to play out according to a formula set up in noir literature.

On the other hand, this is written in a late 90s style. The first chapter is especially difficult to read. It's like the book is so full of itself that it doesn't deem it necessary to adequately bring the reader along. The worst example of this I've found is *Slow Chocolate Autopsy*.

Eventually things settle into the rapid pace needed to conclude the book within 400 pages (hardcover edition).

Sam Reader says

That's the essence of *Noir*-- someone's always getting screwed over

-Turbiner

There's a delicate balance that needs to be struck between style and substance, especially in genre fiction. Most authors decide to pack their books full of cool ideas and then skimp on the plot, leaving us drawn into their world but with nowhere to go in it*. Others decide to give their plot a few cool details here and there, but most of these small touches are better-remembered than the actual plot of the novel. *Noir* by K. W. Jeter...falls a little more to the style side than the substance side, giving us a fantastic world to play around in, but a plot so complex as to leave us completely locked out until later. As I thought that about the book, I debated if it could simply be that in my gravitation towards technology I'd just become anti-intellectual and my attention span had shortened, but it really is just kind of dense and complex to get through. And where sometimes this is a good thing, it also tends to remove the desire to get through the book. But is the book worth the climb? Oh, yes...

Noir by K. W. Jeter is the story of McNihil, a former copyright enforcer (or "Asp-head", in the book's slang) turned freelancer. McNihil is brought in to investigate the death of a corporate junior executive named Travelt, who was apparently working on some big, top-secret project called TIAC. In the dystopian future of Los Angeles, a future where things have run out of control to the point of corporations being beyond any rules (early in the book there's a sanctioned murder) and property rights being enforced with atrocity (debtors are kept alive and put to work while their body parts are harvested, for one), information is gained by sending biomechanical constructs known as "prowlers" into an area known as "The Wedge" to gain information. Travelt's prowler is still missing in The Wedge, and the corporation he works for wants McNihil to get it back. But everyone knows more than they let on, and McNihil may be walking into more of a trap than he bargained for by taking this job. And if he survives, how much of him would be left?

So, the first point I'd like to bring up is how wonderful the atmosphere of the book is. It's really the centerpiece and selling point of the novel. Every scene is overflowing with detail, the characters' language helps to feed the tough-talking film noir tone, and every element is put in place to help draw you into the world. It's an oppressive atmosphere, and it fits the book's point that "Noir is the fiction of anxiety", as quoted by the broken-down old pulp author that serves as a sort of central thematic anchor of the book. Everything in the world serves the bleak tone, from the fact that air travel is now almost impossible due to the air being full of homicidal machines known as noh-Flies that "SCARF" (we're never told what this is) metal and rain it down on the pavements below to the bishops of the catholic church, who argue over what happens when you download the "E-charist". Everything in the book serves to make the atmosphere bleak, creepy, and depressing. And it all works for the book.

Another thing about it is the tone. *Noir* wears a lot of its influences right on its sleeve, and the tone mixes the right way between lurid details, remaining horrified and paranoid, but also with a black humor streak not usually seen outside of William S. Burroughs. In fact, the tough-guy slang and disjointed dream-like narrative (as well as the Aztec goddess who appears at the beginning and end of the novel) seem to borrow a lot from Burroughs, as well as the paranoid tone and the grisly details of organ-harvesting and the draconian punishments for lawbreakers and debtors.

Next, the characters are all very well thought-out, and that helps lend to the story. There's a certain Faustian take to the whole novel, with McNihil playing Faust and Harrisch, the corporate executive who gives him the job, playing the devil. Harrisch has a tendency to appear seemingly from nowhere to ask McNihil to do the assignment, bringing thugs in to kick him apart and lean on him. At one point he appears by crane through the side of a train he had tampered with for the very purpose of screwing with the main character. The one odd point with the characters comes in with November, a female freelancer who seems to exist solely to be saved by McNihil and to finally drive the plot towards its eventual conclusion. She seems like more of an

afterthought, a plot element to eventually get McNihil to accept Harrisch's offer, and when she finally does do stuff in the book and on screen, she winds up almost falling. A lot. Even the noir author who serves no purpose than to deliver the central theme and help derail the plot does more and is better developed.

Which brings me to my next point...we get a lot about what the world looks like, but very little about the characters themselves. In fact, outside the world, there isn't really much to the book...the plot tends to meander a lot and at one point stops dead for a full chapter, the characters are given maybe two lines' worth of description and that's all, and while everything's tied up in the last forty pages, it doesn't give a hell of a lot to run on. Jeter seems to think the world he dreamed up is really cool, but doesn't do anything apart from guided tours in the first section, slow plot development in the second, and then finally the point of the book in the third and fourth. Now, Jeter's world is interesting, and his twisted take on film noir is enjoyable, but one can't help but think perhaps the second section should have served as the first, and then the first be interlaced flashbacks throughout, leading up to the ending. It does rob us of an interesting (and kind of nonsensical) section called "Sex Burned a Wire", but it would make for a much stronger book.

And finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the two major sections that get fairly tracty. The first, around chapter five or six, deals with McNihil confronting a group of "hippies" who squat in an abandoned airplane and say things like "connect isn't a dirty word down here, man..." leading to a passage about how the information age died, and how these idiots kept believing in a better technological future. The second, the infamous "copyright rant" takes up most of chapters six and seven, detailing what McNihil does with a pirate trading in illegal digital copies of books, and then going on a long and gleeful depiction of what happens to copyright infringers-- their cerebrospinal matter is used to create appliances with just enough of their brain matter left to feel pain and fear forever inside of a computer chip. The book stops dead for this section to tell you all about the evils of copyright infringement and how anyone who infringes even unknowingly is a thief and should be charged criminally**, and it was all I could do not to throw the book across the room. When Jeter wants to make a point, he becomes ridiculously unsubtle and attempts to arrange things with a sledgehammer to make it fit.

This also leads to an inconsistency of tone. On one end, Jeter wants you to be horrified of the paranoid, nasty, dark world he's created. On the other, he seems to think that many of the insane things they do are just, or at least presents them as such. Further killing the momentum are cool details that he keeps bringing up, though they have no purpose. There is no reason we need a history of the Rail Amalgamation and their secret societies, as it never comes up later. The main character's weird eye-implants, which make everything look like old detective movies in black and white, are brought up several times simply to make sure we don't forget how McNihil sees everything. Jeter even cameos the character he's most known for, Dr. Adder, in a superfluous way, just to put him in there.

But, despite all its flaws, I cannot really hate Noir. Yes, it's a deranged book that spends more time on scene-setting than plot; but after a while, the tone engages on some level and carries you along. I felt like the book was brilliant in some places, and it was fantastic looking back on it, but while I was reading it, all I wanted to do was put the book down and go do something a little less insane. It is this inconsistency and the tendency to both love and hate it that makes me want to tell you "Yes, I recommend this book, but please, take it out of the library." I like it, it's flawed, and I can't ever think of anyone wanting to own this.

*I fall on this end of the scale**.

**Hey, only one and a half footnotes? I'm softening. Definitely softening.

George Siehl says

In a collection of academic essays on steampunk, "Like Clockwork," a number of the authors praised Jeter's "Noir." Perhaps it is the rapture of the deep some academic post-modernists hold for the abyss (which is where this book dwells) or the frequent dislike of the business community prevalent on many campuses (this book offers a grossly distorted image of that economic sector) that brings forth such support. He writes, for instance, "What the human-resource managers and company psychs called optimized transcience optimization . It was all straight out of Henry Denkmann's magnum opus, Connect 'em Till They Bleed: Pimp Style Management for a New Century, which hadn't so much revolutionized corporate life as confirmed and blessed what had already been going on." (p.37)

The title gives the reader fair warning: the book is very dark, and depressing as well. A continuing motif is the noir films of the thirties and forties and the dominating role they play in the personality of the protagonist, McNihil, a bionic private eye, of sorts. He is here employed by a globe dominating company seeking to make money for the corporate executives at any cost, even the physiological enslavement of ordinary citizens. So voracious are corporations in this world that those who die owing money to major corporations are not allowed to fully die, but remain "indeaded" until they pay off what is owed. They try to earn their full death by working at tasks that pay little. McNihil's wife is one of the "indeaded," a nihilistic existence, indeed.

McNihil had once worked for a company, "the Collection Agency," that tracked down, and killed, individuals infringing on intellectual property rights, those claiming that "information wants to be free." He is coerced into working for Harrisch, an executive of the primary evil corporation in the novel, DynaZauber Corporation, to find what happened to one of his aides who was found dead, and whose death resulted in the loss of corporate secrets. The loss involved sex with a humanoid type called a "proowler." These creatures inhabited a social structure called the Wedge, a group Harrisch wanted to use as a test bed for one of his nefarious schemes. Harrisch wants his missing information returned from this world.

Although set in the mid 21st Century, the bionics available seem very far in the future, while the general familiarity with the latter half of the of the 20th Century seems unrealistically high. Jeter crafts otherworldly characters based on this mixture of technology and culture.

I found the book disappointing. It seems grossly overwritten and propagandistic. It was a poor choice to end the year with. I was tempted to quit at the end of the first part. I didn't, thinking that it had to get better but, unfortunately it did not. In fact, in places it got gruesome. I gave it one star, partly because that is the fewest available, and partly because the author did do a lot of (unnecessary) typing.

stephan wintner says

I finished it, but....

This is a pretty wierd thriller, out there with some of the Phillip K. Dick stuff - after reading this I actually wonder if Blade Runner 2 is not just commercial schlock.

Still, unless you really like the surreal I would skip this. The noir thriller wrapped up in the surrealism is not bad but also not great.

Joe Szilvagy says

I will start by saying it's been several years since I read this book but I find the concepts introduced have stuck with me. It's interesting that I can't remember much about the protagonist or the overall story but I still think about the ideas from the book fairly regularly.

One of the big items is the enforcement of copyright infringement through capital punishment. While it's absurd to think of in today's terms, I've grown to believe absurd things can happen in government.

As a whole, the future presented in this book is as bleak as the name suggests with large corporations running things and workers struggling to make ends meet.

I think I need to re-read this to revisit some of the presented possibilities.
