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Foreword Review SCIENCE FICTION

Midnight, Water City

Chris McKinney
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In Chris McKinney's futuristic thriller *Midnight, Water City*, a detective uncovers a conspiracy that makes him question his life's work.

Akira, the most brilliant scientist in the world, hired her head of security because of his unique synesthesia: he senses the presence of death and murder as red and green wisps of color around crime scenes, items, and people. He also possesses specialized and violent skill sets. As Akira's perfect weapon, he subdued anyone who stood in the way of her great work: creating a beam that could stop a giant asteroid from destroying Earth, which left a mark on the sky that's known as Ascalon's Scar.

But now, thirty years after Akira saved the world, she is found murdered in her laboratory. It's a gruesome scene, and her former bodyguard, who's now a detective, is charged with solving the case. While he thought of Akira as an Earth-saving genius, a cybernetically enhanced, shadowy figure from her past reveals uncomfortable truths about her and her work. The detective is forced to rethink everything—including the deadly actions that he performed for Akira's sake.

As the detective mulls over his relationship with Akira, those considerations are complemented by his general thoughts on humanity. The result is a philosophical, futuristic narrative. Here, after the wake-up call of near destruction, human beings become more environmentally focused, but still need to accommodate for Earth's large, and longer-living, population. Descriptions of looming cloudscrapers and dense underwater cities made of recycled materials bring this intriguing setting to life. Dangerous, inventive technologies are also introduced, while entertaining fight scenes punctuate the story.

Set in a plausible future, the novel *Midnight, Water City* concerns a detective's reckonings with his complicated past.

DELIA STANLEY (July / August 2021)

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