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High Stakes: A Wild Cards Novel



Synopsis

Perfect for old fans and new readers alike, *High Stakes (Wild Cards)* delves deeper into the world of aces, jokers, and the hard-boiled men and women of the Fort Freak police precinct in a pulpy, page-turning novel of superheroics and Lovecraftian horror. After the concluding events of *Lowball*, Officer Francis Black of Fort Freak, vigilante joker Marcus "The Infamous Black Tongue" Morgan, and ace thief Mollie "Tesseract" Steunenberg get stuck in Talas, Kazakhstan. There, the coldblooded Baba Yaga forces jokers into an illegal fighting ring, but her hidden agenda is much darker: her fighters' deaths serve to placate a vicious monster from another dimension. When the last line of defense against this world weakens, all hell breaks loose, literally....The Committee in New York sends a team of aces to investigate. One by one, each falls victim to evil forces--including the dark impulses within themselves. Only the perseverance of the most unlikely of heroes has a chance of saving the world before utter chaos erupts on Earth. Edited by #1 New York Times bestselling author George R. R. Martin, *High Stakes* features the writing talents of Melinda M. Snodgrass, John Jos. Miller, David Anthony Durham, Caroline Spector, Stephen Leigh, and Ian Tregillis. Now in development for TV: Rights to develop *Wild Cards* for TV have been acquired by Universal Cable Productions, the team that brought you *The Magicians* and *Mr. Robot*, with the co-editor of *Wild Cards*, Melinda Snodgrass as executive producer. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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Customer Reviews

I just put down *High Stakes* a few minutes ago, so I am writing this review while it is still fresh in my mind. First of all, to establish my *Wild Cards* bona fides, I have been reading this series since the late-ish eighties, own all of the previous volumes (in print), own copies of both the Steve Jackson *GURPS Supers Wild Cards* (*GURPS*) and *Green Ronin Mutants Masterminds Rpg Wild Cards RPG* books (even though I don't play), and I own the original *EPIC Comics graphic novels Wild Cards* (*Graphic Novel*), as well as the (imho) inferior *Dabel Brothers* comic series from a few years ago. While I love *ASOIAF*, to me *GRRM* was the guy (well one of them) behind *Wild Cards* before I even picked up *A Game of Thrones* years later. Basically, the entire series is a gritty, more naturalistic take on the superhero comic book genre. It's also an alternative history series. The world of *Wild Cards* diverges from ours mostly in 1946 (but actually a few years earlier with the exploits of the original *Jetboy*), when an alien virus is released over Manhattan. A lot of the summaries I've read recently make it seem like the virus killed millions of people around the world, but in the books it infects probably thousands, maybe tens of thousands, initially in the New York area (and then over the years and decades continues to lead to outbreaks worldwide).

I've been a fan of this series since I was in high school and have read the entire collection (I think), including the latest work, *"High Stakes"*. It is challenging to create a fair review of such a mosaic novel wherein multiple authors lent their talents to create a single work. I have to confess to enjoying it more than other books in the series which were crafted by a single author. The tone and feel of *"High Stakes"* is one of creepy, otherworldly possession - a threat more dire to the world than the initial release of the *Wild Card* virus in fictional 1946. Conflict runs rampant throughout the pages - vs. others, vs. themselves and vs. the "Threat" which faces them all. Tension is raised throughout; to be blunt, almost too much in *MANY* places. The authors have collaborated to create a tense, tight Lovecraftian horror with pulp overtones. I'll confess that, at times, I had difficulty keeping track of *ALL* the Aces and Jokers. But the attention it demanded was worth it. And while I'm in a confessional mood, I should admit that at one point, about 3/4 through, I almost put the book down for good. The setbacks and odds against the protags were so great, so disastrous, I was left thinking that *ANY* kind of "un-miserable" ending would be impossible to pull off. I was wrong. Don't

get me wrong; the climax of this book is heart-rending for several reasons. But ultimately a HUGE payoff. Back in '40's, pulp author Lester Dent was adamant about "sticking it to the hero in the neck" numerous times. This collection of Wild Card writers have done that in spades with "High Stakes". (

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