



Altered Carbon (Takeshi Kovacs Novels Book 1)

By Richard K. Morgan

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In the twenty-fifth century, humankind has spread throughout the galaxy, monitored by the watchful eye of the U.N. While divisions in race, religion, and class still exist, advances in technology have redefined life itself. Now, assuming one can afford the expensive procedure, a person's consciousness can be stored in a cortical stack at the base of the brain and easily downloaded into a new body (or "sleeve") making death nothing more than a minor blip on a screen.

Ex-U.N. envoy Takeshi Kovacs has been killed before, but his last death was particularly painful. Dispatched one hundred eighty light-years from home, re-sleeved into a body in Bay City (formerly San Francisco, now with a rusted, dilapidated Golden Gate Bridge), Kovacs is thrown into the dark heart of a shady, far-reaching conspiracy that is vicious even by the standards of a society that treats "existence" as something that can be bought and sold. For Kovacs, the shell that blew a hole in his chest was only the beginning. . . .

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This fast-paced, densely textured, impressive first novel is an intriguing hybrid of William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Norman Spinrad's *Deus X*. In the 25th century, it's difficult to die a final death. Humans are issued a cortical stack, implanted into their bodies, into which consciousness is "digitized" and from which—unless the stack is hopelessly damaged—their consciousness can be downloaded ("resleeved") with its memory intact, into a new body. While the Vatican is trying to make resleeving (at least of Catholics) illegal, centuries-old aristocrat Laurens Bancroft brings Takeshi Kovacs (an Envoy, a specially trained soldier used to being resleeved and trained to soak up clues from new environments) to Earth, where Kovacs is resleeved into a cop's body to investigate Bancroft's first mysterious, stack-damaging death. To solve the case, Kovacs must destroy his former Envoy enemies; outwit Bancroft's seductive, wily wife; dabble in United Nations politics; trust an AI that projects itself in the form of Jimi Hendrix; and deal with his growing physical and emotional attachment to Kristin Ortega, the police lieutenant who used to love the body he's been given. Kovacs rockets from the seediest hellholes on Earth, through virtual reality torture, into several gory firefights, and on to some exotic sexual escapades. Morgan's 25th-century Earth is convincing, while the questions he poses about how much Self is tied to body chemistry and how the rich believe themselves above the law are especially timely.

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From [Booklist](#)

In a society in which death has been rendered practically obsolete, suicide and murder take on different significances. After a particularly brutal offing, former UN envoy Takeshi Kovacs finds himself "resleeved"—that is, his consciousness has been put in a new body—and hired as a private investigator by Laurens Bancroft, one of twenty-fifth-century society's old rich in Bay City (formerly San Francisco). Bancroft claims he was murdered, but the police say it was a suicide. After Kovacs gets hit at his hotel within hours of being resleeved, he sees the possibility that Bancroft was, in fact, murdered, and that someone wants to keep it very hush-hush. As he investigates, he uncovers a far-reaching conspiracy with ties to the most unsavory characters in his generally unsavory military and criminal past. This far-future hard-boiled detective story is a lovely virtual-reality romp distinguished by a conspiracy whose strands have the potential to generate several successful sequels, which is just what its publicity promises. *Regina Schroeder*

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Review

"This seamless marriage of hardcore cyberpunk and hard-boiled detective tale is an astonishing first novel."
—*London Times*

"AN ASTONISHING PIECE OF WORK . . . A wonderful SF idea . . . *Altered Carbon* hits the floor running and then starts to accelerate. Intriguing and inventive in equal proportions and refuses to let go until the last page."

—PETER HAMILTON

"AN EXCITING SF/CRIME HYBRID, with an intricate (but always plausible) plot, a powerful noir atmosphere, and enough explosive action to satisfy the most die-hard thriller fan."

—SF Site

“AN EXHILARATING AND GLOSSY ADVENTURE . . . What makes *Altered Carbon* a winner is the quality of Morgan’s prose. For every piece of John Woo action there is a stunning piece of reflective description, a compelling sense of place, and abundant 24-karat witticisms.”
—*SFX Magazine*

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cameron Trammell:

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Maurice Miller:

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Joseph Sutton:

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Denita Lumley:

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