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Brilliance



Synopsis

In Wyoming, a little girl reads people's darkest secrets by the way they fold their arms. In New York, a man sensing patterns in the stock market racks up \$300 billion. In Chicago, a woman can go invisible by being where no one is looking. They're called "brilliants," and since 1980, one percent of people have been born this way. Nick Cooper is among them; a federal agent, Cooper has gifts rendering him exceptional at hunting terrorists. His latest target may be the most dangerous man alive, a brilliant drenched in blood and intent on provoking civil war. But to catch him, Cooper will have to violate everything he believes in - and betray his own kind. From Marcus Sakey, "a modern master of suspense" (Chicago Sun-Times) and "one of our best storytellers" (Michael Connelly), comes an adventure that's at once breakneck thriller and shrewd social commentary; a gripping tale of a world fundamentally different and yet horrifyingly similar to our own, where being born gifted can be a terrible curse.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I always enjoy reading, even mediocre titles. But I have such high standards for excellence that it is rare these days that I find a new book that I can't help but to gush about to my friends and family. The Brilliance Trilogy is one of those rare gems. There are only so many stories one can write, and while I won't say that the premise of Brilliance is anything so ground-breaking as to be revolutionary, it takes the standard "superhuman" trope and integrates it seamlessly with our own real world, introducing the "Brilliants" (the 1% of humankind born with high-savant-level abilities in a

given realm, without autism or other related disorders) into human history beginning in 1980 and drastically altering the course of human history since. The choice of this time frame is of particular importance because it is not so far outside the memory of most readers, yet far enough back to show us how very much could be altered if only a few key events had gone differently. The result is a society that faces many of the same issues of ostracization that plagues real-life populations, only focused on the Brilliants as opposed to Muslims/other races/transgendered individuals/etc. We are introduced to an America where 99% of the population is normal and terrified of losing their relevance against the minority of Brilliants who are responsible for light years of advancement in medicine, technology, mathematics, science, arts, and even weaponry. As a result, they are hyper vigilant towards the very small percentage of Brilliants - as they are more commonly called, abnorms or, more crudely, "twists" - who realise their own superiority as well as the normals' oppression of their kind and respond with acts of extremely well-planned terrorism. Somewhere between the extremes is Nick Cooper. An agent of the Department Of Analysis & Response (or DAR), Nick is among the most powerful abnorms as Tier 1 intuit with the ability to translate even the most microscopic changes in body language into patterns that help him predict exactly how someone will move or react, and even how they feel. However Cooper is not working for the abnorm terrorists; in fact, as a former military man, he has spent all his life fighting those who would do his country harm. Cooper uses his talents to hunt down these terrorists using his official license to kill. But Cooper isn't a bad guy. He devotes himself to tracking down John Smith - the country's most elusive and most dangerous abnorm, who once used his incredible planning skills to defeat four chess grand masters at once - and along the way finds himself in the path of bombings, assassins, and even corruption at the highest levels. The novel follows his pursuit of John Smith and his journey of discovery along the way. As for the rest of the plot... well I'll save that for you to read!!

I gobbled down all three novels as quickly as I possibly could. It's definitely a stay-up-late-with-a-flashlight story. Marcus Sakey draws enough comparisons between real world issues and events to make his work infinitely relatable to the average reader, yet creates a fantastic enough world to create a vividly different universe. I absolutely loved the premise. The concept of Brilliance is definitely in the realm of science fiction, but as you learn more about its causes and manifestations through the course of the trilogy, it begins to feel almost plausible. The human brain is an incredible computer; Marcus Sakey merely unlocks its potential for the imaginative reader. The writing is action-packed for sure but maintains a high level of character development throughout. You are allowed within the head of the main character - and, through his abnormal abilities, into the minds of those around him - enough to see that great power comes with both great responsibility

and great pain. Brilliance isn't just a gift, like Superman's flying abilities. The fact that a powerful Reader (as they call those Brilliants who are able to sense one's deepest, darkest secrets simply based on a person's words and actions) always knows you're lying comes at the price that they know when someone doesn't really mean "I love you." It's a fascinating dichotomy. This allows for extraordinary depth to the array of personas that grace these pages, from the crass but loyal Bobby Quinn (Cooper's partner and sidekick) to the femme-fatale Shannon, an abnorm under the employee of John Smith convinced of the righteousness of her actions. As tensions mount between the normals, who fear being out-evolved and disappearing the way of the Neanderthal, and the abnorms, who fear being rounded up as criminals simply for their remarkable abilities, Sakey's main characters play out a story of subterfuge and conspiracy that puts everything in question, from allegiance to human rights. Once you have read all three novels, you will see that this author was really in it for the long-haul from the beginning: his ability to interweave plot elements is reminiscent of J.K. Rowling, with elements of the far-thinking John Smith's master plan retrospectively visible even in this first tale. Overall, I would recommend this book to lovers of science fiction, fantasy, superhero tales, action stories, and even detective work. There are plot twists that will throw even the most dogged reader for a loop. It is absolutely excellently written. I haven't raved about a book this much in ages! I will definitely be reading more from this author in the future.

I read a great deal in all genres but rarely have I come across a story that is so great that I missed meals and sleep in order to finish it. I'm hoping that it could be made into a movie but fearful of the changes some screen writer would do. This is the story of multiple conspiracies and multiple mass murders. A sub sect of humans have been born brilliant in some form or another. What we would call geniuses or savants. But the vast majority of people were fearful of these geniuses and the government stepped in to make certain that they followed the laws and weren't dangerous to society. Several "terrorist attacks" are attributed to these Brilliants and Cooper has to go after them in his position of investigator. Eventually he learns that all isn't as it seems, he's been used in a dangerous government plot for power and war. Its action packed much more than a Jason Statham movie! Can't wait for the next book because its going to be great....

Could something like this be a reality? Could this be in our future? I thought this book was amazing! Characters, conversations, scene depictions - I could see it all as I was reading as quick as I could!! Am now going to continue forward with Book 2. I will definitely be reading more by this amazing author!!

First rate fiction from beginning to end. Characters are believable, motivations are clear but not so transparent as to be cartoonish, action is satisfying and writing does not get in the way of telling the story. Plausible except for the basic premise, "brilliance," where there comes into existence a sub-group of humanity that have varying degrees of any of a large range of special talents that are *usually* enhancements of rare-but-known human capabilities (strategic skill and planning, reading physical action intent by observation of subtle body cues, detection of deception by reading similar cues, ability to move among people without being observed by being where they are not *going* to look, ability to remember any detail on any given date of their life, ability to calculate any quantity based on arithmetic combinations of either raw numbers or the descriptions or names of objects/events that have numeric qualities). The difficulty, though minor, is that each brilliant has only one such special ability and seems to be pretty ordinary in all other respects - that may be a bit hard to believe. The tensions in this story are, as would be expected, between the "normals" and the "abnormals." The plot revolves around the social, political and economic implications of the differences between norms and abnorms and how this plays out for the protagonist, an elite government operative in an agency that is somewhat similar to an over-powerful Department of Homeland Security (probably intentionally), his immediate personal and professional circle, the larger government, and American society. Satisfying - I bought the second book in the series and probably will follow the whole series.

For the start of a new trilogy Brilliance does an excellent job at lightly dusting pseudo science and quasi futuristic elements into a hard boiled detective novel. It's the best of both worlds with elements akin to Heroes cum buddy cop movie as meta-humans set the stage for a much grander opera in chapters 2 and 3. Brilliance is more self contained than its sequels and a tighter narrow focus on a couple of main characters makes the pace quick and the action suspenseful. An easy read with a few surprises the author ramps up the action and then kicks it into gear for the grand finale. Marcus Sakey has done a commendable job in touching on popular science themes whilst mixing it with a sexy and sometimes raw action-thriller that is surprisingly touching with the humanism and relationships he builds between friends and family

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