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A Better World: The Brilliance Saga, Book 2



Synopsis

The brilliants changed everything. Since 1980, 1% of the world has been born with gifts we'd only dreamed of. The ability to sense a person's most intimate secrets, or predict the stock market, or move virtually unseen. For thirty years the world has struggled with a growing divide between the exceptional...and the rest of us. Now a terrorist network led by brilliants has crippled three cities. Supermarket shelves stand empty. 911 calls go unanswered. Fanatics are burning people alive. Nick Cooper has always fought to make the world better for his children. As both a brilliant and an advisor to the president of the United States, he's against everything the terrorists represent. But as America slides toward a devastating civil war, Cooper is forced to play a game he dares not lose - because his opponents have their own vision of a better world. And to reach it, they're willing to burn this one down. From Marcus Sakey, "the master of the mindful page turner" (Gillian Flynn) and "one of our best storytellers" (Michael Connelly), Book Two of the Brilliance Saga is a relentless thrill ride that will change the way you look at your world - and the people around you.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marcus Sakey surprised a few people --- actually, a whole army of readers --- in 2013 when he published *BRILLIANCE*, a science-fiction thriller that was promised to be part of a series. He previously had earned his author bones by publishing a number of stand-alone works that together could be loosely classified under the crime fiction umbrella but were very different from each other. Sakey adroitly turned from one genre to another, seemingly without effort, but utilizing the same

tools in the skill set that made his previous efforts so memorable: those would be his perfect storytelling pacing and his uncanny ability to keep the reader guessing as to what will happen next. *A BETTER WORLD*, the second installment in the Brilliance series, continues with the themes that its predecessor initiated while progressing the story line in frightening and unexpected ways. Sakey's brilliant storytelling abilities are on full display here; within the first 16 pages, not only does he grab readers by the throat and drag them into the story, he also provides a quick yet vital summary of what has gone before. The premise of Sakey's world --- very much like our own --- is that a small but significant minority known as "brilliants" within the population possess skill sets of different types and degrees. After the existence of the brilliants is detected in the early 1980s, a screening examination is administered by fiat at eight years of age when a child is thought or suspected to be a brilliant. Those children who are found to be brilliants are shunted off to "academies" --- glorified institutions --- for the stated purpose of more fully developing their talents. The logic behind this is that the people so identified have the potential to be dangerous far in excess of their numbers. Every action has a reaction, of course, with the result being that a small group of extreme brilliants decide that 1) they should be running things, and 2) terrorist actions are the way to demonstrate their potential power. A brilliant named Nick Cooper, who possesses the uncanny ability to read a person's mannerisms and body language and anticipate their actions, was introduced in *BRILLIANCE* as the top operator in a clandestine government agency tasked with taking violent brilliants off the board. As *A BETTER WORLD* begins, Cooper finds himself in a new position as an adviser to the President of the United States. A new group of radical brilliants known as the Children of Darwin have a plan for a better world, as they say, and to implement it, they must bring the United States government to its knees. In order to do so, they first interrupt the food supply to three major cities, and then take those metropolitan areas off the power grid. The narrative shifts its point of view frequently --- among Cooper, a family in Cleveland (one of the affected cities), and the nominal head of the brilliants, among others. This ratchets the already stratospheric level of suspense ever upward, as Cooper finds that his advice to the President as to how to proceed is frequently overruled or outright ignored by the other advisers who have the President's ear. Things get worse, of course, and then they get even worse. By the end of the book, it is anything but that. *A BETTER WORLD* ends on a cliffhanging, though not to say unsatisfying or downbeat, note. There is more, much more to come, but the sequel is an integral part of the journey you will not want to miss. A major reason for this is that Sakey is a masterful scribe, no matter in what genre he chooses to write. His story moves quickly, without sacrificing depth or characterization, and one is never quite sure which side

to take, a feeling not unlike that experienced by fans of a certain other popular series dealing with a contest of chairs, if you will. You will not be able to get *A BETTER WORLD* out of your head once you start or finish it, and conjecture as to what will happen next undoubtedly will continue to ride high until the next installment of the series. Reviewed by Joe Hartlaub.

Brilliance Saga is wonderful sci-fi, great human stories with futuristic good guys and one main great guy Nick Cooper who struggles with his past as a government agent and an abnorm himself. The country is turning against abnorms, stripping them of their rights, incarcerating abnorm children, changing their names and isolating them from their families while the academies treat them cruelly and coldly for their own purposes depending on their specific ability. Brilliant and rich Erik Epstein has created a region in Montana he owns and is filled with abnorms, advanced technology and a fortress where people have flocked to be with their own abnorms, live in peace and without fear. The technology is advanced and utilized to run the cities in the compound. Are they sitting ducks if Sec. Leahy gets his way to take power from the new President he thinks is weak and inept. Nick learns people lie, people trick and those who he believed in are monsters. Now he wants to fix the mess he made. He ultimately trusted the wrong person, unleashed a damning video and feels he needs to right his wrong. Worst of all he was manipulated and that fuels his action. Anarchy in the streets, cities attacked by a terrorist group. Who funded them, who trained them and why? And, Nick is after John Smith who he knows manipulated him to unleashing something that has changed the course of history and may have doomed the country! Cities in turmoil, cut off from food supplies and the government is not helping. There are so many stories within the story and all compelling and drawing you in and close to the characters. Some you root for and others are pure self serving evil.....ok, I NEED book three!

I really enjoyed "Brilliance" and was pleased to find out that it's in production as a movie. I was even more pleased when this second installment was published... right up to the point where the book ended abruptly without a single completed story arc. I'm surprised the author didn't just end mid-sentence. I will probably download book three if the price is cheap enough, just to find out what happened but I'll do it reluctantly. (For the record, I'm a sucker for serial novels from Mildred Dunnit to Elizabeth George to Arthur Conan Doyle but I want a whole story told with each installment.)

This was so similar to the first book although the outcome was different. The ending was exciting but but a little unsatisfying and odd. The cliffhanger and "post-credits" prologue basically set up a

situation where I'm thinking, "finally this story is going to go somewhere". Of course that is where it ends. It's basically x-men, with Xavier's mutants trying to befriend the normals while Magneto is starting a war of dominance. It's an odd commentary how writers think that we would somehow hate and discriminate against people who are effectively superheroes and that our government would automatically go fascist with internment camps, tagging, and sociopathic citizen murder. I think we're probably past that. My assessment of how these books play out is that the briliants would probably be way better off in a place like Iran or North Korea than in America.

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