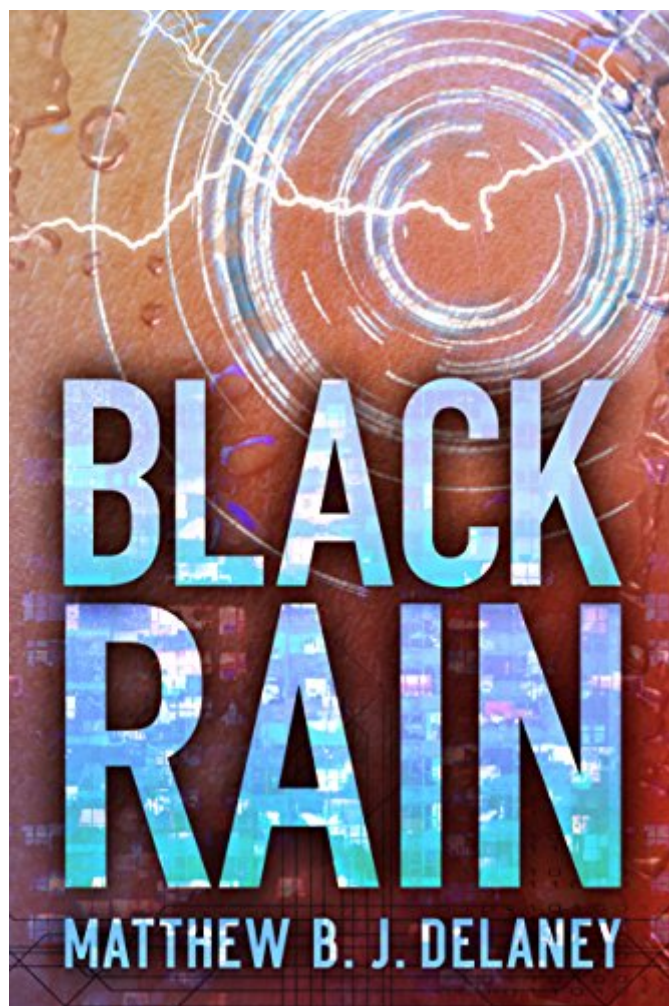


The book was found

Black Rain



Synopsis

In a darkly warped near future, lucrative disease cures are brokered on Wall Street's Genetic Stock Exchange. And the hottest consumer products are artificially synthesized humans that serve as everything from domestic slaves to combatants in savage gladiatorial games. For Jack Saxton, the young heir to genetic design powerhouse Genico Inc., these Synthates are just a fact of life until the murder of a high-profile genetic scientist leads a pair of seasoned NYPD detectives to Genico's door. As a small band of Synthate rebels steps up its attack on the status quo, Jack encounters a pleasure-parlor girl who opens his eyes to their cause. When he dares to sympathize with the rebels, Jack is hunted down and arrested for the murder. Sentenced to die in the brutal games on Bloomberg Island, Jack will be forced to fight for his life, for the future of all Synthates, and for a chance to uncover the mind-bending secret buried in his past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have to admit, I was about one-third of the way through this book and thought I had found a winner. The world that Mr. Delaney had created was very detailed and extremely interesting. The

book held my interest and I was concerned about what would happen with the main character. I was ready to commend the author for having established some gritty characters without resorting to f-bombs to get the point across...then everything began to change. Here's a synopsis of what worked and what didn't, without any spoilers:

THE WORLD -- Though similar to many stories involving androids or robots that eventually come into conflict with humans, the details of this future world helped make it come alive. There was no way that I could resist being drawn into and marvel at what the author had created. For me, this was the best aspect of the book.

THE CHARACTERS -- It was easy to cheer on the main character, Jack Sexton, as well as a couple of the other people introduced into the story. This definitely contributed to the book being a quick read.

THE PLOT -- Overall, a good idea for a story. The tale of humans and non-humans coexisting is not a new one, and Mr. Delaney has done a good job creating a fresh look at the potential troubles. Some of the plot elements in the second half of the story were troubling, though. Characters should not suddenly be able to have talents just because it is necessary to the plot (for instance, Night, a secondary character, twice displays incredible skills that are not part of her background). Too many incredulous, thank-the-stars moments occur in the second half, plot devices that cheapen what could have been an incredible story.

JUST IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING -- As stated above, about a third of the way into the book, the f-bombs and similar language littered the pages...very disconcerting, as the author had previous chapters without even a hint of coarse language. Some might feel it's appropriate to the book, though Mr. Delaney competently handled many early chapters without it. I am just letting you know it is there. Sex and violence, while part of the story at times, is not detailed and graphic. Typos, spelling, grammar errors -- didn't notice any. Mr. Delaney's writing is extremely professional and polished, and a pleasure to read. Only a few minor errors (most jarring was the author's description of a library "actual paper, what a novelty!" followed many chapters later with a character reading a paper version of the Wall Street Journal).

BOTTOM LINE -- This could have easily been a four- or five-star book. However, using plot devices just to make the story work (characters all of a sudden having incredible skills, items inserted to make the plot work, etc.) spoiled the last third of the book for me. However, based on Mr. Delaney's skill as a writer, I would not have been upset if I had paid money for this book (it was a Kindle First). I thoroughly enjoyed reading his prose, and would definitely read anything else he has written.

Throughout the reading of this book, I was thinking how it seemed about right for a wait-to-watch-on-HBO movie: plenty of the popular plot points, usual twists, and opportunities for good-looking movie stars. Big doses of Blade Runner and Running Man, some Minority Report and

Hunger Games interludes, even touches of A.I. and maybe Gattaca. Familiar, but not in a bad way. This is what I would call a "fast and mindless" read; good for the commute, sunbathing, waiting at the airport or DMV, etc. It won't require intense concentration and isn't really thought-provoking, it is just a story moving along. The writing is not at all sophisticated, it was like what I have found in many of my kids' Young Adult dystopian novels. The first third of the book I found pretty slow-going; second third gets the action sequences revved up; last third pays off in a satisfying (but not surprising) way. I read this when it was a Kindle First selection for Prime members; this is the first time I've bothered to finish one of those books so that says something!

Quick & Dirty Highlights This taut thriller is a good bet to rocket to number one among Kindle books. The writing will latch onto your psyche and tug you this way and that, with solid, evocative writing. Although written with an eye to The Hunger Games, it reminded me more of The Running Man. On the negative side - almost gratuitous density of f-bombs and the feeling of anxiety remaining for the next story... Length: Print, 386 pages. Target Audience/Genre: Action-Adventure would be my genre. Shades of The Running Man and of The Hunger Games, to be more specific. Q - How was this book obtained? A - Bought as my Kindle First selection. Q - Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? A - Yes, but when you finish reading this tale, you're likely to be scrambling to find a sequel. Q - Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? A - No. Q - Is this a fast, easy read or is it more of a leisure read? A - Fast-paced leisure read. Many readers will lose sleep for a night or two. Q - What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? A - Adult English laced with a generous helping of f-bombs. Q - What age group is this suitable for? A - If this were a film it likely would be rated PG-17 for language and violence. The violence is not overly graphic, but it does draw a clear enough picture to stir one's senses. Q - My biggest pleasure or disappointment? A - I can't really elaborate here without possibly divulging a spoiler, precisely what bothered me. Suffice it to say, there are additional books coming... What I greatly appreciated was the author's ability to evoke one's senses, while not drawing too many of the details. I like his sketching of scenes that leaves enough unsaid so that I can fill in the blanks. I've included a few small excerpts below, so readers can peruse the style of presentation utilized by the author. Unlike most of my reviews, these are short clips from various points, short enough to give a glimpse, but not so long as to reveal any spoilers.

EXCERPT Excerpt 1 As Reynolds entered the library, he slipped open his sync. The mirror beckoned at the far end and he sprinted for it. He pulled hard on the gilded frame. Nothing happened. He pulled again in a panic. His sync slipped from his hand and skipped across the floor.

The mirror was still shut tight. The footsteps in the hall were loud now, the terrifying figure getting closer and closer. Dear God. The pounding of Reynolds's heart seemed to him as loud as the approaching footfalls. All at once the mirror slid open and his wife's hand pulled... Excerpt 2 But Jack still had to survive. And surviving a Games was like storming the beaches of Normandy. Only the tough and lucky made it. The first morning, the recruits viewed films in the darkened conference center from last year's Braves' season, learning line formations and weaponry. The films were brutal to watch. Countless Synthates being torn apart in battle after battle, left for dead on the stadium floor. None of the new Synthates had ever been inside Entertainment Stadium and couldn't even imagine the scale of what a battle was like. Jack had witnessed these miniwars from behind glass and had to manage the fear of what he knew was coming. They didn't have much time to... Excerpt 3 "What about the guard?" Jack said. "Do you hear that?" Arden glanced back toward the distant sound. "That's another train coming." Sparks fell fifty feet to the ground, easily visible in the darkness. The guard continued to walk along the hall. Somehow he hadn't seen them yet. The rumble of the train grew louder and the tube filled with wind. Beneath them the track began to vibrate. "Cut, cut, cut!" Arden whispered. Lights bore down on them as the train rocketed out of the river. "How we doing?" Jack said. "Almost there . . ." There was a clang as the metal access door fell away and struck the ladder below. "Let them through, let them go!" Arden said. The train rushed toward them, the tube filled with the high shriek of metal. Excerpt 4... stared at his destroyed body. Then he burped warm blood and collapsed to his knees. The pain was unbearable. Then it gradually faded. All senses flowed out of him, through his belly and onto rough ground. Everything he'd ever known, his entire life, slowly caked the earth red, to the roaring applause of the crowd. Bottom Line: The writer is economical with his descriptions, yet is able to evoke many of the senses in his scenes and settings. Despite some similarities to The Running Man and The Hunger Games, there is a high degree of originality in this taut thriller that I didn't feel it was a clone of those concepts. In fact, I forgot about those stories and was enthralled by this novel. ALERT ---- POSSIBLE SPOILER --- ALERT It is clear another story is coming. Hence, even though this can work as a stand alone book, the ending will leave one with a nagging feeling of anxiety. Comments regarding your opinion of this book or of my review, whether favorable or unfavorable, are always welcome. If you buy the book based on my review and become disappointed, especially, I do want to know that and I want to understand how I can improve as a book reviewer. Just please be polite. Thank you.

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