



Connected

Simon Denman

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Brief Synopsis

CONNECTED is a speculative fiction thriller with touches of science and philosophy, which reached No.1 in Amazon UK's Bestseller lists for both Thrillers and Science Fiction within 5 days of release.

Beginning with the funeral of a renowned classical violinist in a sleepy rural hamlet in the Lake District, a former theoretical physicist tries to make sense of his brother's suicide. Across the country, a university student, enjoying the unexpected attentions of an enigmatic seductress, is disturbed when his best friend falls to his death from the thirteenth floor of a neighbouring campus tower block.

As each tries to unravel the mystery behind the apparent suicides, they are drawn into an obsessive search for a computer-generated fractal video sequence, with startling effects on human consciousness, and which might just pave the way for discovery of the ultimate Theory of Everything.

However, they are not the only ones to have seen the potential of this mind-altering video, and soon find themselves in a desperate race against time with gangsters from the shadowy worlds of sex, drugs, cyber-crime, and massively multi-player on-line gaming.

Science Content

Although, as the reviews testify, CONNECTED has been enjoyed by many with no background in computer science, Mandelbrot Fractal geometry, string theory, quantum physics or brain science, those with some interest or knowledge in these areas seem to have particularly enjoyed the book.

One reason for this appears to be that most of these references are actually based on fact. Of course, some readers have preferred to skim these sections, and claim that this did not detract from the story. Others have appreciated the scientific detail and fidelity, and some have even thanked the author for explaining such things in a way that enabled them to learn something new.

Philosophy, Science and Religion

Although CONNECTED is mostly enjoyed as a fast-paced mystery thriller, it is also, to a limited extent, about the inevitable conflict between science and religion. The two main male protagonists happen to be atheist, and some of the dialogue explores the different thoughts and attitudes concerning some of life's deeper questions. These include the origins of the universe, the nature of consciousness, and whether there could be life after death. Again these philosophical references to faith and atheism are few, and mostly quite short, but all are crucial to the story.

Setting and slang

CONNECTED is a contemporary novel, set entirely in England. As the story unfolds through two converging plot threads, the action switches between a fictitious village in the Lake District, the University of Essex in Colchester (an old Roman town about 60 miles north-east of London), Bracknell (a newer suburban town some 40 miles west of London), and North London.

Consequently, there is some British slang and occasional use of bad language (e.g. a few instances of the F-word etc.) in keeping with the age and background of the characters.

Why Connected?

Years ago, while the author was at university, a fellow student had a breakdown and was admitted to the local psychiatric hospital. A few, who knew him well, went to visit and reported that he'd subsequently lost the plot and was gabbling incomprehensibly of having found the answer to life, the universe and everything. While most people seemed consumed with sadness and pity at this, the author's first thought was, "What if he really had discovered some universal truth?" Although never seriously believing that he had, it was on that day that the seed of an idea lodged in his young brain – a seed that years later would

Connected Details

Date : Published June 10th 2012 by DZ Publishing

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Author : Simon Denman

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From Reader Review Connected for online ebook

Jason Reeser says

This is a quick, formula Koontz-like thriller. A nice mix of science, metaphysics, and computers. I was a little disappointed, since it seemed like it had the makings of something beyond the usual thriller. But as the Russian with the bad accent played out his usual role, it became apparent that the formula was going to be adhered to. That having been said, it works very well as a light, entertaining read. This would make a great movie. I very much enjoyed the fact that the author's British vocabulary had not been washed for an American audience. I wish this were true of more authors from the UK. As a first-time author, Denman has shown he has great ideas and can adapt them to match the top-selling genre authors. Here's hoping he doesn't stop there. I hope he can take them to the next level.

Norm Davis says

This is a solid 4 stars for only avid science fiction fans, yet it is NOT presented like a science fiction story.

In my study of writing one rule rarely to be broken is “show, don't tell”. That is why I didn't jack this up to 5 stars. Alternately, because of the depth of the science in the novel, it would be nearly impossible to “show” verses “tell” in large parts of the novel. And, despite the depth of science in this novel, a science novice would likely pick up all the science twists, turns, speculations, and hypotheses.

There are a number of primary protagonists and only brief conflict that might be “antagonist” in this story which included Peter and Doug, the two main characters, then Nadia who goes by a number of aliases early in the book but in all cases serves as the romance character that simply seems required in novel making. She's still a cool character. There are other love related characters related to all the primary protagonist, so in this sense, this book is doing all the right “booky” things.

At 99% of the book read I still was NOT imagining the ending. While it isn't a jaw drop shock like The Sixth Sense was to me, it is still a satisfactory ending.

The science in this book, which dominates the story, is actually stop and think interesting. Sad I wasn't in the mood for the wonders of science that I adored in my youth, but I still followed along ok, agreeing and disagreeing in the speculations as they were presented.

Margreet Nannenbergh says

"Perhaps the laws of the universe were governed by no more than collections of random oddities - islands of logic in a sea of chaos."

Denman is an artist to connect words into sentences which makes my brain flow. He knows perfectly how to combine scientifically theories about multi dimensions, quantum dynamics, and neuroscience with realistic common lives: the doubts people have as it comes to religion, their choices they've made in life and their

drives.

Denman combines his subject of multidimensional theories with a multidimensional approach of his characters: each of them has its own way of thinking, feeling, acting and speaking, which requires a great imagination of the writer.

A story which is without doubt very interesting and exciting!

Anand says

The premise of the plot is great, but the narrative is disappointing. The writing lacks depth and fails to impact the reader the way it could have, given the tremendous plot theme. The narrative is too descriptive, with long sentences and even longer paragraphs that tend to divert the reader's concentration. Also, despite the seriousness of the situation (suicides, Russian mafia, killers, hacking, etc.), the overall feel is anything but serious. It reads like book meant for teenaged thriller-cum-sci fi junkies. If you are looking for an average novel with a smashing premise, read this. If you are discerning and looking for something more nuanced, mature and in-depth, give this a go.

Lynn Worton says

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the author in return for an honest review.

This is a very thought provoking and thrilling science fiction novel. I really enjoyed it!

Peter is a character I really liked. He is a physicist who is now a contract engineer. He has a very analytical mind and is determined to figure out why his brother committed suicide. His journey into discovering his brother's secrets brings him into contact with Doug, a university student, who is dealing with his own problems and secrets.

I am very sorry that I have only now managed to read this book, as it has sat on my Kindle for some time due to my rather large reading list.

This story is told through various points of view, which kept me interested from the first page. The story has a lot of musical, as well as scientific and spiritual philosophy mixed in with the mystery, suspense and danger the characters encounter. I have always been intrigued with the innermost workings of the mind and how music and light affects the brain chemistry. This story takes the reader through some of the science behind this, but doesn't befuddle the less scientific reader by using large words and scientific terms. There is also a sub-plot that lies beneath the story, but doesn't actually come into the forefront until late in the book. However, this sub-plot and the way it was woven into the main storyline sent a shiver up my back. I know that the human brain is still not fully understood and that we seem to use only a fraction of the computing power that could potentially be available to us, but what scares me is that when we unlock the full potential of our brains, will we be better off knowing things, or is ignorance bliss? The author of this story explores not only the good side, but the bad as well. Could we (as a society) be controlled more or less as our brains' capacity increases? This I cannot say for certain, but the way this story twists and turns had me guessing. The characters are all well developed and they felt quite real to me. I must admit that I was completely shocked at a twist near the end that I certainly didn't see coming and I ended up in tears. This twist made me wonder if we are evolved enough yet to continue to push the boundaries of science and scientific discoveries and not become insane. Some will argue that it's a state of mind and we are all insane anyway, but if the incredible

advances we make in understanding how the brain works could (and possibly has already) be turned against the populace as a weapon, then I shudder in horror. In the wrong hands, the ability and technology to control or alter the perception of the human brain is an incredibly dangerous endeavor and should never be allowed in my opinion. Men, greedy for money and power, however, will always be looking for a way to do just that. The story ends on a hopeful and happy note, which left me also feeling hopeful for the future. In any case (and I may be a little naive in thinking this), I am crossing my fingers that even if we do make giant strides in scientific discoveries (such as those explored by this author) that could potentially be used as weapons in the future, common sense will prevail and the "bad guys" (this includes any government in power who wants to keep their citizens in line) never get their hands on any of it.

Simon Denman has written an extremely thrilling and entertaining read, which took me on an amazing journey. I found myself on an emotional roller coaster ride from beginning to end. I love his writing style, which is fast paced and exciting, and the flow is wonderful too. I would most definitely consider reading more books by this author in the future.

Due to the technical aspects, as well as the deeply philosophical nuances within this book, I do not recommend this to young readers. I do, however, highly recommend this book if you love science fiction, suspense or thriller genres. - Lynn Worton

Laura says

This book is engrossing enough that reading it on the bus, not only did I miss my stop, I didn't notice I'd missed it for a good ten minutes afterward. It's well-written, interesting, has an unusual but solid premise, and features engaging and eloquent characters. I've already recommended it to several friends, and look forward to more from this author.

Dave Higgins says

This stylish modern thriller interweaves quantum physics, theology, psychology, and computer science without losing either pace or the reader.

When his brother commits suicide, Peter volunteers to sort through his study; why does a musician have so many notes on religion and abstruse physics, and what did his last message that he knew everything mean? Across the country Doug's best friend, and thesis partner, sends him a link to a file he must see but commits suicide almost immediately afterward; why did he erase all his work before he jumped? As these two men struggle to understand the last days of their loved ones, they are drawn into a race that could end in either humanity's evolution or enslavement.

Denman includes plenty of details on the various fields that he draws upon while skilfully using point-of-view characters who are not specialists in the area, giving a sense that the plot has a solid base without either burying the lay reader under dry technical and philosophical discourse or skimping the interested amateur.

The characterisation varies between the two threads. Peter's struggle with the death of his brother and the consequent impact on his marriage reads like a character-driven story, centred around a well-realised older man who is already burdened with the compromises and injuries of life. Conversely, Doug's life, even before

he is immersed in the plot, is a whirl of casual sex and rushing in where angels fear to tread, giving the feel of a more plot-centred narrative. Both threads are internally consistent, but they do not always sit perfectly next to each other, as if George Smiley and James Bond were investigating the same conspiracy.

A number of paragraphs are much longer than average for a thriller, some continuing for several average screens. However, these are balanced by much shorter paragraphs so would only be an issue for readers who dislike putting a book down, even briefly, in the middle of a paragraph.

Overall, as an interested amateur in both physics and metaphysics, I found the balance of theory and action most enjoyable. I recommend it to readers who like thrillers with a plausible explanation for a world-changing plot.

I received a free copy of this book.

Maureen says

Read for my 2018 TBR Randomizer Reading Challenge. The concepts were definitely interesting and I enjoyed it well enough. Some of it did not come together too well, or rather it was too neat, but maybe over time his writing will smooth out. I would consider reading him again if the subject appealed to me.

Ron says

Probably not four stars, but I'm giving extra credit for such a good debut novel. Hard to classify this story which hovers in the shadows between the mundane and the implausible.

The basic story is well-developed and well-written, except for the unlikely perpetual lust of all the major characters. Sure, the hero's brain are between his legs, but what do you expect for a collegiate male? That so many others seem hormonally challenged diminishes the credibility.

A very good read.

Scot says

A contemporary British thriller (I liked the fact that I was reading a story set in the UK for a UK audience with a UK sensibility, as opposed to an American perception of what that should be.) Structurally, two seemingly separate storylines converge about 1/3 of the way through the book. I was very intrigued by the diverse blend of ideas here, as the story advances and we try to make sense of two separate deaths that appear to be suicides, and ascertain how and why they might be connected: the use of string theory from physics and fractals from programming, 21st century theological debates about reconciling science and religion, rural village gardening, rugby playing strategies, how epilepsy affects the brain and how it can be treated. The ideas here called for rumination and integration, and offered great potential.

However, the writing style, overall, didn't do the conceptual plot ideas the justice they deserved. Two subplots about budding romances fell rather flat, to be honest--even though I'm sure the sexual escapades

were supposed to be titillating. On the other hand, the introduction of the Russian Mafia and a larger nefarious Chinese connection did heighten the suspense, I'll grant you that.

Gary says

Cross between thriller and sci-fi mystery, I enjoyed the compelling plot. A book that will have you reading late into the night.

Meghan Bauer says

The concepts presented were intriguing. Honestly the only reason I kept reading.

The characters and dialogue were wanting. There was a lot of cliché going on. Oh here is the main character, he is a jock and yet great at computers, yet also somehow a complete idiot when a woman is around.

Here is the love interest. Everything she says drips with the fact that she is hiding things but apparently she is SO HOT it doesn't matter. Or he's really dumb. Now, I was prejudice against her to begin with because her name is that of my mortal enemy. (Something like that at least). However, everything she does or says is ridiculous and predictable. And Doug just eats it up.

Peter's wife is a caricature. I did not like him or his attitude towards her. He constantly put her down while mooning over his dead brother's wife. He admits she has depression (IIRC) but instead of trying to understand or help her he complains, acts like a twat, runs away to be with his real love interest, professes his feelings and gets a good spooning on. He comes home and ignores her and his kids, throws himself into the computer...Then, supposedly gets enlightened, which only makes him treat people like funk that got stuck to his shoe.

Shocker! She leaves him, he doesn't give two craps and goes to bang his sister-in-law. You know, cause his brother is dead so screw it. Honestly it pisses me off.

But it takes more tun that to stop me from finishing a book. So I made it through eventually. The only thing that kept me going was finding out WHY they killed themselves. And even that was meh ~ in the end.

Michelle says

Good book

You people should just read this book yourselves and write your own review on this novel yourself and I really enjoyed reading this book very much so. Shelley MA

Mguhin says

I have been reading and watching sci fi for over 55 years. At its best, speculative fiction presents fascinating ideas in acceptable formats that are tolerably written. Denman's CONNECTED kept me reading and passed my most important test: I was sorry when it ended. My second most important requirement was also met

overall: The writing did not make me want reach for my blue pencil too often. I was not put off by the "sciencey" stuff, even if some of it went over my head, and was especially interested in the bits about how temporal lobe epilepsy may manifest in behavior. On the other hand, the romantic/sexual stuff felt clunky and bolted on because some early reader or editor suggested more human interest. Still, I would recommend it to my like minded friends.

Bill says

Partly because it's so beautifully immersed in worlds of art, music, and technology, partly because the scenes are compelling and visually convincing, and partly because the story is full of angst and longing, *Connected* pulls you in and holds you tight. To tell you much about the plot would spoil the experience for you, the potential reader, but if you like sensitive, intelligent, creative characters, you may find Denman's work as satisfying as I did.
