



# The Dismantling

*Brian DeLeeuw*

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## **The Dismantling** Brian DeLeeuw

Brian DeLeeuw hits that sweet spot between literary and commercial suspense with his brilliantly adept, ingeniously plotted novel—a chilling, fast-paced drama that urges readers to question the meaning of atonement and whether revenge might sometimes be the only way we can liberate ourselves from our past. Twenty-five-year-old med school dropout Simon Worth is an organ broker, buying kidneys and livers from cash-strapped donors and selling them to recipients whose time on the waitlist is running out. When a seemingly straightforward liver transplant has an unexpectedly dangerous outcome, Simon finds himself on the run. In order to survive, he must put aside his better moral judgment and place his trust in a stranger who has a shocking secret.

## **The Dismantling Details**

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Author : Brian DeLeeuw

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# From Reader Review The Dismantling for online ebook

## Melinda Elizabeth says

The Dismantling is a novel that takes a while to get to the point. The synopsis, that there's a organ donation gone wrong, has all the elements of a great fast paced thriller. Unfortunately, the characters are not really fleshed out enough in order to get behind their activities in this novel.

Simon is a young med school drop out who was given the job of a lifetime – setting up organ matches for large sums of money. With piling debts, the lure of cash is too much for his moral debate, and he successfully brokers enough deals to see him come close to financial freedom.

When his boss, DaSilva, moves in to the lucrative liver transplant territory, he hesitates for a millisecond before establishing a match for a has been football player, who shows know will to live, beyond that it would make his team mates and wife happy to stay alive.

The organ match is a young Californian, who is sparse on details, and in the world of illegal organ deals, that's fine with Simon and his team. But when Maria turns up in a rival hospital, people start to ask questions about how she received those scars. What follows are chapters of suspicion and some rather boring flashbacks to Simon's family life, which were not endearing enough to make you like him enough to care what happens to him.

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## Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

There are a lot of things that get dismantled in this suspense thriller. A career, a life or two, a criminal enterprise and a cadaver.

It all starts with the cadaver. Medical school dropout Simon Worth dropped out over that cadaver. As he and his study group dissected the anonymous donor, he kept seeing the face of his dead sister in place of the corpse. He couldn't take the nightmares, and he ran away.

That he still feels responsible for his sister's death (he isn't, not really) is what makes his nightmares so peculiarly devastating. Not that his next choice is much better.

He finds himself, with the help of one of his very, very few medical school friends, in a new job where his medical knowledge, incomplete as it is, comes in very handy. Simon is the new face of Health Solutions Inc., a company that matches poor but willing organ donors with recipients who are willing to pay to get moved to the top of the transplant list.

Which is all completely illegal. But Simon is able to elide the moral issues by telling himself that everyone involved, including the highly compensated donors, knows exactly what they are getting into when they game the system.

As long as everybody in the chain of illegalities has something to lose, the delicate balance of crime stays under the radar. Of course, it can't possibly last forever, and everyone seems to get that except poor Simon, who gets caught actually caring for the people in this chain of questionable practice.

It all falls apart when one retired football player needs a liver, and one of his friends decides to buy one for him. Not that Leonard Pellegrini really wants a new liver or a new lease on life, but his friend Howard Crewes is trying to buy himself atonement for an entirely different event. Leonard was perfectly content (happy never comes into this thing) drinking himself to death, and understands completely that his liver is just the first and most vulnerable organ to pay the price of his oblivion.

But Crewes wants absolution, Leonard's wife and kids want him to stick around a few more years, and Peter DaSilva, the actual head of Health Solutions Inc., just gets greedy. So everyone ignores the warning signs.

The donor, Maria Campos, just wants a new life with enough money to set herself up far away from her old life. There are plenty of warning signs on her side of this particular equation, too.

Although the system is successfully gamed, it all falls apart when Lenny commits suicide, and Maria runs instead of showing up for her followup care and finds herself admitted to a hospital with obvious signs of being an off-the-books organ donor.

As the investigations coincide, all the players start trying to clean up any collateral damage, and any potential witnesses.

Simon and Maria run for their lives, still arguing over how much danger they are really in. When the entire structure completely dismantles, it is just barely possible that they might be able to start over again. If they can get past the mess that got them there.

Escape Rating B-: This is a book where I have a lot of mixed feelings. For some reason, I found it difficult to care a lot about Simon or even Maria. Simon just seems to be an emotional mess who has gotten himself in way over his head. It's not that what happened with his sister isn't terribly sad, it's that Simon is so good at suppressing his own emotional reactions to everything that I didn't get enough of a feel for him to, well, feel for him.

On that other hand, the case that brings down the whole house of cards did connect to a lot of my feel buttons, probably because it was so real. Although it isn't named specifically, Leonard Pellegrini and a lot of the other ex-football players who are in the support group he doesn't want to be a part of are suffering from Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) which is very, very real.

(Without spoiling it completely, Leonard's ultimate fate mirrors the real-life case of Dave Duerson, a member of the 1985 Chicago Bears Super Bowl Championship Team. Which explains why I remembered the case.)

(It is also possible that the on field hit that is responsible for Crewes' guilt, which gets all of them into this mess, is intended to represent the case of Darryl Stingley, who was paralyzed in an helmet to helmet hit during an exhibition game between the Oakland Raiders and the New England Patriots.)

Leonard is suffering from CTE, and he's been drinking in order to make the pain, and the headaches, mood swings and general depression, stop. He doesn't want to go on living. But he also isn't willing to fight all the people around him who want him to. There are plenty of warning signs, but Health Solutions Inc. is greedy

and his family is desperate. It is a recipe for disaster on every side.

For me, the football tie-in gave me a lot more feels, and a lot more sympathy, for the reasons why everyone got themselves into this mess than anything to do with Simon or the donor Maria. The football references gave the story a real-life grounding that Simon and Maria's story did not.

However, the football connection made the rest of the story all too plausible. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the concept of organ brokering, it is all too easy to believe that some variation of this is probably happening.

And that does give me the chills.

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### **Mark Rubinstein says**

*The Dismantling*, by Brian DeLeeuw is a novel about a medical school dropout, Simon Worth, a young man with a troubled past filled with loss, regret and guilt. He's now involved in the black market brokering of human organs. He's tasked with finding a match for a depressed ex-NFL player who has a serious drinking problem. He thinks he's found the perfect donor in Maria Campos, a damaged young woman with terrible secrets. Things go wrong, and the novel moves at propulsive speed. Part thriller and part literary tour de force, this novel is about moral ambiguity, guilt, redemption and revenge. It's written in a compelling literary style, one that kept me not only turning the pages, but lapping up the language.

Mark Rubinstein

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### **Melinda says**

A unique controversial tangled narrative full of suspense. The plot is plausible leaving you questioning ethics, the desperation of people, the abuse a body takes specifically of athletes. Engaging characters. A literary patchwork of genres – mystery, thriller. A story addressing guilt, revenge and redemption. Compelling, a ferocious page turner from beginning to end. For every action there is a reaction, if you're partaking in questionable dealings beware of those involved and the fallout.

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### **OpenBookSociety.com says**

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Una

This is a fast read story that is thought provoking, action packed, with twists and turns that keep the reader spell bound. A movie could be definitely in the making.

The story is narrated by Simon, a 25 year old medical school dropout. He lost his mother as a young child and his sister to drowning. He had not told his father that he had dropped out of school when a friend got him a job with an undercover company that sets people up who need liver and kidney transplants with people

willing to sell their body parts. He leaves med school because he has trouble with autopsying a female cadaver. During these very graphic sessions Simon's past comes back to haunt him.

Simon is given the task by his boss Da Silva to find a liver donor for Lenny Pellegrini, a severely depressed and alcoholic ex NFL player. Lenny's friend also a former player has offered to pay for the procedure however must convince Lenny to do this for his wife and family.

Simon finds Maria who he thinks is a single mother in need of money. Since it is illegal to sell organs for transplant Maria must be coached to be presented as a cousin of Lenny. After the operation things start to go wrong and Da Silva tells Simon to fix the situation before too many questions are asked. Simon ends up having to trust Maria as both their lives are threatened and learns she has had a violent past and is definitely not be who he thought she was. In the end Simon ends up with his father and must decide what inevitably he will do with his life.

The reader is left pondering all the bigger issues that the story evokes. Some of the scenes are vivid and certainly require a strong stomach. I was honestly surprised that I not only finished the story but actually enjoyed it.

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### **Lori L (She Treads Softly) says**

The Dismantling by Brian DeLeeuw is a highly recommended suspense novel that explores the morality of several issues, including organ trafficking.

Simon Worth has dropped out of medical school and found himself in an ethically questionable position with Health Solutions, an organ brokerage company run by Peter DaSilva. Health Solutions basically buys kidneys and livers from cash-strapped "donors" for those in need of a transplant who can afford their services. It's Simon's job to discreetly match donor and recipient, or seller and buyer, while behind the scenes DaSilva alters medical records and launders the money. Even though he may have to explain away any ethical quibbles over what he's doing, it is a way for Simon to make a lot of money quickly.

When Simon arranges for Maria Campos, a young woman from L.A., to donate part of her liver to ex-athlete Lenny Pellegrini, all seems to be going smoothly. She's going to pretend to be a distant cousin and Lenny swears he is going to lay off the booze. Even after many successful brokered organs, this time there may be a problem. Additionally, both Simon and Maria have dark personal secrets they are trying to hide.

The plot moves along quickly in The Dismantling and DeLeeuw does an excellent job interweaving the backstory of his characters with the main story. At first it appears to be a medical thriller, but then, as the plot thickens and the tensions mount, it takes a turn toward suspense and drama. This is a well written page turner that should please fans of both genres. The characters of Simon and Maria are well developed. As they slowly divulge much of their personal stories, we learn more about their motives and reasons for participating in an arrangement with questionable legality.

Disclosure: I received an advanced reading copy of this book from the publisher and TLC for review purposes.

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## **Jessica Higgins says**

A high stakes thriller that wants to know how much of yourself are you willing to sell, for whatever the reason may be.

Twenty-five year old Simon Worth is a medical school dropout who has now taken to a career as an organ broker, buying kidneys, livers and other organs from people in desperate need of cash and selling them to a recipient in even greater need of the organ. The recipient is someone willing to pay an enormous amount of money for the organ, the cost of the transplant and the amount that will be paid to the donor. His next assignment is what seems to be a straightforward liver transplant that turns out to be anything but. The client lies to them, the donor lies to them and before long Simon finds himself on the run doing things he never thought he would be capable of in order to survive. He has to put aside his moral judgment and place his trust in a stranger who has a shocking secret. How far is he willing to go, and sell to survive?

The premise of this book grabbed me right away. Such an interesting concept, putting a price on oneself in. I had very high hopes for this book and am sorry to say I was let down. One of the main problems I had was the harsh language. I am not a fan of vulgar language, but it can be overlooked if the story is good enough. That has only happened once and I hate to say this book didn't even come close to that. I had a hard time relating to any of the characters. Simon at first was alright, he didn't want to disappoint his father by letting him know he had dropped out of med school and was doing everything he could to survive, even if some of it could be considered questionable. I could have related even more to him if he wouldn't have been drinking, smoking or cursing every other line. Those were just fillers that took me out of the story. The rest of the characters were just there for me. Maria had a good moment with her flashback at being sexually abused by her foster brother, so much potential there that was left untapped.

The story consisted of real time scenes with flashbacks mixed in. The first several flashbacks bothered me. They didn't fit and took a minute for me to figure out who was talking and if we were in real time or in a flashback. A few flashbacks worked really well but were cut off before they had a chance to get any real flow going for them. I felt cheated. I wish I had more good things to say, I really do but the downfalls took me out of the story before I had a chance to enjoy of the really good parts.

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## **Merilee says**

Interesting premise. Good plot lines.

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## **Star says**

The National Organ Transplant Act (Public Law 98-507) makes it illegal to sell human organs and tissues in the United States. However, this hasn't stopped Peter DaSilva, who runs Health Solutions. Health Solutions on the surface looks like a company who helps organ donors and recipients find each other – all above board. What Health Solutions really does is organ brokerage – they find those willing to donate organs/tissue for a price. In *THE DISMANTLING*, Simon Worth is one of the brokers working for DaSilva and he's been approached by someone who wants to help their friend by buying him a new liver. This is nothing new to

Simon and everything seems to go smoothly from start to finish, until the other shoe drops. It turns out the donor isn't who she says she is and the recipient never wanted to save his own life, so Health Solutions' illegal operations are balancing precariously to the point where one false move will take down the whole house. *THE DISMANTLING* is a medical thriller which deftly explores the moral issues surrounding organ procurement. The author uses many ways to tell this tale – from memories, flashbacks, and character backstories which account for their current motivations, to present day events. I didn't like many of the characters, but I could understand them. The author created them beautifully human – flawed, scared, and at the very least, morally ambiguous at times. The author has skillfully created an atmosphere of foreboding from the beginning and the twists we're thrown throughout the story only serve to add more suspense. I think most readers will find *THE DISMANTLING* an enjoyable suspense story.

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### **Becky says**

For a sick person with cash and in need of a transplant, Health Solutions has the answer. They match donors in need of cash with recipients who can pay. Sure, it's illegal, but their clients are desperate enough not to care. And Health Solutions seemingly has everything in place to avoid being caught.

For Simon Worth, a med school dropout with no way of paying back his massive student loans, a job with Health Solutions means quick and easy cash. But when his latest match - a liver transplant for a retired pro football player - takes a serious nosedive south, Simon's the one who finds himself on the line.

The Dismantling is a relatively short book (clocking in under 300 pages) but boy does it pack a punch!

Desperate is the key word with this one! Desperate people will definitely go to desperate measures, and DeLeeuw's tale is filled with some of the most desperate out there. First there's the footballer who's dying but isn't really all that interested in a transplant. Then there's the girl who's willing to sell part of her liver to save him. There's the friend of the dying man who's fronting the bill thanks to his own guilt. And there's Simon, who hasn't yet been able to tell his dad that he's dropped out of school. Each of them is hiding things. Each of them has their own very personal reasons for being involved in Health Solutions's scheme.

This book was super good, readers! Watching Simon fall further and further down the rabbit hole of awful decisions might just make you start to wonder just how far you yourself might go if you're truly desperate. It's a dark read (emotionally dark, not brutal or gory dark like some of recent reviews), psychological suspense with a hint of medical thriller, lots of moral dilemmas, and again those desperate folks willing to do anything to get what they want.

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### **Ariana says**

[ By becoming Maria's protector so quickly, Simon fell into the trope of a guy who unbelievably would throw his support behind a beautiful woman just because she appeared like she needed

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### **Victor Gentile says**

Brian DeLeeuw in his new book, “The Dismantling” published by Plume gives us an adventure with Simon



Worth.

From the back cover: At twenty-five troubled med-school dropout Simon Worth is faced with the grim reality of failure and massive student loans. Haunted by the accidental death of his sister, he accepts a lucrative job at Health Solutions as a black market organ broker, arranging the sales of kidneys and livers from donors who need the money to recipients whose time on the transplant list is running out. Eight months into the job, Simon is tasked with finding a match for Lenny Pellegrini, a severely depressed ex-NFL player with a serious drinking problem and a failing liver. When Simon is contacted by Maria Campos, he believes he's found the perfect donor.

The surgery goes according to plan, but soon afterward Lenny makes a cruel and destructive decision, while startling secrets from Maria's past further complicate the situation. Under tremendous pressure to keep the media and authorities from exposing Health Solutions, both Simon and Maria find themselves the targets of Peter DaSilva, Simon's boss, who is desperate to protect himself and his organization at all costs. Backed into a corner, Simon is forced to decide that, against his better moral judgment, the only way to survive is to put his trust in Maria.

Let's face it a person cannot live without a functioning liver. Once that goes the individual dies it is just that simple. So there are lots of persons on waiting lists for acceptable matches however it seems that you can age off of these lists. That is when the black market kicks in. To me this whole premise was terrifying. Simon is a broker of illegal organs to that these individuals who are aging off these donor lists can live. From practically page one this is one suspense filled, medical thriller. Be assured "The Dismantling" is going to have you reading just as fast as you can trying to keep up with what happens next. The good news is you will breathe a satisfied sigh when you finish even though you might have given up sleep to get there. It will certainly be worth it.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from TLC Book Tours. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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## **Karen says**

The Dismantling got me thinking about the lengths people go to for money. How much is one life worth? What would you be willing to do to survive. The lines between right and wrong get stretched and tested in this book. I just finished this book, but the story and its ethical questions have haunted me.

Simon just dropped out of med school. Haunted by images of his dead sister, he could no longer do the things required to finish school. When a colleague offers him an opportunity to put his knowledge to good use arranging live organ transfers, it was almost too good to be true. He arranges for a woman named Marie to give part of her liver to an alcoholic ex football star to save his life. This job gets him almost enough to be free from loan debt, one more job and he can start over. Everything is going according to plan until it isn't. Everything that could go wrong does when the transplant recipient becomes national news.

**The good:** This story is told in third person narrative. Which is easily my favorite style of storytelling. It is a pretty good thriller. I enjoyed reading Simon's story. The narrative flashbacks one little piece at a time so we can understand why Simon is grieving so much for his sister. He feels partly to blame and it taints

everything he tries to accomplish. Once I read his whole story, I felt really bad for him. His career choice is less of a choice and more convenience of circumstance. I can't say I would have taken the high road in this situation. I don't know that anyone would when the deal is so sweet. So let me be clear and say that I would have done exactly the same thing as Simon. I agree with the logic of allowing people to make their own choices.

Maria is an illusive character, and the mystery of her story kept me wondering. There were some tough issues debated in this fiction. How much is one life really worth? What is an organ worth if it saves a life? With a guy inside setting up the transfers the lies seem too easy to make. I could completely understand how the right thing could be so blurred when miracles, life, and death are so close at hand. If that seems confusing, well I'm sorry. This story is still so fresh and I am still trying to process it.

***The bad:*** Maria's character. Her back story doesn't get revealed until way past the 50% mark. I was a little frustrated that her story and motivation were not more forthcoming. What kind of girl doesn't need to tell someone the contents of her head? While I mulled this over, the fact that she is way far from normal started to creep in. I don't know that I liked such a bad-ass woman lead. Simon looked really weak compared to Maria, and that bothered me because of her childhood compared to his.

There really wasn't enough details for me to give these characters depth. They didn't have enough emotion to pull off their stories. I wanted more reaction from these characters. Simon and Maria had no life that the reader can envision, just the scenes they show up in and the dialogue. Simon had a lot more than Maria, but I don't really get her. As a result of flat characters, the story dragged a bit.

***Conclusion:*** Even though parts of this were slow going, I am glad I stuck it out to conclusion because I had a lot of unanswered questions. I still have unanswered questions but now they nothing to do with the characters, or their motivation. I get that. I am just left with the moral dilemmas they faced. I know what I would have done, I just don't know if I am on the correct side of right.

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## **Diane says**

Brian DeLeeuw's novel *The Dismantling* has some topical elements in its plot- injuries suffered by NFL players, the lack of available organs for those needing a transplant- and combines them with a young man trying to come to terms with the loss of his younger sister years ago and a woman with a mysterious past into a fast-paced thriller that also makes you think.

We meet Simon, a twenty-five year-old man who has dropped out of medical school but has yet to tell his father. His friend hooks him up with a under-the-radar company that connects people who need kidney or liver transplants with people who are willing to sell them their body parts.

Simon lost his mother to a horrible death when he was just a young child, and his teenage sister died, the circumstances of which are unraveled during the story. We do know that Simon feels that her death was his fault, but we don't know why for a long time.

Simon is tasked by his boss to find a liver donor for Lenny Pellegrini, a retired NFL player with a drinking problem who suffers from too many hits to the head during his playing days. Lenny's friend Howard, also a former NFL player, is paying for the liver and he and Simon must convince Lenny to do this for his wife and two young children.

Through their website, Simon has found Maria, a single young mother willing to sell a piece of her liver to Lenny. Since it is illegal to sell organs for transplant, the woman is presented as a cousin of Lenny's, and she is flown in and coached as to how the process works.

Maria seems like the perfect candidate, but things start to unravel shortly after the transplant. Maria disappears and Lenny is still in a state of severe depression. Simon's boss threatens him that he better fix this situation before too many questions are asked.

The Dismantling is a fast read, one that you want to finish in one sitting while at the same time taking time to ponder all of the bigger issues here. At its heart, it is Simon's story, about his coming to terms with everything in his life, where he has been and where he is going.

While Simon is in medical school, he has to participate in autopsying a cadaver, and the scenes set there are vivid and not for those with weak stomachs. It is in these sessions that Simon's past comes back to haunt him, and he ends up in the dangerous situation he finds himself in.

Simon is an interesting character, and his relationship with his dad was so real and heartbreaking. The Dismantling combines a thought provoking story with some heart-stopping action scenes and twists and turns, and seems tailor-made for a movie, maybe for a Hemsworth brother. I also enjoyed the New York City setting, especially since Simon and I lived on the same street.

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## **Sandy S says**

4 stars--

About the book: Release Date April 28, 2015

Twenty-five-year-old med school dropout Simon Worth is an organ broker, buying kidneys and livers from cash-strapped donors and selling them to recipients whose time on the waitlist is running out. When a seemingly straightforward liver transplant has an unexpectedly dangerous outcome, Simon finds himself on the run. In order to survive, he must put aside his better moral judgment and place his trust in a stranger who has a shocking secret.

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REVIEW: THE DISMANTLING is a suspense filled, medical thriller storyline focusing on the illegal procurement of organ donation. Twenty five year old, former medical school student Simon Worth is in the illegal and unethical business of buying organs. Simon is an organ broker –the go between for people willing to pay and those in need of a quick influx of cash. THE DISMANTLING focuses on a liver transplant where the recipient is reluctant to save his own life, and the ensuing fall out of an illegal operation.

Told from third person point of view using memories, flashbacks and current day to day storytelling, THE DISMANTLING follows the ill-fated procurement, interviews, surgery and after care of a liver transplant that should never have been done. From donor to reluctant recipient, family and friends, operation and recovery, the reader is pulled into an intense story of one man's spiral from promising med student to illegal organ broker to murder and revenge.

Simon Worth is a young man, who for seven years, has mourned the drowning death of his only sister. Unable to cope with the guilt and medical school requirements, Simon finds himself in the awkward position of trying to hide his failure while embarking on a life of illegal organ procurement. His latest 'donor' is a young, cash strapped woman whose past life will slowly be revealed as the storyline unfolds. Simon and Maria will quickly discover that not everything goes according to plan, when the recipient of Maria's liver becomes headline news. With Simon on the run, Maria devises a plan to silence the man in charge.

Brian DeLeeuw is an amazing storyteller. The build up of suspense, powerful imagery, and the catastrophic unraveling of an ill-fated transplant will leave you wondering about the potential reality of the entire situation. The characters are colorful and engaging; the premise original, alarming and sensational; the outcome startling and intense. What are you willing to do to save the people that you love? There are always consequences to every action and decision that you make.

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