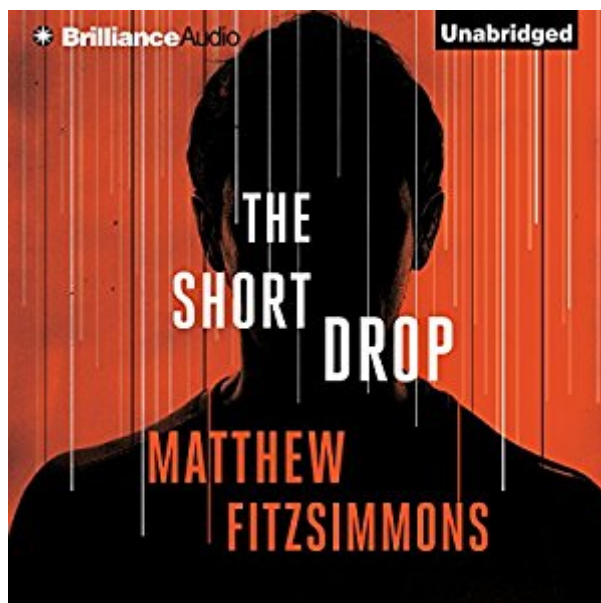


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The Short Drop



Synopsis

A decade ago, fourteen-year-old Suzanne Lombard, the daughter of Benjamin Lombard - then a senator, now a powerful vice president running for the presidency - disappeared in the most sensational missing-person case in the nation's history. Still unsolved, the mystery remains a national obsession. For legendary hacker and marine Gibson Vaughn, the case is personal - Suzanne Lombard had been like a sister to him. On the tenth anniversary of her disappearance, the former head of Benjamin Lombard's security asks for Gibson's help in a covert investigation of the case, with new evidence in hand. Haunted by tragic memories, he jumps at the chance to uncover what happened all those years ago. Using his military and technical prowess, he soon discovers multiple conspiracies surrounding the Lombard family - and he encounters powerful, ruthless political players who will do anything to silence him and his team. With new information surfacing that could threaten Lombard's bid for the presidency, Gibson must stay one step ahead as he navigates a dangerous web to get to the truth.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours 54 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Brilliance Audio

Audible.com Release Date: December 1, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B018ELZOGQ

Best Sellers Rank: #7 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Espionage
#54 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Suspense #81 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Spies & Politics > Political

Customer Reviews

I love when I find books outside of my usual genres of choice that I enjoy this much.

I've found that thrillers, particularly those with a political bent, can be a little light on character development and a little heavy on the unbelievable-and-over-the-top plots. Not at all so with The Short Drop. The characters are well developed, complex and multi-faceted, flawed and susceptible to injury (both emotional and physical). The story and mystery build in that wonderful

way that leaves you rooting for their success, fearing for their safety, and generally feeling as though they're real people, having real experiences. I was equally invested in the outcome of the characters as the plot. Gritty, suspenseful and believable, I didn't want (really couldn't!) put it down. The ending is at once unexpected and darkly emotional. I felt like I'd gotten a glimpse into a world I didn't want to have to see and couldn't look away from. All of this combined with good writing and great word usage make this a book I'm likely to read more than once!

Based upon the 3000+ reviews in just a month, and the rather high rating, I was definitely looking forward to *The Short Drop*, so you can imagine my surprise when I found that almost the complete first half of the novel, billed as a political thriller, was nothing but an excruciatingly slow set up for the second half of the book. Truly, other than finding out a few bits and pieces on the backgrounds of several of the lead characters (it's really more of a team effort than a single protagonist), the only thing that really "happens" in the entire first half of the novel is the recounting of the kidnapping of the current VP's daughter (who is now running for President), from 10 years earlier. Had it not been for the many positive reviews driving me on to find out what was so great about this book, I would definitely have stopped reading well before I got to the halfway point. While the writing was fairly crisp, the one thing that became particularly irksome was the repetitiveness of the author's sentence structure, which was basically, "The man did such and such." Again and again and again, and in a row. Not the sign of professional writer in my humble opinion, who would or should know better, to vary the sentence structure to keep it from becoming so monotonous. That said, I did enjoy the second half of the book which did keep moving from beginning to end, holding my interest without my having to push myself to read it like I did for the first half of the book. This, however, then brings me to a rather troubling criticism, and one which should not be taken lightly. Perhaps it's, as they say, just a case of great minds thinking alike, but about a year and a half ago, I read a novel entitled, "The Moroni Deception," the quite memorable plot of which, has managed to stay with me this whole time (unlike a lot of formulaic thriller novels where you can barely recount the plot details a week later from the twelve previous that you read). So, when the central plot line in *The Short Drop* turned out to be the fact that a current Presidential candidate's 13 year old daughter had been kidnapped, I merely wrote that off as a coincidence. Then soon after, when a sociopathic assassin, on orders from who would appear to be the mysterious central villain, begins stalking the unsuspecting protagonist with orders to kill him if he should find what he is searching for, I was like, well that's certainly more than quite a bit coincidental also. But the near identical reveals in the finale,

which I won't give away as a spoiler, I was now almost convinced went way beyond coincidence, and in retrospect, now seems like the majority of the very few plot lines in *The Short Drop*, are just several of the twists and subplots straight out of *The Moroni Deception*. While these plot lines provided the central and ultimately intriguing story in *The Short Drop* (the second half anyway), I don't think that is a good thing if they were in fact "borrowed."

Just finished reading this and immediately added it to my "Favorite Authors" collection, and bought the next book in the Gibson Vaughn series. It's about the kidnapping of a ten girl then years earlier, and the quest to solve the mystery. Powerful and dangerous forces are determined to maintain secrecy. Enemies become allies, and allies betray. Compelling story you won't want to put down. If you, like me, haven't experience the story telling of Matthew FitzSimmons, do start with this first novel.

This novel is a fast read--I took the night to "feast" on the plot and characters. Word flow and word choices are not complex so reading is quick and comprehension settles in for a fun, and a bit scary, ride. I tend to enjoy stories better when I can relate to and perhaps even love a character or five. While I didn't fall in love too much, I found the strong characters intriguing. The behaviors and thoughts are all related to the plot and the needs of the story, so it is a very tight narrative. Part of the tension is not truly knowing which person is The Bad Guy although there are a few premonition pieces. There are quite an assortment of bad guys and some who appear bad initially, but...However I do love happier endings than sadder endings, and stories wherein what is sowed is reaped. Fitzsimmons succeeds in a complex plot with complex characters and a mostly happy ending. THAT was awesome.

As an easy choice for engaging reading, this is a cleverly-drawn plot that kept me guessing. . .but among several options, each equally plausible. No easy endings, no Hollywood fantasies, but . . . Gosh, this would make a terrific film! Likable protagonist, complicated past, good guy with issues -- and not the usual heavy-handed pop-psychology ones. This reads as a political thriller that catches you by surprise and never lets go. A great one-day read. Be sure to place sustenance nearby.

This is a bit outside my normal reading genre and I have to say I really loved this book. The story is heartbreaking, the protagonist is deeply troubled and fighting through the loss of everything in his life. You can read through other reviews to get a sense of what happens. What those reviews can't

tell you is just how well this book is written. FitzSimmons is a teacher of literature and it shows. His writing style makes the story flow and kept me reading at breakneck speed to the very end. I'm looking forward to the next two books in the series.

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