



Flashback

Gary Braver

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If you could relive your childhood, would you? What if you had no choice?

On the thirtieth anniversary of his mothers' mysterious drowning, Jack Koryan returns to his family beach cottage. During a swim, Jack is attacked by a school of rare jellyfish whose toxic stings put him in a coma for six mths.

When he awakens, he finds that the jellyfish toxin has left him with an extraordinary memory that impresses his doctors. This discovery is complicated by flashbacks: some, pleasant childhood vignettes, others, confusing flashes of violence that leave him quaking in horror.

Jack wonders if he's losing his mind, but that fear is dispelled by Rene Ballard, a pharmacologist working on the world's first cure for Alzheimer's Disease. She wants to test Jack because the basis of the drug is the very jellyfish toxin that sent Jack into a coma. And, while several test patients have miraculously regained functionality, others are also experiencing dangerous flashback seizures.

Ballard's revelation sets Jack on a quest to discover what is happening to him. He and Rene uncover a sinister pattern of lies and deceit that has left behind a trail of bodies, and several elderly patients stuck in a past that they cannot emerge from--or don't want to.

Flashback Details

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Author : Gary Braver

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From Reader Review Flashback for online ebook

Nikki Fordey says

As someone with PTSD that experiences flashbacks, I found this book very compelling. Mr. Braver found a way to articulate the experience of losing yourself in the past, of living a past trauma so deeply that it disconnects you from your present reality. The questions that this book brings up (but doesn't pretend to have the answers for) are thought provoking and I enjoyed wrestling with my own sense of right and wrong as the story unfolded. What is truly for the greater good of society? Should some have to suffer for the majority to succeed? Is it better to be stuck in the past than unaware of the present? Where does quality of life come in? When should DNR orders be put into place? How does the brain process traumatic memories? What secrets are locked away in our own minds just waiting for some jellyfish toxin so they can spring forth?

I like books that make me think. I'll admit a lot of the medical and technical explanations went over my head, but I was more than capable of evaluating the bigger picture ideas. The human elements of the story hooked me. I sympathized with both Jack and Rene and cared what happened to them. I wanted them to find the "truth" they were both looking for.

Sure, the ending of them getting together romantically was a bit forced, but I'm not sure how else the story could've ended. Once Memorine was prevented from going to market, the tension of the story burst. Bad guys go to jail and good guys fall in love. It's okay to sometimes have that cliched ending. There were mysteries that were solved and bad deeds prevented - kind of nothing to say after that.

C. says

Goes beyond mystery/thriller formula. Page turner.

Christine says

Have not read yet but went to hear this author speak tonight. Very interesting . Bought 4 of his books and he signed them

Kristen says

In Gary Braver's Flashback, he took us on another journey. In this one, it dealt with the mind and our memory bank. When Jack Karoyer returned back to his family's cottage of the 13th anniversary of his mother's mysterious drowning, he was attacked by a group of rare jellyfish with poisonous stings that put him in a coma for six months. After he woke up, he learned that the jellyfish had left him with an extraordinary memory that impressed the doctors. On the downside, it left him with some kind of flashbacks--some pleasant, some violent. As he wondered if he was losing his mind, he befriended Rene Ballard, a pharmacologist that's working on a cure for Alzheimer's Disease. She wanted to test Jack for this antidote--some test patients recovered well as other experienced violent seizures. As he discovered what happened to

him, it set them on a path of dangerous lies and sinister secrets that the elderly patients can't or don't want to emerge from.

Marsha says

Heart pounding medical thriller which explores the nature of memory, the ability of the brain to repair itself and the consequences of human drug trials rushed to approval. A new drug, which reduces the plaque on the neurons of Alzheimers patients seems like a miracle cure until some of the patients start to relive traumatic childhood experiences resulting in accidental death, suicide and murder.

Sarah Davis says

I chose 2 stars, but in reality I would make it closer to 2 3/4 stars. I didn't totally like it but I didn't hate it either. So a high 2 - low 3.

Fran says

Flashback

Author: Gary Braver

Reviewed by Fran Lewis

Swimming in the ocean should not be dangerous to your health and welfare except if a school of toxic jellyfish get hungry and decide to feed on you. Jack Koryan on the eve of opening up his own restaurant on the 30th anniversary of the death of his mother, he has a run in with these jellyfish leaving his body covered with toxic burns. As a result he is left in a comatose state for a very long time.

Alzheimer's has no cure and there are at present no drugs to reverse or cure anyone with the illness. Meet Rene Ballard a pharmaceutical consultant whose job it is to monitor the medications given to patients in many nursing homes. As she goes about her normal routines she finds some discrepancies in the patient logs and some missing information. Responsible for providing medications to these patients some of the information does not ring true. Clinical trials are being conducted on these nursing home patients using a drug called Memorine thought to be the end all and be all cure for this disease. However, some of the patients are responding and others revert back to their pasts having terrifying flashbacks causing violent and eruptive behavior including murder. The origin of this drug is the toxin that is in the jellyfish that attacked Jack. How will this affect him and what happens will stupefy the reader, bring chills down your spine and definitely keep you glued to the printed page.

As Rene delves more into the medical records of the patients at these nursing homes she learns that there are some that are not listed on her roster who are part of whatever is happening there. One patient, Claire Devine escapes from a locked ward, goes to CVS and kills the manager yelling and screaming and singing songs from her childhood. Not thinking that this drug should be released and that there is definitely something shady going she becomes someone that no one wants around and she soon learns that everything is not what

it seems. What about the fact that her patients are being given this “miracle drug,” without her permission or knowledge and are being used in this clinical trial hopefully to prove it actually works. But, As Rene delves deeper into the mystery behind these patients and what causes them to react in a violent way, she uncovers a link between what happened to Jack and the toxin that caused him to go into a coma and Memorine. Added to that after speaking and meeting with her former teacher Nick and hearing what the head of Gem Tech relates to him you being to wonder whose on what side and just what will happen when this drug is approved by the FDA and how it might help Jack come back to life. Added into the mix are her feelings about what happened to her father who had Alzheimer’s, conversations she remembers and he guilt for not being able to help him. But, there is much more as Jack finally wakes up and his life as he knows it changes. His marriage is over and his memories are flashbacks of his youth and lead to the mysterious death of his mother. As Jack and Rene find themselves on the same page and working together it becomes abundantly clear that Jack’s recovery hinges on this drug and the problems associated with it. Imagine Alzheimer’s patients suffering as Jack does from flashbacks into their early lives. His revert back to the untimely death of his mother hoping to help him find out what really happened. But, these flashbacks many of the seniors are experiencing lead to violent outbursts, murder, frightening memories and disturbing experiences.

The author allows the reader to hear Jack’s inner thoughts as he struggles to come back to life and let the world know his brain is still functioning even though his body seems to have shut down. He is not down and out yet. But, Rene begins to make more than just the connection between Memorine, the toxin that sent Jack into a coma and the patients she visits at Broadview who seem to have regained some of the long term memory’s back and the Alzheimer’s systems seem to be in reverse. Added to that she is asked by the head of the home to ignore what she knows, not let on about Memorine or the clinical studies being done and just remain silent when the police question her in a lawsuit she has been named in by the man’s family who Clara Divine murdered. Added to that she saw the video of Clara and the events that led up to her escape and was told to say nothing about it. The cover-ups are many and the pressure is on for her to lie and not admit what she knows in the name of research and helping those who this drug has greatly helped. Rene is encouraged not only the Nick her mentor but those working at the many homes and her own lawyer to stick to the program and play by their rules or pay the price. Meanwhile, Jack’s wife Beth has limited her visits, decided to take a different path in life and has told everyone she is widowed in order to play her own games and live her life without Jack.

As Jack comes out of his coma and many are excited those at Broadview nursing home see many patients recalling information they thought lost and some experiencing flashbacks and becoming violent and delusional. Is this a flaw in Memorine or something else? Will they consider pulling it and revamping their product or is this about dollars and cents and not patient care? My mom was diagnosed with this deadly disease in 2003 and I would have given anything for a miracle cure that would reverse the end result. Aricept, Namenda cannot reverse anything and the illness takes over your mind, body and soul and destroys your very being and identity taking away everything that you was were and never will be again. Wouldn’t it be great if a drug like Memorine really worked and saved so many lives from mental extinction?

As Jack wakes up and has some flashbacks into his past and four flashback related deaths are brought to light will those at Gem Tech take a closer look at Memorine or will more cover-ups prevail? When Rene meets Jack and discusses his progress she realizes he is holding back the truth concerning his memory too.

Jack is improving and he is making progress but at times has serious flashbacks leading back to his childhood as do many of those that have been taking Memorine. Some regress so far back that anyone coming near them frightens them and one man thinks he is still a prisoner of war. But, when Nick Mavros suggests that they take time to find out what is causing these serious flashback and delusional outbursts he is given a time frame that is unrealistic and told that the application to the FDA and the drug will be on the

market on schedule. Not really concerned with the outcome for the patients just the money.

As all the pieces fit into place and Jack has his own plan for finding out the truth behind Memorine, his mother's death and why so many have been killed or died, his life is in danger, he takes risks you won't believe and the ending will shock the reader and hopefully wake everyone up to importance of drug testing, making sure that clinical trials are well documented and the hope that someday Memorine or a drug like that will be a reality not someone's nightmare or flashback.

Once again author Gary Braver takes the reader on a journey into the minds of many who have been afflicted with Alzheimer's, their feelings, their families frustrations, the goal of one company to find a cure and bring it to the public at all costs regardless of the end result. Fast paced and filled with research, information dealing with the deadly toxin found in the jellyfish, graphic flashback scenes experiences by those taking the drug and one man's quest to find the truth behind his mother's death. What he learns and how the truth comes out will definitely not endear you to the drug companies. Just what happens to Jack and where does Rene wind up as a result of her efforts to help find the truth? Read Flashback and hopefully your memories of the past will be brighter and better.

This is one book that will keep you on the edge of your seat and reading until the final page reveals the truth. Great book and outstanding author.

Fran Lewis: reviewer

Dawn says

This book is an excellent read.

Sherry says

a man is stung by multiple scandinavian jelly fish and slips into a coma. turns out that this same jelly fish toxin is the basis for a drug that "cures" alzheimers- except it causes terrible flashbacks. good story, kept me engaged and wanted to find out what happened next.

Liz says

I used to love medical thrillers until I noticed that I was imagining all the symptoms ;0) I must be less of a hypochondriac because I didn't notice that with this one.

Margo says

Lots of mystery, not a cliff hanger, almost predictable. However, it was a good read of excellent writing and it posed some interesting questions such as "how far would a drug company go to protect its interests?" The interpersonal relationships in the story were distant and the parts that represented violent intent seems almost too detached to be convincing.

I would prefer not reading it again, but suggest that it would be satisfying if you like mystery.

Alexandra Osterhoudt says

I enjoyed this book & thought it was more like a 3 1/2 +....I wish there were 1/2 stars. Well written & researched. The feeling of dread stayed with me throughout the book, exactly what the author said was his goal in all his thrillers. I flew threw the last 100 pgs. Meeting the author , learning his story & journey added a different dimension to the book as well. A solid read.

Terrie says

I was a huge fan of Gray Matter, and liked Elixir, but this also seems like a variation on a theme of the same plot. The detailed flashback scenes were not really necessary, and none of those characters were really developed beyond that. I did think it wrapped up nicely, and it was hard to guess exactly what the "twist" was going to be at the end.

Jennifer says

I guess...it just wasn't what I was expecting. The 'medical intrigue' part of the plot was soooo obvious, and how it connected with the personal lives of the main characters felt like an afterthought. Sorry, but I can't recommend this one.

Callie says

[There was no reason for the two characters who ended up romantically linked to be that way, and the little clues that things we
