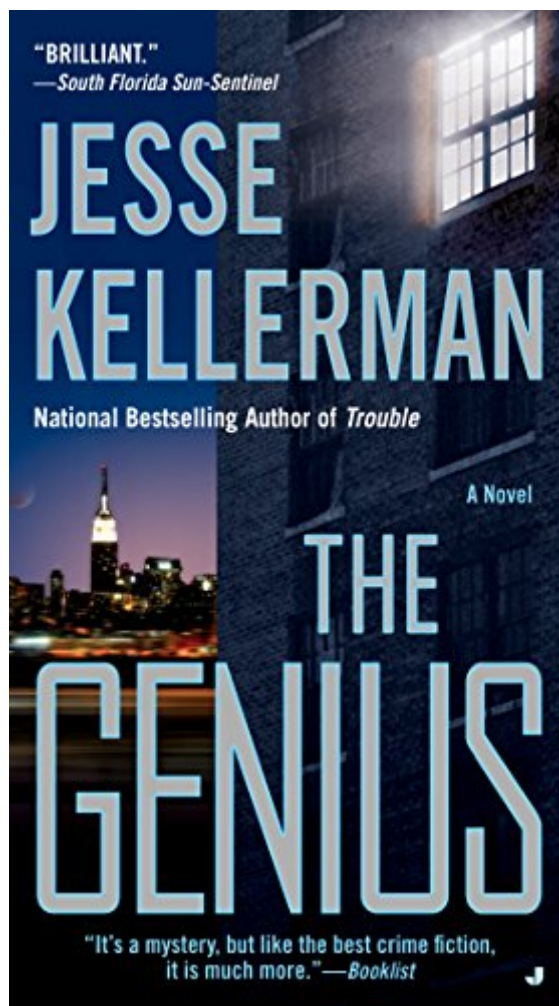


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The Genius



Synopsis

“A MASTERFUL PLOT AND DEAD-ON PACING.” —Entertainment Weekly “From its first hip, cynical, snarky, confessional pages, this deftly plotted novel rivets the reader; a must buy.” —Booklist “In a decaying New York slum, a tenant named Victor Cracke has disappeared, leaving behind countless cardboard boxes of strange, original artwork. Gallery owner Ethan Muller can see their brilliance—and their moneymaking potential. Strictly speaking, the drawings don’t belong to Ethan. But great art demands an audience, and before long Ethan’s wildly successful show is being covered by the Times—where it attracts the attention of the police. Because the subjects of the pictures look exactly like the victims in a long-cold murder case. Ethan has received a letter saying stop stop stop. And the still-missing genius may be the link to a madman—or the madman himself.” —From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Jesse Kellerman is a gifted writer and I don’t say that lightly. His father’s influence is evident in Jesse’s prose, however I have the feeling that the restrictions imposed on most

writers would have benefited Jesse Kellerman. As it is, I have the impression that Jesse Kellerman was free to write anything, in any manner he chose, bypassing the gatekeepers in the traditional publishing industry who reserve such liberties for only the most seasoned and lucrative of writers, such as Dean Koontz, for example. Though Jesse Kellerman tends to use poetic license in excess, I have to admit, most of the time it works. When it doesn't work, however, it flops. Big time. I found it very off-putting in the beginning of the novel and in the very end, where he addresses the reader directly. At one point "and I'm paraphrasing here" he basically says that the reader is probably not a genius. I realize he means this as a matter of probability, but I found his presumptuousness bordering on offensive. If someone were reading a book on coping with depression, it would be acceptable for the author to say you, the reader, are probably suffering from depression. THE GENIUS is a novel, however. It isn't a work of nonfiction entitled THE GENIUS: FOR PEOPLE WHO WISH THEY WERE GENIUSES BUT NEED TO GET OVER THEMSELVES BECAUSE IN REALITY, THEY'RE MERELY AVERAGE. Addressing the reader directly, as he does, is a risky technique that few have mastered. It is risky because if not done correctly it can be "and in the case of this novel it very much is" as jarring to the fictive dream as electroshock therapy. But the pace is molasses slow, and lacks the request superb prose to make such trudging enjoyable. THE GENIUS is the kind of book you can easily put down and forget about. In fact, I wasn't sure I'd finish the book, but I'm actually glad I did. THE GENIUS stretches the imagination in fascinating directions, and the story itself is excellent and well researched. Were it not for a few major shortcomings, this could have been a truly great novel.

good

I was engrossed by this novel from beginning to end, and found it one of the more credible mysteries I've read in a while. There are several related mysteries in the book: Did the artist kill the children? Where did he disappear to? Why does Ethan's father want to buy all the drawings? What's behind the estrangement between Ethan and his father? The answers to all these are quite satisfactory, but the novel takes its time uncovering them. Much of the novel deals with Ethan re-examining his life. There are no chases and shootouts, no sense of danger, no immediacy to the solution. Nobody's life hangs in the balance as the seconds tick away. If these are the elements you want you're likely to be disappointed. But if you'd like a mystery that unfolds over several generations in a richly textured and populated setting, give this a try.

unlike some offspring of successful, popular authors, Jessie totally lives up to his dad Jonathan's skills and rewards the reader with a personal genre that offers a completely satisfying reader experience without borrowing from either parent...

I purchased this novel because I am a fan of the books written by the father of the author. This was a highly complex fascinating novel written by a real professional. I will read every book he writes if he continues to write novels of this quality.

This was a disappointing book by a young writer with a lot of talent - dialogue and scenes spot on - but just too gloomy for me. Ethan Muller, 33, is the only very spoiled son of an exceedingly wealthy man (think the Rosenwald family) by the latter's second marriage and he's had a miserable, lonely, tantrum filled life while dabbling in most of the vices you could name, attending the best schools you could name and living in most of the high toned locales you read about. But he's really smart and exceedingly talented; and five or six years ago he's straightened out and opened his own high class gallery in the best part of New York; and he's doing quite well, still a bachelor though hooked up with a woman two decades his senior who steals every scene on every page she's in. You like Ethan and wish him well. Well, he's put onto some drawings left behind in an apartment by a reclusive genius; and he knows he has the find of the century. But where is the "artist"? And why did he draw a circle of cherubs with the faces of children who were the victims of unsolved killings over a period of years? The resolution of these questions is one story in the book, told partly in the first person by Ethan himself. It's a really good crime story. There's another story in the book too, told historically in the third person about the founding of the Muller family and how they came by their tremendous fortune and about the different Muller characters that peopled the path to fortune. It's interwoven on its own in sections which interrupt the flow of the main narrative and it's full of Mullers with dysfunctional characters of various kinds, all of whom who live in big old dark houses in big dark rooms really full of nothing but family portraits on the wall and a servant at the door. By and by the two stories - the life of Ethan and how he solves the mystery of "the Genius" and his drawings and the story of the Muller family intersect - and it's an entertaining read which I enjoyed. But the end is a downer. Ethan, having broken up with a girl you really like and having closed his gallery because of his quest for The Genius, just walks off stage into the gloom of the Muller family leaving you to want a better resolution. There has to be a sequel. Kellerman can do better than this.

He writes very differently from his parents. So far, the two of his that I've read have been different. Interesting characters and plot twists that you don't see coming. Well done.

Kellerman has once again created memorable characters and a plot that keeps the reader guessing until the very end. Bravo! My favorite story yet!

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