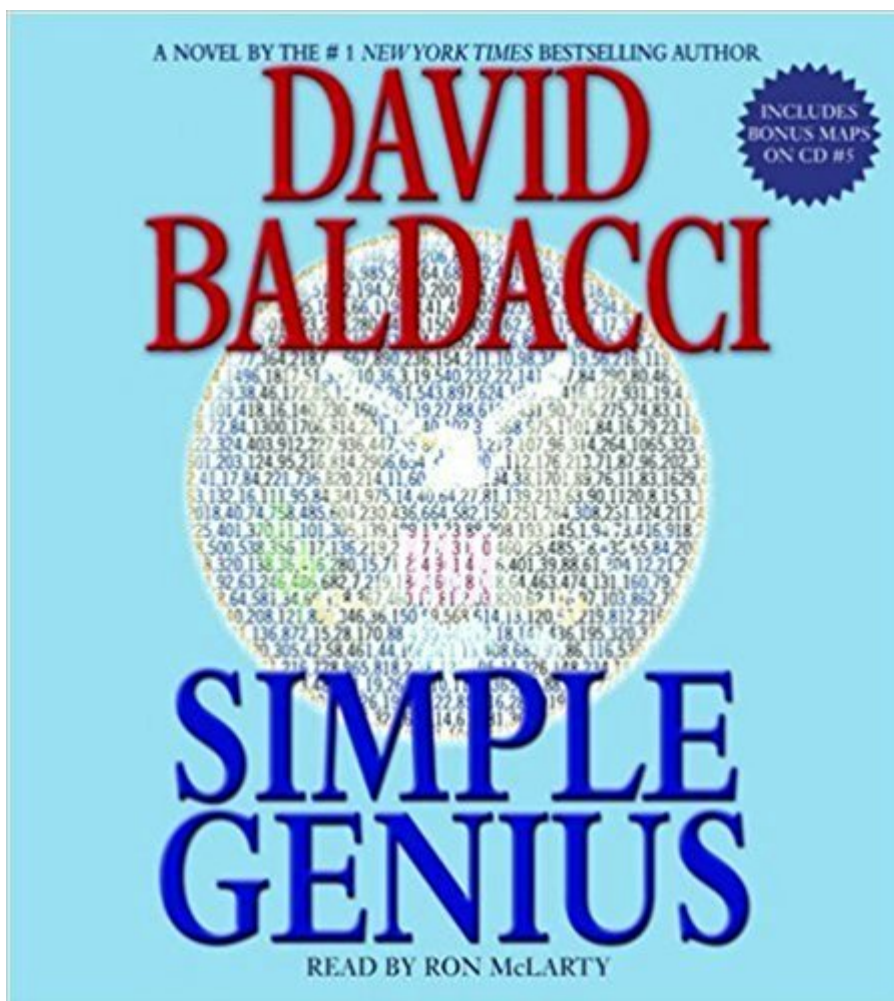




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Simple Genius (King & Maxwell)



Synopsis

Sean King and Michelle Maxwell are back, and struggling in the emotional aftermath of the events that brought them to the brink in *Hour Game*. Dogged by personal demons, Maxwell is seeking solace in a psychiatric institution, after barely surviving a violent barroom brawl. And King, having failed to right their troubled partnership, watches bewildered and mortified by his partner's rapid decline. Relieved to have some distraction, he hastily accepts an offer to investigate a murder at a retreat called Babbage Town, a secret enclave of scientific geniuses working to surpass the capabilities of the most sophisticated microprocessor in the world. But to what end? And more immediate, why do so many of the key players in the menacing project have ties to the institution where Maxwell's staying? Suddenly, the pair find themselves in a race against time to expose a plot that could unhinge the entire global power structure...and destroy what's left of their lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Last seen in *Split Second* (2003), former Secret Service agents Sean King and Michelle Maxwell have reached a crisis in their relationship in this less than compelling Washington political thriller from bestseller Baldacci. When Maxwell instigates a fight with the most intimidating bruiser she could find at a local bar and lets herself be beaten unconscious, despite her superior fighting skills, her partner suggests she voluntarily commit herself to a psychiatric facility. While Maxwell reluctantly undergoes treatment to find the childhood roots of her death wish, King probes the suicide of a scientist found on the grounds of Virginia's Camp Peary, a mysterious CIA facility. Both

mysteries are fairly run of the mill, lacking the sharp twists and expert pacing that characterize Baldacci's fiction at its best. (Apr. 24) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This follow-up to 2004's *Hour Game* begins with Michelle Maxwell, the former Secret Service agent turned private investigator, scraping the bottom of the emotional barrel. When she wanders into a seedy bar and picks a fight with the biggest guy she can find, she knows someone is about to die . . . and she hopes it's not him. Soon Michelle is sidelined at a mental hospital, and Sean King, her partner, is trying to find a case to keep their business afloat. He finds one--a murder at a high-tech think tank--and it's not long before Michelle checks herself out of the hospital and joins Sean. But can they piece together this intricate puzzle in time to save a girl's life and blow the lid off a top-level government conspiracy? The most intriguing element of this compulsively readable novel is its setting: Babbage Town, the think tank, is modeled after World War II's Bletchley Park, where some of the world's top thinkers joined forces to break the top-secret German communications code. Baldacci's twenty-first-century version of Bletchley brings together a community of scientists working on a new kind of computer, but readers familiar with the Bletchley story will note how carefully Baldacci draws the parallels. As always, the two leads work well together, their strengths and weaknesses complementing each other. Baldacci, always strong on suspense but occasionally clunky stylistically, finds his voice here. The best entry in the series. David Pitt Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I elected to give this only a 3 because I thought the book was a little slow in the beginning and didn't care much for the mental hospital portion of the book. Seemed a little disjointed. Once that portion was over the book got better.

Uninspired with a ridiculous plot and a bunch of pseudo psychology. A poor attempt to make a political point about the CIA and big government. The first Baldacci book that fails at all levels. Flipped through pages in the hope it would get better but it never does. A waste of precious reading time. I love the King and Maxwell series and David Baldacci but, everyone is entitled to at least one failure and this is Baldacci's.

Starts with lots backstory and then builds following multiple stores that converge into the finally. In this story, like the previous one, you get to know more about the leading character ... in this case,

Michelle. Ended rapidly, a little too quick for me, but a good ending.

I got started with Baldacci, as so many others, with Absolute Power. I've been a fan ever since. I am truly hooked on the King and Maxwell series. The chemistry of their relationship is dynamic keeps the stories moving along. This one did not disappoint. I enjoyed every minute--even the smart parts...

David Baldacci is a fantastic author. My husband and I get the audio cd's and it is nearly impossible to turn it off. When I was younger and would read his books, I would lose a lot of sleep and the cd's are the same. We love listening to them.

Full disclosure - I am a David Baldacci fan. I have read the first five books in Baldacci's King and Maxwell series and fully enjoyed all. For starters, I would highly recommend reading the series in the order written as there is a fair amount of carry through that helps with understanding the plots. In this book, King is hired to investigate what appears to be a suicide at a clandestine operation but some have questions. As things evolve, the solution appears to revolve around the decedent's musically talented autistic daughter. In typical Baldacci fashion, the character development and pacing are first rate. Highly recommended.

Baldacci is always a good read. Tho I was a bit mystified about what had happened to Michelle so I went back and re-read the Hour Game to refresh my memory. You really would not need to have read that book first but I did.

Reminded me of the old adage "absolute power corrupts absolutely ". It is hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys in this thriller that involved every spook agency in the government. There were fascinating looks into code breaking and Alan Turing's work cracking the Enigma Code during WWII. (I even left the novel for a while and did some of my own research.) There was an extensive look into Michelle's makeup and breakdown through psychoanalysis as well as a glimpse at a child with Aspergers (not stated as such, but with as the hallmarks) who is a mathematical genius. Add to that a strange and puzzling story and this is a world class novel. The best of this partnership so far.

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