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# Brighter



## **Synopsis**

Five years ago, when Ramona Brinks was a freshman in college, Garrett Hillard raped a girl. At least that's what the girl said anyway, and that's why the guys in town got together and introduced Garrett to their fists. They told him in no uncertain terms to leave and stay gone. Garrett's back in town. And Ramona finds herself drawn to the social pariah, especially after he tells her that he didn't rape anyone. Instead, he saw the girl get killed. Of course, that's clearly crazy. The girl isn't dead. But Ramona's been feeling a little crazy herself lately. She had a conversation with her neighbor, only to find out later that while they were chatting, her neighbor's dead body was washing up from a shallow grave....

## **Book Information**

File Size: 710 KB

Print Length: 278 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Punk Rawk Books (February 9, 2011)

Publication Date: February 9, 2011

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B004N62ORY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #34,018 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #119  
in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Suspense > Paranormal > Psychics #150 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Supernatural > Psychics #152 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Supernatural > Ghosts

## **Customer Reviews**

I don't enjoy fantasy or sci-fi genres, and so maybe this book wasn't for me. I got about one-third through it before I just had to delete it from my device. The cloning and spirit stuff kind of turned me

off simply because I cannot suspend my disbelief for this kind of topic. It is my poor judgement call for not knowing this ahead of time, but in case others don't know, I wanted to warn of genre. It's expensive, so I was disappointed that I made a bad purchase choice.

I've followed V.J. Chambers for a long time, starting my love for her with the Jason and Azazel books. I was sucked into those books because V.J. Chambers wasn't scared to pull the blanket off the typical YA books. She wrote what teenagers felt and did. With hormones raging and cursing galore, she caused such controversy in that trilogy. There was also a lot of action and the female lead wasn't a Bella Swan. She was strong and fought for her life through each book. I admired her and I admire Chambers to be able to bring such a character to life. With all of this being said, I thought Brighter was okay.. Not something I expected to see from Chambers at all. I still like how she delivers the characters and keeps the suspense locked down at all the appropriate times. I still thought the main character was likable. Ramona is stuck in the her town...wondering where to go with her life now. But then, things start happening. Things that make her question what is really going on in this town and if the others who claim that the town sucks you in were lying or if what they were saying should be taken in a literal sense. As things start unfolding Ramona is stuck wondering who she should and shouldn't trust...not knowing who is the good guy and who is the bad guy. She soon learns she must trust no one. I don't want to give away spoilers and while I thought this book was decent, I hated the ending. It was the bad beginning to a promise of a series. I don't think Chambers has plans to continue with a series which is why the ending fell short for me. The writing was good and from what I remember there weren't very many errors if any at all. The characters that matter are developed and you find yourself rooting for them. Chambers creates a world all her own and brings eeriness to the book and you are left wondering exactly what is going on. Suspecting anything from Aliens to Supernatural beings....the list goes crazy when you try to figure it out with Ramona. I do remember my heart racing at some points hoping that a certain this or that wouldn't happen and that Ramona would make it out. This book, thankfully, did not detour me from wanting to read other works by Chambers simply because I love the taboo of the books and how she isn't afraid to be the one to cause controversy. I admire her boldness and I admire the way she develops her characters and thinks outside the norm and isn't afraid to go dark in a YA novel. I bought this book back when the price was much lower. I noticed that was recommending me to review this book since I had just finished a book review for someone else so I thought I would go ahead and jump on over to do so and was appalled by the Kindle price of this. \$7.99 for a Kindle edition? I just don't understand the logic behind this spike in pricing. I've spoke with a ton of Indie

Authors who agree that \$2.99 for a normal-sized book is more than fair on Kindle edition. Those writers are also saying that \$7.99 - \$9.99 is what they typically charge for their paperbacks. I'm no one to judge what Chambers thinks the value of her work is...but that's rather pricey for an indie authors ebook edition and as an avid reader you will never see me throw down that much for an ebook. Never. I'd rather browse Hastings' used section for paperbacks and get a book I can actually hold and sit on my bookshelf. For the record, I wouldn't even purchase a kindle edition that cost this much by a traditionally published author. The price, does not convey my actual review and isn't the reason I gave the book a 3-star by any means. I prefer not to rate a book based on price. I am glad I got to review this book and paid a reasonable price for it because had I just been getting around to purchasing it...well, lets just say this review would not exist because I would not have bought it.

Man, could I identify with Ramona at first! Ramona, the protagonist of Brighter, is stuck in her 9-5 college admissions job, in that weird place many of us have experienced in our early twenties where you really have nothing to look forward to because there are few more major life milestones left (e.g., you've already gotten your license to drive, graduated from high school, entered college, hit the legal age to drink, graduated from college...). What do you do with an English degree? Graduate school is calling, but it's hard to get out of that rat race cycle that just sucks you in. And yet, Ramona is literally being sucked in. LITERALLY. Into Elston, the college town she has lived in since she entered college. Without going into too much detail and spoiling the story, weird things happen in Elston. People change, and it's not just because they graduate from college and move on, and that's what you're supposed to do when you become a real adult. I found it frustrating that either people didn't care that something was definitely off about the town, or they just were in that much denial. What I love about Chambers' characters, especially her "protagonists" (if you can really call them that all of the time), are their realness, exposing their major flaws but in a way that can humble the reader. Ramona is no exception. Sometimes, I just wanted to smack her! Sometimes, I wanted to hug her. Brighter is suspenseful, mysterious, enjoyable, and a quick read. I believe that Chambers is pretty courageous in her writing - she doesn't shy away from writing about the complicated and unlikeable things we hide from others. She does is again in Brighter.

This book really does suck you in when you first read it. I was immediately drawn into the world the author created and I couldn't put it down until I finished it. The characters were very well-written and this author definitely has a knack for writing characters who are realistic and engaging. It was exciting to go on the journey of discovering just what horrible secret Elston holds with Ramona, but

unfortunately, there was no payoff at the end after spending the whole book on solving the mystery of what is really going on in Elston. The ending was very noticeably rushed; there were several grammar mistakes that disrupted the flow of reading and after going through every up and down with Ramona and her close friend Heather, every victory and setback, it seemed as if the finale was crammed into the last two chapters and without giving away any spoilers, it just seemed far too easy after everything they two girls struggled through. The conclusion also irritated me with the fact that nothing was wrapped up. While I don't mind an open ending, again, after everything Ramona and Heather had been through, it seemed as if this huge experience hardly affected them and it was just no big deal. While this was a pretty decent read, I don't think I would re-read this book knowing now how poorly it ended, which is a shame since everything was great up until then.

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