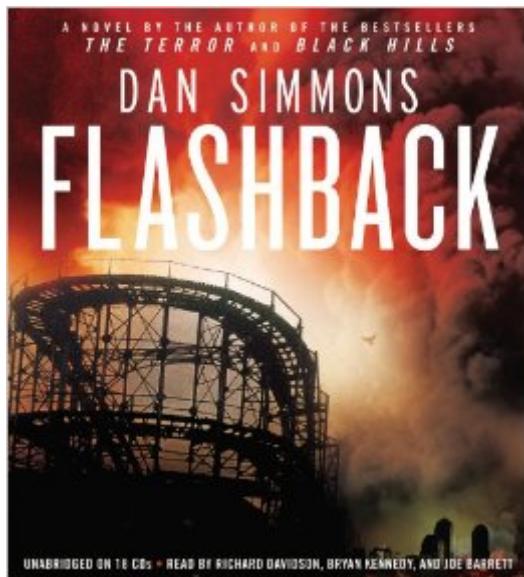


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# Flashback



## Synopsis

The United States is near total collapse. But 87% of the population doesn't care: they're addicted to flashback, a drug that allows its users to re-experience the best moments of their lives. After ex-detective Nick Bottom's wife died in a car accident, he went under the flash to be with her; he's lost his job, his teenage son, and his livelihood as a result. Nick may be a lost soul but he's still a good cop, so he is hired to investigate the murder of a top governmental advisor's son. This flashback-addict becomes the one man who may be able to change the course of an entire nation turning away from the future to live in the past. A provocative novel set in a future that seems scarcely possible, FLASHBACK proves why Dan Simmons is one of our most exciting and versatile writers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I feel somewhat emotionally invested in the work of Dan Simmons so I find myself unable to stop reading (yet!) even though his last few works have been disappointing. I first started reading Dan about 20 years ago when Summer Of Night came out. Dan instantly jumped into my top handful of authors and stayed there for many years. I read everything he put out and it was all exceptional; I didn't care what genre he was writing in. I loved it all. He was a gifted storyteller. I could get lost in his work, the way you should get lost in a fiction writer. Things have changed. The Terror was a bit of a slip and things have gotten worse with Drood and Black Hills. Flashback is probably my favorite of the last 3 but it certainly is not a great book. It is an interesting multi-genre (SF, mystery, action) story that is fun at times. The characters are a bit cliched but I was able to care about what was

happening to them. The story was certainly a worthy idea for a book. But, the same as all his recent work, there is too much of Dan Simmons in the book. I know that he wrote it but I just felt like I was constantly being schooled, constantly exposed to the author's opinions about everything, not just politics. And here's the thing - it seems that I lean Dan's way politically. I do have a problem with the US getting 4 billion dollars a day deeper into debt and I don't think anything good can possibly come out of this. And I still thought he was overly preachy! I know it's fiction but throughout the book the reader is constantly subjected to lessons about everything. He knows more than you do and you need to be enlightened. How is one possibly supposed to lose yourself in a STORY when you are barraged with intellectual asides constantly.

Please bear with me, as I hop on my soap-box for a minute. I promise I'll review the book -WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE?\*ahem\*, I'll try that again...First, let me get the AA piece out of the way. My name is Steve, and I am a Democrat. ("Hi, Steve!") Does that really even matter? No. It shouldn't. I'm not a Communist, Marxist, (yadda-yadda), but I have Democratic morals. So what, right? Here's my point - yes it IS possible to be a Democrat and still love this book. Why? Well because this is just FICTION. Yes, the future in this novel is bleak and scary, yes the political leanings in this book are certainly towards the right, yes some of the characters are racist - WHO CARES! This is still a very well-written book with tons of intrigue, mystery, the whole nine. Dan took what was in his mind a possible scenario, and wrote a fictional novel out of it set in a dystopian America. Authors have been doing this for years. This does NOT mean that Dan is a crazy, racist, wing-nut blah-blah-blah. If that were the case then the author of the dystopian work 'A Clockwork Orange', Anthony Burgess, is truly one sick puppy - but people still love his work! (myself being one of these people) Here's the problem: more and more people are polarized because of political differences. It's almost like religion to some people, so when someone comes up with an opposing viewpoint people get extremely 'butt-hurt' (sorry, not a tactful term, but accurate). So, if you are the type to get 'butt-hurt' over differing political ideals then this book is not for you - go back to reading dystopian works about anarchist children, serial rapists, etc.

In a former United States devastated by economic and political collapse, former police officer Nick Bottom, a Flashback addict like much of the country, is pulled from the ruins of his former life and hired by a Japanese businessman to solve the six year old murder of his son. But what does the murder have to do with the car accident that killed his wife and sent him into Flashback's warm embrace? When I saw that Dan Simmons' next book was going to be called Flashback, I

pre-ordered it immediately. Flashback is a drug that allows the user to relive memories and was first introduced by Simmons in the wonderful Hyperion Cantos, one of my all-time favorite books. Did it live up to the standard set by Hyperion? I'll tell you in a little while...There were a lot of things I liked about Flashback. Flashback and the culture surrounding it made a great plot device. I thought that using Nick Bottom's Flashback addiction to explore his own memories to help investigate who killed Nakamura's son was a pretty novel idea. I liked the converging plotlines with Nick's estranged son Val and his father-in-law Leonard. I liked the relationship with Nick and Sato, Nakamura's watchdog. I loved the references to other Simmons books like Hardcase and Hyperion and the references to Shakespeare and Keats. Most of all, I loved the serpentine nature of the mystery and how it had to do with Dara's death. The world was very well constructed and was a bit of a throwback to the cyberpunk dystopias of the 80's. That's a lot of likes but the dislike was very hard to ignore. The tone of the book was so conservative that it made Rush Limbaugh seem like Hilary Clinton by comparison.

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