



Resonance

Chris Dolley

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Graham Smith is a 33 year-old office messenger. To the outside world he's an obsessive-compulsive mute - weird but harmless. But to Graham Smith, it's the world that's weird. And far from harmless. He sees things others can't . . . or won't. He knows that roads can change course, people disappear, office blocks migrate across town. All at night when no one's looking. The world's an unstable place, still growing, sloughing off layers of reality like dead skin. One day you drive by, and it's changed. Annalise Mercado hears voices, all from girls calling themselves Annalise. Sometimes she thinks they're spirit guides, sometimes she thinks she's crazy. But then they start telling her about Graham Smith and the men who want to kill him. That's when they meet. So begins the story of two people whose lives are fragmented across alternate realities. And how they hold the key to the future of a billion planets. . . .

Resonance Details

Date : Published November 1st 2005 by Baen Books

ISBN : 9781416509127

Author : Chris Dolley

Format : Hardcover 389 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Resonance for online ebook

Bigal-sa says

What an interesting book. One person able (unknowingly) to flip between dimensions and another able to communicate with "others" in different dimensions.

The only thing that bugged me was that about two thirds of the way through you could already guess in which dimension it was going to end. The ending was also rather abrupt, but these points do not detract from making it an excellent read.

What is quite interesting is that Dolley is from England, yet the spelling in the Kindle version I read was American (two words that caught my eye were rumor and pedophile).

Kevin says

I really liked this book!

Graham Smith lives in London and is an office messenger. He delivers mail and memos from office to office. He doesn't interact with anyone, and he doesn't speak. He hasn't spoken since he was a child. He counts the squares in the sidewalk when he walks home -- he never steps on cracks. He has a rigid set of procedures for doing everything. He appears Autistic, but he's not.

His perseverations are a defense mechanism that allow him to deal with a changing world -- *A rapidly* changing world. Streets can change their locations overnight. People disappear, and no one seems to miss them. New people appear, and everyone seems to know them. He's never sure that his address will be the same in the evening as it was in the morning.

Then one young woman goes out of her way to meet him. Her name is Annalise and she came all the way from America. She's from Boston. Duluth. Boise. She has long, black hair. She's a redhead. She's blond. She dyed her hair bright orange. He takes her luggage to his home. She's staying at a B&B. She's paranoid and stays in a large cardboard carton in an alley. She tells him he's being watched. Someone wants to kill him. She came to help.

He finds listening devices and cameras, hidden in his home. He destroys them. They're back, in the same locations, the next day.

There are no new Science Fiction concepts in this book, but the genius is the way the concepts are handled and resolved. The first third of the book is brilliant and the final scenes are very, very good. The author gets off track for a while in the middle. In particular, he tries to make a forced analogy with the theory of evolution that just does not work. Also, he goes into some weird details of genetics that don't hold up. Both of these scenes took me out of the story for a while, but the rest of the story is relentlessly good. The book would be much better, and a little shorter, if these sections were just dropped.

Still, this book is highly recommended!

Some notes: bear in mind that this takes place in London. Cell phones are called mobiles, elevators are lifts, the subway is the tube, etc.

Also, the ebook version I read had some issues -- in particular, there were fairly wide margins that were preset. The Smashwords edition, at least, had no DRM, so I was able to correctly format it for my ereader (a JetBook Light) very easily with Calibre.

Gillean says

I loved this book. I loved the characters and the ideas and it was very gripping and had me on the edge of my seat all the way through. Strangely enough in 1999 I wrote my dissertation on quantum consciousness and schizophrenia and one of the models I suggested was the many worlds' theory and that people could become entangled with their alternate selves. So to read a novel based on a similar concept was quite interesting.

Giselle F says

I enjoyed this book a lot. I don't remember why I chose it but congratulate myself on a lucky find. This book is quite something: an intriguing story that's different to the vast majority of other books, quite a feat!

The only thing is that I almost didn't finish it. I ALMOST put it down and didn't pick it up again because it has such a slow start.

And even once you get past the slow start and you develop some ideas of what it be like and that those ideas might be what gets you through... you could easily be wrong.

Because the story does not follow predictable lines.

Now, I enjoy stories about individualism and I root for underdogs, and for heroes who look nothing like hero material, so Graham is a great character. And it is such fun that he doesn't start out as a great character, as someone you would WANT to root for, far from it: he seems anxious, pernickety, a bit ridiculous and altogether just... a bit too much.

And the aggregate almost is. Of Graham. Except you get him, Graham, most of the time - whereas you don't get his side kick that often, but the essence of her is there.

I really enjoyed the story because it is about the triumph of the normed, the normal, under stress, in dire straights - and still coming through: winning against all the odds.

That's a story I really love.

It's got a nice ending - I enjoyed the whole book. Just try to get past the slow beginning.

Carole O'Brien says

This book had enough intrigue to keep me reading, I was hoping that some thing great was going to happen, yes I found it ok, but would not read it again.

Magister says

Captivating start... which made me wait for the Doctor to come to the rescue any page... only he didn't. And while the book evolved to remind me more of .hack// ...or Inception... somewhere in the twenties' chapters the book lost me and I started asking myself what might be going on in the stories abandoned for this one, with Amy and River, with Bran and Arya, even those who had come to an end once before (like Subaru and Tsukasa) or recently again (like Neville and Luna).

The book had me again at thirty. Haven't finished yet, but will.

Wealhtheow says

Graham Smith does not speak, does not have friends or family, and never, ever, wavers from his daily rituals. Any deviation from his routine makes reality shift and change around him. Coworkers disappear, his apartment changes, his parents are suddenly alive and just as suddenly vanish again...And so every day he walks in precisely the same way along the sidewalk, ties his shoelaces in exactly the same way, and sticks sticky notes to everything, to remind him of what he did and when.

It's a lonely, enclosed life--and it is abruptly burst open by a wild-eyed young woman who tells him his life is in danger. review tbc.

Available for free <http://chris-dolley.com/index.php?opt....>

David says

This was a 3-star feel at the start. I'd read the synopsis, and the plot idea was pretty obvious. But I really liked the way it interpreted a certain OCD behaviour. While I could guess the plot idea, I enjoyed the way the main characters bumbled their way through different explanations; there was even a very funny and obvious movie reference.

Then the pace ramped up and it made me read up a bit on quantum physics. It's not quite how the plot used it, but it's plausible enough. And as the main characters slowly gained more and more understanding of what's happening, it became more of a 4-star for me. It was fun to read through the internal monologues of the protagonist as he tries and tries to rationalise and understand his situation.

Then came the last few chapters and I just had to finish it. It was a 5-star by then. It was a rather reasonable and well thought out manner to resolve the main plot. Throw in a love story, natural selection and nature vs nurture, and several smaller happily resolved plotlines and I think we have a winner. This was a surprisingly

engaging read for me.

Sean Randall says

"at the last count you had 472 fathers and 4,487 mothers."

It's quite evident from the outset of this crackingly enjoyable story that Graham, our strange protagonist, is rather odd. he has strange habits, strange ideas, strange issues. And naturally they worsen a hundredfold throughout.

"Why hadn't fate picked someone brighter? Not someone who took five minutes to lock a door and couldn't sleep if he thought a picture was hanging crooked."

I've seen some odd literary heroes in my time, but graham is up there with the best of them. His whole world is completely skewed, and only people with connections to other worlds can be of any help to him.

"I'm the girl with two hundred voices in her head. I believe everything."

of course no romp through multiple worlds is complete without a female sidekick and love interest, and the 200 provided are certainly interesting candidates. I very much enjoyed puzzling out how Graham was going to get everything sorted. Though some of the dimensional theory was a little confusing at times.

It's perhaps difficult to reconcile the quiet, placid Graham with the one that involves himself with resonance so forcefully. maybe I should stop underestimating the power of love.

Julian White says

Odd to have picked another book with this subject (cf The Game) but I guess with an infinite number of worlds... Ultimately this was a lot more satisfying than The Game - largely because it finishes satisfactorily. It's a good read - had me guessing at first just what was going on - and fails to get the fifth star only because I got a bit lost towards the end in the final resolution (there's a lot going on there!).

M. J. says

From the gift box of books I grabbed this one, not entirely at random--it was the largest book in the box, in part because it is hardcover.

It has an interesting approach to a concept of a multiverse, with a few interesting twists. Two of those twists are characters; the third is in the title "Resonance", which refers to the tendency that anything that happens in one universe is increasingly likely to happen in another, increasing the probability that it will happen in others; some events thus become inevitable.

The main character, Graham Smith, is an anomaly, the only person who exists in every known universe, due apparently to a previous resonance; he has the problem that his consciousness jumps from universe to

universe, but he does not understand it that way--he perceives it as the universe unraveling, changing constantly around him, and he does not understand why no one else ever talks about those changes, but he tries to keep quiet and talk about nothing at all as buildings, roads, even people vanish and reappear seemingly at random. He keeps a note in his pocket telling him where he lives and where he works, and checks it regularly to see if the information has changed.

The girl, Analise Mercado, is also interesting--the unknowing product of a genetic experiment that was supposed to make her telepathic, she hears the voices of parallel selves in her head, and can communicate with them. Each of her selves is seeking an explanation for this.

A company which has found a way to collect information from parallel dimensions has become interested in both of them, and as a result they come together--but someone wants to eliminate his ability, and no one knows who or why. She has agreed with her selves to protect him, working with whatever allies they can find, but even that is difficult as some of the people most able to help them in one world don't exist in another.

It also becomes evident that the Grahams and the Analises of various worlds are different, and the Graham who becomes the primary protagonist falls in love with one particular one, in one particular universe, from whom he is separated; he seeks a way to return to her as well as prevent the disastrous futures he has witnessed on some of the worlds that are technologically ahead of the curve but growing more certain.

The book has a slow start. It tries to paint the picture of the ordinary life of a character whose life is anything but ordinary, and in doing so it creates the puzzle; but it took a while to grab me. Once the story was in motion, it was good reading, with lots of questions, some serious issues, tensions about possible outcomes, and a good dose of action and suspense. Chris Dolley manages to pull a happy ending from the complications, and keeps us on the edge of uncertainty as to whether it is going to work out for the characters or not.

It was an interesting concept fairly well executed. It's not a book that begs me to share it with anyone else, but I will probably keep it around and read it again sometime.

--M. J. Young

Mike says

It's not often that I buy a book thinking it's something completely different from what it actually is, and still end up giving it five stars.

I wasn't in the mood for anything that was already on my Kindle, and I felt like something amusing, so I thought, "That steampunk Wodehouse pastiche *What Ho, Automaton!* was funny. I'll get something else by the same guy." I glanced over the Amazon reviews for *Resonance*, and one of them described it as a "romp", plus it was getting lots of stars, so I grabbed it.

It's not a romp. It's not funny, really, at all, except for moments here and there. What it is is a really, really good technothriller which gripped me almost continuously from beginning to end. (I say "almost continuously" because my attention did drift very slightly when a couple of extra viewpoint characters were used near the middle.)

Chris Dolley pulls off a few remarkable feats here. Firstly, he has the characters provide a series of completely different, complex explanations for the strangeness that's going on in their lives, and makes them all sound reasonable. Secondly, he makes an uncommunicative, almost autistic, obsessive-compulsive man who deliberately leads a boring, predictable life his main character, and then keeps me on the edge of my seat through the whole book while I cheer for the guy. And thirdly, he writes an ending that didn't let down the rest of the book.

The premise, when we finally learn what is actually going on, doesn't bear close scrutiny as science or even a self-consistent system, but as a fictional premise it worked well for me. Certainly it was no worse than anything Michael Chrichton uses, and Michael Chrichton is the author I was most reminded of here.

Even when Chris Dolley isn't funny, he's good. I'll remember that.

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Speculative Fiction

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Fans of speculative fiction, those interested in quantum physics

Trigger Warnings: kidnapping, violence, attacks

My Thoughts: Since I was reading the books by Dolley I'd received in exchange for a review, I decided to go ahead and read this one, which I've had since well before those others.

This is a really good book with a really cool idea. The problem is I can't tell you much about it without ruining the surprise of discovery for yourself. It deals with some pretty intense quantum theories, but in such a way as to be highly readable. This quote will give you a bit of a hint: *"Take away the observer and the world unravels. Without observation there can be no substance and without ritual there can be no cement."*

Graham is a really interesting and well-done character, as is Annalise in all her incarnations. Ray makes a good minor foil, and Adam Sylvestrus is chilling as the main Big Bad. This book will not be for everyone, but if what I've revealed intrigues you, I can only recommend you check out this book for yourself. I haven't checked recently to see if it is still in the Baen Free Library, but that place is a treasure trove, so it's a great place to check out regardless. Highly recommended for fans of speculative fiction dealing with quantum theories.

Disclosure: I picked up a copy of this book a few years back from the Baen Free Library. All opinions are my own.

Synopsis: Graham Smith is a 33 year-old office messenger. To the outside world he's an obsessive-compulsive mute—weird but harmless. But to Graham Smith, it's the world that's weird. And far from harmless. He sees things others can't . . . or won't. He knows that roads can change course, people disappear, office blocks migrate across town. All at night when no one's looking. The world's an unstable place, still growing, sloughing off layers of reality like dead skin. One day you drive by, and it's changed. Annalise Mercado hears voices, all from girls calling themselves Annalise. Sometimes she thinks they're spirit guides, sometimes she thinks she's crazy. But then they start telling her about Graham Smith and the men who want to kill him. That's when they meet. So begins the story of two people whose lives are fragmented across alternate realities. And how they hold the key to the future of a billion planets. . . .

Akiva says

[Slightly bent the laws of the universe for a happy ending, but I'm grateful it didn't just leave me devastated. Oh well. (hide spoiler)]

YouKneeK says

I could barely put this book down. I don't want to give any details about the story beyond the synopsis already provided for the book. The less you know going into the story, the more fun you'll have reading it. I slowly pieced together what was going on along with the main characters. Even once you figure out what's going on, there's still a lot more to figure out. Why is it happening? What can be done about it? Who can be trusted?

If I'd had the time, I might have read this book in one sitting. Since I don't have that sort of time, I read it over the course of a few days. As I went about my work day, I would occasionally find myself thinking about the book. I would speculate about what might happen next or reevaluate the meaning of earlier parts of the book based on the most recent revelations. It made me eager to get home so that I could read some more. It's been a while since a book has captured my attention so well that I would think about it even when I wasn't reading it.

There's nothing that pulls me out of a book faster than characters who don't ring true. The main characters in Resonance, however, were likeable and believable. Not to mention unique and quirky. This story could have been confusing, yet somehow the author managed to write it in a way that was very easy to follow. This was even true during the climax when things were especially chaotic. As others have mentioned, this isn't really "hard science" but I found the story to be internally consistent which is what really matters to me.

Ubiquitousbastard says

Firstly, the cover has almost nothing to do with the book, except in perhaps an abstract way. It is kind of an awful cover that makes it look like the book is going to be some cheesy futuristic affair, and that does it not justice whatsoever.

I went through various stages of wanting to read this book, including deleting it off my book reader because the cover made me think it wasn't worth the effort that I originally thought it might be and then re-adding it later when I saw it in my recommendations and read the description. <-Various stages. Once I started reading it, though, I knew I'd made the right decision. I was surprised and impressed by the decision to start the main character as a semi-autistic person. That really got me wondering if there was going to be an actual sci-fi element, and how it was going to relate in to the character's issues. That itself managed to slowly unfold in a satisfying way, however, I did find the middle a bit slow, and again, less than impressed with the romantic angle.

Luckily, the ending was good, if not as good as the interesting hook of the beginning. The overall message was rather cute, and I liked that the science parts didn't overtake character development or hijack the story

around a macguffin.

Tom Loock says

Having very much enjoyed three of Chris Dolley's Steampunk-novels, this 'straight' novel came as a bit a surprise, but despite some problems with slow pacing , I really enjoyed this clever attempt to deal with parallel worlds.

Rosver says

Resonance
Chris Dolley

An interesting book. Starts in a very confusing and tempered but tension filled situation that gradually escalates and clears up, ending with a very memorable climax. Very exciting with a clean and clear prose. Ideas and the nature of the situations do create confusion that might make it less interesting to some readers.

The beginning opens up with the introduction to our protagonist Graham Smith which initially appears to be insane with his obsession to his routines and inability to fit in with the society he belongs to. But then stranger and stranger things happen: people disappear and reappear, roads appear overnight, dead people returns; very strange events that makes anyone question the sanity of his world instead. A great puzzle that demands to be solved and which the story answers satisfyingly in a great conclusion with an exciting chase to find answers.

The story is greatly complemented by the clear, clean and direct prose that propels the story and makes it easier to follow even with its very confusing events and situations. A prose that makes our brains focus on the story instead of anything fancy. A big plus for me.

The negative(or positive, depending on views) is in the very core of the story itself. Everything in the story: the setting, the characters, the events... the whole world; is a big puzzle that demands patience and perseverance to see through. There are certain passages which are very hard to understand or just makes you loose your footing but soon would be cleared up if you just continue reading a bit more.

Well planned and thought-out book, filled with excitement and a very big mystery to solve. A very good and solid piece of fiction.

Rick says

A great science fiction story of a world in flux with a little emphasis on the why, when , where and how of that flux aspect of the story. Imaginative page turner this one.

Rebecca says

It's somewhat unfortunate that I recently read a book that has a very similar "surprise" premise. I caught on to what was happening by the second chapter. Which was unfortunate, because the characters blundered through half a dozen alternate explanations over the next half a book before discovering that I was right. Maybe if I'd read this first, I would have been more surprised, but I don't think so.

So the pacing really lagged for me for the first half. Fortunately, I found Graham an engaging enough character that I was willing to hang on until they got past the figuring-out stage and into the real action. He's an unusual protagonist. At first, he's so withdrawn (for very good reasons, it turns out) that he appears mentally damaged. He's emotionally damaged, but as he realizes that the world really is broken and it's not just him, he starts to come out of his shell in a well-written arc that's a joy to read. I loved watching him slowly gain courage and initiative and wake up to the world as he finally gains control over a life that had previously been baffling and horrifying.

I'm not sure all the mechanics actually make sense--I'd have to go back and re-read, and I didn't like it so much that I want to. But the fact that ParaDim grows systematically with each rewriting, and the fact that a useful Annalise appears in each version doesn't make sense with the information we were given. And I'm not sure I totally buy the catalyst that causes each change. Worst of all, the villain is more of a cardboard cut-out than anything else. It's disappointing.

So it's flawed. But I do really like the main character, and once things get rolling, they roll along well. I particularly liked Graham's solution to the entire mess--it ties both the personal and global problems together neatly in a way that's genuinely touching. So it's worth considering despite some structural issues.
