



Illuminated

Matt Bronleewe

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August Adams has failed his family before. He's sacrificed relationships in pursuit of adventure, fame, and money. Now the very lives of those he loves depend on his ability to decipher a centuries-old puzzle encrypted in the colorful hand-painted illuminations that adorn three rare Gutenberg Bibles.

It's a secret that could yield unimaginable wealth, undermine two major religions, and change the course of Western civilization. Two ruthless, ancient organizations are willing to do anything to get their hands on it. And August has the span of one transatlantic flight to figure it out.

Illuminated Details

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Author : Matt Bronleewe

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From Reader Review Illuminated for online ebook

Virginia Tican says

Definitely not Indiana Jones or National Treasure but not bad either.

Keiki Hendrix says

Do you love books? Do you love the history and mystery about rare, antique books? Are you intrigued by the stories of the lives surrounding these historical books?

You will not be disappointed in Matt Bronleewe's debut novel *Illuminated: An August Adams Adventure*.

The story is based on the illustrative artwork printed on the borders of the Gutenberg Bible.

August Adams, an antique book dealer and expert in his field, is thrust into an adventure that threatens his life and the life of his family.

This is a suspense novel that will have you searching out all the history and organizations listed, adding greatly to the intrigue of the story. If you enjoyed the movie *National Treasure*, you will love this book.

Filled to the brim with little known facts, clues and nuances, and interesting bits and pieces of the first bibles ever printed - this is a great read. Pick it up for a few hours of very *Illuminated* reading, but keep your laptop handy. You will want to study more of the characters and history mentioned.

I recommend this book highly and look forward to reading more of Bronleewe's work.

Chad says

Illuminated is the tale of an archeobibliologist who must unravel clues found in multiple Gutenberg Bibles to discover some deep dark secret. This is your standard Dan Brown *DaVinci Code* or *National Treasure* formula book by first time author Matt Bronleewe.

The story is formulaic, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. I found that I enjoyed parts of the book and came away feeling like it was okay. There were a few scenes that felt as if they were tacked on to pad out the word count and didn't relate to the story. Several of the aspects required a larger suspension of disbelief than I was willing to give, such as solving the whole mystery that had withstood the test of time for hundreds of years within the space of a 1 hour airplane flight. Worst of all to me was the ending went out on a real whimper, with the book just pretty much ending without much action, fanfare, or strong conclusion to the mystery.

What really drew me to this book was the cover. It's absolutely gorgeous and a brilliant design. You know how they say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover? Well, this is probably a decent reason why. The cover is amazing and beautiful, but the story inside is only okay.

Dena says

I liked it. I had to reread the ending a few times and look up some biblical context but that isn't a bad thing. I think I was a little shaken towards the end because of the implications of the female deity. Didn't know what to make of that!! HA! Author got me!! I will say a few things. I would have liked to see some kind of visual of the mapping and overlayed illuminations. It was such a visual resolution that it might have helped. I loved the build up but felt like I needed more help with how everything resolved. Some parts of it seemed tenuous or at least glossed over and I was hoping for a more neatly tied up conclusion with everything spelled out. However, I see that the other two I can get on my kindle so I'm in!!

Barbara says

I really, really, tried to get into this book but I really couldn't. This book is to *The Da Vinci Code* what *National Treasure* is to the Indiana Jones franchise.

It just fell flat, though: characters never sprang from the pages and the plot never really caught my attention. The plot concerns archaeobibliologist August Adams, who must decipher a centuries-old puzzle found in the illustrations in three rare Gutenberg Bibles. It bears more than a passing resemblance to both "The Da Vinci Code" and to Robert Liparulo's "Comes a Horseman" (in that all three concern secret societies with grandiose plans for world domination) but it never resonated with me.

Ryan Rauber says

A poor man's Da Vinci Code type thriller centering around a mystery surrounding the Gutenberg Bible. The plot itself was thin, it should have actually been a longer book with more explanation and background of the history surrounding the mystery. The characters are really stereotypical, and the action seems flat. I'd avoid this unless you really enjoy these type of books. Overall, disappointing.

shay says

i have to admit i was a bit worried about this book when i got it home and noticed that all the reviews were from christian musicians and it was put out by a christian publishing company. fortunately i didn't feel like i was being preached at throughout the book. there were definitely some trite moments (like the use of "for goodness' sake) several places in the book, and the author REALLY likes similes which is highly annoying, but overall the book was okay.

the story was decent, but not well executed. it was written at a very simple level. there could have been much more backstory and that would have been a lot better. you don't really care much about the characters, which is a shame.

it's a quick read, which is nice. there was a lot of potential here, but it just wasn't fully realized.

also (and i don't want to give away the ending), but there is a bit of annoyingness where the author is obviously trying to reassure his christian audience of their faith and it seemed insulting to anyone who has done any research on ancient religion, etc. it was a small dig, but enough to turn me off.

Sarah Youngblood says

Well this is what I get for randomly picking up a book off the library shelf. I feel like Bronleewe read a Dan Brown novel, and decided he could write one just like it overnight. This book was poorly written, weak storyline, and had contradictions. He said April was thin and would eat ice cream sandwiches for lunch without gaining weight while everyone else did, but three chapters down the line said she felt guilty for weeks for buying a pint of Haagen-daaz at the store. Um, why? At least Dan brown's novels are full of historically correct information. If you don't have the skills to imitate someone, then don't!

What bugged me most about this book was how shallow the characters emotions were. If i was on a plane and the person next to me threatened the life of my child, i wouldn't just meekly sit there and be a Marvin Milktoast. There were so many examples of unrealistic reactions to situation. There should have been anger then fear, not just "okay dear". Another example of August having an unrealistic reaction was when a tooth was pulled out and he instantly responds with "Do your worst". I'm sorry, that is just stupid. Maybe in 10 minutes you will have courage for that, but I'm pretty sure you will be bloody and screaming there for a bit. I felt completely disconnected from the characters. They felt like pieces of cut out paper to me.

I was surprised to find out this is a trilogy. Maybe Bronleewe gets better, since this was his first book, but I am not willing to find out.

April Erwin says

This book blew me away. I sat down and read it straight through - until 4:30 a.m. When I set the book down, I couldn't wait to get Dad to read it.

A few years ago, when The DaVinci Code was first published, I read it and then talked Dad into reading it as well. We both agreed, Dan Brown was a master at suspense, plot twists and adrenaline rushes... but we hated what his message was all about. How can you love and hate a book at the same time?

Illuminated arrived with lots of hype that it was the next DaVinci Code and I have to admit, I just didn't know what to expect. They're right... it is the next DaVinci, but better. The book starts off with a bang and it never stops, not even once. It's intelligent, suspenseful and well researched. And the best part? When Matt makes his final reveal at the end of the book, I was not only surprised by his conclusions but thrilled. It is one of the smartest things I've read in a long time. Dad loved it too.

Move over Dan Brown... You have met your match.

dragynlady says

eh.

Rob says

What "National Treasure" did for the Declaration of Independence and what "Indiana Jones" did for the Ark of the Covenant, Matt Bronleewe has created a fun, brisk, adventure, centering around the notorious Gutenberg Bibles.

During a transatlantic flight from Germany to New York, archaeobibliologist "August Adams" is forced to decipher several illuminations from a recently acquisitioned Gutenberg Bible or his family will perish at the hands of a malevolent organization, whose ancient roots extend as far back to Johannes Gutenberg himself. Although, I consider this historical mystery/adventure Davinci-lite, "Illuminated", is an enjoyable summer read (well, it was summer when I read it). The dialogue can be a bit cheesy at times and "August's" precocious eight year old son, "Alex", can be a tad annoying; but if you can suspend your disbelief and you are interested in encrypted codes, and sinister secret societies (insert man, twirling a handlebar moustache) and a likeable action hero, who happens to love books (the dustier the better), then I recommend this book. I look forward to next "August Adams" installment, "The House of Wolves" when I need to escape reality for a brief spell.

David Schwan says

A fun read but full of questionable details. Two secret groups are chasing a secret coded in a set of Gutenberg Bibles. The initial part of the plot is probably the most improbable. We are given lots of confusing plot twists and it is not clear until the very end who the good versus bad guys are, the confusion seems due to poor writing. The characters are interesting.

C.J. Darlington says

Matt Bronleewe is a man of many talents. He's an accomplished music producer who's worked with the likes of Rebecca St. James, Plumb, Michael W. Smith and Leeland. He's penned or co-penned a number of top-of-the-charts hits. He was a founding member and guitarist for the band Jars of Clay. Now he's written Illuminated---a blockbuster thriller that could easily place him on the best-seller lists. With a National Treasure meets The Da Vince Code style, Matt blows out of the starting gate with this debut novel. "I love books," he told me. "I wanted to write a book about a book."

Like any good thriller, Illuminated immediately draws readers into August Adams' world. A former archeobibliologist, he's now a rare book scout who travels the world searching for valuable tomes. His thirst for adventure has led him into more than one scrape, and he's just about ruined himself financially. On Flight 1213 far above the Atlantic ocean, he starts up what he thinks is a casual conversation with his attractive seat mate Xandria Muro. August tells her he's on his way to New York to deliver his rarest find yet--a Gutenberg Bible. Single pages can fetch \$20-100K, and a complete book has been estimated to sell for 100 million if sold at auction today.

Soon however, Xandria turns extremely unattractive. She believes the Gutenberg holds the key to a treasure hidden for half a millennium. Not only does she want August to give her the Bible, she needs him to decipher the beautiful illuminations found on its pages. If he doesn't, Xandria makes it clear his eight-year-old son Charlie and ex-wife April (who is also an archeobibliologist working at the Library of Congress) will die.

And that's only within the first three chapters. Full of facts about Gutenberg, his Bibles, secret societies, and murderous villains, *Illuminated* takes readers on a wild ride. It's nonstop action from page one, but Matt doesn't neglect to give us background characterization of the major players (albeit in small doses). "I wanted to make a thinking person's film, but on pages," Matt further clarified in our interview. And that's exactly what he's done here. Even before talking to him I thought *Illuminated* could easily be next summer's blockbuster movie. Heavy on action and dialogue, it would translate well to the big screen. But it also works in book form. Sometimes you wonder if someone successful in one creative area (like Matt is in the music world) can succeed in another. This is one of those cases where the transition really works, perhaps because music and books are both powerful mediums for delivering truth.

Illuminated follows the path many novels have taken before--delivering a compelling story from a Christian worldview, but keeping things light on the spiritual side. There's definitely a huge respect for Scripture in the novel (thanks to the Gutenberg), but that's about as far as things go. Matt uses restraint when depicting some violent situations, but there is one scene involving a serial killer dismembering his victim that, although somewhat veiled, will unsettle some readers. The novel does wrap up rather quickly (a few threads felt somewhat abridged), but luckily we pick up hints of the sequel (titled *House of Wolves* according to Matt).

By the end of *Illuminated* you'll want to jump on Google and Wikipedia to find out what's fact and what's fiction, because Matt Bronleewe makes everything seem real. Does the Library of Congress really have secret passageways? Does the secret Order of the Dragon society exist today? Could the Gutenberg illuminations truly have double-meanings? Hmm . . . One fact you can take to the bank: We haven't seen the end of August, April and Charlie. A very good thing indeed.

Margaret Chind says

The endorsements for this book rave about it's quality and after reading the story I must admit that I agree fully! Bringing forth an adventurous story keeping you guessing as to who is the good guy and who is bad, this is a real page turner. It is said to be a mix between 24, Indiana Jones, and the LOTR and I can see that. I'd also throw in a little Tomb Raider, National Treasure, and the Librarian for good measure. There is one scene in the book that I would not recommend for under 13, but the rest is just plain fabulous. It's better than a movie and is in an easy to carry format. I cannot wait to break the cover of Matt Bronleewe's next *House of Wolves*, I'm sure it will prove to be just as exciting!

Janet says

Oh my gosh! I picked this up at a used book sale. It was great. The pace was really good for an adventure type book. Stayed up late to read - was late to work to finish it. The cover blurbs said this was a cross between National Treasure and DaVinci Code - they were right! I can't wait to read the other August Adams adventures. I don't want to give things away here but this book covered all the bases that I like - books,

mythology, history, action, a couple of dead bad guys, a twist - who is the real bad guy and a saved marriage with an amazing kid.
