



L-2011

Mark Gillespie

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What if the 2011 London Riots Had Never Stopped?

August 2011 - The London riots, coordinated by technology and social media, have brought the city to its knees. Buildings are burning. Shops are being looted. Homes and businesses are destroyed.

When the government and police fail, two alternative leaders emerge in a battle for the future soul of London.

Chester George - a masked man whose real identity is unknown, uses YouTube, punk rock and fierce intellect to spread the anarchy.

Sadie Hobbs - Reality TV star and blogger. Loathed and controversial, she urges 'normal' society to fight back against Chester George and the 'feral rats' destroying the city.

The fate of London hangs in the balance. And when the day of reckoning comes, hundreds of thousands of people, including sixteen-year-old Mack Walker, will descend upon the city for the final showdown and a day that London will never forget.

L-2011 Details

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Author : Mark Gillespie

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From Reader Review L-2011 for online ebook

Lilah says

L-2011 (Future of London) draws a dark and scarily realistic portrait of how easy it is for our civilization and contemporary society to make a detour in a closed end street full of violence, looting, horror, and unraveling. The plot was inspired by the real-life murder of Mark Duggan, a black man in London shot by the police in the summer of 2011 and the subsequent riots that escalate after a protest in Tottenham. As every piece of speculative fiction, it starts with the what-if question: what if the resentment, anger and suppressed negative energy had reached their breaking point and they had led to a riot of much larger proportions? What if years of muffled conflicts couldn't be silenced anymore? The short answer is: all hell breaks loose.

I'll admit I wasn't familiar with the real life events and the 2011 protests before opening that book. However, the author has done a great job at leading the reader into the story and depicting the different sides of the protests. It was easy to understand even without having followed the dramatic events of 2011. Half of the novel is written in a docu-fiction style in the form of television report transcripts, YouTube videos, social media tweets and blog posts. The other part revolves around a group of teenagers, their reaction, and involvement in the riots and looting. We meet white and Scottish upper-middle-class Mack Walker, a newcomer in London whose past is catching up with him and the new gang of friends he's been trying to impress. At first, they see the riot as an excitement, something that breaks their normal and grey routine. Over the course of the plot, we see the entire situation through their eyes, from the "shopping" to the YouTube videos and secret Blackberry messages to the blood chilling violence and destruction.

It is the 21st century so the fight, violence, looting and riots are no longer preserved for the streets. Social media is both a weapon of war and the only platform where social injustice can be discussed. The stakes get higher when Chester George, the anonymous speaker for the masses, the punk rock force of nature behind the Good and Honest Citizens moves the crowds of protesters with just a few short YouTube clips and a powerful calling. The reality star and blogger Sadie Hobbs pours oil on troubled waters, convinced that the "feral rats" must be exterminated, that the violence should be met with more violence by those she refers to as the "normal people". It is a matter of days and hours when the inevitable clash will happen, the fear burns faster even than the London buildings. The characters deal with their own demons, the limits of acceptable are pushed and it all leads to an explosive and completely unexpected finale.

I loved the straightforward style of the novel, the small details that get us into the story. The writing flows easily and Mark Gillespie develops characters with a strong presence, realistic, flawed, often insecure beneath their bravado. The story is not for the faint of heart and neither for those with delicate sensibilities. Plenty of horrible, hard to deal with scenes take place between the first act and the thrilling culmination. However, I'm grateful for that. Anything less would be too condescending to the reader. To spare them from the brutal realism of the situation would kill the plot or make it less effective. At the same time, I didn't feel like I was reading a book filled with disturbing violence for the sake of the shock value. As a matter of fact, some of the scariest parts were what we were never shown. Gillespie gives us enough visual clues and our imagination does the trick. That works very strong in one scene that doesn't last a long time and we don't get to see anything too graphic. Yet that moment haunts Mack until the end, feeding his sense of powerlessness and bringing him back to the events from his past he can never escape from.

Perhaps the most frightening are how easy such a situation could happen in real life, especially with the current political and social climate. Maybe it wouldn't be in such a short term or with more resistance from the authorities but it is as close to reality as it gets. In any case, it's a really thought-provoking piece of

fiction with a strong side of realism. As another reviewer pointed out, it was a coming of age tale and also an objective social study.

I enjoyed L-2011 a lot and would recommend it to anyone who likes smart contemporary and well-thought story with a gripping plot, strong conflicts, and characters. I look forward to reading its sequel, Mr. Apocalypse and get to know more of that author's other work.

Five Futuristic Stars.

Chantelle Atkins says

Having read and enjoyed The Outsider Tales by the same author, I downloaded this book the same day. The novel starts with 16 year old Scot Mack witnessing a protest outside the police station in Tottenham. We soon learn that Mack has been brought down to London by his parents after he was involved in some violence in Edinburgh, and also that the book is based around true life events; that of the shooting of Mark Duggan by the police in 2011. The protest soon evolves into the riots that shook Britain in 2011. As we all know, the riots only lasted a few days, but in this book the author has wondered what if...What if the riots didn't end after a few days, what if they went on and on? The plot then revolves around the exploits of four teens, Mack and the three Tottenham boys he has fallen in with. Coming from a middle class, white family, Mack feels he has to prove himself to his new gang, but he is also haunted by the violent events he was involved with in Scotland. Ultimately, he has to decide whether to listen to his parents, or follow his new friends into the heart of civil disobedience and chaos. I liked Mack immensely. In fact I liked and believed in all of the characters in this book. The plot moves at a steady pace, and the events, characters and dialogue are all highly believable. The book is in many ways a coming of age tale, but it also manages to adequately portray the simmering anger and resentment that led to the 2011 riots. I enjoyed the chapters which revolved around news reports and Twitter feeds, providing a vital backdrop of information on the mood of the nation at the time. As well as the teens, there are two other main characters whose views and actions drive the plot towards an intense climax. Chester George speaks for the oppressed masses and has become their spokesperson via social media. Meanwhile, minor celeb and blogger Sadie Hobbs (based somewhat on the controversial Katie Hopkins!) is encouraging people to stand up to the 'feral rats' destroying the city. With both 'leaders' urging their followers to amass at Piccadilly Circus on September the 1st, all Mack knows is that he has to be a part of whatever happens there...A brilliant book, and I am glad there is more to come in the series, as I need to know what happened next

James Marquis says

This is a very timely and intelligent read. I loved how the author really explains how a society can break down (especially with social media factored in). The plot moves along smoothly and the characters are developed well. I especially liked how the author includes television interviews...that's such a big part of the conversation anymore when it comes to politics and culture.

Annmarie Ryan says

Very fast read, not my cup of tea, more boring than annoying

Sophie Childs says

Fantastic!

A fast paced, evocative read that's scarily all too believable. The ending both ties things up neatly and leaves you desperate for more. Thoroughly recommended.

Sarah Marie Graye says

L-2011 (The Future of London) is told from the point of view of Mack - a white Scottish teenager - and his new London social group of black lads from a rough estate. His parents have moved down to London from Edinburgh to get him away from a bad crowd only for him to walk straight into one much worse.

Mixing TV news and political shows, Twitter feeds and reality TV in with standard prose gives a contemporary feel to the story and lifts it from just being about the lives of a group of teenagers and into the wider social context

My review is 4 stars because the ending didn't sit well with me. I can't go into detail without a massive spoiler, but the timing of a particular event meant the story didn't deliver what I feel it was promising to its readers.

Joan Barstad says

I was pleasantly surprised that I liked this book as much as I did.

Mark Gillespie made me feel like I knew the four main characters. He takes you through almost a month of rioting and looting, until Judgement Day. I'm claustrophobic, and I could "feel" all those people in Piccadilly Circus pushing into me.

I SURE DIDN'T SEE THE END COMING, EITHER. So, I hope there is another book to follow this one.

Charles Ray says

In the summer of 2011, riots broke out in London in response to the police shooting of a young black man under questionable circumstances. As the riots continue, two on-line personalities take to the airwaves, battling for the future of the city. Chester George, a masked man whose identity is unknown, uses YouTube to call for general anarchy by the 'real' citizens against corrupt authority, while Sadie Hobbs, a controversial blogger and TV reality star calls for the 'normal' citizens to rise up and take the city back from the 'feral' thugs.

While the shooting incident and subsequent rioting are actual events, from that point on, L-2011 by Mark

Gillespie, is pure alternate history. What if, it asks, the riots never stopped? It then follows events, from a national level to the viewpoint of Mack Walker, a 16-year-old Scot, newly arrived in London from Edinburgh, as he gets caught up in the course of events and joins the crowd for the final showdown that will determine the fate of a nation.

A twisted tale, L-2011 not only shows the sometimes-corrosive effect of social media, but delves into the psychological state of those affected. A chilling story that will cause you to think about the current state of the world we live in, and ask yourself, ‘what if this is not fiction, but reality waiting to happen?

Alex Breck says

Despite the fact that we all know the 2011 disturbances in London didn't lead to anything, this unsettling novel still has the power to shock. Having seen the riots over in Ferguson after the death of Michael Brown followed by the collective insanity of Trump and Brexit, the reader will wonder if L-2011, while being the stuff of a politician's nightmares, actually is as big an imaginary leap after all. I liked the fast-paced narrative and the clever use of the cutting-edge (at that time) phenomenon of social media and reality-TV personalities. Most of us will feel sympathy for Mack, the young Scot, adrift in London. The supporting cast is sketched with a light touch which works well enough here and the story picks up atmosphere and momentum towards a shocking climax.

Smashing Reads says

I downloaded this free (and it is currently free, by the way, on Amazon) book back in March, and by the time I got round to reading it – this past week – I had forgotten what it was about. I took a fleeting look at the cover (which I think had been updated since March), mistook it for a horror fantasy, and delved in.

Well, in a way, it's a fantasy but only in the fact that events didn't happen that way. Yes, L-2011 – if you hadn't realised – is all about the very real London riots of 2011. I wasn't in London, thankfully, but remember watching events unfold on social media, rather like the way Gillespie has cleverly weaved into the story.

Mack Walker has just moved to the UK capital to get away from events that happened back in Scotland. Trying to make new friends, he teams up with a quartet of young, working-class boys. They find themselves in the eye of the riot hurricane that's about to be unleashed, but Mack feels conflicted about joining in, especially when people start to get killed...

The author uses social media and television news coverage to great effect as the reader is shown how the wider inhabitants of London, and the UK, perceive the turn of events, with some aghast at the riots, others ecstatic. A couple of characters are obvious pastiches of real-life British ‘celebrities’ – one in particular, whom you could very well see doing what her fictional counterpart does in this story.

If you like UK-based dark speculative fiction, that gives you food for thought, then I would definitely recommend The Future of London series. I'm just waiting for payday to come round so I can purchase the remaining four books!

Bonnie Dale Keck says

Not kindle unlimited, might be permafree/free, didn't dislike it and it was possibly an 'okay' 3 not a 4 or in between the 2 but since for some reason amazon seems to think 3 is bad, picked 4 to mean more in the way I actually meant the rating to mean. Interesting story, didn't like it as well as the Fab {trilogy} I bought when it was 99 cents for all 3 books, and did get confused a bit in different places as to where it was leading and all, so yeah basically a 4.

The Revolution Will Be Televised, Retweeted And Liked

The London riots, coordinated by technology and social media, have brought the city to its knees. Buildings are burning. Shops are being looted. Homes and businesses are destroyed. Two alternative leaders have emerged in an online battle for the future soul of London.

Chester George - a masked man whose real identity is unknown, uses YouTube, punk rock and fierce intellect to spread the anarchy. Sadie Hobbs - Reality TV star and blogger. Loathed and controversial, she urges 'normal' society to fight back against Chester George and the 'feral rats' destroying the city. The fate of London hangs in the balance. And when the day of reckoning comes, hundreds of thousands of people, including sixteen-year-old Mack Walker, will descend upon the city for the final showdown and a day that London will never forget.

L-2011 is a 'smart, contemporary and gripping' alternate history novel that asks 'What if the 2011 London riots had never stopped?'

L-2011 (The Future of London)

Mr Apocalypse (The Future of London Book 2)

Ghosts of London (The Future of London Book 3)

Future of London Series (3 Book Series) -- The Future of London Box Set 1: L-2011, Mr Apocalypse, Ghosts of London

Kirsten McKenzie says

I've glimpsed the future in these pages, and I'm scared.

Mark Gillespie's book is set in London, just before the London Olympics, in an alternative narrative of "What if?". What if the police lost control? What if the public rose up? What if civil unrest was just too great for the police and armed forces to deal with.

What scared me most was that the narrative was entirely believable.

This was an excellent book. Written from the viewpoint of a teenaged boy who moves cities with his family to escape a troubled past. He makes new friends, but potentially not the sort of friends his parents would have hoped. So far, so good. A good 'coming of age' story...but then the troubles start. The riots. The protests.

So well written. Made me feel somewhat pleased that I don't live in London, or America!

Read it. It's a great book.

Looking forward to reading more of the author's work.

Tony Duxbury says

I'm not one for stories about teenagers, but this one was well done. An fictional tale set within real historical events. London bursts into riots over what is seen as an unlawful killing. At first, the anger is towards the police, but rapidly turns to other targets. There is looting and violence, which spread to other areas of the capital, including middle-class areas that have never seen this type of violence before. Most of the rioters are lashing out at society because of their deep-seated frustration and despair. These riots, which spread to cities all around England, virtually over night, brought to light a malaise within society that still hasn't been tackled. In the middle of it is Mack, newly arrived from Scotland. In the short time that he's been in London, he has been able to make a few friends. The riots excite these teenage lads and they follow the violence from one area to another. Mack is different from the others, as he comes from a stable middle-class background. Most of the rioters are lashing out at society because of their deep-seated frustration and despair. Mack and his friends are waiting for something to come out of these events, but they don't know what. It's a street revolution without any goal or direction, until one man emerges as the spokesman. They pin their hopes on him, to articulate what they can't. Mack is both excited by it all, but also scared because of a recent dark event in his own history. I found this to be very well written and it highlights the utter misunderstanding and lack of comprehension on both sides of the events.

Kristine says

I received this book from Instafreebie...a great site to find new authors ! I am a fan of dystopian fiction in general ; however, I've read enough for them to sometimes get predictable . Reading from the viewpoint of someone from the British Isles was interesting . Mack was from Scotland but moved to London with his parents. There was " trouble back home" ...part of the reason they moved.

Mr Gillespie handled themes of personal responsibility -or lack of- extremely well. I never felt that " moralistic " vibe that can drag down some stories . I also felt the different viewpoints of the media were set up well; he spaced the different voices well & I never was confused.

The mob scenes were descriptive but I could have used a little more...but I'm that kind of reader! The pacing was accurate & I never had to go back to reread something .

I am glad there is already a sequel...I plan to read it soon !

Marianne Reese says

I read the three book bundle. The first book was longer than it needed to be, and a bit slow. But, I was intrigued enough to keep reading. I wasn't sure what to expect with the second book, but was surprised at the turn of events. The second and third books picked up the pace to an acceptable level with plenty of action. There were a few plot twists in the third book that I wasn't expecting that kept me wanting to read more. The book ends with the hint of more to come.
