

The Billionaires' Club: A Novel

Jeff Nesbit

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The Billionaires' Club is a pulse-pounding political thriller in which a dogged journalist unearths national and international secrets.

In Jeff Nesbit's political thriller *The Billionaires' Club*, a journalist winds up at the center of an intricate web of stories with weighty consequences.

Thomas is an investigative journalist for the *Washington Post*. He's exasperated by the mundane assignments he receives; they're too often about garnering views from audiences who care more for juicy gossip than thought-provoking content. But then his predictable life is shaken by a cryptic message that provides him access to an unlimited amount of money from an anonymous source. Indeed, this paves the way for the most exciting adventure of his career.

Thomas is offered entry into an exclusive billionaires' club. But as he's pulled in different directions, Thomas also realizes that he has a lot to uncover, and the resulting story could disrupt American democracy. Still, nagging questions persist and drive his digging. He sets out to unmask the mysterious benefactor who provided a stranger with an uncapped amount of money to manage—and to uncover Russia's influence on the US's politics and economy. And the deeper he goes, the more he is compromised: Thomas is tailed, both locally and internationally, by people who monitor his every action while trying to ascertain his threat level.

As a hero, Thomas is consistent—driven by gut instinct and his hunger for truth. And Thomas isn't alone in his quest for answers: he's assigned a personal assistant, Dotty, whose entry is as mysterious as the uncapped checkbook of possibilities. She proves to be invaluable and thorough and is always a convenient step ahead with the research materials that Thomas needs.

But as it incorporates actual scandals into its storyline, including Russia's interference in the 2016 election and the war in Ukraine, the novel becomes bloated with political theories and hints of widespread corruption. Too often, Thomas's story is overwhelmed by these elements. And Thomas himself has a tendency to deviate from conversations to ponder information at length, or to explain the reasoning behind his next investigative steps. Interactions with top officials at the White House, some members of Russia's upper echelons, and financial experts lead to the delivery of additional information, ever-evolving possible answers, and searching considerations of topics like money laundering methods and cryptocurrencies. There's even a gamble at the identity of evasive Satoshi Nakamoto.

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GABRIELLA HARRISON (July 21, 2023)

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