



MJ-12: Inception

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A team of superhuman covert operatives emerges from the ashes of World War II in a Cold War-era paranormal espionage thriller from acclaimed genre-bender Michael J. Martinez.

It is a new world, stunned by the horrors that linger in the aftermath of total war. The United States and Soviet Union are squaring off in a different kind of conflict, one that's fought in the shadows, where there are whispers of strange and mysterious developments. . .

Normal people across the United States have inexplicably gained paranormal abilities. A factory worker can heal the sick and injured. A schoolteacher bends emotions to her will. A car salesman alters matter with a simple touch. A former soldier speaks to the dying and gains their memories as they pass on.

They are the Variants, controlled by a secret government program called MAJESTIC-12 to open a new front in the Cold War.

From the deserts of Nevada to the palaces of Istanbul, the halls of power in Washington to the dark, oppressive streets of Prague, the Variants are thrown into a deadly game of shifting alliances. Amidst the seedy underbelly of nations, these once-ordinary Americans dropped in extraordinary circumstances will struggle to come to terms with their abilities as they fight to carve out a place for themselves in a world that may ultimately turn against them.

And as the MAJESTIC-12 program will soon discover, there are others out there like them, some with far more malevolent goals. . .

MJ-12: Inception Details

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Author : Michael J. Martinez

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From Reader Review MJ-12: Inception for online ebook

Perry K says

A fun and entertaining read about an alternate cold-war history with powered individuals. The premise was believable, the characters varied and faithful to their roles and personalities, and the powers were unique and entertaining. I look forward to the next installment in this series.

Disclosure- The author was kind enough to let me read and advanced reading copy. Thank you sir!

Hanzel says

A book about powered individuals (called a Variant in the US), the twist no super heroics, no rejoicing, no parades, everything is done secretly even the Variants live their lives mundanely(although most of their time were used for training), the time, after world war II, and the onset of the cold war between the USA and USSR (for the new generation, USSR meant Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, the only country in my opinion that gave Uncle Sam a run for his own money).

This one reads like a spy-thriller with powers, hmmm a Jason Bourne with bullet proof body and eidetic memory (had to consult a dictionary for the word), where every fight is in the shadow or unseen!! Just think the CIA and KGB personnel running around the world with actual phenomenal abilities, one minute you see two ordinary individuals walking towards each other, then suddenly.....oh you thought you saw something.....

This is a good read, the author truly captured the time and the various nuances (ideology and etc. also one of the worst attitude of a person - a racist)during those bygone days.....

Book two here we go!!!!

Luke says

Although I enjoyed the premise and some of the writing, the persistent lack of period accurate research for vocabulary, attitudes, and just plain facts defeated any interest in this book, series, and author.

It's disappointing as almost all of the errors could have been resolved by some minimal googling.

Chris Berko says

Let me tell you how much I loved this book.

I was hankering for a spy/espionage story and was looking at old Tom Clancy (whom I have never read) and Robert Ludlum books for something to get into when I saw a review my Goodreads friend Hanzel wrote for this, raving about it, and it colored me intrigued. I bought it, read it, and thought of doing little else entertainment-wise until I just finished it. The whole X-men meets Mission Impossible thing led me to believe it was going to be a little bit comic bookish but instead this turned out to be an awesome and very

deliberately paced, mature piece of fiction. A lot of twists and turns, enough unanswered questions to propel the story into the next book, and just enough time spent with the characters outside of the action scenes to make them real for me, to the point where it mattered what was happening to them. That kind of connection matters to me and really makes a difference as to whether I am going to continue a series or not and I have to say I've already bought books two and three without a second thought. I'm glad I read this and it definitely exceeded expectations in every way.

Luther Siler says

I have gone on the record twice as being a big fan of the work of Michael J. Martinez. I have read all three of his previous books from his Daedalus trilogy, and I loved the latter two enough to rave about them on my blog. In the third one, he was kind enough to mention me in the afterword. I've never met the guy, but we interact occasionally on Twitter. He is my favorite current, working adventure writer. I have no idea if he's noticed my books or not.

Well, one way or the other, I lucked into an advance copy of the first book of his new series. The book is called MJ-12: INCEPTION, and the series is just called Majestic-12.

The Daedalus books were about... well, quite a lot of things, actually. Dimension-hopping hard-sci-fi steampunk space galleons with aliens on Venus and ancient magic affecting the real world. They were, uh, a bit hard to categorize, but what was clear about the entire series was that Martinez had a huge amount of fun writing them, particularly in the last installment of the series.

MJ-12: INCEPTION is a very, very, very different series from the Daedalus books. So much so, in fact, that were it not for his love of genrebending (or, perhaps, hatred of the idea of genre) bleeding through, I'd not have been able to guess that the books were by the same person. That said, I can find out quickly if you are interested in reading the book by asking a very short question: How do you feel about Cold War superheroes?

Okay. You just told yourself whether you should read this book or not. And if I have any influence, you should. MJ-12: INCEPTION isn't as madcap or as breathtakingly original as the previous series, but it's a convincing period piece set at the very beginning of the Cold War, right after the end of World War II. Harry Truman is a character, as is large chunks of his Cabinet, and if Martinez played fast and loose with any historical events other than a couple of obvious ones they got past me. It's not as fun as his previous series but I'm not sure that's a criticism, as "Cold War thriller" isn't necessarily a genre I need to be a lot of fun. It is, instead, a solid espionage story that links the emergence of superpowered people, known as Variants, to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings (well, Hiroshima, specifically) and then imagines what might happen if the United States and the Russians both had access to an expanding pool of metahumans. Along the way we get a cool look at mid-1940s tradecraft and a bit of Bond-level gadgetry.

It's not the Martinez I'm used to, but I've pre-ordered the hardcover despite getting the book for free. The rest of you can have it on September 6. I highly recommend it.

Karen Ford says

It's been my experience that the first book in a series should hold your interest as well as introducing the cast of characters, and this inaugural novel managed to do both. A mysterious force, found by both the Americans

and the Nazis (then stolen by the Russians), is sending out periodical bursts of energy that is transforming certain humans into X-Men like metahumans, each of them with a different power. The U.S. locates some of these enhanced humans and quarters them at Area 51, training them to become operatives to perform sensitive missions for the government. These metahumans must overcome their distrust of each other, their handlers and their Soviet counterparts to investigate how advanced the Russian program is when one of its founders reaches out and asks to defect. The setting of just after World War II and the start of the Cold War is fresh, and the use of historical figures such as Truman and James Forrestal, who was linked to the MJ-12 documents that purportedly dealt with the investigation and cover up of UFOs, is used perfectly. As the novel moves along, you start to care more and more (with one exception) for the American agents, and there are more than enough sub plots and conspiracies to get one ready for the next installment in the series. My shout out goes to Maggie, the female member of the team, who quickly shows that she us more than a match for the men both in training and out in the field where she keeps a very cool head and doesn't hesitate to use her enhancements or her gun if needed.

Gökçe says

Süper kahramanlar gizli servislerin emrinde olsaydı ne olurdu sorusuna cevap arayan bir roman MJ-12: Inception. Açıkçası daha heyecanlı olmasın bekliyordum ama yazarın anlatımında seçtiği yöntem yüzünden zor okundu. Birden fazla bakış açısı, tam tamamlanmayan hikayeleri ile okumayı zorlaştırdı. Bakılabilecek kadar fazla yapılabilecek daha fazla şey olabilir. İkinci kitapta tanrıların anlatılmayacağı için daha fazla şey olabilir bekliyorum. Çizgiroman okuyanlar için çok yenilikçi değil fakat tavsiye ederim.

Tracey says

MJ-12: Inception is the first novel in an early Atomic Age, paranormal spy series by Michael J. Martinez, author of the Daedalus series. It opens with a devastating post WWII situation during a routine night patrol in the American sector of Berlin. Only Lieutenant Frank Lodge survives the ambush, but he emerges changed. A few months later in Hiroshima, U.S. Navy Lt. Danny Wallace investigates an anomaly given top secret priority. In the tunnels below the wreckage of a hospital, Wallace discovers a phenomenon of intense white light thought to have a connection with the detonation of the A-bomb. This light is believed by an elite few to be linked to the changes experienced by several unsuspecting Americans. U.S. officials call these people Variants; normal people who have been spontaneously endowed with unique abilities that they are not sure how to control and don't fully understand. President Harry S. Truman green lights a highly classified agenda designed to contain, control, and possibly exploit these metahumans' abilities and, in doing so, Operation Majestic Twelve is born.

The main characters in this story are feared because they possess paranormal powers. It's all too easy to believe that our government would go to great lengths to keep their existence a secret. It's also conceivable that they would immediately try to use them as spies. Martinez brilliantly introduces the U.S. government's first paranormal team, Frank, Cal, Ellis, and Maggie, by revealing their bios via confidential reports, and by narrating in the POVs of the Variants themselves. The story follows them through their military quarantine and training, as they learn to control their abilities and work as a unit. I was fascinated by the psychological impact that becoming a metahuman under the government's influence had on each of the Variants.

Martinez also takes the time to detail some of the social injustices experienced by his diverse cast of characters in this Cold War era tale. I was outraged for Cal, the African American factory worker who is definitely my favorite character. His interactions with the bigoted Ellis alternately made me uncomfortable

and frustrated by the lack of justice in the world. Through it all, Cal maintains his compassionate nature and I never stopped rooting for him. Maggie, the school teacher who can manipulate people's emotions, is the most terrifying. Her lack of deep emotional commitment or connection to anyone makes her truly scary. Martinez achieves a perfect balance of delving just deep enough into each character to give the reader a detailed understanding while still leaving a tantalizing amount of information open for exploration in future novels in the MAJESTIC-12 series.

Martinez is truly a gifted writer in that MJ:12 Inception has a distinct and utterly different flavor than his previous series. Although I only know about organizations like the CIA from books, movies and literature, his portrayal of the inner workings of government programs seems authentic. I enjoyed reading the confidential reports written from the perspective of top officials in the CIA. Martinez, a master at genre blending, has created an exciting new series by mixing a pinch of James Bond to a dash of the X-Men and then combining that with a dose of politics and old-fashioned cloak and dagger espionage.

With MJ-12 Inception, Martinez weaves an intense tale of patriotism, Cold War politics, the U.S. spy network, and the nuances of human relationships which I simply couldn't put down

Beth Cato says

The Cold War becomes even more chilling as super-powered Americans are trained to become super-spies in Martinez's new alternate-history thriller. It's morally-complex, intense, and so steeped in the 1940s, you can smell the cigarette smoke.

Fresno Bob says

fast-paced alt history with "people with powers", if you like "Declare" by Tim Powers, or "The Milkweed Triptich" by Ian Tregellis, you'll like this. If you liked this, you should read those!

Alli says

Excellent spycraft and it gave me a lot to think about in regards to writing alt history. Obviously this is extremely well researched, and with intermittent "reports," it feels authentic in the way alternate history should.

Maggie easily stands out as my favorite character, and I think she has some of the most interesting development, but Frank, Danny, and Cal are all great and I can't wait to see what happens in the next installment of this series.

Bianca Scharff says

This book was great. While reading all I could think was this is X men for grown-ups but don't ever say that around an X men fan because they will school you on X-men and how serious it can be. Otherwise still great, the powers this group of chosen people have are unique and interesting. Especially as you read on and watch

those powers develop showcasing how even the powers you thought to be the weakest can actually turn out to be the stronger more scary powers. This book kept me reading until the end a classic spy game with a revamped American twist. My only complaint which is tiny is that I wished the ending tied up nicely. I know it was leaving everything open ended for the next book but I really felt a lack of closure especially when it came to the death of a certain special character. Otherwise I recommend it.

Michael Underwood says

“X-Men meets Mission: Impossible. Martinez takes a concept as simple as ‘Super spies that are actually super’ and comes away with a hit. Filled with compelling, well-rounded characters, MJ-12 is my new favorite spy series.”

—Michael R. Underwood, author of *Geekomancy* and the *Genrenauts* series

Crittermom says

MJ-12 Inception is an ambitious fantasy spy-fi novel set during the early years of the Cold War. Normally I’m a bit leery of stories where the characters have super-powers. I believe that authors have to make a good justification for the existence of unusual powers. Michael J Martinez exceeded my expectations, by not only making an unusual and well-done argument, but also by leading readers to believe that there may be an ultimate cost related to the event that transformed these distinct individuals.

There is no visible pattern behind who is touched or what power will emerge. It is only natural that both sides see them as assets, and potential threats. For now, the US government is training these variants as agents, but that is not to say that their government won’t turn on them in time.

The characters themselves are varied, and their personalities and history play a role in how they approach their abilities and how their abilities change them. Like the teacher who acquires the ability to manipulate emotions and the soldier who acquires both the memories and skills of the dead, it is impossible to remain unaffected. Even the ability to heal is a double-edged sword.

MJ-12 Inception is both a complete stand alone adventure and a thrilling introduction to a richly reimagined Cold War spy-fi series. I eagerly await Michael J Martinez’s next novel featuring the Majestic 12.

5/5

I received a copy of MJ-12 Inception from the publisher and netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

—Crittermom

Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says

Review: MJ-12: INCEPTION
by Michael Martinez

I am so excited that MJ-12: INCEPTION is the first in a new series by author Michael Martinez. This novel

is totally engrossing, and will appeal to any readers who love science fiction, history, conspiracy theories, espionage thrillers, and riveting writing with well-delineated characters and heart-in-mouth suspense. Back in 1945, at the U.S. Atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, an anomaly was “created,” directly below the atmosphere point at which the bomb exploded. Meanwhile, Nazi scientists predicted such, and secured subterranean chambers under the former Reich Chancellery in Berlin (even though that portion of Berlin was by then under Soviet control). They also managed to create conditions to which a similar anomaly appeared. As the years roll forward, the U.S. “captures” the Hiroshima anomaly and installs it at Groom Lake in Nevada: Area 51. The Soviets transfer theirs to a neuropsychological institute in Leningrad. Both sides battle for supremacy in understanding and utilizing individuals who have been tracked, targeted, and changed by the anomalies: “Variants.” Many in both governments fear the Variants' divergent superpowers, and many others see them as future superweapons. Very few except Lieutenant Commander Daniel Wallace any longer recognise them as humans.
