

A System So Magnificent It Is Blinding

Amanda Svensson

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Scribe (Sep 20, 2022)

Softcover \$20.00 (544pp)

978-1-957363-11-0

In Amanda Svensson's novel *A System So Magnificent It Is Blinding*, a shocking secret forces three siblings to reevaluate their places in their family and the world.

Sebastian, Matilda, and Clara are triplets, but they have never been close. This is reflected in their life paths: grieving Sebastian joins a research institute in London, anxiety-ridden Clara escapes to Easter Island after losing her job, and hotheaded Matilda goes on vacation in Sweden with her partner and stepdaughter. The trio grows even more distant when their mother shares a terrible secret about the circumstances surrounding their births. And at the enigmatic institute, Sebastian comes to suspect that there is far more to his family's troubles than meets the eye. But no matter how far they go, the triplets find reminders of their connections to each other—reminders so intense that it makes them question the power of nature versus nurture, and even the fabric of reality itself.

Each sibling is surrounded by others, yet all feel isolated by their confusion and sorrow over life's vagaries. They encounter strange and passionate people who bring new perspectives on their problems and fears. Bad decisions feel insurmountable to those who make them, requiring time and advice from outsiders. Navigating the strangeness of their situations—Clara befriends a former child star and the not-leader of a not-a-cult, while Sebastian is banned from asking about the ultimate goal behind his own work—the siblings work to recover buried shreds of reality. The pieces do not come together until one tense, high-stakes night at Sebastian's workplace, where he finds the answers he's been looking for—or at least, the only answer he has ever needed.

A System So Magnificent It Is Blinding is a dynamic novel about methods of coping in a world where nothing is certain.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September / October 2022)

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