



The Edge Of Madness

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Cyber-warfare: the kind that brings nations to their knees, switching off energy lifelines, crippling the financial markets, starving leaders of authority.

An old Russian nuclear reactor goes into Chernobyl-style meltdown while, on the other side of the world, the US Eastern Seaboard is plunged into darkness. No one knows - yet - who is responsible for the chaos.

Hidden from view of the rest of the world, an extraordinary meeting of the US President, the Russian President and the British Prime Minister is about to take place. They have the weekend to save the world - and they must do it alone.

Something serious is going on in Beijing. Military manoeuvres. Troops on the streets. It's as though the Chinese are preparing for the final thrust against their old enemies, bringing them to their knees in a war that will see not a single shot being fired.

The Edge Of Madness Details

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Author : Michael Dobbs

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From Reader Review The Edge Of Madness for online ebook

Bev Taylor says

in 2 days the world will be destroyed - can anyone stop the bloodshed?

a harry jones thriller

it begins with small things - power failures; blackouts; transport breakdowns; a plane that falls out of the sky

these r just warnings - a test for what is to come

a real cyber war

uk, usa and russia against china. how far do these presidents and pms go to save their countries - and even how far do they go to get there?

retire them to an old scottish tower and u will find out

bev

Haider Hussain says

Horrible story-telling. Cyber warfare was the theme, but there was no plot. After a couple of dozen pages, Dobbs was completely lost. Buildup was slow, filled with irrelevant dialogue between characters, and the ending one of the most uninteresting I've ever read.. Total waste!

Kelv says

Fantastic idea that initially had parallels with 1984 - only to try and be a political thriller = disappointment. The book where everyone is hacking everyone and war is brought on was all set up.

Harry is no Jack Reacher and he came across as a mere country bumpkin who was lucky more than good. Mark was a bit of a war mongering puppet even though he is Prime Minister - very unbelievable.

Convenient ending where someone somewhere stops the steam roller and everyone is saved - - rubbish.

Jon says

Formulaic, clichéd stereotyped characters and pretty implausible in places. Not one of my favourite Dobbs books.

Matt says

Dobbs thrusts Harry Smith back into the fray with another high-octane thriller, filled with politics and intrigue. As the world rests on its laurels, deep within the upper echelon of the Chinese Government a war is in the making. There are no missiles, no guns, and certainly no bombs. Even without active hostages, everyone is at risk; it's a cyber-war. Deep in a Scottish castle, and under a veil of extreme secrecy, the British Prime Minister hosts the US and Russian presidents; a veritable 21st century Potsdam Conference. Trying to determine how to stop a cyber-attack by China, in which everyone is vulnerable because of world reliance on technology, remains at the forefront of the discussion. Each leader has a trusted deputy with them, Harry Smith acting in such a capacity for the PM. When outward acts of violence and military build-up begin appearing on television, the three leaders know they must do something, but remain unsure how to strike at the core and ensure they are successful. As they ponder, a nuclear reactor within the UK is about to make Chernobyl pale in comparison. In these new-age wars, little can be done to stop the aggressors, whose religion is silicon-based with followers facing towards the motherboard.

Dobbs' idea is quite good, as the world still simmers from the ongoing wars with excessive price tags. As the world becomes even more reliant on electronics, it is no stretch to think that those who control the cyber world would have the upper hand. That being said, the approach and delivery of the book leave much to be desired. The characters, with all their political might, seem neutered of any abilities, almost damsels in distress. Even the conversations and plotting seems watered-down and less than believable. The ending not only does a 180 in a matter of pages, but lessens the impact the entire novel built towards. I can only hope that such an approach can be revised by others (or Dobbs) down the road, giving the plot and characters the teeth they so badly need. One interesting side story, though only two books into the series, Dobbs's desire to personalise Queen Elizabeth II is highly humourous. While many see her as a detached monarch, Dobbs paints her in such a way as to be highly compassionate and opinionated. One can only wonder if he has a fan base within Buckingham Palace for this portrayal.

Kudos, Mr. Dobbs for this curious story. I was hooked and intrigued by the theme, but hoped for some stronger character support throughout.

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<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

Tim Laven says

Sorry but I did not complete the book because I was not prepared to wait for the plethora of story lines at the beginning to make any sense.

The style of writing for me was too much involvement and intrigue versus own comprehension - maybe I was wrong?

Kay Smillie says

I stumbled upon the Harry Jones series about two years ago and have been reading them in a non chronological pattern. Have now read them all bar the first in the series. This is the second in the series and whilst not as good, in my opinion, as the later books, it is still a thoroughly enjoyable romp.

With his insight to the workings on the world of politics, Michael Dobbs, may use his imagination to spice things up, but I reckon his novels are not without a strong element of truth.

Ray Smillie

Mic says

Nice idea, horrible execution

Graham says

The concept behind the book was good - Chinese govt backed hackers throwing the western world into chaos through nefarious manipulation. The characters in the story tended to be a little too stereotypical for me. I enjoyed the book but I felt it could've been much more interesting with just a little more thought.

Cliff says

I gave up this book half way through as I could not be bothered to waste my time reading anymore of the tosh. The story supposes that the Chinese intend to bring the West and Russia to their knees by a sustained cyber attack which is going to knock out all computers in the countries attacked and in the words of one of the protagonists 'take the world back to the feudal system'. I have nothing against disaster scenarios, provided they are based on at least a modicum of fact. This idea is just stupid. For a start, the Chinese leaders are nothing like the technocrats that now rule the country in their neat dark suits. The leader is, for heaven's sake, called 'Mao (not Tse-Tung however). I am sure those leaders are fully aware that is totally not in the interests of their country to desptroy the West. They have an economy growing by the year which is sustained by the sale of goods of all kinds to the West. It would be cutting off their noses to spite their face to destroy the West and I am sure that they are as aware of that as I am. Not a good book.

Karen says

It doesn't seem to matter how adamant I am about the subject matter that I just don't like, there just always seems to be "that book" that comes along and shoots all my prejudices out of the water. THE EDGE OF MADNESS is about cyber-war. The threat of annihilation of the free world at the hand of a shadowy threat, hiding behind computer terminals, in darkened rooms, hidden deep in the new Big Bad Evil nation. The nameless, faceless, threat - as the blurb of this book puts it "no guns, no missiles, no vapour trails stretching

like accusing fingers across the skies".

THE EDGE OF MADNESS sees an unlikely gathering deep in the wilds of Scotland. The location where the Prime Minister of Britain pulls together the leaders of Russia and the United States when Britain realises that there is a massive cyber-attack being rolled out against all of them. Sending nuclear reactors into meltdown, crippling financial markets, playing with military hardware guidance systems, deep inside medical systems; the threat is all the more terrifying as it is completely faceless, completely silent and seemingly impossible to find or track. There is only this small, highly secretive gathering of these world leaders and their closest advisors between shut-down and survival.

As is the way with these sorts of thrillers it seems to come down to one man to save the day. In this case, Harry Jones - SAS-trained, resourceful, unorthodox, man on the spot.

It's a really interesting premise that's propounded in this book - cyber-attack, one rogue nation (in this case China) against the once unlikely partnership of Britain, Russia and the USA. The scenario is really good - and the evil (in the person of one Chinese General) is ramped right up to the maximum; the good guys hampered by their own petty squabbles and rats in all their ranks. Possibly what is best about the entire nature of the "threat" in this book is that it all seems feasible, even possible. Somehow you can sort of see this one working as the author as laid it out. And that's from somebody who normally finds these sorts of cyber-threat books cause more groans and eye-rolling per page than just about any other sort of thriller.

Unfortunately, the early promise in THE EDGE OF DARKNESS fizzled out rapidly at the end. It was always really really difficult to see how Harry was going to stop this particular evil, deep inside an impenetrable nation, but when the resolution sort of all fudged into a cloud of confusion and fires and rushing around in Scotland, whilst seemingly unconnected events in China sorted everything else out, it was disappointing to say the least.

Jim Thornton says

A quick read. Builds on the last novel and expands the Harry Jones character. An interesting romp which could have been improved with more detail about the plotters and their activities, and a bit less about Harry and the American president. Nevertheless, whilst I feel that Michael Dobbs was better in "FU" territory, this was a good read with some credible tenets to the plot.

Lara says

Page-turning thriller. The Tony Blair-like Prime Minister gathers the American and Russian leaders to a secret meeting in a Scottish castle. The ensuing novel is then a mix of country-house mystery and the threat of international cyber-attack which came across as all too frighteningly possible. Taking with a pinch of salt that world leaders could shake off their minders, I found this an engrossing mix of character and an exposure of how very vulnerable the world is to cyber attack.

Nigel says

I am a fan of Dobbs and while the premise for this story was a bright idea, probably even more relevant today, the ending seemed rushed and contradictory. I was also dissatisfied with Russian connection. I still think there is plenty of scope for Harry, an interesting hero who's adventures I will continue to follow.

Mieczyslaw Kasprzyk says

This is an easy read and at times has the ability to keep one on the edge of one's seat but... Ah! The but is a big one. The scenario is simple; the British get wind of the threat of cyber war initiated by China. They call a clandestine meeting of the US and Russian presidents to discuss tactics in an isolated Scottish castle. Meanwhile the Chinese have actually initiated said cyber war... edge of seat.

But...

What a pathetic bunch of individuals the politicians are! How lacking in political will, in the ruthlessness that such people must have acquired on the climb up to power! The story becomes a boring talking shop, a round of circuitous arguments that belong in a school staffroom rather than such high-powered venues. The book takes on cliche after cliche until one almost wants to abandon it...

There was so much potential here!
