



Car Wars

Mike Brogan

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Car Wars is a timely mystery thriller about revenge, espionage, and corporate rivalry that's taken to a deadly extreme.

Terrorists threaten America's electric car industry in Mike Brogan's thriller *Car Wars*.

Madison is ecstatic when her advertising agency wins a contract with the car manufacturer preparing to release the XCar, a vehicle with a revolutionary, energy-efficient battery. But her excitement turns to horror when XCars begin driving themselves off the road, injuring and even killing their owners. Madison finds herself in the crosshairs as the countdown to the deadliest attack of all begins.

Car Wars is a fast, exciting journey through the intersecting worlds of car manufacturing, advertising, and corporate espionage. Technical explanations regarding the car's technology and the advertising business are thorough enough to flesh out the concepts without becoming tedious. *Car Wars* keeps one foot in reality, making its premise all the more unnerving.

The story is tense and engaging. Scenes of the XCar surges are especially nerve-wracking; it's impossible to tell who will emerge unscathed and who won't. However, language repeats, and the book uses italics in an unnecessary way. Major developments are followed by rounds of redundant phone calls as the news is shared among the bad guys. Light descriptions of each location enhance the narrative without weighing it down; the dingy dives where the bad guys meet are especially well-rendered.

Some characters are underdeveloped, and several go on tangents, flashing back to traumatic events that have little bearing on the story in general. Madison is a smart, likable lead, but after the halfway point, she contributes little to the plot. The story devotes much more time to the villains, who are all despicable and fully realized characters, though their backstories are filled with uncomfortable implications, including surviving child abuse. This is contrasted with Madison's happy childhood and supportive, loving parents. Unsavory characters are often singled out for being overweight, while a Muslim villain who expresses a desire to kill "infidels" is a questionable addition.

The final attack is set up well. It results in a nail-biting confrontation, even though it is ultimately resolved off-screen, with the resolution referenced in brief in the epilogue. The people responsible for the XCar surges are dealt with in a satisfactory manner, and Madison and her friends experience closure.

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EILEEN GONZALEZ (August 21, 2019)

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