

Deadly Cold

Jed O'Dea

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A fast-paced, politically savvy potboiler, Deadly Cold is a quick and engaging read.

A series of apocalyptic natural disasters plunges Earth into a deep freeze in Jed O'Dea's *Deadly Cold*. Two fugitive scientists, Maya and Tucker Cherokee, may hold the key to the survival of the human species, but they themselves are hunted by a psychopath whose strongest desire is to kill. Meanwhile, the nations of the world scabble for dwindling resources in a world no longer capable of supporting its human population.

Featuring a parade of disasters and violent conflicts both international and small scale, *Deadly Cold* arrives well timed with current fears about climate change. Action scenes come as thick and fast as though the book were a film script, helping to maintain a rapid pace and high tension. Though it features research scientists, it avoids jargon and technicality in favor of derring-do.

Certain aspects of the plot, including a revolutionary new power generator and one character's psychic abilities, don't quite integrate into the main stream of the story by the end of the book. However, they do make good scenery, and the broad narrative surrounding the planetary freeze is compelling. Changes in the world political scene, including the machinations of several major governments, are admittedly over the top, but make sense within their context.

From a technical standpoint, the book's writing style is generally awkward, often using passive voice ("A military coup ensued") and repeating key words multiple times within the same paragraph. Several chapters conclude with a sentence reiterating the catastrophic effect that the cold weather has on world politics and everyday life, the result being somewhat melodramatic ("it was another ... impact of the deadly cold weather," "The deadly cold weather had claimed two more victims," etc.). However, the story is engaging enough that many readers will be willing to forgive these transgressions. The book's structure is very sound, and the story quite riveting despite stylistic weaknesses.

Though most characters tend to act as vehicles for the action, they are generally distinct, individually well-established, and interesting. This is particularly true in the case of the insane villain, a living "ghost" whose name is never revealed. In keeping with the story itself, this character is flamboyant, delighting in destruction for its own sake. In a less exuberant book, he might seem implausible, but the plot already revels so unabashedly in unlikely coincidences that the villain simply ends up adding to the fun.

Any action fan will find *Deadly Cold* a good way to spend a couple of hours. It's a quick, enjoyable, refreshing romp through a well-realized natural and political apocalypse. Similarities to both Tom Clancy and Clive Cussler are strong enough that *Deadly Cold* is a good read-alike for both authors.

ANNA CALL (February 2, 2015)

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