



Edge of the Kingdom: A Mind and Heart Altering Interactive Novel

William Walker

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Edge of the Kingdom is an interactive, instructive work with much to say about truth and meaning.

In interactive, genre-defying prose, William Walker's *Edge of the Kingdom* presents a personal worldview that urges seeking truth and love.

The theological perspective of the work is that God is contained within every person. Only awareness—perhaps fueled by substance use—is necessary to bring God to the fore, it claims. The work urges people to love each other, discover the true nature of the divine, and embrace positivity.

Simultaneously, the book tells the story of two star-crossed lovers: an active military man and an alluring stripper. The combination of these two narrative streams is designed to be didactic but results in awkward reading.

Authorial intent is made clear from the beginning of the work, which encourages the audience to smoke weed while reading in order to reach the same high that is crucial within the less-than-a-day-long romance between the main characters, Jack and Trinity. Though sexual attraction brings them together initially, they forge their more intimate connection through long, convoluted conversations they have while high.

These interactive qualities of the text are interesting, if they ultimately make it difficult to become truly immersed in the story. Characters lack depth. They talk a great deal—about politics, religion, and ontology—but are often interrupted by omniscient narration, with a directing, overarching voice urging that the audience partake in a particular playlist or movie to achieve true understanding of the work.

Such constant interruptions are very distracting. The book's heavy use of pop culture references—from shows like *Seinfeld* and *Friends*—date the work considerably, and little is truly revealed about the characters and their inner lives through these side excursions.

Dialogue is stilted and pedantic, mostly functioning to deliver revelations beyond the characters' lives—thoughts concerning the dual nature of God (male/female, dark/light), or the methods by which one might reach the edge of the kingdom. Over the course of the night, Jack and Trinity engage with topics including climate change, Trump, faith, and death.

Writing is simple and indulges in clichés. People within the book have hearts of gold and find love at first sight. Descriptions are infrequently evocative, with the text focusing on driving home its message rather than on perfecting delivery.

At the end of the book, the story proffers a few surprises that reference earlier moments, but the twists—which feel foreshadowed by the bolded, italicized text that announces intents throughout the work—are anti-climactic.

Edge of the Kingdom is an interactive, instructive work with much to say, if it does trip over its own conventions.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (November 6, 2017)

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