



On Edge

Albert Ashforth

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Afghanistan's geography, traditions, and tumultuous history are vividly portrayed in this military thriller.

In Albert Ashforth's exciting and intriguing adventure mystery, *On Edge*, an army investigator comes out of retirement to investigate a friend's tragic death in Afghanistan.

Alex Klear is on a special-ops assignment in Kabul, quietly seeking the truth behind Colonel Peter Hansen's supposed killing. As he moves across the country, he butts heads with various military personnel, renews a friendship with the colonel's widow, and stays one step ahead of potential death, all the while trying to cajole his miffed fiancée.

The author's military background lends great credence to his expressive text: "Kabul is a nice city—if you're willing to overlook the frequent Taliban attacks, the traffic chaos, the many military checkpoints, the occasional IED explosions, and the unpredictable green-on-blue killings." The many characters and authentic dialogue are realistically rendered. Klear himself presents as contemplative and daring, and his speech has a sardonic edge. When told he's having lunch with military brass, he quips, "I'll make sure I use the right fork."

The plot unfolds at just the right pace, with several surprising and suspenseful turns, usually involving the mysterious Captain Leslie Corley, whose exact motives Klear is unable to ascertain. Afghanistan's geography, traditions, and tumultuous history are vividly portrayed, particularly in the case of descriptions of the Korengali Valley area and its inhabitants. Background information is cleverly introduced through Klear's jaunty narrative.

A glossary of military terms proves useful, and further ensures that audiences do not have to be familiar with the military to get drawn into this gripping story. Pashto terms peppered throughout make the text all the more authentic.

Albert Ashworth's *On Edge* features an appealing and familiar hero in Alex Klear, and should prove exciting to those drawn to adventure stories with some elements of mystery.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (Fall 2016)

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