

## RATS

**Joe Klingler**

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*High-tech gadgets and a thrilling motorcycle rescue highlight this explosive plot.*

*RATS* by Joe Klingler immediately launches into the world of high-tech gadgetry and how that technology impacts the characters' lives and decisions. The first chapter pushes full-tilt into the wild ride to come with an opening motorcycle scene that begins the thrill ride. Klingler draws the story from a true-life event of a boy finding an unexploded ordnance and injuring himself by repeatedly throwing it against a wall.

Alaska is the last frontier and the meeting place for Corporal Claire Ferreti, an army sniper, and an enigma known as the Demon, proves to be an exciting experience for everyone involved. Someone is blowing up the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. How are they doing it and who are they? When tables turn, Claire has to put her faith in those she is hunting. Mixed into all of this is a twelve-year-old boy who finds one of the *RATS*, and gives them their first clues. When the threads coalesce, readers should be ready for an explosive conclusion.

It is clear that Klingler knows technology. He seamlessly inserts all manner of high-tech contraptions into this book. Strangely enough, the most exciting gadget is a motorcycle. One of the most thrilling scenes involves the rescue of the unconscious Corporal Ferreti on the cycle. "He lifted her onto the bike and duct-taped her boots to the passenger pegs. Then he mounted in front and ran big loops of tape just below her armpits and around his chest. ... He pulled her head forward and put tape around his helmet and hers to hold her in place above his right shoulder."

At around 450 pages, this book does come in rather long, even for a thriller. There are periods of excessive dialogue. While the purpose of including two characters named Billy is somewhat clear, unnecessary confusion results and requires one to stop reading to clarify which "Billy" is being referred to. Also, the younger Billy is twelve years old, yet he often comes across as younger.

One quality of the book that stands out is the juxtaposition of the Alaskan wilderness and the jungles of Vietnam. Even during the summertime in Alaska, the sparseness of the environment is detailed, as opposed to the lush jungle scenes in Vietnam. This gives the book a well-rounded feel as the intensity ratchets up.

Fans of international thrillers and espionage books will enjoy this novel, especially those who have some interest in the Vietnam War or technology.

LYNN EVARTS (July 16, 2014)

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