Clarion Review

Thriller

This Way Madness Comes
Robert Alan
Cycad Press
978-0-9817962-4-6
Five Stars (out of Five)

After World War II, the USA and the USSR established themselves as two superpowers. They entered into a tense rivalry that remained equal by matching each other's nuclear weapons proliferation. This strategy is called MAD—Mutual Assured Destruction—and means that each rival has enough nuclear weaponry to destroy its enemy and, thus, themselves. The doctrine of MAD was part of the Cold War between the two countries during the second half of the twentieth century; a time when each country sought to gain an edge over the other.

Robert Alan's novel, *This Way Madness Comes*, winner of the 2010 International Book Awards and 2011 National Indie Excellence Awards for Best Fiction Thriller/Adventure, begins in the 1970s during the Cold War. Dr. Alexi Truskov, a Soviet scientist, discovers another type of MAD principle: Matter Antimatter Duality. His discovery appears to be the answer to all of the world's problems. Truskov believes global equality and peace could be achieved through the new MAD's production of limitless energy. The Soviet government, however, sees Truskov's MAD as a weapon that could give them an advantage over other superpowers.

Working at a base in Siberia, Dr. Truskov and his team are enlisted by the Soviet Union to design a weapon based on the new principle, code-named GRASER. Like King Lear in Shakespeare's tragedy, Truskov is torn between his duty to the human race and his obligation to his homeland. He must decide whether to save humanity from the weapons of mass destruction his government and military want him to construct, or to make grave sacrifices for the betterment of mankind. The decision could drive him to madness and throw into motion events never dreamed of by anyone in the 1970s.

The author's background with the United States Air Force and the aerospace industry lends an air of legitimacy to his writing, much like that of Tom Clancy and Nelson DeMille. Alan sets an incredible pace that will keep readers riveted. He effortlessly puts them into the

thick of his epic, movie-like novel; yet there is no authorial hand of intrusion. Readers will forget they are reading a book as they are swept away in Alan's imagination, and will find themselves clamoring for the author's next novel.

Lee Gooden