



The Cobra

Frederick Forsyth

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An extraordinary cutting-edge thriller from the *New York Times*-bestselling grandmaster of international suspense.

Meticulous research, crisp narratives, plots as current as today's headlines-Frederick Forsyth has helped define the international thriller as we know it. And now he does it again.

What if you had carte blanche to fight evil? Nothing held back, nothing off the table. What would you do? For decades, the world has been fighting the drug cartels, and losing, their billions of dollars making them the most powerful and destructive organizations on earth. Until one man is asked to take charge. Paul Devereaux used to run Special Operations for the CIA before they retired him for being too ruthless. Now he can have anything he requires, do anything he thinks necessary. No boundaries, no rules, no questions asked.

The war is on-though who the ultimate winner will be, no one can tell...

The Cobra Details

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Author : Frederick Forsyth

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From Reader Review The Cobra for online ebook

Jill Holmes says

Although this isn't my favorite book by the incredibly prolific Frederick Forsyth, I still recommend it because he tackles a subject few would dare. "The Cobra" is the code name of both a man and a project. A former CIA Special Ops master, Paul Devereaux is hauled out of retirement to eradicate the cocaine trade. Given carte blanche by the President and heavily assisted by the British and a Brazilian fighter pilot on a personal revenge crusade, the Cobra hires a former bounty hunter named Cal Dexter as his right hand. They pull together a \$2-billion plan to crush the Colombian drug trade into the U.S. via the Caribbean and the trade to Europe through several West African ports. All of the above may seem like a "spoiler", but, in fact, it is how the plan comes together that makes this a great read. You can count on Forsyth to make the good guys really good and the bad guys truly evil. The story also makes you hope that fiction will someday become fact if only real-life heroes to run the ops and elect officials with some backbone will back them to the bitter end. Forsyth kindly provides the reader with a key to the characters and a list of the rather baffling list of acronyms, agencies, and abbreviations involved. The book is carefully crafted, and, despite the potentially bewildering array of characters, plot twists, data, and initials, Forsyth carries the reader all the way to the last period on the last page.

Alain Dewitt says

Pitiful, just pitiful. How far Mr. Forsyth has come since 'The Dogs of War' and 'The Day of the Jackal'! I guess he must have needed money to pay for the upkeep of his yacht in Monaco and so he phoned in this lackluster thriller (which contains precious few thrills).

The story is about the decision by the US President to dismantle the Colombian cocaine cartels (well, cartel since in this putative future the cartels have been consolidated into one supercartel) using unconventional means.

To do that he recruits Paul Devereaux, aka the Cobra. The Cobra recruits his top lieutenant, Cal Dexter. These two are pitted against Don Diego Esteban, cartel boss, and his cadre of lieutenants (an interchangeable smattering of Joses / Juans / Pedros Sanchez / Lopez / Rodriguez and all eminently forgettable).

Most glaring is the book's almost complete lack of characters and character development. There are four viewpoint characters (Devereaux, Dexter, the Don and MAJ Joao Mendoza, a Brazilian pilot recruited to conduct anti-surface warfare against the cartel). Each one gets between one and two pages of character development / biography and that's it. MAJ Mendoza's Blackburn Buccaneer fighter-bomber gets more pages of exposition than any of the main characters.

When you read a techno-thriller (Clancy, Bond, Coonts, etc.), you expect to have to compromise. You accept that in exchange for tight plotting and accurate technical detail, you must suffer boring, All-American cardboard cutouts for characters.

Here, Forsyth welshes on the bargain. The plotting is rather conventional with no twists or turns whatsoever. And you can forget about technical detail. A trip down memory lane with the vintage Buccaneer is all we get. (And the occasional error, such as Forsyth referring to Creech Air Force Base and AFB Creech.)

It's like the old joke about the restaurant: 'The food's not very good but at least the portions are small!'

Vijai says

Even the masters make mistakes or so I am to believe by this lack luster performance by Mr.Forsyth.

I am not saying it is bad, it just does not register even a blip on the Forsyth scale - an instrument of fiction writing awesomeness that all other action thriller writers will be measured by - this is the man who wrote Devil's alternative and the Fist of God for crying out loud.

I am a noob here and doling out details of the plot seems to be considered a cardinal sin here so I will keep it relevant to those who have read it - that part where Deveraux asks Cal to go somewhere to destroy something and Cal tastes it - now, why would he do that? that just illogical. Here's a man who went behind enemy lines (while negotiating something with someone) and escaped by a whisker to achieve Deveraux's master plan and suddenly he doubts the very man? does not add up at all.

All said and done, high marks for research and amazing application of some novel ideas. Bad marks for lack of character development.

May the Gods forgive this sin I have committed by criticizing one of their finest gifts to the world of fiction writing.

Pawel Rejdak says

Disgusted and dissapointed. Badly...

Putting my hands on a paperback with a "Forsyth" on cover I was more than assured thats Master's imprint will be there, somewhere between the pages.

But I was very wrong.

From the forefront, I couldn't resist the feeling an Author forced himself to write this, and more - he had no idea how to do it.

Boredom, easily suspected twists, cold and flat dialogs finished with childish story brings only to a "bad writing" name.

Most powerful characters from a few of his latest books mixed together seems much more like an Marvel Avengers or Expendables part 17 (LOL) than a Goodread.

1 star.

If only I could give zero or at least a half - I would gladly do so.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Jerome says

Cobra falls short and is disappointing.

The first half of the book isn't bad; the US and British prepare for their covert war against a powerful Colombian drug cartel. It's toward the second half of the book where things slip. Navy SEALs and British SBS soldiers intercept drug shipments on the high seas, and a Brazilian fighter pilot shoots down aircraft carrying cocaine. This happens a bunch of times, over and over again, and each scene is just a repeat of an earlier scene with no new twists or surprises. Meanwhile, law enforcement and intelligence go after various agents of the drug cartel and corrupt officials.

It just goes on for almost 200 pages until the President decides to shut the operation down and then... that's basically it. There's no suspense or sense of looming danger, just intercepting this drug shipment and that drug shipment, with no real threat or danger posed to anyone other than the drug smugglers. The book really isn't much of a thriller at all.

Moreover, the book and lead character's name is "Cobra", but the story follows Cobra's deputy, a certain Cal Dexter and the ending is almost anti-climatic. It reads like a 500-page police report written by government employees trying to burnish their record.

Lots of factual errors. Like mention Goa in Karnataka. There is no Goa in Karnataka. Goa is a beach in Indian west coast. And it is not swampy. And there are no swamps in Karnataka. And the Ochoa brothers were not part of the Cali cocaine cartel, as the novel states. They were founders of the Medellin cartel along with Pablo Escobar and Carlos Lehder. It was the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers who founded and ran the Cali cartel. Also, Bogota is at 7,500 feet above sea level and is cool and often rainy, not scorchingly hot. Even on a sunny day, if you're in the shade it's not hot. The book says otherwise. And apparently Roosevelt Roads Naval Station still in operation.

There's a bunch of grammatical errors... (not really too bad, but annoying,) and some quite poor word choices. The development of the subject is childish and the characters totally unlikely. I about had enough when I read about a diplomat at the UN, belonging to the Puerto Rico mission. Puetor Rico?! Maybe they are in the same boat with Alaska and Hawaii?

Some other gems to make you barf:

-p.274, speaking of a drug lord who gets sliced & diced the author ends with ..."He had ever had only one daughter. and he had loved her very much."

-p.40 "It is not a threat, it is a warning. If the conditions are not met the project would simply fail, expensively and embarrassingly. These are they."

-p.27: "The housekeeper, the beaming Maisie, told the lad her employer was at church and gave him directions."

The plot is plain not believable. Everything goes right for the "good guys" and everything goes wrong for the "bad guy" drug cartels. Somehow the criminal mastermind drug cartels can never figure out what is going on, but they were smart enough to corner the entire world market?

Dipanjana says

The world does not call Mr. Fredrick Forsythe a master story-teller for nothing. I remember finishing "The Day Of The Jackal" in one night. I remember having left completely dumbstruck with "The Devil's Alternative" and I also remember gasping through the twists and turns in "The Negotiator".

Well, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Forsythe has done it again with "The Cobra".

I must admit that I was purposely delaying this read as I found the name to be very tacky. I mean, it does sound like a C Class Hollywood Action flick. But that's as far as that goes.

"The Cobra" is an out-and-out intelligent book. It's about war against drugs. But this is a war which is carefully planned and systematically executed. The main protagonist of the story, Paul Devereaux, does not make even more than a couple of appearances. But he controls the reader with his mind like a skillful maestro. He makes his enemies dance like puppets on a string. And nothing, not even one incident is by coincidence or a stroke of luck. Now THAT is the most amazing thing about the story. This story shows that intelligence is the ultimate power and can take down any amount of brawn like a hot knife through butter.

This is written in typical style of Mr. Forsythe. It starts off at a gentle pace with high levels of informative planning and then sucks you into the labyrinth before you even realize it.

As usual, I won't reveal much about the story. This book is a must read for anyone who likes "intelligent" plots with less action and extremely high thinking.

Mr. Forsythe - welcome back. It's always a crazy ride with you in the pilot's seat.

Girish says

I generally think twice about picking up a Forsyth for the level of detailing on topics that go over my head (literally too, come to think of it..). What normally swings it in favor is the solid story. So, it came as a surprise that The Cobra is a weak story that is shockingly one-sided.

Paul Devereux aka Cobra is called out of retirement to wipe out the billions of dollars worth cocaine 'industry'. Armed with a free license and a 2 billion budget, Cobra puts up a team to throttle the Colombian Cartel. Playing by the rules is the last thing on this team's mind.

Cobra's presence is felt in the details than filled on pages. A person who can hang up on the Chief of Staff. Cal Dexter as the second in command is the mainstay of the operation - cool, calculated and with a conscience. They put a plan in motion that involves fighter ships and mid-ocean grabs, mid-air attacks and Art of War level application of war strategy.

What doesn't work is everything goes as per plan! All the fearsome cartel and the Don could do is take it and play right into the hands of Cobra. Quite a few lucky breaks that were not factored in works as well.

The book was like watching a one-sided match between 2 teams you don't care about. Except for the detailing of the cocaine industry and some stunning detail of the mid-sea battles, the book is a damp squib.

Tony Johnston says

Awful. I only read it because I had nothing else and I was duly disappointed.

My guess is that Mr Forsyth has had a few drinks one night and told his agreeable old chums "Bloody governments, no backbone! If they wanted to close the drug trade, they could do it! I could do it! Give me some guns and a budget of a couple of billion! I'd kill the lot of 'em!"

And so he's written up his idea into a page-turning thriller to show how he would do it. In summary, a rogue "Cobra" leading an unfettered SBS/SEAL/[Insert other acronyms] attack on the stupid evil Colombian Drug runners. And it's not really a plot spoiler to say they have some success. Because the book really is that simple. Shame that the world isn't but never mind.

Now my understanding is that you read Forsyth if you like to spend a few hours reading a fictional travel guide to that other world of spies, secrets and government agency acronyms. Usually, if you like French men called Jean-Yves to be womanising charmers who are not really trustworthy, Hispanic green berets called Cortez to die heroically and swarthy villains called Victor Ramon who do things like throw victims noses to rabid dogs you will not be disappointed.

Now, I'll admit that I haven't liked that stuff much since I was 12 but I could still see that, for the genre, this was appallingly done. I've read the Jackal and it was well-crafted plus by the standards of it's competition it felt alarmingly real. By contrast, this felt like it was bolted together with wet cardboard by a man with too much confidence in his own powers and not enough respect for his readers or reality.

Eric Wright says

Shocked by the death of a young man through a drug overdose, the president of the US determines to do something to eradicate the scourge of cocaine. He calls together a high-powered group and asks what can be done. A radical and relentless operative, Paul Devereaux, former leader of Special Ops of the CIA is called in and tasked with the destruction of the cartels. This man, the Cobra, demands time and resources and ultimate authority to do whatever it takes. He is given these powers, reluctantly.

So begins a secret war, having reclassified the drug cartels as terrorist targets.

The Cobra hatches a detailed and audacious plan to intercept all cocaine shipments and thus create an internal war between different factions of the drug culture.

It is a fascinating story, full of remarkable detail that makes one believe that the defeat of the cartels is possible. Will it work? Will the democratic governments of countries involved hinder its fulfillment?

Sumit RK says

Overall, the writing in "The Cobra" is really good and fans of military adventures may like it but the novel's plot is unconvincing. Not one of Forsyth's best works..

Alfie Shuvro says

[illegible]

Susan says

Started well, despite the constant lecturing tone lurking under the surface (don't do drugs kids, drugs are *baaad!!!!*) Then at 7% enters Chuck Norris/Gary Stu/Paul Devereaux to singlehandedly beat down da eeevvvlll terrorists/drug dealers/communists/atheists/you name it. We are treated to a lengthy and rather tiring infodump of his childhood/youth - superrich, nearly aristocratic, at the top of his class/learns languages on a yearly basis (I'm not exaggerating here), singlehandedly brought down the USSR (ok, not really but it's sort of presented like he did), masters Arabic in several different dialects...

I didn't get to the part where he looks like a Gap model and fucks everything that moves, because at this point I decided I don't have time for this shit and went to play Angry Birds instead.

I've read *The Phantom of Manhattan* (another steaming pile of shit) from the same author and couldn't get past 5% of *The Day of the Jackal*, is it just me or this guy is really undeserving of his fame?

Efka says

Forsyth'as, labiausiai žinomas d'l savo superhito "Šakalo diena", yra atrad's ger? niš?: daugiau niekas nerašo tokio stiliaus trileri?. Skaitant Forsyth'?, neretai galima pamiršt, kad skaitai knyg? ir ?sivaizduoti, kad skaitai kokio nors žini? portalo ar Wikipedijos straipsn?. Trumpai, aiškiai, lengvai, su daug smulkmen? ir technini? detali?, nepersistengiant kurti veik?j? profilius ar motyvacijas. Bet tame ir yra visas jo žavumas - nei vien? sekund? nekyla mintis, kad vyksta kažkas nerealaus, holivudiško, etc etc. Visi veiksmi, operacijos, taktikos aprašomos taip, kad eiliniam pilie?iui atrodo, kad viskas taip ir vyksta. Žodžiu, lengva, greitai skaitoma knyga, nekelianti sau užduo?i? b?ti išskirtine, netradicine ar pateikian?ia nauj? perspektyv?.

Tiesa, turiu ir kritikos. Dažniausiai šio autoriaus romanuose "gerie?iams" per daug lengvai ir paprastai viskas einasi. Joki? kli??i?, viskas pagal planus, be išim?i? ir eksces?. O konkre?iai ši knyga užsidirbo labai rieb? minus? d'l pabaigos. (view spoiler)

Kaip visada, kai realus pažymys tur?t? b?t kažkur per vidur? žvaigždu?i?, suteikiu *benefit of doubt*, tad žvaigžd?s - 4, nors dešimtbal?je b?t? 7.

Atishay says

Frederick Forsyth is one of the greatest thriller writers of our modern era and this latest work by the veteran reveals the work of a pure master.

In *The Cobra*, Forsyth takes on the cocaine industry eating away into the American and European societies. When the President Office of US decides to do away with the cocaine industry once and for all, the executives turn to Paul Devereaux, an ex-CIA veteran, to devise and implement a strategy that can carry out the operation. Devereaux, nicknamed *The Cobra* assembles a team of specialists, led by the notorious tunnel rat, Cal Dexter to execute the plan. The novel crackles along at a lightning pace as *The Cobra* and his team devise a brilliant strategy to take on the drug cartels and execute it ruthlessly.

Forsyth's novels are never short on research which makes them perfectly aligned to the modern world politics and parallel with the prominent figures. *The Cobra* is a typical Forsyth novel that way just like his

earlier works. What little disappointment his fans might have had from *The Afghan* is likely to be compensated from this masterpiece. A compulsory must read for Forsyth fans.
