



The Sum of All Fears

Tom Clancy

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How do you save the United States President from himself? What if the President is incompetent to deal with the greatest crisis of all? Jack Ryan never thought he would have to ask those questions as, the world order changing, he prepares the ground for the Middle Eastern peace plan that, at last, might be the one to work.

But too many groups have invested too much blood. Shunned by their erstwhile Soviet sponsors, increasingly isolated by the realignment of the Mideast, these terrorists have one more desperate card to play, requiring a degree of ruthlessness never before seen. With one terrible act, the world is plunged into an instant nuclear crisis -- and the floundering President is plunged into the ultimate nightmare. Forces collide. Shots are exchanged. What had seemed to be an isolated and horrible incident appears to each side as the incendiary mischief of the other. With the world poised on the brink of nuclear war, Ryan and his FBI counterpart, Dan Murray, frantically seek a solution before the chiefs of state lose control of themselves -- and the world.

The Sum of All Fears Details

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Stephen says

3.0 to 3.5 stars. I am a big fan of Tom Clancy, especially of his characters Jack Ryan and John Clark, both of whom figure prominently in this Middle East thriller centering on Nuclear proliferation. As good as Clancy is and as compelling as the story can be, this one felt just TOO LONG to rate any higher. With some strategic editing, this one could have been amazing. As it is, it is still very good.

Alex says

Like most of his work, Clancy's "The Sum of All Fears" starts pretty uneventful. The events have played out pretty much as you would have expected from the end of "Clear and Present Danger" and the new president and his cabinet have settled into their new roles and with Ryan's help are looking towards a more more peaceful future. As you can expect that doesn't go as planned.

The biggest criticism I've seen/heard/read about "The Sum of All Fears" is how long it takes for any real action to takes place, but I think the book does a good job of lulling you into the same safe space that the characters are suppose to be in before punching everyone in the gut with an explosion of action and confusion for the last quarter of the story.

Thomas Strömquist says

Together with The Cardinal of the Kremlin, my favorite Clancy. Sure, the stories stars to be a bit repetitive by now, but if you know what you are in for and look upon this as it's own work, it's brutally effective! The Sum of all Fears, is just that - there are so many things converging that the sum is overwhelming. The suspense and intensity does this story, even if it is a long and not always fast moving one. Forget about the horrible movie adaption, the double mistake of casting Ben Affleck and not bothering with any fears but one didn't just make it inaptly named - it got to be a totally different story.

it'chy says

now to make a bomb of my own...

rest in peace, tom

and oh, one thing i didn't notice when i first read this (this was way back in the '90s): black sunday was referenced three times, though in film form (and not the book) in all instances

Jess says

I finally got interested at about 600 pages - no kidding - for about 75 pages.

This was the worst book I've ever read (there've been some other bad ones, but I had the common sense not to finish them). If I could take stars AWAY from a book, I would. At about 700 pages, it got so tedious that I thought I wouldn't finish; why was I wasting my time? (I had this thought a number of times while plowing through it.) After that, I was saying, 'Oh, come on!' because it became so outrageous. A better title would have been 'The Sum of All Ridiculousness'.

A convoluted plot with numerous sub-plots that I just knew would come to a logical conclusion, instead came together in a contrived conclusion. and some didn't come together at all. There were sub-plots about Ryan, his wife, Caroline, who was called Cathy (don't ask me why) & Dr. Ryan (as was Jack/Ryan/Dr. Ryan). Another sub-plot included President Fowler (Bob/Robert) & Elizabeth/Liz/Dr. Elliot. There were high & low level Arabs & Russians, German military & civilians, the U.S. Navy (submarine & destroyer officers & enlisted), Air Force (pilots & Pentagon personnel, Israelis & White House staff. Oh, & the Japanese. They had a small part too. and the Mexicans. Have I missed anyone? Chinese? No, I don't think there were any mentioned.

The sub-plots were confusing, but Clancy didn't think the story was complicated enough, so he spiced it up by referring to people, at various times, by their first names, last names, full names, nicknames, titles(multiple, & sometimes just their informal roles), middle names, terms of endearment & the reader was supposed to remember who he was talking about. Russian names? Forgetaboutit! I soon lost interest in keeping up with them (not just the Russians).

Several hundred pages, I'm sure, were spent describing the inner workings & ingredients of bombs, submarines, aircraft, facilities for making them & other dull stuff. Who cares? Dozens of pages were spent describing football plays & players, which were background for the bombing, but really, dozens? An entire chapter was devoted to describing the inner workings of a bomb which fizzled.

Goodley/Benjamin/Ben/Dr. Goodley was sent in by Dr. Elliot/Liz/Elizabeth to spy on & sabotage Jack/Ryan/Dr. Ryan, then suddenly became his ally. What was with that?

'Why did she finish this book at all?' you ask. At first I thought it would get better (not), then I felt I'd invested so much time in it I might as well finish, then I wanted to finish it so I'd have good cause for writing this scathing review.

Tom Clancy is a pompous know-it-all (language cleaned up). I won't be reading another of his books.

The almost five months spent reading this garbage were not entirely wasted. I read almost 30 other books concurrently with this one, most of which I enjoyed. I'm not exaggerating. I keep track of them on Goodreads.

Lisa says

This is a Tom Clancy novel where the movie is better than the book (like *The Hunt for Red October*). *The Sum of All Fears* is so crammed full of everything Tom Clancy learned about building a two-stage nuclear weapon and about submarines and submarine warfare that it really detracts from the interesting plot, which could have been pulled together in half or one third of the space. And if you haven't read earlier Clancy books you won't get some of the references to hero Jack Ryan's earlier adventures, or to why there is so much animosity between him and NSA advisor Elizabeth Elliot. And that may prevent you from caring as much as you should about Ryan's imminent burn-out as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. So see the movie on this one (reworked as a prequel before events in *The Hunt for Red October*). For something a little faster moving, try *Patriot Games*; for something where the endless set-up pays off much better (or for which I am more patient, since I am more interested in epidemiology than in nuclear weaponry), try *Executive Orders*. But you still may need to search for a "Cliff Notes" version of Ryan's earlier adventures to catch all the allusions and understand the nuances.

Mike Hickey says

Working through the Jack Ryan series, I thought this one would be slow based on the early going. Not so. Clancy once again delivers gripping action and parallel storylines that come together seamlessly. My eyes couldn't read fast enough in the final chapters as the two Cold War superpowers edge to the brink of global thermonuclear war.

Antonio Rosato says

"L'ammiraglio Greer diceva che la prima legge delle operazioni del servizio segreto è che la probabilità che un'operazione fallisca sono proporzionali al quadrato delle persone che che conoscono i dettagli". Romanzo che, pur essendo stato scritto nel "lontano" 1991, affronta tematiche (purtroppo) sempre attuali: cosa accadrebbe se qualcuno (politico o terrorista che sia) si impadronisse di una delle tante testate nucleari sparse per il mondo? Libro stranissimo (e lo dico subito, il più "soporifero" tra quelli che ho letto sino ad oggi di Tom Clancy): per oltre 650 pagine il ritmo è lento e non succede niente di niente, tanto che stavo quasi per mollarlo perché sembrava di essere di fronte alla classica trama con il solito gioco al rimpiazzino tra politici, servizi segreti e terroristi vari; poi, nelle restanti 200, succede di tutto e di più... con Jack Ryan, sempre lui, che salva il mondo da una crisi nucleare, e questa volta andando anche contro gli ordini del presidente americano. Romanzo, come tutti i lavori di Tom Clancy, molto descrittivo (anche troppo per la verità) sia per quanto riguarda le armi che per quanto concerne le nozioni di fisica e chimica... mancava solo che Clancy ci spiegasse come realizzare davvero una bomba nucleare!!!
[<https://rosatoeu.blogspot.it/2017/08/...>]

Rob says

Executive Summary: After how much I enjoyed *Clear and Present Danger* this one was a pretty big letdown. It dragged a lot in places, but the ending helped make up for it a little. 2.5 Stars.

Audiobook: Scott Brick does his usual fine job. He does a few accents (in particular Russian) to add a little something extra. For the most he just reads in his normal voice though. Doing the audio for this book both

helped and hurt.

There were times when I was bored that I might have put the text down and the audio just kept going so I was able to get through it. I will admit my attention probably drifted a bit more than normal when listening to an audiobook and I eventually decided to do 1.25 speed (something I almost NEVER do) just to finish the book sooner. It was really long at nearly 40 hours.

Full Review

These days I primarily read fantasy. I especially love epic fantasy. Tom Clancy seems to write epic political thrillers. I don't know how else to describe it. Just like epic fantasy spends a bunch of time on the details of the world (or in some series describing the clothes and the food in far too much detail), this book gets into the details of just about everything rather than simply telling a spy/political thriller.

I imagine just like the fact that I love epic fantasy, when many others do not, there are people who like this kind of detail. I don't however. I'm much more willing to accept some of the ridiculous plot details that drive this story than I am to be excited listening to details about how certain procedures or the technical specs of military equipment. There were parts where I just wanted the story to get on with things.

I had no idea just how long this book was when I picked it up. I was looking for something "quick" to fill some time waiting for a hold from the library to come in and I ended up having to speed up the audio just to get through it fast enough.

I know I've seen the movie with the same title, but my recollection was that was a reboot of sorts since they switched from Harrison Ford to a much younger Ben Affleck, but beyond that I don't remember that much. I do recall it was my least favorite of the Jack Ryan movies.

My main issue with the book however isn't it's length or somewhat ridiculous plot points, but that "the villains" are just downright awful. There are a lot of antagonists to Jack Ryan, but the worst is basically the only female character whose not simply a supporting role. She's awful. Terribly written. I can't really get into why without Clancy's disdain for liberals is probably more apparent in this book than any other of his I've read so far.

I've talked about my dislike of Jack Ryan in some of my reviews for previous Ryan books, but the conflict in this one was almost too much. A fight between two people I don't really like. Jack was a lot better in this one than in some of the earlier books, but at times I just wanted to put the book down as a result.

I was surprised by how much I ended up enjoying the end of this book after struggling through much of the early parts, which is why I rounded up to 3 stars instead of down to 2. I'll probably continue on with the series (there are a few others I still want to read for some reason) at some point, but I figure I'll take a break until much later this year if not next year before doing so.

I'd like to add in more thrillers (especially political thrillers) but so far I've not found the books to be nearly enjoyable as I recall the movies being, which is typically not the case for me at all.

Richard Wright says

Oh thank God. Thank God it's over. I picked this up en route to Goa a few weeks ago, and I seem to have

been reading it forever. As always, Clancy's world is incredibly detailed and credible, in many ways all the more impressive for its sometime parallels to the world we live in today. As ever, the central plot is great. As ever, there's just too bloody much detail for anybody outside of the military to maintain much interest. The characters are for the most part the same seven or eight core people, given different names and accents, and recycled at whim into a cast of thousands. The thousands are too many to keep track of. The detail of what they're doing is too monotonous and minuscule to do anything but slow the plot. And while the writing is functional, watch the inelegance of his point of view switches, requiring only a new paragraph to instigate, making it occasionally an act of backtracking and deduction to work out whose thoughts you're trying to follow. There's a good story buried in here, but it's splashed over so pointlessly large a canvas as to require almost forensic reconstruction to be able to see it.

Asghar Abbas says

Ben Affleck as Jack Ryan, bahahaha!

Jack Ryan is the Mary Sueist of all the characters in the history of this world.

Chad Sayban says

The Sum of All Fears isn't Tom Clancy's best written book in the series, but as the title suggests, it is certainly the most frightening – especially when it was written during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the thaw of the Cold War. It is a sobering look at what can happen when dysfunctional Washington leadership is confronted with an unthinkable attack and how things can spiral out of control. Considering it was written ten years before 9/11, it is startling how it foreshadowed the worst frailties of leadership.

It's not great art by any means, but it is intense storytelling and nobody works the details better than the techno-thriller master himself. More than any other book, I always wanted to see this one made into a movie - until the poor excuse for a movie was actually made. Now I wish my only memories were of the book. More than any of the Jack Ryan novels, the story of *The Sum of All Fears* sticks with me to this day.

Adam says

Tom Clancy's books are like having sex for the first time: It starts out exciting, gets a little awkward in the middle as you have no idea what's going on and are waiting for something to happen; it becomes intense toward the end but it ends too quickly and you feel unsatisfied.

****SPOILERS BELOW****

All major conflicts in the book are too well-resolved. Clancy expertly builds suspense when Cathy is convinced Jack is having an affair, only for it to end anticlimactically with Clark explaining it all away. Same deal with the aftermath of Denver; the bomb turns out to be a dud and only causes minor damage; we don't even hear about the city afterwards. And the USSR is a little too eager to back down and the terrorists are caught without a single shot fired.

Let's also deal with Clancy's characters: there are no surprises--he lets you know right off the bat whether a character is good or bad. I know right away to hate Fowler, Elliot, and Cabot; I know right away to love Ryan, Clark, Ding, and the Saudis (who are for some reason characterized as religiously tolerant, progressive, and loyal allies of the US.) And although I think Ryan is meant to be inspirational rather than relatable--like Atticus Finch or Superman--the constant stream of praise people give him in their inner monologues gets stale. I absolutely understand why people call him a Mary-Sue.

Clancy loves to include various subplots but he doesn't make the characters part of the central story. Like Bart Mancuso. His appearance in this book is just for commentary on submarine captains and to briefly take part in a naval battle that none of the main characters ever hear about. Not for a brief moment do I care about him; I just want to get back to Ryan.

****END SPOILERS****

It may seem strange that I'm ripping this book apart when I gave it four stars. Even if the battles are too short and the characters bland, you are sweating bullets the entire time wondering what in the world are the bad guys going to plan and how the good guys are going to stop it. Tom Clancy was a master storyteller, with emphasis on the plot and little else. His imagery is crisp and you really feel like you are there. It's an acquired taste, and although acquired tastes aren't something you can say "yum!" to, they're still worth it.

Darren Burton says

It has been rumored that permission to publish this book had to go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and ever since then there is a standing court order that the CIA, FBI, and NSA receive advance copies of every Tom Clancy book a month before it goes to the publisher. Why? Well this book tells you step by step, in layman's language, in exacting detail how you build a hydrogen bomb. About the only thing that is left out is the exact amount of plutonium you would need. This did not sit well with the powers that be and considered it to be an extreme threat to national security. Clancy's lawyers pointed out that all of this information is available to the general public in any college library if someone is willing to take the time to look it up. The court agreed and allowed the book to be published without any of the information being removed.

The story starts during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. By then Israel had already secretly developed atomic weapons. Israel had a jet fighter loaded with an atomic bomb ready to scramble, the atomic bomb was not armed, but the plane was scrambled to go engage a group of tanks threatening the air base with the atomic bomb still attached. During the battle the plane was strafed with 50 caliber machine gun fire and the bomb mounts were hit, the bomb broke loose and came down in a farmers field. The jet crashed before it could limp home and the pilot was killed. Searches failed to locate the bomb. Flashforward, to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Communist scientists desperate for money sell deuterium or "heavy water" to the palestinian terrorists allowing them to convert the atomic bomb to a hydrogen bomb. They decide that the Super Bowl will be the perfect target - since it is televised and the Vice President of the United States has box tickets.

You will be hanging by the edge of your seat waiting to see if they succeed.

Lance Howell says

I think I now know how to make a nuclear bomb...

