



Bleeding Edge: A Novel

By Thomas Pynchon

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It is 2001 in New York City, in the lull between the collapse of the dot-com boom and the terrible events of September 11th. Silicon Alley is a ghost town, Web 1.0 is having adolescent angst, Google has yet to IPO, Microsoft is still considered the Evil Empire. There may not be quite as much money around as there was at the height of the tech bubble, but there's no shortage of swindlers looking to grab a piece of what's left.

Maxine Tarnow is running a nice little fraud investigation business on the Upper West Side, chasing down different kinds of small-scale con artists. She used to be legally certified but her license got pulled a while back, which has actually turned out to be a blessing because now she can follow her own code of ethics—carry a Beretta, do business with sleazebags, hack into people's bank accounts—without having too much guilt about any of it. Otherwise, just your average working mom—two boys in elementary school, an off-and-on situation with her sort of semi-ex-husband Horst, life as normal as it ever gets in the neighborhood—till Maxine starts looking into the finances of a computer-security firm and its billionaire geek CEO, whereupon things begin rapidly to jam onto the subway and head downtown. She soon finds herself mixed up with a drug runner in an art deco motorboat, a professional nose obsessed with Hitler's aftershave, a neoliberal enforcer with footwear issues, plus elements of the Russian mob and various bloggers, hackers, code monkeys, and entrepreneurs, some of whom begin to show up mysteriously dead. Foul play, of course.

With occasional excursions into the DeepWeb and out to Long Island, Thomas Pynchon, channeling his inner Jewish mother, brings us a historical romance of New York in the early days of the internet, not that distant in calendar time but galactically remote from where we've journeyed to since.

Will perpetrators be revealed, forgotten or brought to justice? Will Maxine have to take the handgun out of her purse? Will she and Horst get back together? Will Jerry Seinfeld make an unscheduled guest appearance? Will accounts secular and karmic be brought into balance?

Hey. Who wants to know?

[The Washington Post](#)

“Brilliantly written... a joy to read... *Bleeding Edge* is totally gonzo, totally wonderful. It really is good to have Thomas Pynchon around, doing what he does best.” (Michael Dirda)

Slate.com

“If not here at the end of history, when? If not Pynchon, who? Reading *Bleeding Edge*, tearing up at the beauty of its sadness or the punches of its hilarity, you may realize it as the 9/11 novel you never knew you needed... a necessary novel and one that literary history has been waiting for.”

The New York Times Book Review

Exemplary... dazzling and ludicrous... Our reward for surrendering expectations that a novel should gather in clarity, rather than disperse into molecules, isn’t anomie but delight.” (Jonathan Lethem)

Wired magazine

“The book’s real accomplishment is to claim the last decade as Pynchon territory, a continuation of the same tensions — between freedom and captivity, momentum and entropy, meaning and chaos — through which he has framed the last half-century.”

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Bleeding Edge: A Novel By Thomas Pynchon Bibliography

- Rank: #73203 in Books
- Brand: Pynchon Thomas
- Published on: 2014-08-26
- Released on: 2014-08-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.35" h x .99" w x 5.46" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 496 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Reviewed by David Kipen. Published 50 years ago by long-gone J.B. Lippincott & Co., Thomas Pynchon's *V.* wasn't just the best first novel ever, it was a blueprint for his entire career. Much as that book yoyo-ed between an international femme fatale and a feckless contemporary klutz, the Pynchon shelf has alternated between globe-trotting, century-spanning bricks like *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), and impish, only slightly historical, California-set bagatelles like *Inherent Vice* (2009). Now comes *Bleeding Edge*, a lovably scruffy comedy of remarriage, half-hidden behind the lopsided Groucho mask of Pynchon's second straight private-eye story. Like Ornette Coleman's riff on *The Rite of Spring*, it starts out strong, misplaces the melody amid some delightfully surreal noodling, and finally swans away in sweet, lingering diminuendo. Almost all Pynchon's books are historical novels, with this one no exception. Where *Vineland* slyly set a story of Orwellian government surveillance in 1984, *Bleeding Edge* situates a fable of increasingly sentient computers in, naturally, 2001. Of course, the year 2001 means something besides HAL and Dave now, and Pynchon spirits us through "that terrible morning" in September--and its "infantilizing" aftermath--with unhyysterical grace. Our heroine throughout is Maxine Tarnow, a defrocked fraud investigator and daftly doting Manhattan mom, still stuck in that early, "my husband...ex-husband" stage of an unwanted divorce. Maxi soon becomes embroiled in the mysterious case of one Lester Traipse, a superannuated Silicon Alley veteran who, along with the dotcom bubble, has just gotten popped. The plot's dizzying profusion of murder suspects plays like something out of early Raymond Chandler, under whose bright star *Bleeding Edge* unmistakably unreels. Shoals of red herrings keep swimming by, many of them never seen again. Still, reading Pynchon for plot is like reading Austen for sex. Each page has a little more of it than the one before, but you never quite get to the clincher. Luckily, Pynchon and Austen have ample recourse to the oldest, hardest-to-invoke rule in the book --when in doubt, be a genius. It's cheating, but it works. No one, but no one, rivals Pynchon's range of language, his elasticity of syntax, his signature mix of dirty jokes, dread and shining decency. It's a peculiarity of musical notation that major works are, more often than not, set in a minor key, and vice versa. *Bleeding Edge* is mellow, plummy, minor-key Pynchon, his second such in a row since *Against the Day* (2006)--that still-smoking asteroid, whose otherworldly inner music readers are just beginning to tap back at. But in its world-historical savvy, its supple feel for the joys and stings of love--both married and parental--this new book is anything but minor. On the contrary, *Bleeding Edge* is a chamber symphony in P major, so generous of invention it sometimes sprawls, yet so sharp it ultimately pierces. All this, plus a stripjoint called *Joie de Beavre* and a West Indian proctologist named *Pokemon*. Who else does that? David Kipen is the former director of reading initiatives at the National Endowment for the Arts and is the founder of *Libros Schmibros*, a nonprofit lending library and used bookstore in Los Angeles.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Pynchon's debut novel, *V.*, appeared 50 years ago, and ever since he's been tracking dubious covert actions and the arc and consequences of technology in novels of labyrinthine complexity, impish wit, and open-armed compassion. Of late, his inquiry has taken the form of rambunctious and penetrating crime novels. *Inherent Vice* (2009), currently being adapted for film, is set in 1960s Los Angeles and features a pothead PI and the launch of the digital revolution. In his latest, a hilarious, shrewd, and disquieting metaphysical mystery, Pynchon expresses love for New York City and leeriness of the seemingly boundless reach of the Internet. In spring 2001, the dot-com bubble has burst and 9/11 looms. Maxine Tarnow, a fraud investigator gone rogue, is unflappable, wise-cracking, Beretta-toting, and Jewish. Devoted to her young sons, she is embroiled in an amorphous case involving a sinister techie billionaire, diverted funds, Islamic terrorists, hip-hop-spouting Russian gangsters, a black-ops agent, a cosmic bike messenger, and a "Deep Web" virtual reality. Fearless, caustic, lightning-witted Maxine (sister to characters created by

Sara Paretsky and Cynthia Ozick) instigates some of the funniest banter ever scripted. But amid the sharp hilarity of this exuberantly maze-like, pop-culture-peppered, deeply informed tale, Pynchon incisively and cuttingly broaches unanswered questions surrounding the tragedy of 9/11 and elucidates just how profoundly life has changed in its wake. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Pynchon is a magnet for media attention and reader fervency, and this New York mystery will exert a powerful pull. --Donna Seaman

From Bookforum

Even as its plot grows ever more complex, *Bleeding Edge* is reliably entertaining as a sort of cracked Zagat's, with entries ghostwritten by Ben Katchor. —Ed Park

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lisa McCann:

Book is usually written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can realize everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As we know that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Alongside that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A reserve *Bleeding Edge: A Novel* will make you to always be smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about every thing. But some of you think in which open or reading a book make you bored. It is not make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you trying to find best book or acceptable book with you?

Christopher Barry:

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Jeffery Harman:

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April Cotton:

Bleeding Edge: A Novel can be one of your basic books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to put every word into delight arrangement in writing Bleeding Edge: A Novel but doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can drawn you into completely new stage of crucial imagining.

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