



House of Cards

Michael Dobbs

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The Number 1 Bestseller that inspired the hit Netflix series starring Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright. Politics, intrigue and passion in the corridors of power.

Chief Whip Francis Urquhart has his hand on every secret in politics - and is willing to betray them all to become prime minister.

Mattie Storin is a tenacious young political correspondent. She faces the biggest challenge of her life when she stumbles upon a scandalous web of intrigue and financial corruption at the very highest levels. She is determined to reveal the truth, but she must risk everything to do so...

Praise:

'This blood-and-thunder tale, lifelike and thoroughly cynical, certainly carries the ring of authenticity . . . a great triumph' Independent

House of Cards Details

Date : Published February 14th 2013 by Simon & Schuster UK (first published 1989)

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Author : Michael Dobbs

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Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Politics, Mystery

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From Reader Review House of Cards for online ebook

Tom Marcinko says

Basis for the BBC trilogy. I didn't like it half as much. You don't have the voice that the script, & Ian Richardson, gave to the evil PM. Lots of the better plot points were added in the script, too—like the reporter & the evil pol becoming lovers. Not to mention the ending. Still ... an interesting look at how a work can change from one medium to another. I liked it enough to probably read the rest of the trilogy. [Although I'll note here, almost a year later, that I haven't bothered to track 'em down]

It reminded me a lot of the pre-Watergate Washington novels I read when I was a kid, like *Advise and Consent* or *The President's Plane Is Missing*.

Some quotes:

“But that’s all bloody Horlicks, Frankie, and you know it.”

“... You can't hide away in journalism—investigating, exposing, pulling other people's worlds apart in search of the truth—unless you are willing to face those people afterward and live with their pain.”

“That’s not fair...” she protested.

“Is it? I hope so for your sake, because if you can't accept the fact that your work may cause a lot of innocent people great hurt, then you'll never be a good journalist. Look for the truth, Mattie, by all means, but only if you're willing to recognize and share the pain it may cause. If you think it's enough just to float like a butterfly from one story to another, never hanging around long enough to see the damage that your version of the truth might inflict on other people, how the devil can you put any real value on your work? It's your job to criticize self-important politicians, but how dare you criticize the commitment of others if you are afraid to commit yourself? You say you are afraid of commitment. But commitment is what it is all about, Mattie. You can't run away from it for ever!”

...where all the best parliamentary secrets are stored to away Judgment Day, or some other parliamentary emergency.

Snejina says

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Scarlet Cameo says

"Por su propia naturaleza, la ambición necesita víctimas"

Este libro fue concebido con una premisa simple: como deshacerse de un primer ministro. Si bien esto puede

realizarse de muchas maneras, y muchas veces ni siquiera que alguien alevosamente mueva los hilos, aquí esto es tejido en pro de satisfacer la ambición y vengar el resentimiento de un miembro del partido, A.K.A. nuestro protagonista, Frank Underwood Urquhart.

"La política requiere sacrificios. El sacrificio de los demás, por supuesto. No importa qué pueda conseguir un hombre sacrificándose por su país, siempre se saca mayor provecho dejando que otros lo hagan primero. Elegir el momento adecuado, como dice siempre mi esposa, lo es todo."

Si bien en el inicio Frank se me figuró un personaje en cierto modo débil, de hecho supongo que la idea del autor era esa demostrar que en la política hasta los individuos más reprimidos son capaces de acciones terribles, pasadas unas páginas notamos como el personaje despliega toda su inventiva con el fin de hundir al primer ministro electo, no obstante no se puede decir que el personaje sea fuerte, más bien su furia lo lleva a iniciar un plan que después, tal como el ha dicho, no puede controlar y que continúa entramando hasta el final más por la necesidad de evitar que él mismo se hunda conforme la historia avanza.

"La política dejaba una estela de dolor y familias atormentadas a su paso"

El resto de los personajes están tremendamente desdibujados pudiendo destacar únicamente Mattie, quien tiene cierto protagonismo dado que es aliada y enemiga de Frank. Si bien es descrita como una mujer lista, intuitiva y joven estos atributos pocas veces salen a la luz, dado que la mayoría del tiempo pelea por sobresalir gracias a historias arriesgadas, y verdaderas, pero su forma de manejarse es más impulsiva que reflexiva, jugándole esto en contra la mayor parte del tiempo. (view spoiler)

"Los políticos se parecen mucho a los escritores avejentados y las mujeres ancianas. La fase más peligrosa en sus vidas tienen lugar cuando ya no se contentan con el respeto de los amigos y exigen la adulación de un público"

No puedo decir que la trama sea una joya, pero la manera en que se maneja es bastante funcional y logra que, conforme los planes de Urquhart van cumpliendo los objetivos, la historia entretenga y honestamente entres en el deseo de que descubran a Frank y al mismo tiempo de que no lo hagan. Toda la putrefacción que puede haber en el mundo de la política está depositada en Frank pero, esta versión del personaje ~~que de hecho es la original~~ no siento que logre sostener por sí mismo la historia.

Vaios Pap says

?να συναρπαστικ? πολιτικ? θρ?λερ! Δεν θα απογοητε?σει καν?ναν.

Jennifer Boyce says

<http://bookreviewsbyme2.wordpress.com...>

I will start right out by saying that while I have seen advertisements for the show "House of Cards", **I have never actually seen the show**. This is an honest review of the *book*, not a comparison between the book and the show. Now that is out of the way, let's talk about the book.

I found this book to be extremely dull and uneventful. I definitely do not believe that this book should be classified as mystery/thriller, more like plain literary fiction.

The plot is slow from the start. While there are some interesting parts dealing in political sabotage, there isn't much excitement throughout the entire story. The story is slow moving, dealing more in the interactions of characters than in any excitement or action. While I am normally a fan of strong character-driven plots, that style just didn't work for this book.

The characters in this book were part of the reason why I felt that the character-driven plot didn't work. All of the characters in this book seemed incredibly unlikable and difficult to relate to. Even the characters that it seemed like the reader was supposed to like, weren't easy to like and were much easier to dislike. I found all the characters acted in an extremely superficial and fake manner, making them difficult to enjoy and believe in.

The writing in this book was also insufferable. The author writes in a manner that, while seemingly sophisticated, is confusing and challenging to follow. I had a hard time keeping everything straight in this book- who all the characters were, who had done what, etc. Normally I don't have a problem following even the most confusing of story-lines, but this book posed a serious challenge to me. I also found that the author wasn't very descriptive; he writes in a manner that is almost too straightforward and factual for a fiction book.

The final issue that I had with this book is the understanding of politics. I live in the United States and while I feel that I have a solid grasp on the way our political system works, the political system of England is another matter entirely. This book is completely about the government, so if you don't have a solid political understanding, this book is a challenge to follow and read.

Honestly, I had been hoping that after reading this book I would want to watch and enjoy the show. In reality, after reading this book I will definitely *not* be watching the show for fear that it will be as bad as the book.

I received this book for review purposes via NetGalley.

Nina says

Todella viihdyttävä poliittinen valtapeli, jossa ei keinoja kaihdeta päämäärien saavuttamiseksi.

Sanon nyt suoraan, että jos ei ole lainkaan kiinnostunut politiikasta (tai lähinnä siitä suljettujen ovien takaisesta, yleisöltä salassa pidetystä touhusta) niin tämä kirja ei ole sinulle. Mutta jos haluat päästä sisään Britannian parlamenttiin ja päästä lukemaan asiantuntemuksella kirjoitettua tekstiä niin kyllä, lue tämä.

Jännää miten aloitettuani tämän kirjan en yhtään osannut nähdä Kevin Spaceytä Francis Urquhartina (tai Frank Underwoodina kuten tv-sarjassa hänen nimensä on), mutta kun olen nyt about kahdeksan jaksoa sarjaa katsonut en osaa nähdä enää muuta kuin Spaceyn kasvot.

Erittäin nokkela teos. **Neljä tähteä!**

Matt says

This opening book of the trilogy lays the groundwork for what looks to be a sensational British political series, centred on one Member of Parliament and his addiction to power, no matter the cost. The book opens after the latest general election, as cabinet posts are being mulled over, and certain people, sure to be getting something are left out in the dark. Cue the beginning of the end for those holding the reins of power. Any reader of this genre may see some of the Jeffrey Archer influences in the book, especially in *FIRST AMONG EQUALS*, though in this case it is one man seeking power, not a handful. The reader will also see the lengths to which a report will go to obtain the scoop of her lifetime and how she will handle the world of man-dominated reporters. In what can only be described as a true ascent to power of both characters, Dobbs sets the scene for some explosive action in the books that follow and will surely have readers on the edge of their seats.

I can admit an addiction to the Netflix-based Americanisation of this novel and how intriguing it was. I have yet to see the BBC series and will once the trilogy is complete. That said, the two different forms of government (parliamentary versus presidential) is not the only means by which this book and that series differ. The intrinsic nature of the British parliamentary system is a perfect backdrop for the book and will certainly come to play an even greater role and the second and third books present more information and drama. I can only hope that the books pull me in as Ralph Reed's trilogy did, based on a US election and subsequent ascent to power. Anyone with a passion for politics (and especially a love of the parliamentary system) will thoroughly enjoy this political drama. Dobbs is to be applauded for his work and I cannot wait to see what he has in store next.

Kudos Mr. Dobbs... you have the golden touch. Keep it up and dazzle us readers some more!

Rebecca McNutt says

I don't use Netflix so I've yet to see the TV series (have these producers never heard of releasing to DVD before?) but the book is incredible and very deep when it comes to the ruthless nature of politics and the cutthroat atmosphere in the background of it all. With realistic characters and an engrossing plot, *House of Cards* is a book unlike any other.

Jemidar says

I've long been a fan of the original BBC series based on this book and have always meant to read it, so with my son nagging me to hurry up and watch the new US series I thought it was time to finally get around to reading the book that started it all.

Very glad I did. Well worth the read. Also makes me appreciate the full extent of what Andrew Davies so cleverly did with the original series. Love it!!

Am now eagerly awaiting the next two books in the trilogy :).

Mary ♥ says

3.8/5 stars

Politics require sacrifice. The sacrifice of others, of course

So...

This is gonna be an interesting review. And probably as complex as that book and my feelings while reading it. I wouldn't say political thrillers are my cup of tea. I was never really interested in politics and how a country should be handled but 1) I was in mood for something corrupted and 2) my brother (who by the way is into politics) asked me to read it and tell him my opinion. I still don't know how I feel about it anyways. Did I like some things? Oh yes. Did I dislike some others? Obviously. Let's do it!

The writing style was rich but also simple. It was changing from poetic to tough very quickly, along with the mood of the characters and totally matched the shade of the book and the plot. It was a big thumbs up for me and especially the quotes in the start of every chapter made me get even more excited for what was going to happen. The plot twists were absolutely mind blowing and the way everyone was falling under Urquhart's feet for the sake of power was making me more eager to turn the pages one by one, devouring the book bit by bit. Too bad most of the characters had very bad surprises upon their way.

What was a big thumbs down for me, though, was the characters. Let me tell you. The way they were built, full of secrets and dark desires, was perfect for a political thriller. The thing is, though, that due to their behavior and want to fulfill their purposes without to care for the rest made me hate them all. I found myself indifferent even for the characters that were supposed to be liked. Francis was probably the character I hated the most, although he is an amazing protagonist for a book like that. I just feel annoyed when I cannot connect with the characters at all, since they play a very important role to my opinion about a book and I was actually sad there was not a single character to like. I did love to hate a lot of them though. Mostly Francis but also Benjamin and some more. The way they were moving the strings of their puppets to lead themselves to their ultimate purpose was both frightening AND fascinating.

Another let down was the way women were treated. I liked the fact that one of the main characters was a strong woman that was willing to uncover a ground breaking mystery but other than that, I could see a lot of sexist vibes and that disturbed me.

Overall, it's a nice book for fans of the kind. If you want to read a political thriller with lots of twists and utterly messed up and corrupted characters, I totally suggest it. If you'd like something with characters you'll root for... Well, I suggest you'd try something else

~Mary

Jane Jago says

It's a good read, but maybe not a great read. If we were allowed half stars it'd be three and a half. More than three for the intriguing concept. But.

I think it may even be one of those rare occasions when the TV adaptation has something the book lacks. I think it's down to Francis Urquhart himself. Ian Richardson made him so believable and so intensely bad...

I'm undecided whether or not to do books two and three.

Javi says

Empecé a leer este libro, como seguro muchos otros, por la serie de Netflix. Increíble; increíble también la interpretación de Kevin Spacey, e increíbles también los IWC que con tanta elegancia porta el tío. Y hasta aquí las menciones a la serie.

Este libro no está basado en la política estadounidense sino en la política británica. Michael Dobbs lo escribió, de hecho, cuando dejó de ser jefe de gabinete de Margaret Thatcher; cabe pensar cómo trataría a sus compañeros la Dama de Hierro, para que el pobre tuviera tanta rabia acumulada para pasársela por la cabeza esta historia.

Dobbs recoge en este libro lo peor de la política en la figura de Francis Urquhart. La trama es similar a la que todos hemos podido ver en la serie, con la salvedad del escenario, del cambio de política y del pensamiento y humor inglés del autor de la novela; lo que hace que pese haber visto la serie de Netflix puedas disfrutar también del libro.

Urquhart es tremendamente bueno en lo que hace; es el típico político con el que puedes disfrutar viendo cómo se maneja entre el nido de ratas de forman tanto él como el resto de políticos, nido del cual tiene que ser el peor para que el resto le tengan el respeto que precisa si no quiere ser acribillado por cualquiera de sus «colegas»; es el prototipo perfecto de político que bajo ningún concepto querrías que gobernara en tu país o ciudad... pero a la vez, por todo lo anteriormente expuesto, es quien más posibilidades tiene de ser elegido. Porque no dudará un instante en llevarse por delante a quien haga falta con tal de hacer realidad sus aspiraciones.

El inicio es un poco lento, y puede llegar a parecer incluso que nos enfrentamos a una lectura tediosa, pero conforme Urquhart empieza a «soltarse» las cosas van sucediendo una tras otra y siempre quieres saber cuál será su próximo paso, por lo que al final logra enganchar y terminar el libro muy rápido.

La historia da miedo, porque plasma de forma evidente lo que el ser humano es capaz de hacer por pura ambición, aunque esto es sólo ficción; lo que da realmente miedo es la política de verdad, últimamente cada vez más; lo que se hace público será una cuarta parte de lo que en realidad ocurra, y ya es bastante desagradable, por lo que teniendo en cuenta la profesión real del señor Dobbs y algunos políticos a los que conocemos cuyos egos y ansias de poder son más grandes que ellos mismos...

Rebecca Huston says

After sitting down and watching the adaptations of this novel on Netflix with Kevin Spacey in the lead role, I was hooked. I decided to read the original novels, and I was fascinated at how the character of Francis Urquhart came about. Set in the late 80's, FU is the Chief Whip for the majority party, and after the Prime Minister manages to hang onto his job, FU is expecting a sweet plum of a Cabinet position to fall into his lap. But he is passed over and FU vows a bloody revenge on the Prime Minister -- and this novel reveals the convoluted tail of ambition, power and sheer wickedness. If you've only seen the Netflix series (and if you haven't, you should) rest assured that this won't ruin anything. I found it to be an intriguing intersection with the series, and only whetted my appetite to read the rest of the series, and hoped that there will be a third season on Netflix to come. Four and a half stars, and very much recommended.

For the longer review, please go here:
<http://www.bubblews.com/news/4557088-...>

Lewis Weinstein says

This is a political thriller of the first rank. Even after having seen House of Cards on TV (the American version) this book was still a fascinating read. I could hear Kevin Spacey's brilliantly evil voice in many of the written lines. The use of the press to twist and distort political events and perceptions is well portrayed and utterly frightening, especially as we see the Koch brothers and Fox News seeking to do the same thing in America now. People are often ill-informed and naive, in the book and in life.

Tanabrus says

Ho deciso di leggere questo libro dopo essermi appassionato alla serie televisiva e aver scoperto che in origine le vicende non si svolgevano in America (e nel presente) quanto in Inghilterra, e ormai un bel po' di anni fa.

Il cambio di location ovviamente imponeva un'enorme quantità di modifiche: il sistema elettorale, il ruolo aspirato, i finanziatori, le politiche... tutto diverso.

Ho scoperto così la storia di Francis Urquhart, chief whip dei conservatori.

Una storia per certi versi simile a quella di Frank Underwood (ambizione, assenza di scrupoli, certi punti in comune nelle vicende dei due) ma per altri parecchio diversa.

Francis, rispetto a Frank, è meno geniale, meno forte.

Si sente profondamente ferito quando, dopo le elezioni, non ottiene il ruolo cui aspirava e quasi si umilia con il Primo Ministro.

E anche quando mette in moto le macchinazioni che porteranno alla sua caduta, lo fa per vendicarsi di quell'umiliazione. Stupendosi di esserci riuscito.

Non è che quando i giochi sono ormai fatti, che finalmente capisce cosa ha realmente ottenuto e decide di puntare al vertice.

E' molto diversa anche la moglie, Mortima, rispetto alla Claire della tv.

Mortima ha interessi personali ma non è una donna in carriera con le sue attività da mandare avanti, si piega alle necessità del marito ma non è sua pari in tutto, eccessi compresi.

Soprattutto, è diverso il nemico, l'avversario da abbattere.

Il Presidente Americano è appena stato eletto, è saldissimo al potere e serviranno due stagioni a un Frank

Underwood deciso e privo di morale a spodestarlo.

Il Primo Ministro invece è una figura debole e quasi paterna, proposta anni addietro come successore della Thatcher per allontanare il partito dalla figura intransigente e forte di lei. Un Primo Ministro più accondiscendente e pacifico, che però giunto al record del suo terzo mandato ha una maggioranza risicata e governa un partito in sommossa dopo i risultati deludenti delle elezioni appena vinte.

La ragnatela di eventi che Francis metterà in moto per sfiduciare il Primo Ministro prima e farsi eleggere poi è degna della serie tv, tra ricatti impliciti ed espliciti, truffe, contraffazioni e rilascio di informazioni riservate.

E anche qui ci saranno un paio di vittime immolate sull'altare del potere. Pure qui si tratterà di una persona affetta da dipendenze delle quali Francis approfitterà biecamente, e di una giovane giornalista che avrà instaurato un rapporto con lui (benché in questo caso lei si dichiarerà addirittura innamorata del politico).

Insomma, la trama è avvincente e più rapida che non nella serie televisiva.

La storia è ottima, e questo pur conoscendo la serie e quindi sapendo bene o male cosa sarebbe dovuto succedere.

Ottima anche la scrittura, all'inizio abbiamo poi una metafora del potere politico con la falena e le lampade che ritengo splendida.

Gli unici difetti che ho trovato nel libro sono che Francis appare meno dirompente, come personaggio, rispetto a Frank Underwood (ma questo può essere dovuto alla diversità del media utilizzato e all'interpretazione magistrale di Kevin Spacey), e il fatto che nei primi capitoli l'attenzione si sposta da un personaggio all'altro come a darci un quadro generale della situazione prima di partire con la trama vera e propria, generando però un po' di confusione.

Un'ottima lettura politica, fornitaci da uno scrittore che prima di questo libro aveva vissuto una situazione simile a quella sperimentata da Francis all'inizio della storia, essendo stato sotto la Thatcher quando cominciava a scricchiolare, non reggendo più la pressione politica. Fatto che lo portò a chiedersi, al momento di cominciare a scrivere un libro, come si sarebbe potuto togliere di mezzo un Primo Ministro ormai a fine corsa e indebolito, prima che distruggesse il partito...
