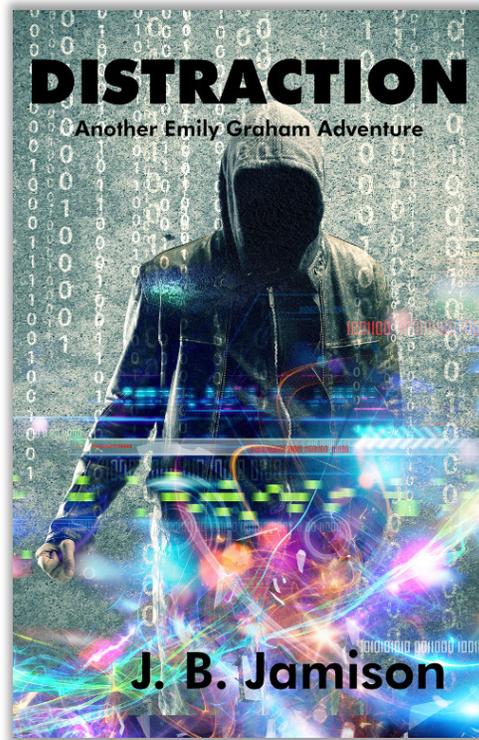


Distraction

By J. B. Jamison

Discussion Questions



NOTE: This material will include information about the story. We recommend using this material after you have completed reading *Distraction*.

We recommend first discussing the questions presented and then looking at the following pages where you will find J. B.'s response to each question.

More about *Distraction* and J. B. Jamison at:

Website: johnbjamison.com

Facebook: [@jamisonbooks](https://www.facebook.com/jamisonbooks)

Discussion Questions for *Distraction*, by J. B. Jamison.

How realistic are the risks of the hacking attacks that take place in the story? Do you think these are actual risks we face today? If so, what could or should be done about them?

Isn't a story like this with all of the hacking attacks risking giving bad people ideas?

What is your reaction to the situation that takes place at the St. Louis landfill? Is something like that possible?

Is there a specific scene in *Distraction* that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

After reading *Distraction*, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

What are your thoughts about the group of powerful men?

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of *Distraction*?

J. B.'s Responses to the Discussion Questions for Distraction:

How realistic are the risks of the hacking attacks that take place in the story? Do you think these are actual risks we face today? If so, what could or should be done about them?

As I did the research for Distraction, I read lists of documents from government sources, corporate sources, hacking sources, and had conversations with several people in various roles related to the risks of hacking. Based on that research, I can say that every situation described in the story is technically feasible. Some of the hacks, like the medical devices and remote control of an automobile, have been carried out by “white hat” hackers, seeking to demonstrate the risks that do exist in the attempt to see that changes are made to make them more secure. Others, like the pump hacks, have been carried out by both “white hat” and “black hat” hackers, demonstrating the risks that exist.

I do stress that this story is “fiction”, and the things that happen were possible because the attackers had unlimited time and resources. But, the simple fact is that real risks like those in the story do exist.

Isn't a story like this with all of the hacking attacks risking giving bad people ideas?

I'm not that creative. These risks are already known by those who live in the world of cyber-security and who might have the ability and resources to take advantage of them. One of my reasons for writing the story was just the opposite. While the “bad guys” are already aware of the risks, the majority of us are not aware of them and are not aware of how easy it is for us to be manipulated into helping the bad guys. My hope is that Distraction may make us a bit more aware, and a bit more careful.

What is your reaction to the situation that takes place at the St. Louis landfill? Is something like that possible?

The West Lake Landfill, Bridgeton, MO. is real, as is the material that was dumped there. The containment measures described, the cover, the vents, the water cooling system, are all real as well. The underground fire is real. The ‘fiction’ of Distraction begins with the attack on the pumps.

More about West Lake Landfill:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/508327822519437/>

EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/mo/west-lake-landfill>

Just Moms Stl: <http://www.stlradwastelegacy.com/>

Is there a specific scene in *Distraction* that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

I have several scenes that keep coming back to me. One is the closing scene when Emily discards vanHollings like yesterday's coffee grinds. The second is the moment during the phone call when Colonel Goodwin mentions the words "fires of hell". I can see the look in Emily's eyes as she puts things together. I like the scene when Liz meets her brother in the restaurant. I can see him there with that look in his eyes. One other very brief scene I like is when Angelique pulls the packet out in front of Captain Bonatemps and he begins to curl-up and sweat. It's brief, but I can see it like I'm standing there.

After reading *Distraction*, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

The more I get to know Emily, the more I like her. And as I mentioned above, I really enjoyed meeting Antoine Jean Bonatemps DuCheine, as well as Angelique Fanchon Decoudreau, and I'm hoping since both of them are in New Orleans they might show up again one of these days. And I do hope that Liz will come back with a story to tell, perhaps one of her own, although she and Emily might work together nicely again to one of these days.

What are your thoughts about the group of powerful men?

*In answering the discussion questions for *Disruption* I said that I've never been one of those "conspiracy theory" kind of guys. However, as I've watched the real world unfold over the past couple of years I am believing more and more that a group like this does exist, and is doing everything it can to 'Distract' us.*

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of *Distraction*?

I have to admit that I have come to the conclusion that nothing is truly secure anymore. If someone has the resources and keeps us distracted from what they are doing, there is no place safe from them. I believe the absolute most important thing for us to do is to, once again, learn how to "think". We must overcome our fears and hesitation and ask the difficult questions, demand real answers, and have the courage to call a lie a lie. We must stop being distracted by the noise and boasts, and stop trusting our future to the Distractors.

We must think.