



Forbidden Planet.. Beneath Contraband's ultra stylish cover lies a tale of high action and drama in a very near future where technology and communications have become inescapable. And just because it's a tech heavy book doesn't mean it's light on story. Far from it. Contraband is a difficult and complicated book, but a good one nonetheless and well worth sticking with for the ending. The story opens in Afghanistan, February. Two mercenaries, Charlotte and Tucker, are in Afghanistan to stir up trouble and make rival factions fight each other rather than the occupying forces. Charlotte ends up captured by some terrorist cell or other and becomes just another hostage video star. But her videos are posted to Contraband, a video-sharing mobile phone app that has begun not only to broadcast news but to dictate it as well. Then we hit the first of many jump cuts in the book, something Behe does with some mixed results. This is why Contraband will be seen as a difficult book by many unwilling to go with these time shifts and switches in the narrative flow of the story. It all takes work on the reader's part (you have to pay attention to the date on the pages kids). It's now 4 months later, June. This boy called Toby is running around Belgium trying to track down Charlotte from clues on Charlotte's Contraband video posts. He's desperate to find her, aware that only he can save her life. Another jump and Toby's in London. It's May. A month before he's dashing around the Belgium countryside but three after the Afghanistan abduction. He bumps into Tucker in an Internet cafe and gets himself strongarmed into the search for Charlotte. It transpires she's now working with a fellow called Jarvis who's doing his best to bring the Contraband network down. Told you it got confusing didn't I? After this the story keeps switching between the two periods in Toby's life as he runs round trying to find Charlotte in both. Characters come and go, the plot twists and turns until coalescing towards the end as it accelerates to a finish. A very satisfying and exhilarating finish indeed...