

Guest blog post by Vyvyan Evans, May 2 2023 at All the Ups and Downs

Topic: If you knew an apocalypse was imminent, how would you prepare?

The Babel Apocalypse is set in the near future, the early twenty-second century, when language is no longer learned but streamed from internet in space direct to neural implants (“language chips”) implanted in citizens brains, at birth, governed by laws. So what could possibly go wrong? Plenty as it turns out. When a cyberattack destroys the language streaming servers in low Earth orbit, large swathes of the world’s population lose the ability to communicate, at a stroke.

The only person who saw the Babel Apocalypse coming was the last native speaker in the automated world: Professor Ebba Black. Ebba is an heiress, and a hacker extraordinaire. But she had been planning for just such a catastrophe, a global language outage. She set up a secret base, Freetown, and with her team of scientists, established a Language Unplugged protocol: a medical procedure to “untether” human brains from the language chip technology that makes much of humanity entirely dependent on big tech.

In such a near-future landscape, when something akin to ChatGPT is literally embedded inside everyone’s heads, language has become a commodity, and no one actually learns it anymore. This is why a low probability event—a global language outage—is so catastrophic; no one can use language without it being streamed directly into their brains via the internet-of-things ecosystem.

But Ebba is ready. The only problem is that corporate powerplays, money and governmental politics inevitably have made her an outlaw--she is a wanted woman. Hence, Ebba must use skill and daring to stay off the grid. And with the assistance of the loner, Europol commander, Emyr Morgan, they must together figure out who is behind the outage, and how to restore language to humanity, when sinister, global forces are dead set against them.

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