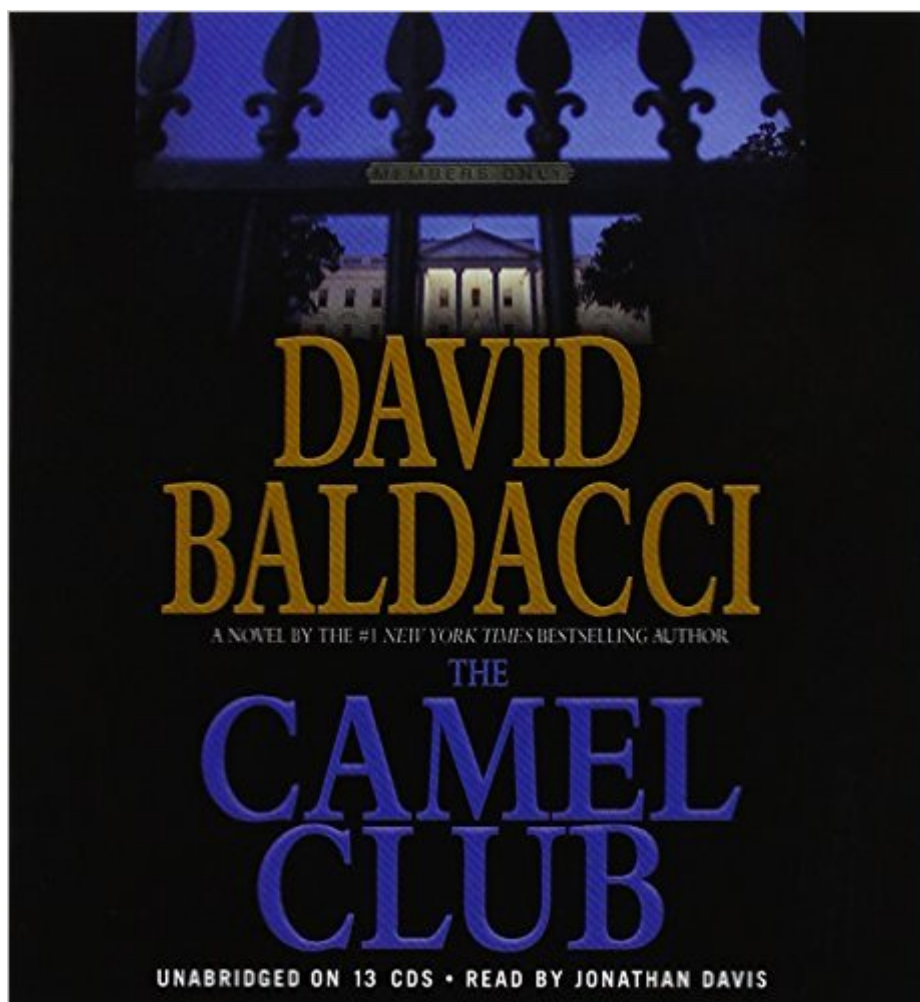


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The Camel Club



Synopsis

In "The Camel Club", bestselling author David Baldacci paints a frighteningly vivid portrait of a world that could be our very own soon, and the few people who have a chance to stop the chaos...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nobody writes a conspiracy thriller like David Baldacci, and *The Camel Club* will keep you turning pages at breakneck speed. Unfortunately, his latest is not without some flaws and while many of his books defy belief, this one is even more of a stretch. *The Camel Club* consists of four misfits (nearing senior citizen status) who form a secret conspiracy watchdog organization. The ringleader is "Oliver Stone," a man with a very secret and mysterious past. While meeting in a park during off-hours, the four witness the murder of a Secret Service agent, Patrick Johnson. Unfortunately, the two killers realize they have witnesses. Because of their checkered backgrounds, the Camel Club decides not to report this to the police. Instead, they go on the offensive, trying to discover not only the identity of the killers but also their motivation. At the same time, Secret Service agent Alex Ford is assigned to investigate the death of Johnson, but runs into trouble with the various agencies also looking into the murder (FBI, Metro Police, NIC, etc.). As if this isn't enough going on, a group of Islamic extremists is plotting a terrorist act involving the US president. But not all of the plotters are Islamic or Middle Eastern. In fact, some are working from the inside. Much of *The Camel Club* is very relevant to post 9/11 America. The FBI, CIA, NSA and other intelligence agencies are being forced to combine information, but infighting, jealousy and guarded secrets are still common. Government agencies are involved in illegal activities. The war is still raging in Iraq with Americans split on the

issue. The issues are very similar to today. But The Camel Club has just too many flaws.

It's late. I should be in bed by now, but I couldn't wait to get a review started for this book. It's my first Baldacci, but it won't be my last. I was hooked on page one. The Camel Club is a political thriller that opens in Washington, D.C. (well, not quite. The opening chapter is not in D.C.), where we meet four eccentric, once-upon-a-time effective fellows who make up a group they call The Camel Club. Each has some kind of experience and/or brilliance that makes him essential to the small assembly; and each has been successful at one time or another in his life. Now, they are only reflections of what they once were. There's Oliver Stone (his assumed name), Caleb Shaw, Reuben Rhodes, and Milton Farb, conspiracy theorists all. They meet once a month in the middle of the night to discuss recent conspiracy theories and reflect/update those they've held for years. There are other interesting characters introduced in the early pages, including Secret Service agent Alex Ford who's on the downside of his career, and Kate Adams, a Department of Justice lawyer who works as a bartender at night. Go figure that one out! We are also briefly introduced to U.S. President, James H. Brennan, and to National Intelligence Center Director, Carter Gray, among others. Stone has a tent near the White House where he watches what goes on there. His goal is to find out the "truth" of things. He believes the American people have been denied that most desirous of tenets. On the evening of the beginning of this story, the Camel Club meets as arranged, but in the course of their meeting they unwittingly see a terrible crime committed on Theodore Roosevelt Island. Now, they must decide what to do about it...and I'm only on page 70! More later. October 29, 2005: It's later.

Baldacci has become one of the best selling writers of thrillers in America. The main characters usually include federal agents of one sort or another and you often get interesting insights into 'The System'. In addition, Baldacci researches his books well in an effort to make them accurate both practically and historically. He brings all of these aspects to this new thriller, but the sum total is less than enchanting. The unfortunate addition to Baldacci's tried and true method is a highly unbelievable political agenda that permeates the book from beginning to end. In addition, by the end of the book there are few true 'bad guys' and anyone with any sense of morality will find few, if any, characters that come out as truly a 'good guy'. Many, through the last few chapters, are either praised for their questionable actions or those actions are simply overlooked. The book centers around a group of four misfit conspiracy theorists of reasonably high intelligence, of older age, and of various backgrounds who meet once a week to compare theories, observations and plans and call themselves the Camel Club. On one such meeting they witness a murder and set out to figure

out who has done this and why. They can't go to the police because they wouldn't be believed (most of them would be dismissed as crazy). Another plot line focuses on Secret Service Agent Alex Ford and his love interest Department of Justice Attorney Kate Adams (who moonlights as a bartender). The romance is forced and not especially believable. Agent Ford has been slated to look into an agent's death (the one that the Camel Club witnessed). He has a light acquaintance type relationship with the leader of the Camel Club who goes by the name of Oliver Stone.

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