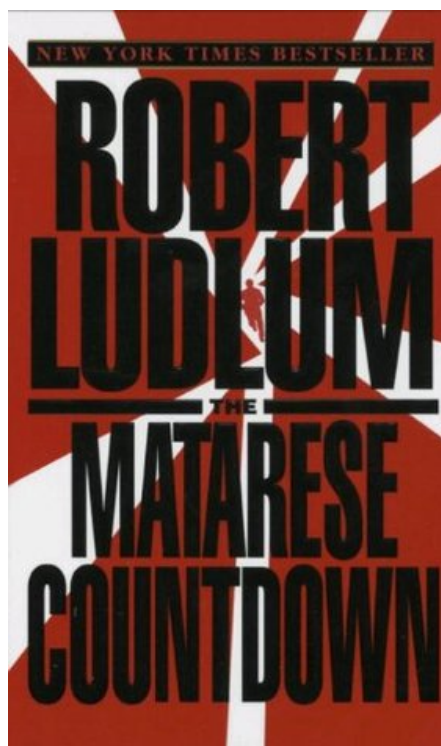




The Matarese Countdown

Robert Ludlum

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TWENTY YEARS AGO, TOP AGENTS FROM THE CIA AND KGB BANDED TOGETHER TO BRING DOWN THE MATARESE CIRCLE, AN INTERNATIONAL CABAL OF POWERBROKERS AND ASSASSINS WHOSE SOLE OBJECTIVE WAS TO ACHIEVE WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC DOMINATION. NOW THE BLOODY MATARESE DYNASTY IS BACK --- AND THE ONLY MAN WITH THE POWER TO STOP IT MAY HAVE ALREADY RUN OUT OF TIME ...

CIA case officer Cameron Pryce is hot on the trail of the new Matarese alliance. His only chance to terminate its ruthless activities is to follow the trail of blood, money and stone-cold killers right to the heart of its deadly conspiracy. From the Hamptons to London's Belgrave Square, Matarese assassins have already struck with brutal efficiency, eliminating all who stand in their way. Their chain of violence is impossible to stop --- until Pryce gets a rare break. One of the Matarese's victims survives long enough to whisper dying words that will blow the case wide open: the top secret code name for legendary retired CIA agent Brandon Scotfield --- the only man who has ever infiltrated the Matarese inner circle and lived to tell about it.

The Matarese Countdown Details

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From Reader Review The Matarese Countdown for online ebook

David says

Not Ludlum's best, but not his worst either. Formulaic like Ludlum's other books, however this is set 30 years after the Matarese Circle, with some of the worst characteristics of Ludlum's worst novels, and only glimpses so far of his best work. Ludlum is the master of the chase and action sequences and tangled webs of anti-government conspiracies, and while this novel is chock full of the latter there sure isn't much action so far. There is just a ton of buildup, with shocking (not) revelations that are right in line with his other works.

Christine says

Robert Ludlum never fails to disappoint. I didn't realize that this is a sequel to the Matarese Circle, but that didn't seem to matter too much - it was easy to keep up with past events. However, the format of the book seems to follow the Bourne series closely, sometimes it seems that only the character names are changed.

The plot involves current and former CIA agents trying to stop a secret organization (the Matarese) from dominating the world's economy for their own personal financial gain. I thought the plot was interesting, but trying to follow the plans of the Matarese was sometimes difficult.

I would definitely recommend this to anyone who regularly reads the genre.

Bernard A. says

This was disappointing. I had hopes for this story, given the reputation of the author. How did he get such a great reputation. His writing is stilted, bordering on purple, with such lines as, "Oh, I see what you mean," said the tall, attractive, and formidable Antonia,...," and, "Our?...Taleniekov is dead. He's gone!" "Not in my head, Cameron Pryce. He never will be."

This last leads me to another point, his character identification. Cameron Pryce is sometimes Cam or Cameron or Pryce or Cameron Pryce. The old master-spook, Brandon Scofield is sometimes Brandon, Bram, Scofield, Brandon Scofield, or his code name Beowolf Agate. The names change sometimes in the same conversation. And italics are thrown around like rose pedals at a wedding, with no regard for their place in the sense of the dialogue.

Speaking of which, Ludlum's dialogue is stiff with endless conversations that, seem to bring the characters themselves to scream, "Get to the point!"

In his favor, I was attracted to the idea of an aging CIA spook, years past his prime, revisiting an old enemy. There were so many possibilities for this book, but Ludlum seems to have taken the road most traveled and written a trite, simplistic yarn that could have had so much more tension.

Bill says

Awesome!

Marija I says

I was somehow disappointed which is uncommon for Ludlum's books... This one took a little longer to read and didn't necessarily keep me interested the whole way through... There were times I had to really force myself to keep going.

If you are picking up a Ludlum book for the first time, don't choose this one! Also if you have not read 'The Matarese Circle', which is book number '1' in this series, don't attempt this one. There is a lot of prior assumed knowledge and character development and plot development in the first book that this one lacks.

It was also extremely slow the action happened in the last 10 pages. Generally speaking Ludlum's books are packed with action.

Overall dissapointing.

Brett says

I got this book out of a box of free books sitting in front of a bookstore, and I guess you'd say that I paid the right price. I was fairly generous in my (three star) review of the Matarese Circle, which was a goofy and cliched piece of writing, but was at least a fun beach read. This sequel, however, should never have seen the light of day.

In the Matarese Countdown, the shadowy and inscrutable Matarese group are back at it again. What exactly are they back at? Pretty hard to tell. Something about buying up a bunch of corporate conglomerates, tanking their businesses, and throwing the world economy into chaos. To what ends do they wish to do this? Let's put it this way: if questions of why a character is motivated to do something in a book matters to you, then perhaps you are not the ideal reader of this book. The Matarese are one of the groups of bad guys that appear to have no ideology, are incredibly secretive, and yet also have hundreds (or thousands?) of people in their employ and limitless financial resources and access to military grade weaponry.

Our hero from the previous book, Brandon Scofield, and his now wife Toni are back, along with a new super spy, Cameron Pryce and a paper thin love interest for him. I dare you to find one salient difference, besides their age, between Scofield and Pryce. For story purposes, they are functionally interchangeable.

Pretty much all 550 pages are taken up by macho shouting, which is the main form of communication. If you like reading sentences like "What do you mean by that?!" and "You better tell him to get his ass down here!" then there will plenty for you to like about the Matarese Countdown. If you like characters with inner lives, any hint of mature humor, or a plot capable of surprise, then no.

My favorite asinine conversation was held by some anonymous bad guys who are trying to schedule a meeting to discuss their evil plans. Already, you can tell this is some scintillating writing. Two of the characters wish to meet in a half hour. One of the other characters wishes to meet in an hour. The original

two characters carry on a lengthy conversation about how mad they are about the one hour meeting time vs. the originally proposed half hour. This is a thriller that is as exciting as a conference call at the office.

I've read some bad novels in my time, including huge chunks of Dean Koontz and Tom Clancy that were, I thought, unsurpassable in terms of dreadfulness in popular fiction. Ludlum is giving them a real run for their money here, and making a bid to enter the pantheon of the worst of the worst.

Christian, Kelanth, Scala says

Circolo Matarese: conto alla rovescia, in originale "The Matarese Countdown" è un romanzo di spionaggio scritto da Robert Ludlum e pubblicato nel 1997. E' il sequel de "Il circolo Matarese".

Robert Ludlum, come già detto molte volte nelle mie precedenti recensioni è un maestro indiscusso del genere spy-story, tanto da meritarsi l'appellativo di "Mr. Plot" -signor complotto-. Ha scritto 27 romanzi thriller. Il numero di copie dei suoi libri in stampa è stimato tra 290 milioni e 500 milioni. I suoi libri sono stati pubblicati in 33 lingue e 40 paesi. Ludlum ha anche pubblicato romanzi sotto gli pseudonimi di Jonathan Ryder e Michael Shepherd.

È diventato celebre per la serie di romanzi "The Bourne Identity" ai quali sono stati vagamente ispirati tre film.

La trama di questo romanzo: come la mitica fenice, il Circolo Materese stanno rinascendo dalle ceneri e stanno riguadagnando la loro antica potenza. Il nuovo leader del Matarese è una figura enigmatica di nome Jan van der Meer Matareisen: secondo lui l'unico nipote legittimo del barone Guillaume de Matarese, il fondatore del gruppo Matarese. Con l'aiuto di un'altra figura oscura nota come Julian Guiderone alias "figlio del pastorello," che sembra essere sopravvissuto agli eventi narrati ne il "Circolo Matarese" quasi venti anni fa, pianificano un nuovo e diabolico complotto per far precipitare il mondo civilizzato nel caos totale. Solo un uomo come Brandon Scofield alias Beowulf li può fermare, anche se ormai si è ritirato da quasi venti anni. Brandon Scofield tornerà ancora una volta in campo insieme ad un altro uomo della CIA, Cameron Pryce, ma questa volta il nemico è più pericoloso.

Come da tradizione: spionaggio, intrighi internazionali, finanza, economia, politica mondiale e corruzione. Colpi di scena e tradimenti, un po' di humour e di sentimenti. Non manca niente.

Lo consiglio a chi volesse trascorrere qualche ora di tensione e suspense. Anche se, personalmente, se volessi apprezzare da subito l'autore partirei con la Trilogia di Bourne.

Marc says

Wow. This was cheese. Other reviewers have probably said it better but this was way off the mark for the work of Robert Ludlum. A number of years ago I read almost all of Tom Clancy's books back-to-back during one summer of reading. This may have disguised what I later noticed to be a "dumbing" down of his work. Campy dialogue, impossibly perfect characters, and useless repetition of important plot lines became the norm in Clancy's work (maybe it was there all along, but *Rainbow Six* was the major turning point for me). This Robert Ludlum book seemed to be heavily influenced by the later Clancy novels as though some sort of reverse mentor-apprentice relationship had formed between the older Ludlum and the younger Clancy.

Either way, I wouldn't recommend this book unless you have nothing else to read.

Steve says

This was left behind in my hotel room by a previous guest and I picked it up when I ran through my own books. It's a spy novel from the late '80s and feels like a straight to DVD spy movie. Computers and technology we take for granted are almost magical devices that can do almost anything. If it weren't for the authors need to explain how wonderful these things were it wouldn't have been so distracting. I've read many spy/thriller type novels set before the ubiquity of computers that dealt with them much more rationally. Also the Matarese are like a Bond villain with unlimited resources and access to military hardware and technology that you wouldn't expect to find in the real world. The main characters read like action heroes from a bygone era where men are men and women are sex toys.

I had read the Bourne novels about 20 years ago and remember liking them at the time, so I found this to be of a let down.

Ryan says

To be honest, the ending was a bit of a let-down. It was a good sequel, but it didn't deliver the same sense of suspense or urgency found throughout Martarese Circle. We have a lot more visibility into the workings of the bad guys this time, and it results in them feeling a little inept, especially toward the end. We went from the beginning of the first book, where these mysterious bad guys can literally find you anywhere, to the end of the second book where we can apparently sneak right into their house without them knowing.

Adam Nelson says

Not quite as fun as the original, but to be fair I got interrupted in my reading of this one by a binge of GRRM's A Song of Ice and Fire. That aside, I think what dampened the effect of this one a bit is that you're already well aware of the scope and depth of the Matarese conspiracy. Ludlum seemed to know this, however, so the attention in this one is more on the interplay and banter between Brandon Scofield, the old spook, and Cameron Pryce, the young one. However, this friendship lacks the depth and interest of that between Taleniekov and Scofield in the last one. There aren't layers to it; there isn't a deep and dramatic past like we had with the Russian and the American. Also, the Cold War backdrop to both characters made their relationship all the more interesting. Scofield and Pryce have that comical interplay of the old cop and the young cop, but since the young cop is pretty much just as talented and disciplined as the old one, you don't even have the traditional buddy cop interplay to enjoy. The humor is situational and surface-level and unfortunately undercuts the suspense. We also have the romance between Pryce and Montrose that again seems to be lip service--you have to have a new romance because Scofield and Antonia are old hat. I make it sound like I didn't like this one very much when, to tell the truth, I did. I just can't help but look at it in light of The Matarese Circle, which was incredible, Ludlum as good as I've ever seen him. This one is a diverting beach read. It goes down easily, which is good when you've been doing too much serious reading lately. It won't change your life or end up being particularly memorable, but I was glad to revisit Scofield and Antonia after what all they had been through in the first one. You read this for the characters, for your love of them, sort of like watching a new Pirates of the Caribbean movie to see Jack Sparrow.

Paula Howard says

The Matarese Countdown is the sequel to the Matarese Circle. Scofield and Toni barely escaped with their lives after believing that the son of the Shepard Boy had been killed and thus the Matarese has been killed. They go off the grid on an island and live an enjoyable life away from the spy world.....UNTIL.... the US and the world need their talents... the Matarese is back.

This time the circle is made up of the descendants of the Count of Matarese who started it all. They are intent on controlling the world and have spies in all the governments. Despite being in his 60's, Scofield has to bring his A game.

Good and worth reading but not as good as the Matarese Circle.

Matt says

Not as action-packed as the first Matarese story (something I find with a few Ludlum sequels, Bourne Supremacy being the exception). The theme of a global takeover reminded me of my favourite Ludlum novel, Aquitaine Progression, but the manner of the takeover is different.

Fredrick Danysh says

After an absence of twenty-four years the Matarese are back with their plans for world domination. A CIA agent and a military intelligence office work to prevent that takeover with the help of a retired CIA agent who destroyed the group two decades previously. This work is fast paced with bodies dropping all over the place. Vintage Ludlum by the man himself not someone else using his characters.

Hertzan Chimera says

In Ludlum's follow-up The Matarese Countdown, a much slower (tedious) book published in 1999, Brandon Scofield is dragged out of self-imposed exile on some Caribbean island to once again foil the rising phoenix of the Matarese inheritance. As I've said, I was rather disappointed with the narrative events of this sequel. Circle was fraught with narrative dead ends and 'how can he survive this' while Countdown just happened, scripting by numbers. It was the all-too-smooth routing of the remaining members of the Shepherd's family, the tying off of any tattered arteries the earlier book might have left.
