



The Hades Factor

Robert Ludlum

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The very first Covert-One novel from the *Sunday Times* bestselling author Robert Ludlum.

An unknown doomsday virus has claimed the lives of four people - including the fiancée of Covert-One's Lt Col. Jon Smith. Devastated and enraged, Smith uncovers evidence that this was no accident; someone out there has the virus, and the pandemic that threatens millions of lives was planned...

Not knowing who to trust or where to turn, Smith assembles a private team to fight the deadly virus. As the death toll mounts, the quest leads them to the highest levels of power and the darkest corners of the earth. And Smith and his team must hunt down a genius determined to destroy them.

The Hades Factor Details

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From Reader Review The Hades Factor for online ebook

Raashi Agarwal says

First things first, the name suits the theme. An insidious virus that is waiting to unleash its true potential to turn the planet into the Hades. A thrilling odyssey involving the materialistic lust of Dr. Victor Tremont of Blanchard Pharmaceuticals for which he is willing to go to any lengths and Dr. Sophia Russel's fiancée's and her sister's quest to end the pestilence and Dr. Tremont's diabolic plans make a riveting read. Besides this book sets the balls rolling for the Jonnathan Smith getting anointed to the Covert gang! A must read for people looking out for t.v. episode like heebie-jeebies in a book.

Somnath Banerjee says

Standard covert-one novel. As usual the plot is good, like other novels of the series. A deliberately engineered lethal virus is spread to cause a pandemic, for financial profits and it kills the fiancée of Smith, the protagonist. He starts an investigation which leads to capture of the powerful nexus. The story is decently paced, but at times paused by emotional ramblings. My favorite character is Marty, the computer geek. I could spot some minor flaws in the story line. If I got the chronology correct, Smith was attacked before Sophia got involved in the case, which has no reason. Attack on Smith should have been preceded by Sophia's involvement. Next the murder of Director of NHI, who deleted phone/lab records and was subsequently run over, was never investigated, while it should have given important clues. Even if the author wanted to highlight it as a humanly mistake of the protagonist, it should have mentioned in third person. Overall a good book.

Jim says

First, I should explain that I have read the book twice and seen the movie twice. Second, I am a big fan of Robert Ludlum's work. This is one of Ludlum's best efforts and I highly recommend either/both the book and the movie.

The story opens with the start of a plague. First a couple of soldiers die, then other people. Clearly easy to spread this disease and clearly it is deadly. No cure. Early the story takes on a mid-east terrorist theme and we begin to learn the disease is being spread by the terrorists. As the team at "Covert One" (a secret US government intelligence agency) ramps-up, we learn that the terrorists have a method of deployment of this airborne virus that will be very effective. The story mostly focuses on where did the original virus come from and who is causing it to be spread. There are some plot twists slowing down the investigation (like murder of some key people). While the story seems to be exclusively a bio-terrorist plot, there is a big plot twist where the terrorists are simply the agent of the people who are really behind the plot.

A well told story with building suspense. A lot of reality in the story which is chilling to imagine this could really happen (i.e. it ain't sci-fi; it could happen). In the real world, we have seen SARS, Bird Flu and recently H1N1 Flu effecting the population; what if the disease is more deadly than these? What if it spread widely? Yes, this is an exciting, suspenseful story. This is an exciting race against time to save the world! I highly recommend it!

Steve says

Great suspense, reads more like a down to earth Jason Bourne, rather than over the top James Bond. Action packed, even though it is a little cliched with the fantastic looking people with haunted pasts ect ect.

Claire says

The book is very fast paced & full of suspense. The drama starts at the very beginning & continues to the very last page. A book I'd recommend to all.

Joan says

"The Hades Factor" is a thriller that I found fascinating. Ludlum portrays the evil character in such a believable fashion. Pandemics, pandemonium, blackmail on a massive scale - what more could a reader ask for?

Leothefox says

I usually finish every book I start, but I cried uncle on this one at page 212.

This is not so much a book as it is bullet-point stereo-instructions, lifeless and soulless "action thriller" crap that's as brainless as it is lazy.

What is wrong with Ludlum's "Covert One"? Well, for one, none of the people in it are really characters. Each player here is more like an action figure, given an appearance and a stat or two, but nothing to make them human. Our hero is a doctor/soldier/"badass" named Jonathan Smith who proved to be as bland and uninteresting as his name. He burns for very bland revenge as he harries the plot of a villain who has a conspiracy working involving a virus. All of the villains are known to the reader and none of their allegiances are in question, since the book cheats out to cover what everybody does, says, and thinks.

The story, like the writing, is purely mechanical. I'm never expecting literature, but I figure a decent writer, hack though they may be, has a duty to invest some life and personality into any product they put out. "Covert One: The Hades Factor", however, is so thoroughly generic and workmanlike that it never does anything with the material. It's like a cook who has no interest in pleasing the taste-buds, so they simply churn out nutriloaf.

Nearly every person in this story is supposed to be some kind of genius, many possessing a PHD or two. They never convey this through dialogue or actions, yet the narrator reminds us all that they have high stats and are wicked smart. This is more fuel for a growing theory of mine that writers who insist their characters are brilliant do so to cover up their own idiocy.

This book was an utter chore, and it's one I'll leave unfinished. On almost every page I found a source of irritation, from the Wikipedia-like travelogue blurbs about each location, to the awful dialogue, to the embarrassing and inescapable reminders that this is a "cutting-edge" thriller from 2000 (Hussein alive, the internet explained, Aspergers called an "affliction").

Every single thing that happened was buried in labored explanation, drawn out to the stretching point without any trace of levity or playfulness. You can't feel for the hero over the murder of his girlfriend as she was a non-character with an off-the-shelf romance who took too long to die anyway.

To be clear: I hated everything about this book and I regret ever starting it.

Ben Adkison says

After finishing Robert Ludlum 19s The Paris Option a few weeks ago, I realized it was actually part of a series of novels known as the Covert-One Novels. So, I went back and downloaded The Hades Factor, the first in the series. It 19s pretty standard Ludlum: Fun to read (especially as an audiobook), enjoyable characters (only somewhat believable), and hard to put down. Since I have a audible.com account, and multiple credits saved up, I 19ve now moved onto the next Covert-One Novel: The Cassandra Compact. Should I read more really good fiction? 13 Yeah; Do I still enjoy reading these novels? 13 Yeah.

3.5 out of 5 cups of black coffee.

Jeanne says

Basically a quick read, (just grabbed it on the way out the door leaving for a trip), typical Ludlum (but not as good as earlier ones), [Spoiler Alert] where the beautiful lover of protagonist is killed, which sets him off on a quest to find those responsible. Far-fetched plot of virulent virus that is purposely manufactured and spread by evil leader of pharmaceutical company so that he can become even more wealthy by "miraculously" (and very conveniently) having millions of doses of the cure available (for a previously unknown virus--just a tad suspicious?!?). There were some interesting characters, like Marty, the eccentric computer wizard, Peter the Brit, and Samson the Doberman guard dog (but then I am biased toward Dobermans :-).

A long, long time ago, I had really enjoyed a few Ludlum novels, so I thought it might be time to read another of his books (after originally thinking the plots and characters were getting too repetitive, so I had to quit reading them). Apparently, twenty years was not long enough time in between reading his stuff again. Maybe I'll try again in another twenty years. ;-)

GymGuy says

Have to say this reads somewhat like a "Dukes of Hazard" script. Tons of random action, chasing here and there and everywhere, quirky characters, improbable situations, black-and-white characters. I also got really, really tired of all the emotional diversions.

Other than that, not a bad read, just not super. I generally stick to books with a 4.0+ score. This one was 3.8

or so. Now I know why I stick with 4.0+.

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

I love Robert Ludlum. This book has the oddest set of characters ever in a Robert Ludlum book of international intrigue. This is a better spy novel than most spy novels.

Dr. Smith, mourning the loss of his fiancée joins the hunt for her killer and finds out it was no lab accident. He has to call in every marker and favor from his past in counter espionage, a world he had thought he had left behind, to keep himself out of jail and alive long enough to save...the planet? From a deadly viral killer.

Some of the characters were, Clive Cusslerishly larger than life, but generally Gaule Lynds and Ludlum manage to keep them under control. The story is generally tight and the pace moves from fast to feverishly fast.

I enjoyed this book (and the sequel) very much. This isn't quite as cerebral as James Rollins (if one can call action adventure "Cerebral") but it is very complex. It's a little weak on character development past the main three, all men, but there is potential to "flesh out" a couple more in future stories.

More to it than your average germ-o-phobia case.

Marts (Thinker) says

Three persons fall victim to an awful and deadly virus and the scientists can't seem to figure it out... When Lt. Col. Smith returns from overseas he's attacked by some strange folk and then his fiancée also dies from this damned virus...

Can he and his team figure it out and prevent it and the evil fools behind this whole ill scheme from gaining more victims?

An exciting tale for thriller lovers...

William says

Interesting premise with the deliberate plague of a virus especially with the current Ebola scare, but not a very good read. Full of the hero that can do no wrong. He goes from one improbable super heroic action to the next with very few pages between. Accompanied, of course, by the predictable and improbable tough female. All while moping over the loss of his true love to the bad guys. Oh well, the book was worth what I paid for it (0).

Keith says

Army Lt. Col. Jonathan Smith, MD loses his beautiful fiancé to a strange new infectious disease, unknown to

modern medicine and finds that when he attempts to find its source he becomes the target of a mysterious group of killers. As the story continues we find that the criminals were sent by the rogue executive of a pharmaceutical company which is responsible for the virus. There's lots of action adventure but since this was written before 9/11 the communication technology and middle-east intrigue and political escapades seem conspicuously out of date.

K.D. Absolutely says

I have to admit now: Robert Ludlum is my guilty pleasure.

His books are addictive. I don't mind having him as my most-read author. His stories give me cheap thrills. Cheap in both literal and figurative senses. Literal because his books are being sold for about \$1 or \$2 and they flood the second-hand bookshops. Figurative because whenever I mention to my literary friends that I love Robert Ludlum, I do not get thumbs up unlike when I say that my favorite author is Leo Tolstoy or Alan Hollinghurst.

Robert Ludlum is so commercial that it is almost expected that any thirtyish or fortyish man like me would at some point in his life, read all the Ludlum books available in the marketplace. Nobody pays attention if a man (or even a woman) reads or even professes his admiration to his works. It is like John Grisham or Dan Brown for the current generation. Or maybe my non-literary reader-friends would still be in awe if they hear somebody reading Dan Brown since it's been only a decade ago when the duo bestsellers, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* hit the market.

The Hades Factor started the Covert One series so it was here where **Sgt. Jon Smith** was introduced. It was in this book where his girlfriend and fellow scientist, **Sarah Russell** died because of viral epidemic. I thought I felt that the event in the book was similar to the SARS that started in Hong Kong in 2003. I thought that maybe Ludlum was inspired by that event. Then I noticed that this book was first published in 2000, a year before Ludlum died. So, Ludlum actually sort of predicted that some kind of disease from monkey would spread throughout the world 3 years before it actually happened.

So, if Aldous Huxley predicted the use of hallucinatory drugs for brainwashing or cloning of babies, Robert Ludlum predicted the spread of monkey (or fowl) virus worldwide. It's quite creepy thinking about all these good novelists being able to predict some catastrophic events in the near future.

A film shooting of another movie of the *Bourne* series is being shot here in Manila. That's one reason why I also picked this book. I wanted to go to the shooting to watch until I realized that it is Robert Ludlum who I admire and not some kind of crappy second-rate actor. Sorry, I just miss Matt Damon. Why the hell they decided to let go of him?

I have to complete this series. One of the best book series that I've read.
