



Marco Polo, If You Can

William F. Buckley Jr.

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Master of espionage fiction and National Book Award winner William F. Buckley Jr. brings us another in his best-selling series starring the intrepid CIA agent Blackford Oakes.

When a shadowy Russian mole threatens to undermine the free world's defenses by infiltrating President Eisenhower's National Security Counsel, CIA super-secret agent Blackford Oakes is called in to unmask the imposter. Then, Oakes turns the tables on the Communists by piloting a U-2 spy plane on a Gary Powers-style one-way mission behind the Iron Curtain. Sentenced to death and trapped in the depths of the Lubyanka prison, Oakes may have turned his last trick. Or has he?

Marco Polo, If You Can Details

Date : Published June 1st 1996 by Cumberland House Publishing (first published 1981)

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Author : William F. Buckley Jr.

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From Reader Review Marco Polo, If You Can for online ebook

Jim B says

I think I may try other Bradford Oakes mysteries by Buckley. This fourth of the series gave a taste of Cold War espionage circa 1960. I wish I was more informed because Bill Buckley is very witty. For example, Bradford Oakes is reading one of Buckley's nonfiction books and his mind keeps wandering (but that's "no fault of Buckley's"). I'm sure I missed a lot of other enjoyable references. This espionage tale was not a suspense novel, but interesting for what it revealed about the complicated world of the spy, which Buckley had experience with. The book was easy to follow, which made it a good choice for an audio book while driving to and from work (some spy stories and mysteries require too much attention to follow while driving -- on the other hand, maybe I missed some of the humor and references because Buckley is such a deft writer).

James Cooper says

A little drier than the others in the series, but nothing should be taken away from Buckley's writing. Whether running away, being traded for, freelancing, spying, or anything else Blackford always finds a way to return home to dear ole Sally. The beginning as well as the ending were great. For some reason, the middle just seemed a bit of a bore this time.

Jack says

At the time I read these novels (the late 1980's and early 1990's), I found them to be pretty good... sort of a cross between Matt Helm and James Bond. Not quite up to Ian Fleming's standards, but not quite as dated by then either.

Maija Urrelo says

This book is a mess. Read it only for the homoerotic bits. Pass.

Philip says

Read a bunch of Buckley's Oakes stories back in the '80's. I remember them all being pretty good, and this as the best of the bunch since I found the whole U-2 thing interesting. I haven't reread any of them since then, however, so have no idea how they're survived the test of time.

Alex says

I enjoyed it, but it wasn't a book I couldn't put down.

Richard says

I love the Cold War Era fiction by WFB. Surprisingly good plot.

Carole says

Continuing my series of William F Buckley readings, I read this spy story. One of my all time favorite genres, being a child of the 50's & 60's but even I found this rather dated. Our world has gone so far beyond doctoring a xerox machine to make extra copies of everything & hide them in a secret drawer! Nothing of Buckley intrudes on what is a plain old-fashioned spy story, based on the Gary Powers U2 spy plane incident. He went down in the USSR & was held, put on trial & later exchanged for a Russian spy. The book was entertaining, well written but somehow less than gripping. Maybe it's time to move on from my favorite genre when I was 13!!!

Kevin Montgomery says

Another fabulous Blackford Oakes novel. Oakes is cool, calm, and collected, as usual...even while facing imprisonment in the Soviet Union. This guy is smart, compassionate, handsome, suave... you name it. A regular James Bond without the smugness or the gadgets. His boss Rufus...low-key, impeturbable, and deadly decisive. Great dialog throughout, especially the rantings of President Eisenhower about his staff's incompetence and "Kroo-cheff's" bumbblings. This is (as are all of Buckley's novels) sophisticated reading. So read Marco Polo, If You Can...if you can!

Ashley says

Just didn't do much for me. It's a pretty straight forward Cold War era spy story. But, when reading it in 2011, it feels too dated. Hard to get too excited about espionage being conducted via photo manipulation and xerox machine. Plus, having read several of William Buckley's son Christopher Buckley's books, I was expecting a bit more wit than was present.

David Vanness says

y copy is Published January 28th 1982 by Thorndike Press
Large Print, Hardcover, 414 pages

Nate Oman says

Oakes is a Mary Sue and the plotting isn't impressive. What brings me back is the way that Buckley invokes the 1950s and 1960s.
