



The Collectors

David Baldacci

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In Washington, D.C, where power is everything and too few have too much of it, four highly eccentric men with mysterious pasts call themselves the Camel Club. Their mission: find out what's really going on behind the closed doors of America's leaders.

The assassination of the U.S. Speaker of the House has shaken the nation. And the outrageous iconoclasts of the Camel Club have found a chilling connection with another death: the demise of the director of the Library of Congress's rare books room, whose body has been found in a locked vault where seemingly nothing could have harmed him.

A man who calls himself Oliver Stone is the group's unofficial leader. Staying one step ahead of his violent past and headquartered in a caretaker's cottage in Mt. Zion Cemetery, Stone, drawing on his vast experience and acute deductive powers, discovers that someone is selling America to its enemies one classified secret at a time. When Annabelle Conroy, the greatest con artist of her generation, struts onto the scene in high-heeled boots, the Camel Club gets a sexy new edge. And they'll need it, because the two murders are hurtling them into a world of high-stakes espionage that threatens to bring America to its knees.

From an ingenious con in Atlantic City to the possible forgery of one of the rarest and most valuable books in America history, to a showdown of epic proportions in the very heart of the capitol, David Baldacci weaves a brilliant, white-knuckle tale of suspense in which every collector is searching for one missing prize: the one to die for...

The Collectors Details

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Author : David Baldacci

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From Reader Review The Collectors for online ebook

kartik narayanan says

Read the review of the entire Camel Club series at my my blog

The Collectors is a perfectly acceptable entry in a perfectly acceptable series. It stars the same four main characters from The Camel Club with a new character added to mix things up.

I found some of the main characters to have mysteriously changed from the previous book. Milton no longer displays OCD behaviour and is a lot more assertive. Caleb has become more of a coward. Oliver makes mistakes you would not expect a 666 man to do. But, this is a book that does not take itself seriously and, I guess, neither should I.

It was fun to read and that's all that matters

Kelly says

I just love David Baldacci. I think he is my guilty pleasure when it comes to books. He does such a wonderful job of character development and plot timing. The first part of this book, I was trying and trying to figure out how the two seemingly disconnected stories were going to tie together, and then BAM. Never saw it coming. The Camel Club is an organization of disenfranchised former (and current) government employees who always seem to be in the thick of things and have a unique combination of skills that help them stay alive while solving dangerous crimes. This is the second installment of their adventures, and I just love every minute of it. Of course, I have to now read the next one to see how the cliffhanger on this one unfolds! I also love Baldacci's pacing (although it has cost me many a late night). His chapters are 3-10 pages, so it is very easy to say, "Well, I'll read just one more!" A great read for anyone who enjoys interesting thrillers with a historical/governmental context and flavor. After reading this, I want to go to the Library of Congress reading room and peruse a book!

Tracy says

I was hoping to get into this series a little more than I am. I couldn't get through the first one but I did manage to get through this one it just wasn't as interesting as the other books I have read from Baldacci.

D.K. says

Oliver Stones suspects there is a link between the assassination of the U.S Speaker of the House and the director of the Library of Congress rare books room. The Camel Club is joined by Annabelle Conroy, a con-artist who should be running for her life, but is instead aiding the group to solve this mystery.

All the members of the Camel Club lives are threatened by a ruthless enemy that once worked for the same

ultra secret organization as Oliver Stone.

David Baldacci has the amazing ability to thrill and surprise in his novels and never disappoints with his Camel Club series.

Benjamin Thomas says

The second book in the “Camel Club” series combines a lot of subjects that are near and dear to my heart: antiquarian and rare book collecting, short and long cons, and the Library of Congress (yes I am a card-carrying member and certified as a “reader”) and its Rare Books reading room. The story brings back the four main members of the Camel Club from book one The Camel Club, but FBI agent Alex Ford gets a breather this time around. Instead we are treated to the interesting character of Annabelle Conroy, a con artist extraordinaire who pulls off an amazing revenge con on an Atlantic City casino king only to be drawn into the orbit of Oliver Stone and the rest of the Camel Club as they investigate the somehow connected deaths of the Speaker of the House and the Director of the Library of Congress’s Rare Books room.

I think I enjoyed this one just a little bit more than the first, probably because of the book-related and con-related plots. I do think it would be best if readers begin the series with book one, rather than plunge directly into this novel because there is not much time devoted to describing the various quirks of the main characters. I would be afraid that without the background development from book one, readers might think these Camel Club guys are just plain weird versus understanding how their peculiar personalities and characteristics actually lead to progress in resolving the plot.

I chose this book to read during a business trip because I always feel confident that Baldacci can hold my attention throughout the ordeal of crowded airports and cramped plane seats as I make my way across the country. He has an easy-to-read style which not only holds my attention but also makes it easy to pick up my place in the narrative despite multiple interruptions. This book did the trick...I only wish I had brought along book number three for the trip home.

IslandRiverScribe says

The Collectors is the 2nd novel in the Camel Club series, following The Camel Club (2005). This novel is both a thriller and a mystery. First, it is a thriller because we know who the assassin is, by name, from the first page. He is quite an engaging psychopath, smart as the proverbial whip, and has a snideness to his inner monologues that can make the reader smile widely, if not downright laugh out loud. But do not be misled by that snideness, he is a stone-cold, government-trained killer.

The mystery, however, is three-fold. First, we must discover why the assassin, located in Washington, D.C., is killing his targets, as it is clear from the first chapter that it is not by agency directive. Secondly, we have to divine why the author is creating a second plotline involving a sophisticated con artist who is preying on the uber-rich 3000 miles away on the West Coast. And finally, we must determine how the members of the Camel Club, involved already in the first mystery, can possibly fit into the 2nd plotline.

Then, in one sentence, the degrees of separation between the three mysteries converge and the novel

skyrockets to the next level of action and anticipation.

While the previous novel in the series set up Oliver Stone as the main protagonist, it also introduced his friends and fellow club members. That novel also tended to revolve the story line around and through all the supporting characters evenly. However, in this novel, Baldacci centers most of the attention on Caleb Shaw, who happens to be a Rare Books librarian at the Library of Congress.

Caleb finds the body of his boss murdered in one of the Library's book vaults, finds himself the executor of that man's literary collection, finds an extremely rare book in that collection that should not have been there and then finds himself up to his eyeballs in trouble, the kind of trouble that makes you dead really quickly. Caleb's basic character is one that is incredibly rule-oriented, law abiding, and self-righteous almost to a fault. And it is fascinating to watch Baldacci take this character through the physical stress and moral ambiguousness of the spy game in which he finds himself an unwilling and central figure.

Throughout the novel, Baldacci's writing is both tight and informative. By "tight," I mean that he does not indulge in those "Hi, how are you? Fine, thanks, and you?" aspects of conversations that appear to occupy space and increase word count. Nor does he wander afield in descriptive prose.

As to being informative, he does not dump paragraphs of facts onto the reader. He blends the technical or historical background information that he deems necessary for the progression of the storyline into the conversations of the characters and into their internal monologues. Thus, the reader can move along smoothly without being overwhelmed or bored.

But being smooth in style does not make this book a "cozy." It is gritty and its violence is graphic. The action scenes feel realistic, no super-hero stuff, just pure use of intelligence, experience, desperation and guts.

And, after finishing this novel, you may never ever look at the members of your book club again in the same way as you do now.

Eric Bjerke says

Anytime I read a book from cover-to-cover in just a couple of days, I obviously enjoyed it. I am easily bored and this one was not boring. I learned about con artists, and ex-CIA hit men, and rare books. That said, it wasn't clever enough. I don't mean the plot--I will never understand how people come up with such a twisting, complex tale--but the characters just seemed so pedestrian to me. Obviously a book like this is not going to contain characters that are dynamic because it is all about the plot. I just felt like all the banter between the characters was, well, weak. I will probably read this author again (this one is already set up for a sequel), but I'm not running out and getting it right away.

Toni Osborne says

Sequel to "The Camel Club"

Soon after the Speaker of the House is assassinated, Caleb Shaw a quiet librarian stumbles upon the body of his boss Jonathan DeHaven at the Library of Congress narrowly escaping the same fate. "The Camel Club" group promptly sets out to investigate and it becomes a race to stop a man who is determined to auction off America to the highest bidder.

On a local level, Annabelle Conroy, a gifted con artist, is out to pull off a major con against a ruthlessly violent casino boss. She gathers three other scammers and together they undertake a heist that promises to make them all rich. She eventually meets up with the Camel Club after she attends the funeral of Jonathan DeHaven (her ex husband). She then joins the group in the hopes of solving the crime. Their lives become more and more in peril as they come closer to the truth.

This crisp action thriller is a blend of two masterfully intertwined plots, truly entertaining. The characters may be a little too eccentric but they are likeable and interesting. As the storyline unfolds you are left turning the pages to a very interesting conclusion that is obviously leading to a sequel. I would recommend reading "The Camel Club" first.

David Highton says

Another tale of the slightly ramshackle group called the Camel Club, led by the long retired CIA operative, Oliver Stone. Investigating the murder in the Library of Congress of a senior work colleague of one of the group, they stumble into a spy ring and need the help of the ex-wife of the victim, herself in hiding after a successful con trick in Atlantic City. A little over-convoluted at times, Baldacci keeps the narrative moving at pace, as usual.

James says

Before reading any of his books, I was all set to become a David Baldacci cheerleader. With twelve New York Times bestsellers to his name, 50 million books sold in 80 countries, plus glowing press and reader reviews, he seemed an ideal candidate for my pantheon of favourite authors. Then I started reading *The Collectors*

With a mixture of disappointment and disbelief, I ploughed through page after page, hoping that at some point it would turn into a thriller. But, far from the diamond-sharp dialogue and pacesetting plot I'd been expecting, the book turned out to be as thrilling as a damp dishcloth.

The main story surrounds an investigation by a group of conspiracy theorists into a death at the Library of Congress in Washington. Elsewhere, a gang of con-artists sets out to relieve a notorious mobster of his fortune. These plots intertwine and the rest of the book unravels the consequences.

So far, so good. But right from the start Baldacci's clunky writing gets in the way of the story. On Planet Baldacci, people don't just say things. They say them "bitterly", "solemnly", "eagerly", "breathlessly", or even "matter-of-factly". This outbreak of adverbs is profoundly annoying, but it's by no means the only problem with *The Collectors*.

The paper-thin characters are a mixture of the unremarkable and the unbelievable. Baldacci may have intended con-artiste Annabelle Conroy to come across as a clever and classy broad with a will of steel and a heart of gold. But before too long, I was tiring of this James Bond in tights. The reader is meant to gasp in wonder at her skullduggery and subterfuge as she takes the mean and the greedy for a ride. But how can we admire a character whose actions lead to the innocent getting killed? Or are we supposed to dismiss these casualties as collateral damage?

Meanwhile, the group of conspiracy theorists, known as the Camel Club, owe more to Hanna-Barbera than to Hitchcock. They're not so much amateur detectives as shamateur defectives. Led by Oliver Stone (I kid you not), these misfits bumble their way across Washington with all the finesse of a herd of elephants on roller skates. Especially irritating is Caleb Shaw, the wimpy librarian. Baldacci gets exactly no prizes for fishing him out from the dressing-up box of tired old stereotypes.

As for the mobster, Jerry Bagger, he's an incredibly stupid pantomime villain. Far from masterminding his way to owning a string of casinos, a dodgy character like this wouldn't get past the doorman in my local supermarket.

With little of interest in terms of plot and character, the reader should at least have been able to admire the scenery. An attractively drawn map of Washington, D.C. on the first page suggests that this monumental city will play a significant part in the story. Yet, aside from passing references to the Mall and the White House, we might as well be in Grimsby. Even the magnificent Library of Congress, where much of the action (I use the word guardedly) takes place, is described in the most fleeting of terms.

Early on, we're told that the Camel Club saved the world from Armageddon in a previous adventure. This incredible claim should have set alarm bells ringing, but I pressed on, expecting an eventual resolution to the story. But not in another book.

Baldacci couldn't have been less subtle had he placed a photograph of a cash register on the final page, with a little banner declaring: "So long, suckers, see you in the sequel". It was an appropriately fraudulent end to a so-called thriller that delivered not so much a tightness in my chest as a lightness in my wallet. Baldacci is on record as saying that he strongly identifies with Annabelle Conroy. Having conned me out of my hard-earned cash, I can say (truthfully, angrily, bitterly, furiously) that he's well on the way to emulating his heroine.

Perhaps I was just unlucky. Other reviewers have claimed that this isn't Baldacci at his best, and it could be this wasn't the right place to start on his books. But it's definitely the right place to stop. Rather than risk another mugging, I'll be steering clear of this particular author. From now on, my bookshelf is a Baldacci-free zone.

Angela says

[the actually minor plot point with the Psalm Book. I was really disappointed. (hide spoiler)]

Michael Hollingworth says

I really had fun with this one. It was great to dig into yet another Baldacci book. The pacing was really nice,

and I enjoyed the story. Got lost amidst some of the character names, but seeing as I'm being ridiculous and reading the second book before the first, well. XP There was some sexual material in there, which, I guess, depending on your view, might be seen as somewhat obtrusive, but personally, most of it didn't bother me. Anyway, yeah. That's it. =P

Donna says

I got to page 117. I realized it was time to quit when I found myself thinking, "Gee I really should read a few pages in that book I'm working on, but I'd rather clean the bathroom." With all due respect to Mr. Baldacci. His writing obviously affords many people untold hours of welcome diversion. But apparently I'm not going to be one of them.

So far, what we've got is a dead body in a locked room and two groups of people running around like gangs of middle school kids, playing at being grownups. One consists of four unlikely superhero types charging around in a van and on a motorcycle trying to solve the crime; the other is a group of crooks that persist in proudly calling themselves "cons." (Isn't "con" a verb or the name of an action unless it refers to "convicts"?) Eventually, I'm sure, they'll all come together, but I won't be there to see it.

To me, the characters are flat and silly. I really don't care who killed the librarian.

My apologies to Baldacci fans. I tried.

Cindy says

Another great read. The Camel Club is awesome at watching the government!

Irene says

1.5 - 2 stars because there were some memorable characters but the story wow so ridiculous.

Mahoghani 23 says

The Camel Club can really place themselves in harms way; the sights of a killer.

A spy ring in Washington, D. C. Has caught the attention of Oliver Stone and he never backs down from getting to the truth of the matter. Along with Oliver is Reuben, Caleb, Milton and now Annabelle (read the book!) whose bringing her skills to the group.

Annabelle needs to inform them of her previous activities. Jerry Bagget, her last con job, is right on her tail because of Tony's mistake.

Starts off slow but brings you to the threshold of action, suspense and a better understanding as to why

everything happened the way it did.

Carol says

First Read: The Collectors is a thriller novel written by American author David Baldacci. The book was published by Warner Books on October 17, 2006. This is the second installment to feature the Camel Club, a small group of Washington, D.C. civilian misfits led by "Oliver Stone", a former CIA trained assassin. On November 5, 2006, the novel debuted at No. 2 on The New York Times Best Seller list and remained on the list for seven weeks.

The Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the curator of the rare books collection of the Library of Congress both are found dead. The Speaker has been killed by a sniper at a party while the head of the rare books collection dies from "unknown circumstances." Oliver Stone and the Camel Club become suspicious, although initially they indulge what they believe is his overactive imagination. Stone and his cohorts discover that Seagraves had been selling American intelligence secrets to terrorists in the Middle East, compromising intelligence efforts in the region. However, when they are followed and ask the Secret Service for help, the followers disappear, and the Camel Club becomes interested in their activities. Seagraves kidnaps and subsequently tortures Stone for information. Annabelle Conroy is introduced as a con artist, who after pulling off a \$40 million heist against an Atlantic City Casino owner (Jerry Bagger) is on the run for her life. Bagger wants to find and kill Annabelle and her con team. Alex Ford from the previous novel reappears, and in the climax Seagraves is killed by a knife thrown at his carotid artery by Stone who turns out to be an ex-CIA killer. Alex Ford and his agents take Seagrave's remaining collaborators into custody. One of Annabelle Conroy's collaborators in the heist is tortured for information by the angry casino owner, who finds out the general area in which she is living (Washington, D.C.). The novel ends with a set-up for Stone Cold, the third novel of the Camel Club series. The mystery deepens in the gripping second novel in David Baldacci's Camel Club series, The Collectors.

Annabelle is a beautiful stranger with a mysterious past, planning the heist of the century – two short cons to fund a long con, then a life of unashamed luxury, incognito in a foreign land. Jonathan DeHaven, the shy head of the Rare Books Division at the Library of Congress, is planning nothing more than an uneventful day amongst his cherished collection. But when Jonathan is found dead by Caleb Shaw, a member of the Camel Club, two conspiracies are destined to meet as the Club determines to track down the dead man's long-lost wife – and Annabelle decides to avenge the death of her beloved ex-husband. Unfortunately, the victim of Annabelle's long con has sworn eternal revenge and Jonathan's killers will stop at nothing to keep the truth about his death, and the code they have perfected over the years, from surfacing.

Second Read: The Collectors is the 2nd novel in the Camel Club series, following The Camel Club (2005). This novel is both a thriller and a mystery. First, it is a thriller because we know who the assassin is, by name, from the first page. He is quite an engaging psychopath, smart as the proverbial whip, and has a snideness to his inner monologues that can make the reader smile widely, if not downright laugh out loud. But do not be misled by that snideness, he is a stone-cold, government-trained killer.

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Caleb finds the body of his boss murdered in one of the Library's book vaults, finds himself the executor of that man's literary collection, finds an extremely rare book in that collection that should not have been there and then finds himself up to his eyeballs in trouble, the kind of trouble that makes you dead really quickly. Caleb's basic character is one that is incredibly rule-oriented, law abiding, and self-righteous almost to a fault. And it is fascinating to watch Baldacci take this character through the physical stress and moral ambiguousness of the spy game in which he finds himself an unwilling and central figure.

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Highly Recommend. Great Read!!!

Diane says

Lots of nasty characters in this book, actually liked this book better than the 1st in the series.

Rare books are the underlying theme in this edition, with murder, stuff blowing up, poisonous gases, makes for a very thrilling and interesting espionage read!

From the blurb: Oliver Stone and his Camel Club are in a race to stop a man who is determined to auction off America to the highest bidder: Roger Seagraves is selling America to her enemies, one devastating secret at a time. On a local level, Annabelle Conroy, the most gifted con artist of her generation, is becoming a bit of a Robin Hood as she plots a monumental scam against one of the most ruthless businessmen on earth. As the killings on both fronts mount, the Camel Club fights the most deadly foes they've ever faced.

4.5 stars and 2 thumbs up!

James Glass says

This book started out well but then fizzled out. A librarian is found dead in the rare books section of the Smithsonian. A congressman is murdered. At first glance there doesn't seem to be a connection.

The Camel Club begins to put some of the pieces together when they team up with a beautiful woman who's interested in finding out who killed the librarian. She claims to be an old friend, but no one can find anything about her.

As the Camel Club dig deeper in to the clues they discover there's no conspiracy going on, but find out there may be espionage involved...but how are the librarian and the congressman connected.

The book was well written, but the plot seemed a bit farfetched. Some of the characters were over the top. But I still enjoyed the book. Not one of my best by Baldacci, but readable.

Nicholas says

Sneaky Mr. Balducci: His first book in the Camel Club series was a passable airport read - not quite enthralling enough to warrant a commitment to the whole series, but just good enough to convince me I should check out the second in the series, in the hope that things get better...

The Collectors started off much better than its predecessor, but quickly became bogged down in mediocre narrative and predictable exposition. I was intrigued by a few newly introduced characters, but resolved to end my investment in the Camel Club series as soon as this story was done.

That is where Mr. Balducci pulled his clever scam: While the core plotline is indeed resolved in this book, albeit with a somewhat pedestrian denouement, the secondary plotline is left purposefully unresolved. Now I must reconcile my desire to see how any story ends, with my equally strong wish to invest my few available reading hours in a work that will reward my time invested...
