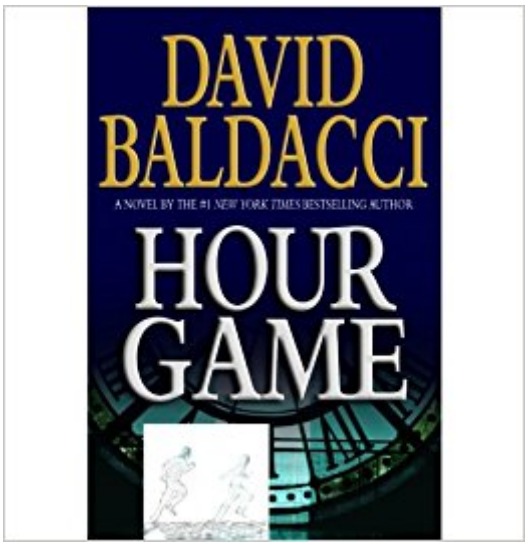
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Hour Game (King & Maxwell)



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Synopsis

Two disgraced former Secret Service officers team up to solve a series of copy-cat crimes in this exciting new thriller by a master of the game. Sean King was momentarily distracted when a presidential candidate he'd been guarding was assassinated a few feet from where he stood, and Michelle Maxwell left the Service under a similar cloud when she lost a "protectee" to an ingenious kidnapping scheme, events told in Baldacci's typical terse, fast-paced style in Split Second. Now partners in a private investigation firm in a small Virginia town, they're hired to investigate a burglary at the home of a wealthy local family. But even before the chief suspect in the break-in meets his death in a gruesome slaying reminiscent of a serial killer long since caught and punished, King and Maxwell get caught up in a string of other murders, each of which copies the techniques of another madman, from San Francisco's Zodiac Killer to Chicago's infamous John Wayne Gacy. While the two protagonists aren't especially complex or well-developed, the action never stops, and Baldacci's trademark pacing keeps the reader turning pages until the denouement, which unfortunately isn't quite as satisfying as the rest of the novel. --Jane Adams.com Exclusive ContentWhy Hour Game: An Exclusive Essay by David Baldacci It's hard not to notice that the majority of fictional serial killers are cut from the same mold. When David Baldacci wrote Hour Game, he went out of his way to create a murderous original. Read this .com exclusive essay to learn how and why he did it.

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Customer Reviews

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Baldacci's last book, Split Second, was a relatively weak offering from this bestselling author, sunk by a cartoonish villain and absurd plot. But it did introduce two of Baldacci's (Absolute Power, etc.) most memorable characters, former Secret Service agents Sean King and Michelle Maxwell, in business together as private investigators in smalltown Wrightsburg, Va. Baldacci is back in form, and King and Maxwell reappear in this utterly absorbing, complex mystery-thriller that spins in unexpected directions. The novel starts as a serial-killer thriller, for there's a murderer at work in Wrightsburg whose selection of victims appears random but whose modus operandi, differing from kill to kill, mimics the work of a notorious serial killerÃ¢â ¬â •the Zodiac killer, John Wayne Gacy, etc. The fifth victim is local resident and international tycoon Robert E. Lee Battle. King and Maxwell have already been tangling with the gothic horror show of a dysfunctional Southern family that is the Battles, as they've been hired to help prove the innocence of a Battle handyman accused of stealing from the family. Then that handyman is murdered, and the duo (along with a clueless local sheriff and an obnoxious FBI agent) must race to figure out if the same killer is behind all the murders and, if so, why. There are terrific action sequences sprinkled throughout, and plenty of suspense, and the King/Maxwell relationship, while not romantic, emits sparks. It's Baldacci's portrayal of smalltown Southern life, however, and his sharp characterizations of the Battles, from the bombastic Bobby

and his regal widow to his weird extended family, that give the novel texture and depth: this is Baldacci's most accomplished tale since his nonthriller Wish You Well, and it rivals that novel in its social commentary. Despite fair clues, few if any readers will ID the villain (villains?) before they're revealed, and a snappy surprise ending will have Baldacci's many fans remembering why they love this author so much. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the first book that brings together Michelle Maxwell and Sean King, and it is excellent. Both were on duty as Secret Service agents guarding probable Presidential candidate losers, but several years apart. King's guy was shot to death in what was a very public way, while Maxwell's equally loser candidate was kidnapped in a very private way. They end up helping each other figure out all the inconsistencies and strange coincidences in their two cases, realizing at last that they are linked. [How they are linked would be a spoiler.]I liked this one so much I immediately went looking for other books in the series. The second one is on my bathroom window sill right now.

The second King and Maxwell book pairs the 2 former Secret Service agents together again, this time with their own budding PI agency, to help catch a master serial killer assuming the identity of famous serial killers. The killer is so well hidden among the characters that he seems to be the least plausible in the end, but who really knows our neighbors? And there seems to be more than one killer on the loose, which is frightening in a town that previously had none. The story is fast paced and offers a glimpse into the old genteel south with its rich traditions and charm.

As always this author never disappoints. Great character and story development. Never sure who did it and really hard to put down.

This was a great book to read. It takes a long time before you may have a clue vas to who the killer might be. Just marvelous!

Baldacchi is always a good read; this was no different. King and Maxwell are a good team. Held my interest throughout.

Once again, I compliment Baldacci on his plots...but his dialog, after reading Burke or Silva, is not so satisfying...

I enjoyed most of the plot, but I was somewhat unnerved by the seeming naivety of both King and Maxwell regarding their own safety requirements around their own homes.

This King and Maxwell book is a pretty fair mystery though it does suffer a little from Baldacci's tendency toward excessive complexity. After the main mystery is resolved, it takes 10% of the pages to identify all the inter-relationships that have been puzzling you in the last half of the book. There are many murders, a few seem superfluous.But I enjoyed the book for its expansion of the relationship between the two main characters - each a former Secret Service agent. I saw recently an ad on TV for a new show coming this Fall named "King and Maxwell." lets hope it remains fairly true to the book series.This seems to me the second in the series but there is conflicting information about other books that may be in the series. I will be checking them all out.The "romance" between the main characters goes through some adjustment in this installment when each of them has an opportunity to "date" other people, though these dates are each doomed to failure.I think this installment is the best so far - good entertainment!

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