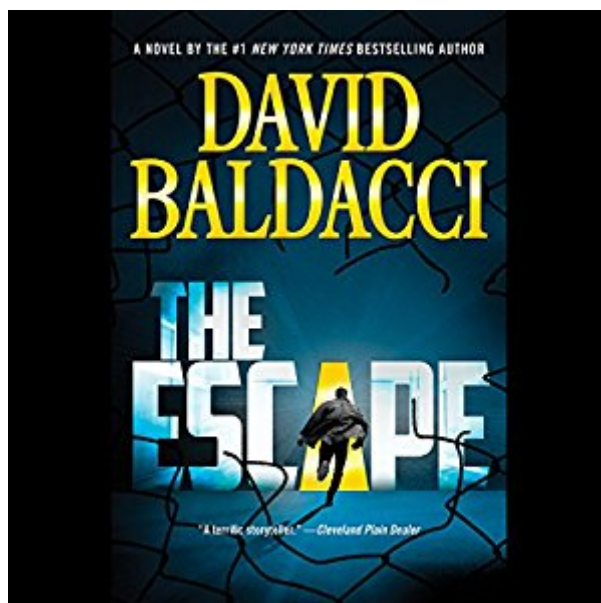


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# The Escape



## Synopsis

David Baldacci is one of the world's most popular storytellers. In his blockbuster thrillers *Zero Day* and *The Forgotten*, listeners met John Puller. A combat veteran and special agent with the U.S. Army, Puller is the man they call to investigate the toughest crimes facing the nation. But all his training, all his experience, all his skills will not prepare him for his newest case, one that will force him to hunt down the most formidable and brilliant prey he has ever tracked: his own brother. *The Escape* It's a prison unlike any other. Military discipline rules. Its security systems are unmatched. None of its prisoners dream of escaping. They know it's impossible. Until now. John Puller's older brother, Robert, was convicted of treason and national security crimes. His inexplicable escape from prison makes him the most-wanted criminal in the country. Some in the government believe that John Puller represents their best chance at capturing Robert alive, and so Puller takes on the burden of bringing his brother in to face justice. But Puller quickly discovers that there are others pursuing his brother, who only see Robert as a traitor and are unconcerned if he survives. Puller is in turn pushed into an uneasy, fraught partnership with another agent, who may have an agenda of her own. They dig more deeply into the case together, and Puller finds that not only are her allegiances unclear, but that there are troubling details about his brother's conviction....and that someone is out there who doesn't want the truth to ever come to light. As the nationwide manhunt for Robert grows more urgent, Puller's masterful skills as an investigator and strength as a fighter may not be enough to save his brother - or himself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Baldacci is one of my favorite authors, but with this book he may have moved into first place. While my favorite book of his is not a thriller (*Wish You Well*) this one comes close to first place. The story will make you think. How small the world has become and what that means for all of us if there is ever a contagious bioterrorism attack is a clear theme. For the first time my thinking on Snowden's release of top secret material was put into question by this book. At what point does national security eliminate or reduce constitutional rights? How can you protect your country when the acts of one person could be catastrophic? Does the end justify the means? Yes this book will make you think and while it may keep you up all night to finish reading it, it may also keep you up all night when you finish because if it doesn't scare you a bit you must not be breathing. At the book's heart it is a thriller and the best one I have read in years. The plot moves along quickly with unexpected twists and turns. The characters are so well developed that I can literally see and hear them in my mind. The book is also a story about family, loyalty and the often unfortunate dysfunctional relationship between parent and child. The Father of the main characters has Alzheimer's disease. The horrific effects are clear both to the afflicted and to their loved ones. I can't wait for the next Puller novel. The series just gets better with each book. Baldacci has created a character who is noble, loyal, intelligent and daring but who is most importantly incredibly likeable. Puller is the person one would aspire to emulate. He is not without flaws, but those flaws make him human.

This was the first John Puller I've read of the series - and the plot involving John's and his brother, Robert's, goal to clear Robert from an espionage conviction that has Robert serving life in a military prison has, of course, now affected the first two books in the series which I've started reading. I very much liked the two main characters even if John is a military/special forces/"best of them all" heroic personage. Baldacci does, as usual for him, add sufficient dimensions to the prototype that one can get to like and care about the character - and want to read more about him which I'm now doing and enjoying. "Tough women who remain women" are a bit of a problem - as are "tough women, do or die." The former makes a more frequent appearance in such books but in this book we have versions of both types. They help move the story along; provide some necessary heat and complexity - but little about them defines them as anything other than an apparent need to have both sexes represented. This kept me reading to the end; immediately picked up the first in the series and trust to more Puller ones to come.

I have really liked the John Puller series from the beginning and really wanted to know more about

Robert Puller. Well, this book delivers. Robert is John's older brother, who had worked in the intelligence field and who resided at Fort Leavenworth prison during the previous two books after being convicted of espionage. The escape in the title of the book refers to the escape of Robert from prison. The book is exciting with many twists. So much happens; the action is really non-stop. And that is a little bit of a problem. There is so much action that the narrative of what the bad guys are doing and how the good guys learn all of the story and what the full story is gets lost. Although John Puller learns of various events that have taken place throughout the book, we never really learn how it all started or why the central villain did everything that was alleged. We don't really ever understand how events occurred to lead up to the big crisis. Finally, certain occurrences are never adequately explained - what happened with Susan's husband and why, where did John's kidnappers disappear to, what exactly happened with Schindler, etc. These things are not critical to enjoying the thrill ride, but the ending is a little less satisfying due to this lack of understanding. The last few chapters are also somewhat abrupt, denying us full closure (and one scene is a bit manipulative), but I am hoping that the want of complete resolution means there will be at least one more John Puller book dealing with the story of John and Robert's mother. There is still a very real mystery extant. I look forward to the telling of that story very much. While this book stands alone, one is more invested in the story and more familiar with some of the characters, if one has read the prior two novels, *Zero Day* in particular. All in all, I enjoyed *The Escape* greatly and recommend it.

If you like the Puller books, you'll like this one. It's more of the same. Puller's bro breaks out of prison after an attempt on his life and Big John is called in to track him down. He picks up a gorgeous NSA sidekick along the way, but (unlike Reacher who always bangs his leading lady) never bags her. The usual far-fetched plot develops as we learn about the government moles who set Puller's bro up for a fall. Pretty linear action all way through. Note to Baldacci- spice these Puller books up a hair. We liked it when Puller crawled into the sack with the General lady. Basically Baldacci is always readable. This one is no exception.

I enjoyed the content and speed of this book. It was well written and fast paced. Although it's fairly easy from the start to figure out some of the main "twists", it was an exciting and fun road to get there. The on negative was the over use of acronyms for government agencies, vehicles, clothing, etc...very military and didn't really add much to the book other than stretching the text out for several more pages than it would have been without it. Aside from that, I really enjoyed the Puller brothers and their entourage so am likely to read the other Puller stories.

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