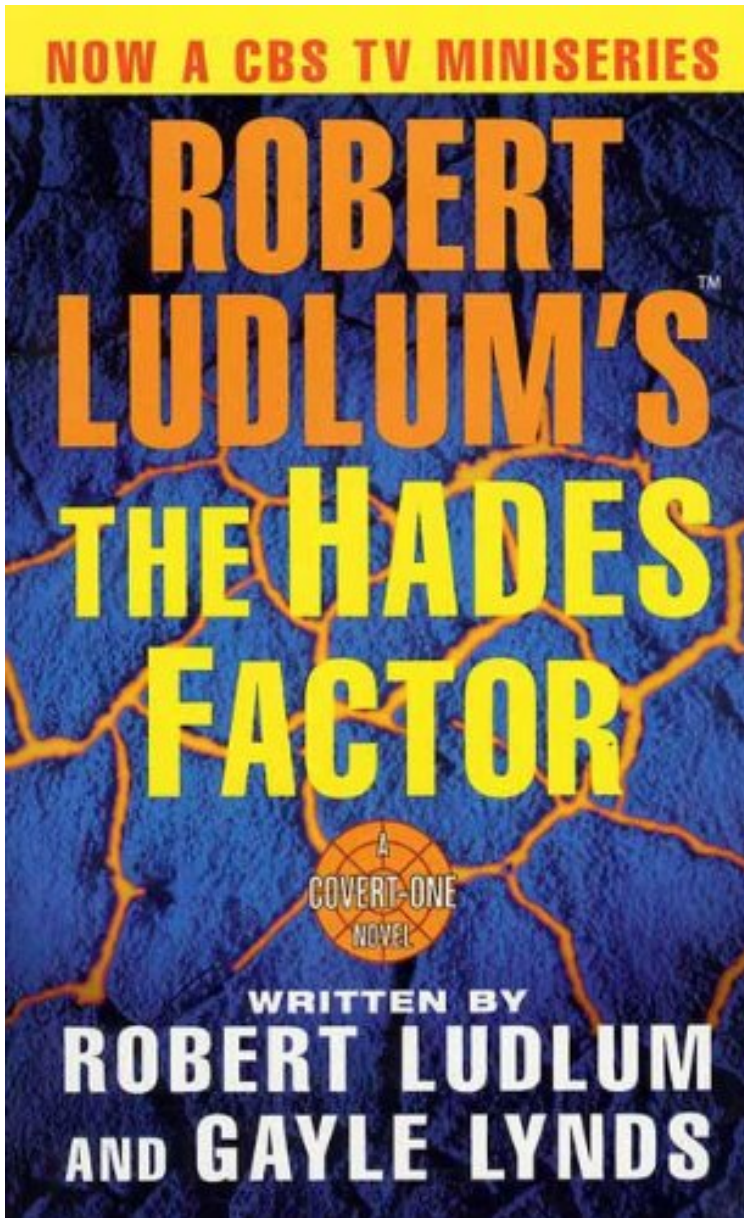


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Robert Ludlum's The Hades Factor: A Covert-One Novel



*Par Robert Ludlum, Gayle Lynds
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Par Robert Ludlum, Gayle Lynds : Robert Ludlum's The Hades Factor: A Covert-One Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Robert Ludlum's The Hades Factor: A Covert-One Novel:

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Description : Description du produitA homeless man in Boston, an Army Major in California, and a teenage girl in Atlanta all die suddenly and painfully--each a victim of an unknown doomsday virus. For three days, a team of scientists is a U.S. government laboratory has been frantically trying to unlock the virus's secrets. When the leading researcher from that lab, Lt. Col. Jonathan Smith, returns from overseas, he barely survives a series of well-orchestrated attempts made on his life. By the time Smith eludes his pursuers and makes it home, he discovers that the virus has claimed its fourth victim, Dr. Sophia Russell--Smith's

fiancee. Devastated and enraged, Smith quickly uncovers evidence that his lover's death was no accident--that someone out there has the virus, and the pandemic that threatens hundreds of millions of lives is no accident. But wherever he turns, Smith finds that some unseen force has blocked his quest for information. Not knowing whom to trust, Smith assembles a private team to search for the truth behind the deadly virus. While the death toll mounts, their quest leads to the highest levels of power and the darkest corners of the earth, as they match wits with a determined genius--and as the fate of the world lies in the balance.

Robert Ludlum has been acclaimed as the master of suspense and international intrigue. His many books have thrilled millions of readers, reaching the top of bestsellers lists the world over and setting a standard that has never been surpassed. Now, from the imagination of one of America's greatest storytellers comes Robert Ludlum's *The Hades Factor*--a thrilling new entry in the Covert-One series. A homeless man in Boston, an Army Major in California, and a teenage girl in Atlanta all die suddenly and painfully--each a victim of an unknown doomsday virus. For three days, a team of scientists at a U.S. government laboratory has been frantically trying to unlock the virus's secrets. When the leading researcher from that lab, Lt. Col. Jonathan Smith, returns from overseas, he barely survives a series of well-orchestrated attempts made on his life. By the time Smith eludes his pursuers and makes it home, he discovers that the virus has claimed its fourth victim, Dr. Sophia Russell--Smith's fiancee. Devastated and enraged, Smith quickly uncovers evidence that his lover's death was no accident--that someone out there has the virus, and the pandemic that threatens hundreds of millions of lives is no accident. But wherever he turns, Smith finds that some unseen force has blocked his quest for information. Not knowing whom to trust, Smith assembles a private team to search for the truth behind the deadly virus. While the death toll mounts, their quest leads to the highest levels of power and the darkest corners of the earth, as they match wits with a determined genius--and as the fate of the world lies in the balance.

With an unbroken string of bestsellers dating from the early '70s (beginning with 1971's *The Scarlatti Inheritance*) and over 200 million books sold, Robert Ludlum is an acknowledged superstar of the political thriller. Gayle Lynds, who was compared to Ludlum after her 1996 debut, *Masquerade*, has two successful novels and a slew of pseudonymous pulp fiction titles to her credit. Together--after a fashion--they serve up book 1 of Ludlum's new Covert-One series of trade paperback originals, Robert Ludlum's *The Hades Factor*. After three disparate Americans succumb to a hitherto unknown Ebola-like virus, the United States Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) is pressed into service. Since the USAMRIID's top doc (and former military intelligence operative) Lt. Col. Jon Smith has yet to return from an overseas conference, the job of heading the medical research team falls to Smith's colleague and fiancee, Dr. Sophia Russell. Upon Smith's return, he is sequentially treated to a life-or-death warning from a childhood friend (and rogue FBI agent), several nasty near-death experiences, and the viscerally graphic demise of his wife-to-be, an apparent virus victim. Enraged and bereaved, Smith flies into investigatory action only to discover doctored files, expunged records, and the distinct likelihood that he's dealing with cases of murder-by-virus. As more questions are asked, more deaths occur, official channels slam shut, and Smith finds himself a wanted man, battling his best friend, an evil-genius gazillionaire scientist, corrupt politicians, and Third World terrorists. In other words, it's Smith versus all the usual suspects. Ludlum and Lynds cover no new ground here (and their prose is less than sterling). In fact, *The Hades Factor* owes as much to Tom Clancy's Op-Center series--co-created by Clancy and Steve Pieczenik--and Richard Preston's *The Hot Zone* as it does to Ludlum's own considerable body of work. That said, *The Hades Factor* still delivers a respectable level of intrigue and suspense, will likely be snapped up by output-starved Ludlum fanciers, and will be right at home on the bed stands of Preston fans.

--Michael Hudson
From Publishers Weekly

In his first book since 1997's *The Matarese Countdown*, onetime thriller superstar Ludlum teams up with Lynds (*Masquerade*; *Mosaic*) for a lackluster trade paperback original, the first volume in a Tom Clancy-like series called "Covert-One." The novel stars ace doctor (and former military spook) Lt. Col. Jonathan Smith, who now works for the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md. We first meet Dr. Smith in London, where a childhood friend and rogue FBI agent warns him not to get involved in USAMRIID's latest investigation; the institute is looking into the baffling deaths from an unknown killer virus of three people in three widely separated states. But Smith's colleague and wife-to-be, Dr. Sophia Russell, is already trying to link the virus with a mysterious disease that decimated the Monkey Blood tribe she had worked with during her student days in Peru. What she doesn't know is that the slickly evil scientist who investigated the virus then is now the head of a giant chemical company with links to Third World terrorism. When Russell herself

falls victim to the virus early on, Smith must forge ahead with the assistance of her sister, Randi, a CIA agent in Baghdad. Ludlum and Lynds keep things moving at a capable pace, but the familiar plot and uninspired writing (Smith "wore his restlessness like another man wore his skin") do little to foment interest in future installments on the series. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.