



The Race

Clive Cussler, Justin Scott

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Detective Isaac Bell returns, in the remarkable new adventure from the #1 New York Times-bestselling author.

It is 1910, the age of flying machines is still in its infancy, and newspaper publisher Preston Whiteway is offering \$50,000 for the first daring aviator to cross America in less than fifty days. He is even sponsoring one of the prime candidates—an intrepid woman named Josephine Frost—and that's where Bell, chief investigator for the Van Dorn Detective Agency, comes in.

Frost's violent-tempered husband has just killed her lover and tried to kill her, and he is bound to make another attempt. Bell has tangled with Harry Frost before; he knows that the man has made his millions leading gangs of thieves, murderers, and thugs in every city across the country. He also knows that Frost won't be only after his wife, but after Whiteway as well. And if Bell takes the case . . . Frost will be after him, too.

The Race Details

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From Reader Review The Race for online ebook

Jenny says

The Race is book four of the Isaac Bell series by Clive Cussler. Isaac Bell, the chief investigator of the Van Dorn Detective Agency, was hired to protect a young woman, Mrs Josephine Josephs Frost after she saw her husband kill a man. However, Mrs Josephine Josephs Frost is participating in the Great Whiteway Atlantic-to-Pacific Cross-Country Air Race which caused Isaac Bell to come involved in the race to protect Mrs Josephine Josephs Frost. The readers of The Race will follow Mrs Josephine Josephs Frost and Isaac Bell adventure across The United States of America. Also, the readers of The Race will start to wonder if Josephine and Isaac will fall in love.

I enjoy reading the books in this series, and The Race did not disappoint. Clive Cussler and Justin Scott know how to engage me with their stories from the first page. I love Clive Cussler and Justin Scott portrayal of their characters. Clive Cussler and Justin Scott did a great job in describing the settings and the plot of The Race. I like the old fashion photos that Clive Cussler and Justin Scott included throughout The Race. The Race was well written and researched by Clive Cussler and Justin Scott.

The readers of The Race will learn about flying Biplanes. Also, the readers of The Race will learn about the procedures of being a private investigator at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Gary says

Where Cussler got the idea of a protagonist that was a Pinkerton-like operative at the turn of the 20th century, I'll never know. Thank God I only have three previous novels in the series to catch up with. The story was enough to allow me to overlook the sometimes over-heated writing and stereotypical characters. It was a lot of fun to read.

Many years ago, I had read one of Cussler's Dirk (arm)Pitt novels and found it so unlikeable that I felt it was not worth bothering reading anything else by him. I get the feeling that, at 81, Clive only pitches ideas and his co-authors do the heavy lifting.

Why did I bother with this one? My wife's aunt was a HUGE Cussler fan-as in every thing he was written is on prominent display on the shelves in her house. When I told her that he was coming out with a new novel, she was looking forward to it's arrival on her Kindle. Sadly, about two weeks before the release date, she lost her battle with cancer and left us. Clive lost a serious fan of his work.

Anyway, in her memory, I put myself through the potentially tedious task of reading this book. And came away quite pleased.

I hope Glo was looking over my shoulder and reading along. Maybe she had one or two of the cats with her.

Edmond Gagnon says

This makes two Clive Cussler novels in a row that I've read, but this one was the last book left in the pile that was left here at the apartment in Mexico. I like the Isaac Bell Detective series, but found this book was a cookie cutter version of the last one I read. The good guy chases the bad guy, almost catches his two or three times, gets a little banged up on the way, then gets the girl and lives happily ever after. The names of the characters have been changed.

Need I say more? Okay, in fairness it is a good read and a bit different than all the other crime fiction stuff out there in that the story is about the birth of aviation and a race across America to see who has the best machine.

Cathryn Ferrara says

Another great Issac Bell adventure. This time Issac takes to the air to protect a young aviatrix in a cross country race. Danger awaits at every turn and we get to catch up with all of the usual suspects.

Mark Muckerman says

\$3.65 at the used bookstore, in HARDCOVER no less, and worth every penny! I'd even go as high as \$4.00, but not a cent higher. Any one who has red my reviews of recent Cussler collaborations knows well my disappointment in the product, and my self-loathing that I keep reading them, but for under \$5 I'm apparently willing to keep touching that same stove to see if it's still hot. In this instance, I was pleasantly surprised to not get burned too badly.

The plot is sound: in the early days of aviation, a coast to coast aeroplane race is sponsored: \$50,000 to the pilot who completes the trip in under 50 days. The only female entrant in the race is being chased by her husband, with murder on his mind, and Isaac Bell has been assigned to protect her and capture her stalker (with an unnecessary but nice plot enhancer - Bell and the husband have some ancient history from Bell's earliest days as a Van Dorn rookie. This bookending is reminiscent of classic Cussler, and is a nice addition without being forced).

The setting is interesting: Early 20th century U.S. is a much-overlooked period of US History, and with perhaps the exception of Caleb Carr's works, as well as Devil in the White City, it's a rarely-seen setting (at least in my genres). That period was an age of great innovation and technology, and one of the attractions of the Isaac Bell stories is that it gives the author(s) a nice canvas to expand and expound upon "new" technologies, and to illustrate how those advances force change upon the world, and evolve traditional behavior (such as detective work, pursuit and communication).

The writing is fair: We must all acknowledge that we know there is NO Cussler story in which the hero does not a) prevail and b) get the girl (who is always preternaturally beautiful, and possessed of a charm and grace that would make Venus envious). Character development and interaction dialogue is decent (and hey - it's Cussler, not Keats), and all in all a decently told story.

The disappointment: While Cussler's works with Justin Scott are in NO WAY nearly the infuriating dung heaps of vomitous pulp that his other collaborations are (Fargo adventures, in particular), my disappointment remains consistent in all of Cussler's later books and collaborations, and points out where he went astray from the Dirk Pitt success: If your hero has a pre-existing reserve of fabulous wealth and powerful

connections that allow him to miraculously see his way out of any scrape, or able to procure any resource needed at a moment's notice, you lose your drama. Dirk Pitt made a boat of out a bathtub and a stolen outboard motor; Bell flashes an "all access pass" that lets him commandeer any railroad train in America? Dirk Pitt stole a car, flattened the tires and drove across the desert until it died, then he walked. Bell pulls out his wallet and buys an airplane?

That's my complaint, but one I don't see changing as long as he can turn out 3 "collaborations" a year and watch the money truck back up to his house.

Still - a fair read from the \$5 bin.

Ralph McEwen says

I enjoyed this book. I like the care the writers took with conversational language. There is a lot of details about early aviation that I did not know. Another action packed Cussler formula style book.

Mahlon says

The fourth book in the Isaac Bell series, the action revolves around a transcontinental air race in the early days of aviation. This Adventure struck struck me as a cross between Wacky Races and Dastardly and Muttley which made it a really fun read!

Matt Tarasuk says

I love reading Clive Cussler! I have really enjoyed the two Isaac Bell novels so far. This one was pure action and adventure, and I learned a lot about the history of early aeroplanes. I will be looking forward to my next Bell story again soon.

Kristen says

In Clive Cussler's The Race, the 4th installment in the Isaac Bell historical action-adventure series, this time he took to the friendly skies on an aerial race. It all started with Josephine Josephs, who wanted to be the first woman to race cross-country in an airplane, when she witnessed her husband attempted to kill her friend and lover. That's when Issac and the other Van Dorn detectives were assigned to protect her during the race from her husband. During the race, there was a lot of mayhem, sabotage, murder, and a lot of deceit, when Isaac took to the skies and fly a plane himself while protecting her and learned the hard earned truth about the plotted scheme to make her a winner--or not.

Sonny says

I really like these Isaac Bell novels.

Mark Harrison says

Entertaining adventure as Issac protects a brave woman trying to win an air race across the US. There is a rogue saboteur and a murderous husband conspiring against her and he and the other Van Dorn agents face lots of mindless thugs. All a decent afternoon read.

Melinda says

Another fabulous addition to this series. I am really enjoying reading about Isaac Bell and his detective work in the early 1900's. Good stuff.

Frank says

I found this entry in the Isaac Bell series to be a little disappointing after really enjoying the first 3 books - especially "The Wrecker." I thought the characters in "The Race" were not very well developed and the plot was somewhat lacking. Although Cussler and Scott gave a lot of detail about aeronautics in the early days of flying, the thrill of being able to fly in these early days did not really come across. Some of the terminology that was used also got to be a little repetitive including the term "mechanician" instead of "mechanic." This is probably the correct terminology used in 1910 but it got to be a little annoying. Also, I didn't think Isaac Bell used his deductive reasoning very well in this story -- I would think he would have been able to easily see through the disguise of Marco Celere. Anyway, I still enjoy the Bell series and will probably read the next one when it comes out.

Shaun says

In part because it was the only one I found, and also because the third book, about German submarines (yawn) didn't interest me, "The Race", the fourth Isaac Bell book, is the third one I've read. I like the series as a breath of fresh air, I'm tired of discovering lost shipwrecks and getting caught up in far-fetched plots with predictable outcomes, and the early 1900s setting of the Isaac Bell novels is a welcome relief. In "The Chase", I mainly thought that Bell was too intuitive, I mean the man could deduce your blood type by looking at you (a slight exaggeration). In "The Wrecker", Bell's abilities are dialed back a tad, where he has good instincts but still isn't a human Magic Eight Ball (which, all signs point to yes, are ALWAYS right)... Passing over the third book in the series, because Cussler can't let Nazis go... So then we get to "The Race", which introduces a new technological marvel to the universe. "The Chase" and "The Wrecker" were train-heavy books, and this one is all about "aeroplanes". And how does our stalwart hero fare?

In "The Race", Bell seems particularly flat. He doesn't seem to do much but fly planes, fire guns, and ask

questions, which, instead of driving the plot, feels more like taking up pages. There's an expectedly lot of technical details about early flying machines, and this becomes repetitive. How many times does "flying machines", "aeroplanes", "axiatrix" "mechanicians" and "alettoni" appear in this book? I'll give you a hint. I opened the book AT RANDOM to see how to spell alettoni, first word I see, alettoni. Alettoni and mechanicians though were particularly recurring.

Next, and this, to me, is probably what really killed my interest in the book, because I'm weird like that.... But why is nearly every time Bell mentioned in the text, he's referred to as "Isaac Bell"? There's only one Bell in the book, and it's an Isaac Bell book, so you don't need to tell me every other time you mention Bell's name that his first name is Isaac. This goes also for the villain, Harry Frost, but probably also for many other characters. There's only one Bell. Say Bell. There's only one Frost. Say Frost. My mind works in strange ways, but this repetition was kind of the deal-breaker for me. Bad editing. Combine that with the repeated mentions of flying machines, axiatrix, mechanicians, and alettoni. The book was... messy. And this all helped to add to the word count, and made the book seem to drag on, and my interest wane. That's in terms of the writing, not at all the storytelling.

Now, the storytelling? None of the characters were intriguing, including Bell. Part of the reason I don't think I felt anything for him was because he didn't seem to have any abilities or weaknesses; every gunfight, he is either accurate and/or the bullets miss him by "millimeters". Every time there's a plane crash, no matter how bad it is, the person (most often) walks away from it... All in all, there's an over-riding sense that these are the good guys, they can't be harmed, and these are the bad guys, the irrelevant goons will be beaten, but the main ones will get away no matter what until the end... I mean everyone knows the hero and the villain will make it until the end, when they have their final confrontation, but to make the hero so impeccably immune to harm, bullets passing by millimeters, terrific crashes and they somehow manage to "hit the ground running" as Bell does in one scene.... And there's a scene where he's aiming for Frost's head and before he fires the bullet, I said to myself, it nicks his ear, and guess what? It's frustratingly predictable, and not engaging.

One last detail about the story (I think)... In both of the other books, the identity of the bad guy is revealed pretty early on, and the intrigue for the reader is how will Bell catch them? And the way one of the two villains is revealed in this book, letting the reader know less than halfway through about... I don't want to share the spoiler... But.. eh. Regardless. It took whatever suspense was left in the book and blew it. I think it could've been made into a decent plot twist late in the book, the whole time Bell is chasing this guy, who by all appearances is most definitely bad, and then late in the book we see ah ha, this guy is causing problems too! ... It would've made for a much better story. Revealing the identity of the villains in the other two books worked all right because there was still a sense of cat and mouse, the villains outsmarting Bell, Bell outsmarting them... In this book, there's not really any outsmarting anyone. The major "spoilers" are all spoon-fed to you pretty early, and so the suspense of the story is... what? It's not the danger, because Bell and his company are all able to avoid disaster by millimeters and walk away from aeroplane crashes... It's not the skill of the villains, because they never really cause any harm to the main characters, missing by millimeters. There's no cat and mouse. It's more like two cats playing on opposite sides of a house, one with a laser pointer, the other with a piece of yarn.

At the last, I don't like authors co-writing books, but at this point, I think authorship of the book is mostly the other writer, Justin Scott, not Cussler. I don't really detect anything Cusslerian in this book. So assuming I read more in the series, because I have the fifth book in the series already ("The Striker"), I think I'll start judging them more as Justin Scott books than Cussler books. And because I like the first two books well enough, I'm intrigued enough that I'd like to try reading a Justin Scott solo book. It'd be nice to see what he does not trying to imitate the style of Cussler, but doing his own thing.

So! Rating... I'd probably go two and a half stars, I really should round down because of all the problems with the book, but it's at least a nice attempt, writing isn't easy, I like writers, so I'm going to go ahead and give it three stars. Really, it's more like a two. But here. Three stars. Buy yourself a car!

Rob says

This was a good quick read that kept me entertained and engaged while spending hours on a plane. The storyline was good enough to keep me reading, but I felt like the plot was dragging and it took a while to really develop. I didn't really care for any of the characters - even the protagonist was hard to like and seemingly shallow. It was hard to tell who the real villain was, and the story was too predictable even without clarity.

Even so, this was a good book for a vacation or travel because very little thinking is required and the book reads fairly quickly. It is fairly entertaining, though there is little to no real literary value.
