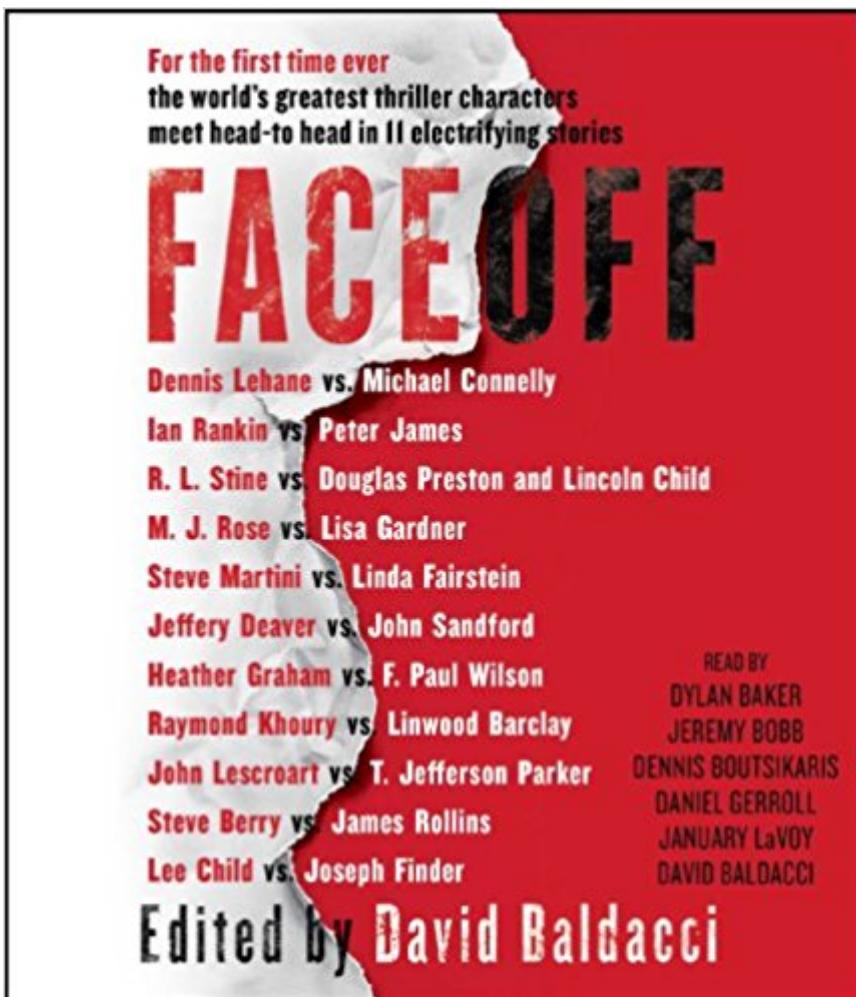


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## FaceOff



## Synopsis

Edited by #1 New York Times bestselling author David Baldacci and including stories by Michael Connelly, Lee Child, Jeffery Deaver, and more, this one-of-a-kind anthology pulls together the most beloved characters from the best and most popular thriller series today. Worlds collide! In an unprecedented collaboration, twenty-three of the world's best-selling and critically acclaimed thriller writers have paired their series characters—such as Harry Bosch, Jack Reacher, and Lincoln Rhyme—in an eleven-story anthology curated by the International Thriller Writers (ITW). All of the contributors to FaceOff are ITW members and the stories feature these dynamic duos: Patrick Kenzie vs. Harry Bosch in "Red Eye," by Dennis Lehane and Michael Connelly; John Rebus vs. Roy Grace in "In the Nick of Time," by Ian Rankin and Peter James; Slappy the Ventriloquist Dummy vs. Aloysius Pendergast in "Gaslighted," by R.L. Stine, Douglas Preston, and Lincoln Child; Malachai Samuels vs. D.D. Warren in "The Laughing Buddha," by M.J. Rose and Lisa Gardner; Paul Madriani vs. Alexandra Cooper in "Surfing the Panther," by Steve Martini and Linda Fairstein; Lincoln Rhyme vs. Lucas Davenport in "Rhymes With Prey," by Jeffery Deaver and John Sandford; Michael Quinn vs. Repairman Jack in "Infernal Night," by Heather Graham and F. Paul Wilson; Sean Reilly vs. Glen Garber in "Pit Stop," by Raymond Khoury and Linwood Barclay; Wyatt Hunt vs. Joe Trona in "Silent Hunt," by John Lescroart and T. Jefferson Parker; Cotton Malone vs. Gray Pierce in "The Devil's Bones," by Steve Berry and James Rollins; Jack Reacher vs. Nick Heller in "Good and Valuable Consideration," by Lee Child and Joseph Finder. So sit back and prepare for a rollicking ride as your favorite characters go head-to-head with some worthy opponents in FaceOff—it's a thrill-a-minute read.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Baldacci and the International Thriller Writers have cobbled together what can only be called a thriller reader's ultimate fantasy. How cool would it be if a pair of celebrated crime-fiction protagonists, the creations of different authors, teamed up together on a case, in a story jointly penned by the two writers? Even if it was just 1 pair, it would be pretty darn cool, but 11 pairs? Way cool. Start with the dream duo of Michael Connelly's Harry Bosch and Dennis Lehane's Patrick Kenzie. Bosch is in Boston working a 15-year-old murder case when he spots another guy staking out the suspect's address; naturally, the other guy is Kenzie. Another stellar pairing finds John Sandford's Lucas Davenport, a world-class wiseass, joining forces with Jeffrey Deaver's Lincoln Rhyme, who doesn't suffer fools, gladly or otherwise. Other notable pairings include Lee Child's Jack Reacher teamed with Joseph Finder's Nick Heller, and Ian Rankin's John Rebus alongside Peter James's Roy Grace. Baldacci includes backstory for each entry and biographies of all the contributors. Great fun for thriller fans. --Wes Lukowsky --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"So good it demands a sequel." (Publishers Weekly) "A thriller reader's ultimate fantasy. How cool would it be if a pair of celebrated crime-fiction protagonists, the creations of different authors, teamed up together on a case, in a story jointly penned by the two writers? Even if it was just 1 pair, it would be pretty darn cool, but 11 pairs? Way cool. . . . Great fun for thriller fans." (Booklist) "A marvelous anthology. This innovative concept entertains as each author works in concert with another to deliver a story worth every word on the page." (RT Book Reviews, 4.5 Star Review) "In FaceOff, nearly two dozen authors take their most popular characters and have them interact in 11 stories. . . . Familiarity with the authors and their creations is a huge plus in reading this collection, but not knowing a particular character or writer should not be a deterrent. . . . Some great collaborations and stories." (The Associated Press) "FaceOff is a unique offering in that it teams up some of the genre's most esteemed authors in stories that allow their beloved protagonists to combine forces. . . . An impressive accomplishment that celebrates the genre in both style and substance.

Enthusiasts will dig it for what it is—*an abundance of chills and thrills delivered by an inspired lineup of literary heavyweights*—while casual readers just might be tempted to pick it up for the sheer novelty of it all. Regardless of motivation, they will find themselves turning pages late into the night. This just may be the optimal summer read. (Hartford Books Examiner) “When I settle in with an anthology, it’s that same wonderful feeling of being presented with a box of chocolates. You can start at one corner and methodically gorge yourself, or study the chart and pick out the caramels. With an anthology, you can start at page 1 and read through, or peruse the table of contents for favorite writers. If the anthology is good enough, it won’t matter. And *FaceOff* is. In fact, it is brilliant. . . . The teaming up is what makes this anthology so special. It’s a fair bet that fans will first turn to their favorite authors, but after devouring those stories, try the others. It is like a wonderful box of chocolates -- without the guilt. (The Newark Star-Ledger) “*FaceOff* is like a literary Mortal Kombat. (The Chicago Tribune) “*Pow! That*—*is the sound of thriller fans*—*heads exploding when they hear the bold premise of this anthology. . . . This collection is 11 fever dreams come true.* (Reader’s Digest) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a collection of short stories by some of the best known mystery/thriller writers. The twist that makes it unusual is that they collaborated to write them, presenting us with unusual predicaments and outcomes. The characters you may be familiar with are paired with those of other authors. (If you’re familiar with children’s picture books--with movable, divided pages-- that allow you to change the picture, you can better grasp the idea of a different pairing, but in printed text.) I enjoyed this unique opportunity, but not as much as reading full-length stories by my favorite authors. I think my ingrained expectations of settings and characters diminished my pleasure. But, if you’re open to a collaborative, short story concept, you may enjoy this book very much.

The concept brought together characters that you don’t normally, if ever, see together in the same story. Like most collections, some stories will interest you more than others, and it probably depends on which authors are your favorites. I rarely rate a collection at five stars, but some individual stories might be five plus. They are all stand alone stories, and they can be read in any order. I started with the last one, written by two of my favorite authors. So, to the stories, taken in the order they appear in the collection -“Red Eye,” by Michael Connelly and Dennis Lehane, sends Harry Bosch to Boston to investigate a lead in a cold case. He teams up with Patrick Kenzie who is

working as a PI trying to find someone's recently missing daughter. They have a good lead, and neither is concerned about a little illegal entry."In the Nick of Time," by Ian Rankin and Peter James, sends John Rebus down to Brighton where he teams up with Roy Grace to investigate a crime from years earlier. A man was stabbed in a gang fight. Events turn out a lot different than expected for everyone concerned."Gaslighted," by R. L. Stine, Douglas Preston, and Lincoln Child steps back in time, and is an eerie story about a man who does not know whether he is dealing with reality or a dream."The Laughing Buddha," by M. J. Rose and Lisa Gardner starts with a murder in the past and deals with things magical. It concerns the question of people having past lives, and their efforts to remember previous lives. Starting in the past when a man is murdered for the secrets he may have found, it fast forwards to the future when another man is murdered because he may have possession. Events don't turn out as people expected."Surfing the Panther," by Steve Martini and Linda Fairstein concerns missing antiquities and forgery of the same. Some collectors are willing to buy stolen artwork for their own very private collections. But how do they know if they are buying the real thing, if the real thing is never recovered. A skillful forger could easily sell multiple copies, and who would dare talk. But a sale to the wrong person could have deadly results."Rhymes with Prey," by Jeffrey Deaver and John Sandford brings us a case where Lucas Davenport travels to New York City to meet with Lincoln Rhyme in a case involving a serial killer. This is another case where the killer has a secret chamber. There are other things going on, and events do not turn out quite as expected."Infernal Night," by Heather Graham and F. Paul Wilson sends Repairman Jack to New Orleans to assist in recovering an artifact. But Michael Quinn is also involved. There are strange things about that artifact. Be careful what you wish for."Pit Stop," by Raymond Khoury and Linwood Barclay finds Glen Garber and his daughter taking a travel break at a highway service area when he becomes distracted and then sees his vehicle (with daughter still inside) heading out onto the highway. The chase is on as he joins Sean Reilly who had been trailing the man who stole Barber's vehicle. There are some unexpected consequences."Silent Hunt" by John Lescroart and T. Jefferson Parker finds Wyatt Hunt heading to La Paz for some saltwater fly fishing when he meets up with Joe Trona, also going fishing. Nothing is ever simple. Some bad guys show up looking for some reported gold. Ah, but Hunt and Trona come up with a plan to deal with the situation. There is more than one way to skin a cat, or to deal with criminals."The Devil's Bones," by Steve Berry and James Rollins finds Commander Gray Pierce on a riverboat on the River trying to obtain a vial of a potent nerve poison in the possession of a scientist more interested in money than in patriotism or public good. Cotton Malone happens to be on the same riverboat on the same mission. They team up when things go very wrong, and the end result is not quite what they might have expected."Good

and Valuable Consideration," by Lee Child and Joseph Finder places Jack Reacher and Nick Heller in the same bar in Boston for the same reason - to watch a baseball game. But baseball games tend to move slowly, and they take note of other people in the bar, and team up to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity. Reacher discovered something long ago - if bad guys lose something of value, whom are they going to report it to? A Good and Valuable Consideration: Jack Reacher vs. Nick HellerThe editor provides short introductions to the stories and biographies of the authors.

I am a regular reader of about half of these authors, and was pretty excited to read stories that combine some of my favorite characters. Unfortunately, this may be one of those things that sounds great in theory only. I really liked the story featuring Lucas Davenport and Lincoln Rhyme. They were a natural fit for one another, and Sandford and Deaver did a nice job fleshing out the plot. However, most of these stories felt a little bit forced. I think a lot of that can be attributed to it being difficult for the authors to fashion a cohesive story featuring two major characters in only 30ish pages, but a couple of these were just out and out disappointments to me. Particularly the final story that combined a couple of my favorites in Jack Reacher and Nick Heller. I didn't dislike this book by any means. That being said, half of these authors/characters were new to me, and there was nothing in this introduction that makes me want to explore them further.

I've been waiting months for this one, like a kid who knows his Christmas gift is cooling in his folks' bedroom closet. I virtually live from Connelly to Deaver to Lincoln/Child, and the notion of my favorite suspense icons bumping elbows filled me with unbearable, well, suspense. So far, the waiting pangs have been amply rewarded. The TV crossover has always been a risky proposition, reliant for its success on good writing and an evenhanded plotline that displays the strengths and weaknesses of the dual (or dueling) protagonists. CSI Meets Without a Trace was a meeting of deductive/procedural giants and character insights. Hawaii Five-0 Meets NCIS: Los Angeles not so much. A previous mystery effort, Partners in Crime, was a satisfying but mixed-bag anthology where largely single authors crossed their own creations or featured their existing sleuthing partnerships. FaceOff is the undiluted real deal. No fast-and-sloppy shorts to meet editorial deadline. No fleeting character cameos to satisfy the crossover criteria. These are genuine team efforts -- full-fleshed, plot-rich stories and novellas. For me, the prize of the package (and winner for worst title) has to be Rhymes With Prey, Jeffery Deaver and John Sandford's collaboration of serial homicide experts Lincoln Rhyme and Lucas Davenport (a character from whom I drifted years ago for no good reason). The story could have been the fodder for a novel-length treatment by either

writer, and the authors wisely divided up the investigating chores between forensic genius Rhyme and behavioral analyst Davenport. Plus, we're offered a new perspective on Amelia Sachs' relationship with Rhyme, insights into how working with the quadriplegic Rhyme has revived Davenport's memories of a past trauma, and a plot melding Rhyme's plot-twisting skills with Sandford's story-propelling sense of suspense. Red Eye also scores big -- Harry Bosch is one of the last truly great cops in U.S. crime fiction, and Dennis Lehane's troubled Boston P.I. Patrick Kenzie has been gone from the literary scene far too long (save the powerhouse film version of *Gone, Baby, Gone* and the compelling print sequel *Moonlight Mile* it inspired Lehane to write). Again, this team-up showcases individual but complementary strengths: Bosch's quest to provide closure in cold cases, Kenzie's no-holds-barred obsession with rescuing lost youth. While the two team up in a fairly straightforward episode, the setup and rationale for their meetup are flawless. *Gaslighted* is a wholly different delight. We enter to find Preston-Child's Agent Pendergast in a nightmarish fugue only he could land in, with echoes of past tragedies and cases. We then meet R.L. Stine's sinister Slappy the Ventriloquist's Dummy with an unacknowledged glance. The story resolves in a plot with savory quasi-scientific implications and a hint of supernatural intrusion. Well-done if extremely weird. There's a sample. All I can say is, hey, guys, how about a sequel? Alex Cross crosses swords with Hannibal Lecter? Matt Scudder shares one of his '80s flashbacks with Kinsey Millhone? Alex Delaware tries his hand at analyzing Stephanie Plum? Well, maybe not that one,

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