



The Metronome

D.R. Bell

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The Metronome is the first book in *The Counterpoint trilogy* and a prequel to the previously published *The Great Game*. This was an unplanned book: *The Great Game* was supposed to be a stand-alone story. Then questions about a sequel started coming in. The last words in *The Great Game* are “This is not the end.” I meant it philosophically, meaning that the struggle between good and evil, quest for power vs. individual liberty will continue as they did through the centuries. But I was being too cute by half and the readers called me on it.

And somewhere in the process of working on a sequel I have taken a turn into the past. Events in *The Great Game* are based on the financial crisis which in turn is rooted in a financial warfare between the US on one side and China and Russia on the other side. I wanted to go back in time and show the beginning of that warfare, show that the seeds have been planted and carefully cultivated prior to the events in the story. And something else started happening. Some of the events “predicted” in *The Great Game* began to materialize much sooner than I expected, particularly rising tensions between the U.S. and Russia and growing rapprochement of China and Russia.

The characters of *The Metronome* are made up but the backdrop of the events is real and factual. The main protagonist Pavel Rostin is a regular, very flawed man who faces difficult circumstances. I know that the ending of *The Metronome* will upset some of the readers but I felt it was the only honest way to conclude the first part: the larger context was not Pavel's immediate fate or his flaws, but the moral choices he made at the end and their impact on others. Because “even the smallest person can change the course of the future.”

Pavel Rostin has taken too many chances. Once a promising physicist, he abandoned science for finance and risked everything on a speculative venture. Careless and rogue, he gambled with his personal relationships. As Pavel tries to pick up the pieces of his life, a call from Russia informs him that his father is dead.

When Pavel follows his father's footsteps trying to solve the mystery of his death, he turns up some inexplicable clues. The investigation draws him deeper and deeper into his family's past – and his country's future. From starving 1941 Leningrad to free-wheeling Moscow of the mid-1990s to bubbly 2006 Wall Street, Pavel uncovers a web of money, murder, revenge and evidence of a plot involving the world's superpowers. The choices of right and wrong don't look as clear cut as in newspaper headlines. But is he just a pawn in someone else's game?

The Metronome Details

Date : Published August 19th 2014 by D. R. Bell

ISBN :

Author : D.R. Bell

Format : Kindle Edition 279 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review The Metronome for online ebook

Sundar Raj says

'The Metronome' is more than a fictional work. It weaves some real historical events and facts into the story. Though, the main plot being centered around a possible murder/suicide. The story goes on to explain so much about post cold war financial warfare that's happening in the world. "The wars are not fought with bombs and bullets anymore", appeared to be like a cliché to me. but, financial warfare seems to be much more less fictional. The financial institution which are too big to fail pose a real danger to the socio-economical society of ours.

Even though the author was ambitious in pulling together the story of this magnitude, its after all a story of fiction. But everything seems to be connected in the story. there are no loose ends. some history could have been avoided, but that gives you a real insight into stalin's russia, nazi's attack on russia, etc.,

I didn't get why they named it 'the metronome'. i guess it represents some thing more than the time ticking in those siege days in russia. i really don't know. overall, good book. must read, if you're into historical fiction.

Linda Kressal says

Interesting perspective on modern day Russian/American relations. And horrifying glimpse at the suffering of Russian citizens during WWII

Jody says

First off...amazing cover. I found myself repeatedly looking at the cover of this book...two different photos of the same place at different times in history. Great idea. The book is historical fiction, much of the events described in this book actually happened but to different people. Just like Steve Berry does, Bell includes a few pages at the end of the book that will let the reader know what was factual and what was imagined. This is historical fiction, political thriller, mystery and action adventure all wrapped up in one book. I have never heard of this author before but I would rank them up there with Steve Berry and Michael Crichton easily. I will not give any spoilers but I will say that the father's diary captivated me and sent me to google to look up more concerning Germany's attack on Russia during WWII. This book still haunts me and I cannot seem to get some of the images out of my head and oddly I don't want to.

Frank Roberto says

What a book!!

This is the first book that I have read from D. R. Bell. I really enjoyed it because it was partly based on actual events and people. The characters and the situations that they were faced with were believable. The best thing about this book was after the book was over Mr. Bell included an epilogue that explained a little more of some of the events and other things that were in the book. He also included other books on the subjects in case the reader wants to read more.

Michelle says

*****SPOILER ALERT*****

I really enjoyed this book up to the very end...and then I hated it! The writing was superb. The plotline was interesting and the characters very engaging. I found the subject matter incredibly diverse and interesting.

Now for the negatives of which there is only one...

WHO KILLS OFF THEIR MAIN CHARACTER AT THE END OF THE BOOK?!?

I spent so much time getting to know Pavel and the writing was so good that I found myself actually caring about what happened to him. The story line wrapped up nicely and I was ready for him to ride off into the sunset so to speak. Then there is an epilog that is his funeral and everything I thought had just happened (getting the bad guys, mailing off the proof) was gone. The bad guys won and I HATED it!!

Maybe I'm just a sucker for a happy ending, or even just a so so ending, but this killed me. I spent all of that time reading it only to absolutely hate how it ended.

Fiona Zakka says

A great read

I read the book fast because it was interesting and well written. The financial info about the world fast road to hell is really interesting and very informative for someone who doesn't have a financial background.

Kyle Janison says

D.R. Bell's new literary novel "The Metronome" helps fill in Western readers on a major missing piece in our understanding of the modern world: recent Russian history. As the main character, now living in the States, investigates to determine if his father in Russia was murdered, he - and we the reader - learn of the horrors of living in Russia during the German blitzkrieg, the paranoia of living in post-war Soviet Union, the go-go party mentality of Russia in the post-Soviet 1990, and the resulting corruption that since has filled the vacuum as the nation edges toward economic calamity. Without taking sides, Bell infers the reasons for the current Russian belligerence in the Ukraine and elsewhere. This novel isn't a political thesis paper, though. It's a very human story that at spots will cause your eyes to well and at others make you cringe as you fear for the main character's life. For anyone who wants to understand how our modern world has arisen out of very human terrors and emotions, this is a must-read novel.

Claire says

The switching from first person, to third person, to just boring facts drove me crazy. All the additional information about Russia, flash backs, and hedge fund information did nothing for the story development and caused me to skip pages and pages at a time.

I continued to read subjected to the boring drone of details that took away from the story. I finally gave up at about 1/2 through the book, I just couldn't take it anymore. Reading this book felt like the reading assignment you dreaded in modern lit.

Lorin Cary says

Pavel Rostin is a Russian emigre, a former scientist and hedge fund manager. Now divorced, he heads back to St. Petersburg when his father dies. It's an apparent suicide, the police say. But something is fishy. Pavel flies to Moscow suspecting that his father sent him something. He's right---a package, which is promptly stolen from him. Pavel heads back to the States, reading his father's diary on the way. There are lengthy descriptions of the siege of St. Petersburg during WWII.

Pavel gradually learns that former hedge fund partner, Martin, likely swindled him prior to the fund's collapse---and had an affair with his wife.

Well that just the tip of the story. Shuttling between Russia and the US, Pavel tries to learn the truth about his dad's death. The missing pages of the diary resurface, along with a brother he never knew about. And he's plunged into uncovering a tangled web of stock and other financial transactions during and after the collapse of the USSR.

Lurking in the background is an attempt to explain the financial collapse of 2007.

It's a complex tale, laced with details about the privations in WWII, the machinations of the Soviet elite as the state crumbles, and forays into US/Soviet/Russian foreign policy (whole chunks of neo-con and policy assessments appear). It's a good way to learn about another country and think about why Russian/Soviet leaders are so paranoid, or seemingly so. Fascinating as this is, however, the book is ripe for editorial trimming. The story would be much stronger if the manuscript had been pruned.

There is a sub plot of Pavel's relationships with women: his former wife, Karen; his former lover, Anya; and his current love interest, Sarah; and his daughter....

I wonder why I kept reading this.

Kara says

Fast paced, quick read. The writing wasn't the tightest, and the characters tended to be kind of flat, but the story moved well. If you're a history nerd like me, it provides an interesting look behind the Iron Curtain, and also provides a fascinating take on the development of American-Russian relations. Good commute read - not a "can't put it down" per se, but still very much an "I want to know what happens"

Alicia Huxtable says

Good but needs minor work

To be honest, I didn't finish this book. I wanted to, I tried to but it just wasn't happening for me. For 1, it seemed to jump from one scene to another but then you'd realise that it was a new paragraph but the spacing hasn't been put in to show that. The other issue I had was the storyline, it felt like you were in a traffic jam.....slow, fast, slow, fast. Some parts the story moved along well but in other places I felt like I was reading at a standstill. The characters were basically the only constant.

Michele says

The Metronome was written as a prequel to The Great Game. This book will give the background story of how everything came to be the way it is today, and why the story of the Great Game played out the way it did. This is a novel but many of the facts are all too real. You will recognize them immediately. In the Epilogue the author explicitly states and sites which are real and which are not with references that can be checked.

It is the story of a (fictional) family that lived in Russia under several of the different political regimes. One more horrific than the next. It is about how that family survived. The son, Pavel, ultimately meets an American girl, falls in love and goes to America to marry her. The marriage has failed and now the Russians have to attempt to sabotage him into helping them. Does it work?

All I can promise you is that this book will give you the shivers--too much of it is what is happening now or has happened in our recent past. Once you have read this you will want to read The Great Game and I want to read the third book whenever it comes out.

Sean says

I really enjoyed this one

Patrice Fischer says

Very exciting, well-written, informative historical/political fiction concerning a man who was born and raised in the Soviet Union, emigrates to the US, marries an American woman, and becomes embroiled in a mystery that involves his family home in Russia. Solving this mystery takes him all over the US and also traveling between Moscow & St. Petersburg. It includes an up-close-and-personal view of the horrific Siege of Leningrad and also a current economic scenario which could explain our (the US') current up-and-down relationship with the former Soviet Union.

Chilling & plausible. It's also of note that a few names of current behind-the-scenes political leaders in the

US are specifically cited in the exacerbation of the current tensions between the US & Russia. These are some of the same names mentioned as part of Jeb Bush's election 'team'. Let's see how this plays out.

Bert says

This is a fascinating book on multiple levels. The protagonist is a Russian former physicist who shifted from science to finance when he immigrated to the United States. His employer, a brokerage house who trades in derivative financial products, is convinced that his mathematical formulae can be used to predict changes in financial markets. Meanwhile we learn that his estranged father, a former Russian detective, has come to the United States and is exhibiting odd behavior. It seems that the Russian mob has decided to get a piece of the action during a time when some would pay shell buyers to apply for mortgages on homes, with the expectation that the loans would go into default, and the government would reimburse the "lenders" for 90% of the loss. Nice work if you can get it, but illegal and unsustainable. No "tells" to spoil the ending. A good enough novel for me to overlook a number of proofreading errors early on in the tale.
