



by Martin Suter
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Fiction
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Pro Helvetia supported the
English language translation
of this book.

Monte Cristo

Montecristo

review

Set in the tangled world of finance, politics and the media, *Monte Cristo* is a pacy thriller full of betrayal and underhand tactics – a sharp and entertaining demonstration of the topical maxim that some banks are simply ‘too big to fail’.

Video journalist Jonas Brand is on a rail journey from Zurich to Basel when stock trader Paolo Contini appears to throw himself from the train to his death. Brand sets his footage of the aftermath of the incident aside to investigate a strange coincidence: two 100-Swiss-franc banknotes bearing the same serial number have come into his possession. Sensing an opportunity to graduate from celebrity journalism to serious investigation, he has the banknotes analysed, with bizarrely contradictory results. It dawns on Brand that Contini’s ‘accident’ might somehow be connected to the dubious bank notes. With the help of his former colleague Max Gantmann, a respected TV financial journalist gone to seed, Brand discovers that a major Swiss bank has been colluding with the printers to acquire vast quantities of banknotes with duplicate serial numbers. Contini had run up huge losses and seems to have been done away with before he could inform the regulator.

Meanwhile Brand’s half-abandoned feature film project – an updated version of The Count of *Monte Cristo* – unexpectedly receives funding, and Brand narrowly avoids being caught with planted drugs during a police raid on his hotel. Someone wants him off the case for good. When Max dies in a house fire, Brand realises he cannot trust

anyone anymore. He ends up being kidnapped and brought face to face with the Swiss Finance Minister and the Swiss National Bank supremo. He is warned that his findings would destroy the Swiss financial industry, causing untold economic suffering. Finally, Brand discovers that his film colleagues and the press are all members of a prestigious, conspiratorial society – the Lily Club – that has been stymying his investigation. The novel closes with the premiere of *Monte Cristo*, attended by Switzerland's great and good: a happy ending with the bitter aftertaste of compromise and defeat.

Monte Cristo is a lively, finely-tuned read and a real pageturner. Brand endears himself to readers as a bungling amateur in a world of establishment villains. The novel would translate brilliantly onto the screen and seems certain to continue Suter's success in English.

press quotes

'An exceptionally gripping, well written book, the type you don't want to put down until you find out how the showdown ends.' – Handelsblatt

'Martin Suter's thriller plunges into the world of money and high society. So well researched that you can't help but reconsider the good old method of keeping your savings tucked away under the mattress.' – Gentlemen's Quarterly, Munich

'A fast-paced novel with a finale reminiscent of Dürrenmatt. This is Suter's most political novel so far.' – ZDF

'A thriller set in the banking world, which reveals that our financial system is still built on sand.' – ORF

about the author

Martin Suter was born in Zurich in 1948, and is a writer, columnist, and author of screenplays. Until 1991 he worked as a creative director in advertising, before deciding to focus exclusively on writing. His novels have enjoyed huge international success. In 2011 he began his crime novel series, *Allmen and the Dragonflies*. Martin Suter lives in Zurich with his family. His books have been published in thirty-two languages.

Previous works include:

Alles im Griff (2014); *Allmen und die verschwundene Maria* (2014); *Die Zeit, die Zeit* (2012)

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Diogenes Verlag was founded in Zurich in 1952 by Daniel Keel and Rudolf C. Bettschart. One of the leading international publishing houses, it numbers among its authors Alfred Andersch, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Patricia Highsmith, Donna Leon, Bernhard Schlink and Patrick Süskind. Children's authors include Tatjana Hauptmann, Ute Krause, Karl Friedrich Waechter and Tomi Ungerer.