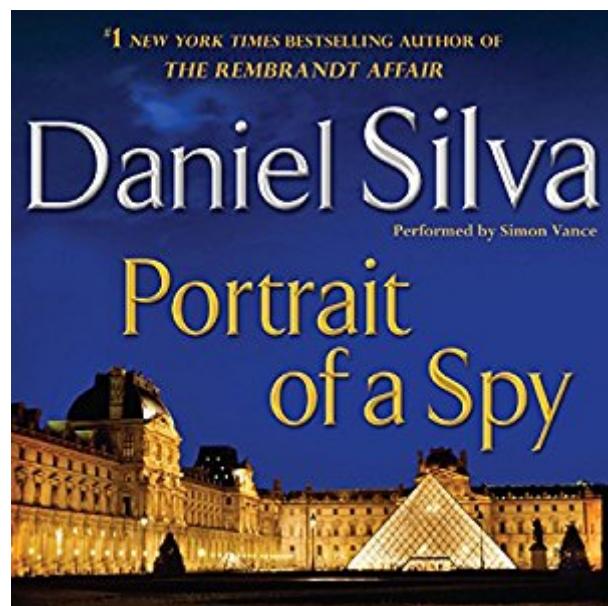


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Portrait Of A Spy: A Novel



Synopsis

Haunted by his failure to stop a suicide bomber in London, Gabriel Allon is summoned to Washington and drawn into a confrontation with the new face of global terror. At the center of the threat is an American-born cleric in Yemen who was once a paid CIA asset. Gabriel and his team devise a daring plan to destroy the network of death - from the inside - a gambit fraught with risk, both personal and professional. To succeed, Gabriel must reach into his violent past. A woman waits there, a reclusive heiress and art collector who can traverse the murky divide between Islam and the West. She is the daughter of an old enemy, and together they form an unlikely and dangerous bond. Set against the disparate worlds of art and intelligence, *Portrait of a Spy* moves swiftly from the corridors of power in Washington to the glamorous auction houses of New York and London to the unforgiving landscape of the Saudi desert. Featuring a climax that will leave listeners haunted long after the final words, this deeply entertaining story is also a breathtaking portrait of courage in the face of unspeakable evil - and Daniel Silva's most extraordinary novel to date.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Okay, here's the thing from a reviewer's viewpoint. You would probably not be reading the reviews of Daniel Silva's newest book in his Gabriel Allon spy series if you weren't already familiar with his writing. Silva's written 10 or so novels in the series and I think I've read most of them. And this one, "Portrait of a Spy" is a very good Daniel Silva/Gabriel Allon book. But it is similar to all the others I've read. And for me, a reviewer, it's a difficult book to review for that reason. Daniel Silva is deeply

concerned with the Middle East and the problems with radical Islamism that have risen from there in the last 60 years or so. Silva uses his books - characters and plots - to speak intelligently about those problems and the repercussions - terrorist bombings in both the Middle East countries and in Europe. Silva seems to publish a new book in the series every July. Now, this year and this book, 2011 and "Portrait of a Spy", pose a fairly tricky problem for Daniel Silva. How much of the "Arab Spring" - which actually began in mid-December, 2010 - does he include in his story? And does he include the assassination of Bin Ladin, which occurred fairly close to the time of publication? I could tell that he makes reference to Bin Ladin's death in a line towards the end where the text could still be changed in final proofs. The "Arab Spring" is mentioned towards the end. That's the problem he may have faced with the plot. But it's with the characters he's really facing problems. Gabriel Allon has not changed much in the 15 or so years he's been the subject of Daniel Silva's pen. And Chiara, his younger Italian wife is still gorgeous. They are still trying to retire to the English countryside and really go back to art restoration.

Gabriel Allon is on site and fails to stop a terrorist attack in London. He leaves his Cornish retirement to help a CIA ally eradicate the network that executed the attack, as well as the operational mastermind and inspiration of said network. Ultimately Gabriel lives and triumphs...which should surprise no one. Entertaining, somewhat engrossing, extremely well written, *Portrait of a Spy* was not all I hoped it would be. I can handle the Allon books being cookie cutter plots, but the books are so well written that I enjoy the ride even though. However, what begins as a really clever idea is not carried through by the author. Silva had the chance to break from the mold of the last few books and he chose not to. On the cookie cutter front, we have the standard Allon associates-Shamron, Uri, the Allon Team, and now extended elements in the CIA and the world of broadcast news. We have world class bad guys with an agenda...but the new trick is that the bad guys will be found by routing funds to them with the help of the daughter of...a man Allon killed and who dies in the arms of the daughter Allon wants help from. If there is a weakness in the Allon series, it may be how anyone who is asked feels compelled to help Allon, and in the course of working with/for him they come to see him as being wonderful...even here. No one comes away feeling used or bitter or in any way conflicted or angry. That is the opportunity Silva misses in *Portrait of a Spy*.

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