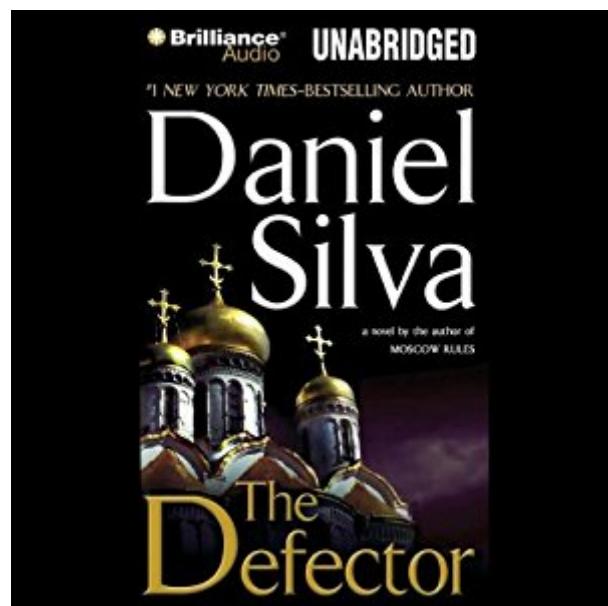


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The Defector



Synopsis

Over the course of a remarkable career, Daniel Silva has established himself as one of the world's finest writers of international intrigue, a craftsman worthy of comparison to John le CarrÃ© and Graham Greene. His latest bestseller, *Moscow Rules*, was not only superior entertainment, but a prescient cautionary tale about the emergence of the New Russia. Now he takes that tale to the next level. Six months after the blood-soaked conclusion of *Moscow Rules*, Allon is in Umbria, trying to resume his honeymoon with his new wife, Chiara, when a colleague pays him a shocking visit. The man who saved Allon's life in Moscow and was then resettled in England has vanished without a trace. British intelligence is sure he was a double agent all along, and they blame Allon for planting him. To discover the truth and clear his name, Allon must go immediately to London - a decision that will prove to be the most fateful of his career. In the British capital, he finds himself once more on the front lines of the secret war between East and West, where Russian spies and dissidents engage in the old game of cat and mouse. There, Allon uncovers a much greater conspiracy, a plot by an old enemy to resurrect a network of death, to bring the world to the precipice of a new confrontation, and in order to stop it, he must risk everything: his ties to an organization he has served since his youth, his new marriage . . . even his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Daniel Silva's "The Defector" is a sequel to "Moscow Rules," in which superspy Gabriel Allon and his team attempted to outsmart the sadistic Russian oligarch, Ivan Kharkov, with the help of Kharkov's disaffected wife, Elena. Kharkov, a former KGB agent, is a ruthless arms dealer who

foments violence all over the world for profit. Of late, Allon has been living a placid life in an Italian villa under an assumed name along with his new wife, Chiara. He spends much of his time restoring priceless works of art for the Vatican. Unfortunately, his tranquil existence is rudely disrupted when Colonel Grigori Bulganov, former member of the Russian Federal Security Service and a defector to the west, suddenly disappears from London. Did Bulganov willingly return to Moscow to resume his old life? Allon, who knew the man well, firmly believes that this is an unlikely scenario, since Grigori not only hated the new Russia, but was also enjoying his life as a celebrity dissident. Gabriel fears that Kharkov must have orchestrated Grigori's abduction for reasons that will soon become apparent. When another key person vanishes, Allon, with the help of his former superior and advisor, eighty-year old Ari Shamron, as well as other powerful spymasters from England and America, arranges a complex extraction on Russian soil. If his plan should go awry, it could cost quite a few Jewish lives. This is not one of Silva's finest efforts. Too much of this four-hundred and sixty-page novel is devoted to endless exposition, in which the author rehashes events from "Moscow Rules" and other earlier books. "The Defector" is almost entirely plot driven and populated by one-dimensional characters.

It seems that the State of Israel is having no trouble in the great wide world. Its most accomplished agent is once again free to pursue matters of personal honor, unencumbered by obligations to Mossad, and indeed aided by that legendary organization. Daniel Silva's early thrillers - both the Gabriel Allon series and the three Michael Osbourne novels - are among my all-time favorite reads. The Prince of Fire is one of the two best thrillers I've ever read, and The Unlikely Spy is a richly researched nail-biter set in WWII London. But the last two Gabriel Allon books were below Silva's usual standard, far below. The Defector is better than those, but not up to the early work. There's very little of Italy here - or any other setting -- and virtually no art restoration, and I'm exceedingly sad to see that Silva is close to churning out a Pattersonesque formula thriller. Here we go: Part 1: something bad happens to someone Gabriel knows. Part 2: Gabriel assembles a team and mounts a complex plan to fix things (being a fan of planning, I like this part best, but it was sadly diminished here). Part 3: Gabriel or Shamron forces the US or the UK to carry the can. Part 4: lots of blood; and more blood. Part 5: Gabriel and his support staff tie up loose ends with yet more blood. No surprises here, although Silva does forego Gabriel's seemingly obligatory trip to St Peters. Any writer can have an off year, but this makes three off years for Silva. What's up with that? One possible answer is that he's working from his files, rather than doing research. I wouldn't care, were Silva not so addicted to the use of the particular. Without research, the details suffer, of course.

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