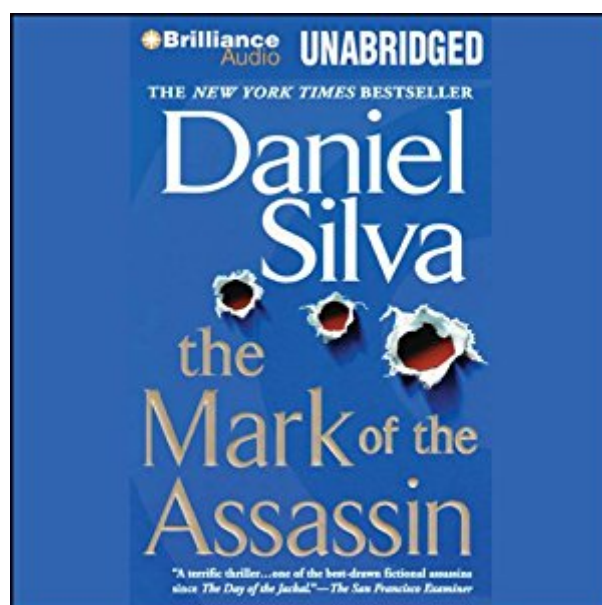


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The Mark Of The Assassin



Synopsis

When a commercial airliner is blown out of the sky off the East Coast, the CIA scrambles to find the perpetrators. A body is discovered near the crash site with three bullets to the face: the calling card of a shadowy international assassin. Only agent Michael Osbourne has seen the markings beforeâ•on a woman he once loved. Now, it's personal for Osbourne. Consumed by his dark obsession with the assassin, he's willing to risk his family, his career, and his lifeâ•to settle a score....

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours and 23 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Brilliance Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 20, 2009

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B002Y2Q9AW

Best Sellers Rank: #67 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Espionage
#539 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Spies & Politics > Espionage
#3244 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

I thoroughly enjoy Silva's Gabriel Allon novels. This book does not rise up to the same level. While the plot moves quickly, I felt like I had already read the book before. The main character is a super CIA agent, who lacks the depth of character of Gabriel Allon. He is a plastic imitation of Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan character. The assassin was your typical cold-blooded former KGB 1000% evil type. The deeply secret international cartel that controlled the senior members of the CIA and other parts of world governments was unbelievable and contrite. Silva's other books are known for their historical research and unique characters. Since this book was set in modern times, Silva was unable to flex one of his primary strengths. From now on, I will stick to the Gabriel Allon books and skip the CIA super agent tales. While there was nothing really bad about the book, it never really rose above the level of being an average run of the mill pulp spy novel.

A commercial jetliner is blown out of the skies over Long Island. A body is found during the recovery operation with three bullet holes to the face -- "the mark of the assassin" has just surfaced but his identity remains a mystery, even to the most notorious underground figures. Enter Michael Osbourne, a senior CIA "case worker" (the preferred term for "spy").. Osbourne recognizes the assassin's mark as that of the man who killed his former lover and many high profile political figures. As he gets closer and closer to finding the killer's identity, Osbourne becomes more entangled in the assassin's web, and unknowingly, places his life, and that of his entire family's on the line. Silva masterfully includes all the cookie cutter elements that genre fans want in a really good read: a solid (and very visual) education of international locales, inside details of covert activities, rapid pace story telling, masterful plotting, lots of chasing, twisting and turning...but he adds something even more spectacular: a romantic undercurrent that humanizes the roles of the protagonist AND antagonist. Silva beautifully weaves in two riveting love stories right under the surface of the main plot. I have a couple of pet peeves (Elizabeth's whining throughout the first half of the book was particularly annoying) but they were immediately squashed as I raced throughout the night toward the last page. If you enjoy fast-paced spy thrillers that take you on a whirlwind of espionage action all around the globe, then this is the book for you. The pace is relentless and the writing is flawless. Enjoy.

An American jetliner is shot down from the sky off of Long Island by a hand held Stinger missile by a two man team in a small boat, killing all aboard. The boat is discovered to be the tomb of a dead Palestinian terrorist with links to the militant group the Sword of Gaza. He had been shot 3 times in the face, the signature of premier assassin Jean Paul Delaroche, known as October. The attack had been orchestrated by a group called the Society, a clandestine group of wealthy businessmen, intelligence experts, career military men and criminals. The goal of the Society was the maximizing of profit by promoting world chaos. Mitchell Elliott, multi millionaire industrialist and owner of Alarton Defense Systems was a prominent member. Through years of political contributions, Elliott was able to control policy decisions of America president James Beckwith. Elliott now stood to make a fortune by supplying the nation with a missile defense system. Michael Osbourne, top CIA agent and Middle East terrorism expert is called in to investigate the tragedy. Osbourne, now married to beautiful and high powered lawyer Elizabeth Cannon, years ago, witnessed the killing of his girlfriend Sarah by Delaroche. Osbourne suspecting that the Sword of Gaza was not involved in the plot, starts to investigate Elliott and Delaroche. His speculation is confirmed when his wife's best friend, Susanna Dayton, investigative reporter for the Washington Post is found murdered. She had been working a

piece that exposed the dirty dealings of Mitchell Elliott. Eventually Delaroché is commissioned by the Society to dispatch Osbourne, which begins a cat and mouse game across the globe between hunter and hunted. Silva does an admirable job in crafting an exciting and revealing tale of international intrigue. I would suggest reading this novel prior to his follow up book *The Marching Season*, which I unfortunately did not do.

This hackneyed, terrifically unoriginal "thriller" will leave fans of the genre reaching for their Le Carre or Deighton for a dose of the real thing. Silva's idea of a character flaw is a mild smoking habit? Please. I haven't seen a collection of characters like this since I put away my Hardy Boys books. All of the women are slender and attractive, all the men handsome and cool under pressure - not to mention sensational lovers with the security of an inherited bank account. The descriptions of exotic locales are tired: London - rain and fog; Cairo - hot and dusty. Skip it.

This book is, without a doubt one of the worst suspense novels I've ever read. It seems to have one cliché after another. First there's your uber-assassin, which seems ripped out from a James Bond movie and to a lesser extent, Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal*. Then, there's your money-grubbing conspiracy to rule the world using terrorism, extortion, etc. Does this sound at all like *SPECTRE* from the old James Bond movies? Perhaps the author should have considered making an original plot instead of trying to make just another lackluster spy novel. In conclusion, if you want a good suspense novel, stick to the works of Frederick Forsyth or John Le Carre.

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