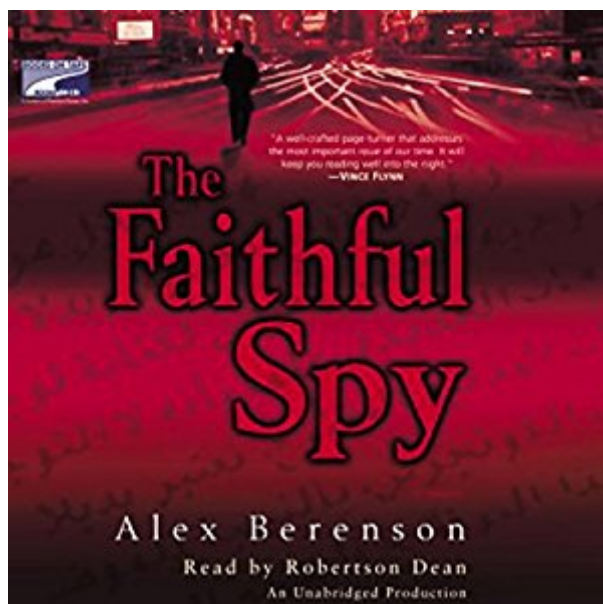


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The Faithful Spy



Synopsis

A well-crafted page-turner that addresses the most important issue of our time. It will keep you reading well into the night. "Vince Flynn, a New York Times reporter has drawn upon his experience covering the occupation in Iraq to write the most gripping and chillingly plausible thriller of the post-9/11 era. Alex Berenson's debut novel of suspense, *The Faithful Spy*, is a sharp, explosive story that takes readers inside the war on terror as fiction has never done before. John Wells is the only American CIA agent ever to penetrate al Qaeda. Since before the attacks in 2001, Wells has been hiding in the mountains of Pakistan, biding his time, building his cover. Now, on the orders of Omar Khadri, "the malicious mastermind plotting more al Qaeda strikes on America" Wells is coming home. Neither Khadri nor Jennifer Exley, Wells's superior at Langley, knows quite what to expect. For Wells has changed during his years in the mountains. He has become a Muslim. He finds the United States decadent and shallow. Yet he hates al Qaeda and the way it uses Islam to justify its murderous assaults on innocents. He is a man alone, and the CIA "still reeling from its failure to predict 9/11 or find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq" does not know whether to trust him. Among his handlers at Langley, only Exley believes in him, and even she sometimes wonders. And so the agency freezes Wells out, preferring to rely on high-tech means for gathering intelligence. But as that strategy fails and Khadri moves closer to unleashing the most devastating terrorist attack in history, Wells and Exley must somehow find a way to stop him, with or without the government's consent. From secret American military bases where suspects are held and "interrogated" to basement laboratories where al Qaeda's scientists grow the deadliest of biological weapons, *The Faithful Spy* is a riveting and cautionary tale, as affecting in its personal stories as it is sophisticated in its political details. The first spy thriller to grapple squarely with the complexities and terrors of today's world, this is a uniquely exciting and unnerving novel by an author who truly knows his territory. From the Hardcover edition. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 12 hours and 4 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Books on Tape

Audible.com Release Date: May 2, 2006

Language: English

ASIN: B000FIHLYU

Best Sellers Rank: #69 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Espionage #79 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Terrorism #362 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Suspense

Customer Reviews

Spy novels at their best can approach great literature. I can give as examples the work of John LeCarre (at least in his younger years) and a personal favorite of mine Alan Furst. But stories like these, set in the Cold War or World War II, deal with an enemy that to some degree at least we understand. Anyone who tries to write a spy novel about the war we are in now, against Islamist extremists, has a much more difficult task since we (at least most of us) do not at all understand our enemy. That is why presumably so few writers have so far attempted to write serious fiction about the current war. Alex Berenson has at least tried. Although this first novel is not completely successful he should be given some credit for his attempt. The book is in two parts. Part I (The Homecoming King) is just wonderful. The basic idea is original if not easily believable. A CIA agent manages to infiltrate Al Qaeda and then quite sincerely becomes a Muslim without however losing his basic patriotism and loyalty to America. The result is that his CIA bosses no longer trust him while his Al Qaeda bosses do not completely trust him either. He is a man in danger of being lost between two worlds. This part of the book is subtle and nuanced. Berenson describes the psychology of the Islamist fanatics in a way that is credible and deep. I found it not only enjoyable to read but came away with a better understanding of today's headlines. Part I is a real page-turner as other reviewers have noted. Part II (The Believers) is in comparison very disappointing. Berenson seems to have dropped his literary aspirations and decided to go for the big money and the movie rights. This part of the book, while still well-written, is a standard thriller complete with plot cliches and the required happy ending.

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