



Moscow Rules

Daniel Silva

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Now the death of a journalist leads Allon to Russia, where he finds that, in terms of spycraft, even he has something to learn. He's playing by Moscow rules now.

It is not the grim, gray Moscow of Soviet times but a new Moscow, awash in oil wealth and choked with bulletproof Bentleys. A Moscow where power resides once more behind the walls of the Kremlin and where critics of the ruling class are ruthlessly silenced. A Moscow where a new generation of Stalinists is plotting to reclaim an empire lost and to challenge the global dominance of its old enemy, the United States.

One such man is Ivan Kharkov, a former KGB colonel who built a global investment empire on the rubble of the Soviet Union. Hidden within that empire, however, is a more lucrative and deadly business. Kharkov is an arms dealer—and he is about to deliver Russia's most sophisticated weapons to al-Qaeda. Unless Allon can learn the time and place of the delivery, the world will see the deadliest terror attacks since 9/11—and the clock is ticking fast.

Moscow Rules Details

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Author : Daniel Silva

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From Reader Review Moscow Rules for online ebook

Sarah Sammis says

Moscow Rules is the eighth book in the Gabriel Allon series by Daniel Silva. Allon is a art restorer and former Israeli Mossad agent. In this book Allon's attention moves from historical crimes to a present day case involving arms sales to al-Qaeda.

The choice of topic is an interesting follow-up to last week's Booking Through Thursday question. As I stated in my answer, I haven't shied away from books involving modern day terrorists. Nonetheless, Deb's question did sit in the back of my mind as I read Moscow Rules.

Coming into a series eight books in and with a change of direction, it's difficult to gauge the success of the book. The first hundred pages or so is so focused on establishing the segue with the last book and setting up the change of direction. The actual plot involving a forged Mary Cassatt and a wife's betrayal of her arms dealing husband doesn't come into play until the halfway point of the novel. A four hundred page mystery shouldn't be one hundred pages of "in the last episode" followed by another hundred pages of teaser for the current plot.

Moscow Rules is a run of the mill international thriller. The second half is tighter and faster paced than the first half. It reminds me at times of a novelization of a James Bond film by someone who had never read the Ian Fleming novels.

The entire list of books in the series is:

1. The Kill Artist (2000)
2. The English Assassin (2002)
3. The Confessor (2003)
4. A Death in Vienna (2004)
5. Prince of Fire (2005)
6. The Messenger (2006)
7. The Secret Servant (2007)
8. Moscow Rules (2008)

Jim says

Moscow Rules is the 8th book in the Gabriel Allon series by Daniel Silva. Gabriel and Chiara are on their honeymoon when Gabriel is summoned. A Russian journalist has important information he wants to pass along about a threat to the West but he will only tell it to Gabriel. He travels to Rome to meet the Russian journalist but the journalist is killed before he can tell Gabriel. Allon then travels to Russia to try and find out what it was that the journalist wanted to tell him. There he learns of a Russian oligarch arms dealer named Ivan Kharkov. His latest deal is a plan to sell missiles to al-Qaeda. This is the new Russia and not the old Soviet Union. Kharkov has bullet proof limousines, a private plane, villas and his own army of former KGB henchmen. At times the description of the Russian president and killing of dissident journalists sounds like it is something right out of today's headlines. I believe this is the first book in the series where Russia is the

prominent setting and Gabriel has to learn to play by the "Moscow Rules". This was not my favorite Gabriel Allon book but it was still a good read. I have not read the series in order so this book did help to explain some things that are mentioned in later books in the series such as The Defector

Joe says

BOILERPLATE

This is the eighth book featuring Gabriel Allon, a part-time art restorer and full-time Israeli Secret Agent. I find this author's books very reminiscent of Robert Ludlum's, i.e. some literary spy-craft, (surveillance techniques are big in Moscow Rules), mixed with some globe-trotting, (usually around recognizable landmarks), and a world threatening plot that needs to be foiled - all loosely tied to the current headlines.

Moscow Rules follows Silva's previous tried and true formula – the book begins by introducing the bad guys committing a crime beyond the capabilities of local authorities to solve. A reluctant Gabriel, busy in some remote but beautiful locale, (in this book he is on his honeymoon in Italy), is then summoned. He pulls together a team of now well known characters and sets up a sting operation to snare the bad guys – usually Arab terrorists. Inevitably the plan falls apart at some critical juncture forcing Gabriel to single-handedly save the day..... and the world while providing the reader with a happy ending. The twist in this book is that the bad guys are Russian black market arms dealers supplying Arab terrorists.

I don't mean to sound condescending or as if I'm intellectually thumbing my nose here, I'm just as guilty as the next reader when it comes to enjoying mindless thrillers - but the Allon books have become cookie-cutter repetitive and hence stale - if you've read one, you've read them all.

Joyce Lagow says

8th in the Gabriel Allon series.

Gabriel and Chiara are on their honeymoon in the Umbrian hills of Italy while Gabriel, under an assumed name, of course, restores a painting for the Vatican. However, any thought that Ari Shamron, the unofficial head of Israeli Intelligence, will allow Allon some peace is rudely shattered when Allon gets an assignment: meet with a Russian journalist now in Rome, find out what he wants--because the journalist will talk with no one but Allon about what he claims is a grave danger to Israel and the West.

A simple mission--just an overnigher to Rome, hear out the journalist, then back to the Villa dei Fiori to finish out his honeymoon.

Nothing in Allon's world, however, ever works out that simply, and before long, Allon is on a headlong quest that takes him to the Cote d'Azur in France and then to Moscow.

In my opinion, no one writing today matches never mind bests Silva in the international spy thriller genre. His books are always well-written, well-plotted and incredibly exciting. That's the case with Moscow Rules, which has a page-turner of a denouement that keeps you up at night until you've finished.

His recurring characters, such as Ari Shamron, Uzi Navot, Eli Lavon and, of course, Chiara, are solid. We meet again Adrian Carter of the CIA and Gergory Seymor of British Intelligence. His one-timers are good--believable-- even if some of them are somewhat one-dimensional. No matter--the action is what counts, and Silva is brilliant at it. Highly recommended.

Day says

Once again, I wish goodreads had half stars...I more than 3 star liked this book but not quite 4 stars. Maybe b/c it's book 8 in the series, they're all merging in my memory, but this one didn't stand out better than any of the others. It's still a great spy read, and thoroughly enjoyable. Russia was new terrain for these characters, and interesting since I have very little knowledge about Russia...and this piqued my interest.

Another "issue" related to this being book 8 of the series is the literary device of reminding readers of the main characters back stories for those who might have forgotten or for new readers who start reading mid-series...For me, while Silva keeps these sections brief, it still takes away from the main story-line and progression of the plot.

Dick Reynolds says

We have no trouble spotting the bad guy in this book: Ivan Kharkov is ex-KGB and is now engaged in supplying weapons to the absolutely wrong countries. In short order, Israeli foreign intelligent agent Gabriel Allon is on the hunt for Kharkov. Allon's travels take him to various countries such as Italy, France, Russia and the American capitol. Author Silva has a keen appreciation of the different cities visited by Allon, his fellow agents and the unsavory associates of Kharkov; he paints some very attractive pictures with his words while also making sure the plot moves ahead smoothly.

Ivan Kharkov has a wife, Elena, and two small children. He's also carrying on an affair with another Russian woman and hasn't much interest these days in Elena. But watching out for his children is another matter entirely. Elena's hoodlum bodyguards are looking after Ivan's family with two missions: making sure Elena behaves herself and that no harm comes to his children.

Allon's mission is to gain detailed information on Kharkov's subversive dealings and he starts by conjuring up a meeting with Elena. She's both an art collector and expert so Allon makes sure that a painting which he has worked on comes to Elena's attention. They meet and are soon linked together in an attempt for Elena to retrieve sensitive information from her Moscow apartment. What could possibly go wrong? In a word, plenty.

The plot builds steadily and you'll have a hard time putting it down until you reach the exciting ending. All things considered, I think it's one of the best Silva novels that I've read.

A comment about Silva's writing: One of the rules for writers is not to draw attention to the writing itself but, in this particular book, I couldn't help but notice. The scene is Geneva, Switzerland, and Silva remarks that travelers who approach Geneva by train from Zurich are frequently so overcome by its beauty that they hurl their return tickets out the window and vow never to leave again. He then gives us Allon's thoughts on Geneva: he found it to be a charming but intensely boring city. Once a place of Calvinistic fervor but finance was now the city's only religion, and bankers and money men were its new priests and archbishops. Nevertheless, Silva paints quite a nice word picture.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

Pretty good story. I was due for a little espionage and international intrigue. Silva includes a lot of stuff that is close to reality, which makes the story a little more edgy and also disturbing. It's sad to know that the Russian people are not really much better off or more "free" since the fall of communism. (Except that they are allowed to leave the country now.)

I'd heard things about the Russian "mafia" and the oligarchy that presides since capitalism swept in, and also about the underground arms trading. Maybe more than we want to know if we want to sleep at night.

Cheryl says

My problem with the latest Dan Silva novel, "Moscow Rules" is that it seems that Silva is playing by rules of his own. Each of his latest novels seems to have been become formulaic:

1. Gabriel Allon gets persuaded back into the life of an Israeli intelligence officer by presumably doing a "favor" for his mentor Ari Shamron.
2. The "favor" turns into a large scale operation.
3. Perfect Plan is formed on intelligence and sources.
4. Perfect Plan goes astray.
5. Allon saves the day, retreats back to his "other" life usually with a lot of physical and emotional damage.

This book is no different.

While many may be turned off by this formula that Silva has cultivated instead of thinking outside of box, it does make for an exciting novel. Bottom line: if you're looking for something new in the spy-thriller genre aside from the past exploits of Gabriel Allon, then you're barking up the wrong tree; if you're totally cool with Silva's obvious plot devices (as I am) you'll find this an enjoyable read.

Steve says

Fully satisfactory (indeed, darn close to perfect) airport, airplane, and hotel reading...

I definitely wouldn't start with this one In comparison to the others I've read, I found this installment was on the high end of the scale in terms of momentum and sustained page turning, but not necessarily one of my favorites in terms of character development (including the (now familiar) protagonist, the newly introduced antagonist, and/or the supporting casts for both) or my interest in the underlying scenario, situation, or plot. I fear (or sense or, at very least, guess) that the reason the installment was weighted this way (seemed like it flew by even if the story arc wasn't fully developed) is that it's part of a series within the series or, in other words, the sub-plot hasn't played itself out yet.

Silva increasingly has claimed the preeminent spot among authors I turn to when I know I'm going to be trapped in a long steel tube (yup, an airplane) for a long time. So I plan to keep working my way through the series.

Galina says

It is written with understanding how ruthless Russian thugs really are. As well as with appreciation that there are always decent, noble, refined, and courageous people in every society, even as barbarian as Russia.

Also, I hope that 1.5 hr ride from Moscow to Ukranian border is a misspelling, it would take at least 7-8 hours.

Nancy Brisson says

In **Moscow Rules** by Daniel Silva, when a Russian journalist dies in the arms of Gabriel Allon, an Israeli operative, at the Basilica in Rome, Gabriel's highest level friends in the Vatican are not thrilled. Gabriel had a meeting with this, now dead, reporter who had something to tell him. Gabriel is not thrilled either. He was on his honeymoon in Umbria and he does not want any part of this. But it's a mystery that involves injustice, assassination, and perhaps more; clarion calls that Allon can never fail to answer. Gabriel immediately knows his honeymoon is over.

Ops inside Russia, especially in Moscow, are rarely undertaken by any nation's spy agency, let alone the Israelis. Moscow plays by its own rules. What is supposed to be a quick in and out excursion, under a false identity, to talk with Olga Sukhova, another journalist, goes badly awry when Gabriel decides to outstay his team. Moscow rules say, "Assume every room is bugged and every telephone monitored. Assume every person you encounter is under opposition control. And don't look back. You are never completely alone." And yet he defies his boss and friend Ari Shamron and stays. Guess how that turns out.

In these days when we talk about Russia every day, the information the author gives us about Russia is very familiar to us. Olga tells Gabriel, "To understand Russia today, you must understand the trauma of the nineties. Everything we had, everything we had been told, was swept away. We went from superpower to basket case overnight. Our people lost their life savings, not just once but over and over again. Russians are paternalistic people. They believe in the Orthodox Church, the State, the Tsar. They associate democracy with chaos. Our president... uses words like 'managed democracy' and 'State capitalism' but they're just euphemisms for something more sinister, fascism."

Gabriel's Russian op does not stay in Russia. He learns that the man our reporters were so worried about is a very wealthy Russian oligarch who is very well guarded. Olga tells Gabriel exactly why this particular oligarch is so dangerous and exactly how he has stepped over a "red line" to pursue a business deal that must be stopped.

In **Moscow Rules** you can read about the plan Gabriel comes up with to flush him out. Since we know that Gabriel's plans do not go smoothly, find out how he messes up this time. Find out if his new wife is still speaking to him after he never gets back to the honeymoon. It's a very satisfying Gabriel Allon book. It has all the characteristic parts of the pattern readers expect when they throw in their lot with the Israeli Secret

Service and their painterly operative, who manages, despite the powerful people he chases down, to get some of the worst players off the world stage. I think you will find that it also resonates with the situation we find ourselves in today, vis a vis Russia. Serendipity.

Lance Charnes says

I've mentioned before my general slam on long-running series: at some point, the author starts repeating him/herself. Characters that were once vibrant and fresh start doing and saying the same things. Often, they don't seem to learn anything from their previous adventures or do much changing. So it also goes for the recurring supporting characters. It's one reason why I've only recently begun thinking (albeit reluctantly) about writing a series.

Unfortunately, it appears that Gabriel Allon, Daniel Silva's favorite Israeli secret agent, has fallen into this same trap.

In this, his eighth outing, *Our Hero* is sent after Ivan Kharkov, a Russian oligarch who has grown rich selling arms to the combatants in various Third World wars and is about to pass on to al-Qaeda some serious weaponry. Allon shuttles from Rome to Moscow to London to St. Tropez, trying to figure out what Kharkov's selling and how to stop him.

First, the good news. Silva's grasp of tradecraft and the ins and outs of espionage is still intact and strong. As I and others have pointed out, Silva's known to "get it right" when portraying covert operatives at work. While Allon isn't strictly a "spy" -- he's basically an assassin with ancillary skills -- the setups for his various elaborate operations at least seem authentic and rely very little on magic or coincidence (unlike in some other "spy thrillers" out there). He has a steady if light hand with settings. His voice is cool and often distant; not a lot of passion leaps out at the reader from these pages. It's a fast read, both because of the prose and because there's not a lot of weight to the proceedings.

Preface: I haven't been reading these in order. I previously read (and reviewed) the eleventh Allon installment, *Portrait of a Spy*. Had I read that one after this one, I'd be saying the same things about it.

With this, my fourth Allon book, I'm picking up some patterns that I find increasingly disturbing. To wit:

-- For long stretches of this novel, I couldn't shake the feeling I'd read it before. At a certain level of abstraction, I have; it's essentially the same outline as *Portrait of a Spy* and, it appears, other books in the series.

-- Using the timeline references Silva includes in the plot, when this book was written (2008), Allon was in his late fifties, and Ari Shamron (his long-time mentor) was in his seventies. Yet they're still going into the field, and Allon is still taking on men half his age. They're both ridiculously old for this kind of thing, and Allon's way too old to get the tar kicked out of him (as appears to happen at least once per story) and be able to recover. (In *Portrait*, everyone's three years older, which makes the action in that story even more unlikely.) Really? Isn't it time for Allon to go run *The Office* (Silva's thinly disguised Mossad) and let the younger guys get captured and tortured?

-- Not only is Allon way too old to be the kind of field operative that he is, but his identity has been so

thoroughly blown through his previous exploits that every major intelligence agency in the world knows who he is and what he looks like. Somehow, he's still able to slip across borders and work undercover in hostile environments. In this regard he's become much like the movie James Bond, whom the bad guys always recognized but always let in the front door anyway. Why does anyone in *The Office* think it's a good plan to send the man on covert missions?

-- This may have been the case before, but I really noticed it this time: all the principal female characters are beautiful and are attracted in one way or another to Allon, who's significantly older and has a lot of miles on him. Is it just me, or does this seem lazy?

-- Just as all the women are beautiful in Allon's world, all the villains are brutal, corrupt, venal, murderous thugs who are bad because they can be. It's nice to have things made so easy, right? I'd like to run across an Allon opponent who has good reasons for what s/he does, or at least has some nuance.

-- Having jumped from the first to the eleventh, then back to the eighth part of this saga, I can see that Allon has hardly changed. Even though he's now married (to a beautiful, much younger woman, of course), he does the same things with the same motives. He hardly hesitates in dropping his honeymoon with said beautiful younger woman and running off to do Shamron's bidding once again, even though he knows exactly how it's going to turn out. Not once does he seem to really miss his new wife; not once does he wonder why he's still doing this.

Is *Moscow Rules* worth the time to read? It depends. If you're a rabid fan of the series, then of course. If you've never read any part of the Allon saga, I'd point you to one of the early installments (*The Kill Artist* , perhaps), back when the character and stories were fresh and new. But if you've read a couple of the other parts and are hoping for something different, you won't find it here. I have one more of these in my to-read pile (*The Rembrandt Affair*) that I'll get to someday; unless Silva's taken off running with the art-crime angle he's supposedly been exploring lately, it will probably be my last. Sorry, Gabriel; it's time to retire.

Natacha Martins says

Sempre tive curiosidade para ler um dos muitos livros que Daniel Silva tem publicado ao longo dos anos. Não só porque é um dos muitos luso descendentes, bem sucedidos além fronteiras, mas também porque sempre li boas críticas aos seus livros.

"As Regras de Moscovo" é um livro sobre terrorismo, sobre relações internacionais, especialmente as que se mantêm com a Rússia, e sobre a venda ilegal de armas. Allon pertence aos Serviços Secretos israelitas, sendo um dos seus mais conceituados espiões. Recentemente casado e a gozar a lua-de-mel em Itália, Allon concorda fazer um pausa para se encontrar com um jornalista russo que diz ter informações importantes sobre uma possível catástrofe a nível mundial que estará a ser planeada e insiste que só fala com Allon. Um pequena pausa na lua-de-mel torna-se numa interrupção sem data para voltar quando o mesmo jornalista russo é assassinado antes de conseguir contar a Allon o que quer que seja.

A partir daqui começa uma corrida contra o tempo. Allon parte para a Rússia para falar com uma outra jornalista russa, colega do que acabou por morrer nos braços de Allon em Itália, para tentar descobrir o que se passa. Lá, descobre que um conceituado empresário russo, cuja fortuna nada tem a ver com actividades legais e sim com o negócio ilícito de venda de armamento aos países de terceiro mundo e, ao que parece, numa das suas últimas negociatas, terá vendido misseis a uma célula da Al-Qaeda.

É a partir desta premissa que toda a acção se desenrola. Com violência, muita coragem e muita sorte à

mistura, Allon vai fazer tudo para que, obviamente as armas nunca sejam utilizadas, mas também para que nenhuma das pessoas envolvidas se morra durante a operação complicada.

Embora não seja o tipo de livro que me costuma encher as medidas, enquanto leitora, porque gosto de policiais, de thrillers e afins que fujam um bocado ao "normal". Que não sejam tão tradicionais, no entanto não dei o meu tempo por perdido. Gostei dos cenários por onde se movem as personagens e das próprias personagens. Embora tenha gostado da história, não sei se gostei muito da forma com a acção se desenrola, porque parece que não se aprofunda muito e, confesso que a visão americana sobre toda a problemática mundial me fez alguma "comichão".

Recomendo, porque embora não seja o meu tipo de livro, sei reconhecer que dentro do género é bom. Para mim, vale sobretudo pelo facto de se passar na Rússia e por levantar a questão da falta de democracia que se vive no país.

Boas leituras!

Jerome says

Moscow Rules follows Silva's previous tried and true formula - the book begins by introducing the bad guys committing a crime beyond the capabilities of local authorities to solve. A reluctant Gabriel, busy in some remote but beautiful locale, (in this book he is on his honeymoon in Italy), is then summoned. He pulls together a team of now well known characters and sets up a sting operation to snare the bad guys - usually Arab terrorists. Inevitably the plan falls apart at some critical juncture forcing Gabriel to single-handedly save the day..... and the world..... while providing the reader with a happy ending. The twist in this book is that the bad guys are Russian black market arms dealers supplying Arab terrorists.

The earlier books had a intriguing mixture of character and tradecraft. Unhappily, now, Silva is just phoning it in, lazily dredging up old characters from past novels for no apparent reason other than to repeat similar functions and fill up pages. No new conflicts from them, particularly Sarah, no advancing of plot, or more intriguingly, their relationship with Allon. The villain has become the same brutal venal character; only the name changes.

But much worse, MOSCOW RULES features the luckiest Deus ex Machina since Aristophanes. Without 'spoiling' the very fortuitous climax, all the previously hard won respect for Allon's ingenuity and skill is not exploited; instead, the vaunted team just leaves town, and the only thing that saves Allon and those that depend on him is the lamest break in the history of airport thrillers. The Allon Series has clearly run its course. Even the copy editors Silva so graciously thanks don't seem to care too much anymore either as a non-sequitur -- an apparently dropped line from Allon on page 166 where Seymour confusingly speaks twice in a row, answering a question that was not asked -- caused me to reread the exchange five times before realizing I was reading a typo. No matter, the dialogue that is coherent is flat and lazy, with too many scenes of characters telling each other information that they both already know simply for the sake of the audience.

First, the Russian newspaper represented in the book is entitled "Moskovsky Gazeta", it should be "Moskovskaya Gazeta." The character Olga Sukhova has a grandfather with the same last name, Sukhova. Sukhova is the feminine form, if it is a man, it should have been Sukhov. I also noticed that the AK-47 is purported to have been one of the reasons the Soviets won against the Germans. I could only interpret this as a reference to WWII, yet, the AK-47 was not developed until after WWII. These are just a few of the errors I

found, there weren't many more, but they did take away from the usual interest I have when delving into the world the author is trying to create.

An apparent a few weeks pass, the hero is in Saint Petersburg; it is White Nights. The book is has a lot of weirdnesses like that. A speaker of "fluent Russian" not knowing the meaning of the Russian word "silovik" is simply nonsensical, as is the AK 47 (the "47" means "1947") winning the war for the Soviets against the Germans ---- I don't know how much of a role the AK-whatever had in the Soviet win. The writing style was at times rather verbose, and I felt like it was pounded out in a hurry to make a quick buck, often thinking version of, "Why did you use ten words to say what could be said in six?" Thus could use a major, heavy application of "The Elements of Style."

Some of the scenes are so outlandish as to be comic. In a meeting at the CIA in Langley, Allon demands of the CIA chief the NSA telephone communication intercepts (presumably available) of the antagonist, Ivan, a Russian arms broker. The chief responds those intercepts are highly classified, and furthermore such information cannot be turned over to a foreign intelligence service, as Allon works for Israel. Allon casually responds that he'll call someone in the Oval Office, if the chief won't turn over the intercepts. The chief responds:

"You wouldn't."

"In a heartbeat."

"I'll get the material released to you within twenty-four hours. What else do you need?"

And please save the political rants: yes, Stalin, was certainly a murderer, but at least give the Russian people their due, as do all historians, for taking the millions of casualties -- civilian and military -- which bought the Allies the time to defeat Hitler. But in Silva's rigid world, everything now is black and white. If this review seems uncharitable, it's only because the first few books of the series showed such great promise and passion. Unique characters, worthy and motivated adversaries. However, the last couple, particularly The Secret Servant and Moscow Rules, are the last bloated gasps of a series that should be put to rest. Mentioning these efforts from Silva in the same breath as Greene and LaCarre is a joke.

stan says

Hi

Daniel Siva has done it again, a spell bounding spy story. One of the best books i have read

You know, I used to read 2/3 books a week . Now I am retired I find it difficult to read for long periods.

But this book I nearly read in one sitting.

Now what does that say? This is a seriously fine book

Well done Daniel
