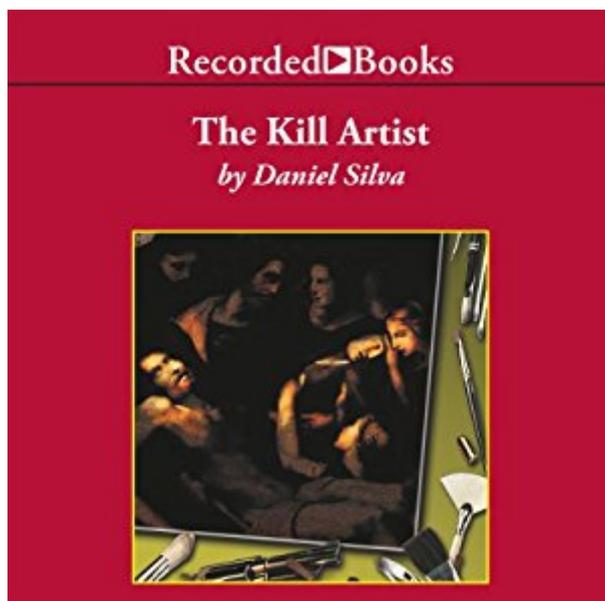


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# The Kill Artist



## Synopsis

Tightly written thrillers like *The Marching Season* have made best-selling novelist Daniel Silva a favorite of readers everywhere. In *The Kill Artist*, he paints an absorbing portrait of a reluctant hero's attempt to thwart an old enemy to preserve a precarious peace. After the assassination of his wife and son, Gabriel Allon retires from his brutal anti-terrorist career and loses himself in his previous cover job: art restoration. But when Tariq al-Hourani, the Palestinian terrorist responsible for his family's death, begins a killing spree designed to destroy Middle East peace talks, Gabriel once again slips into the shadowy world of international intrigue. In a global game of hide-and-seek, the motives of Gabriel and Tariq soon become more personal than political. Filled with vivid action and a fascinating cast of supporting characters, *The Kill Artist* delivers pulse-pounding suspense, carried to a startling climax by the tension-packed narration of George Guidall.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is chronologically the first in the Gabriel Allon series. Chronological Order: 1. *The Kill Artist* 2. *The English Assassin* 3. *The Confessor* 4. *Death in Venice* 5. *Prince of Fire* 6. *The Messenger* In this book, Gabriel, a former assassin for Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad (which translates into English as "The Institution") retired after the murders of his wife and son to lead a quiet life as an art restorer, one who fixes the wounded past. Gabriel's ex-boss, Ari Shamron, an Israeli spymaster a la George Smiley but more treacherous, convinces Gabriel to leave his sheltered hermitage to hunt down Tariq, the assassin who killed Gabriel's family, before he

can kill again. In an exquisitely wrought plot of treachery and counter-treachery, Silva explores the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from many, many angles. I don't read spy fiction as a genre. I don't read anything as a genre. I read great writers, pretty much no matter what they write. I've read a lot of John Le Carre, and one of the few criticisms that I have of his work is that his spies play a gentleman's game. However, Le Carre's spies are deeply human and British. Silva's spies are not gentlemen, and this is no gentlemen's game. This is hard and dirty intelligence work by one of the hardest and dirtiest intelligence services on the planet. The Mossad is charged with keeping tiny Israel's formidable opponents at bay, and you don't do that by playing fair. Gabriel's Mossad plays entirely unfairly, as it must, as it does in real life. In this book, Jacqueline/Sarah is used as a "honey trap," and Silva lightly explores what it does to a woman to prostitute oneself for a good cause.

Gabriel Allon is "the Kill Artist"; a former assassin who worked clandestinely for the Israeli government. When we first meet him he is living in a remote English seaside village and working as an art restorer, a cover he used frequently during his covert operations. He is soon called out of retirement by his former boss, Ari Shamron, head of Israeli intelligence, and a calculating man with his own agenda...one that may cost Gabriel his life. Ari needs Gabriel's talents to track down Tariq, an Palestinian assassin whose killing rampage is threatening the Middle East peace negotiations. Tariq and Gabriel have met before when Gabriel killed Tariq's brother in a very brutal manner, and Tariq avenged that death with a killing of his own...Gabriel's wife and son, making this a story of international intrigue and personal revenge. The stage is now set for a major showdown, but they must first cover three continents and weave through an array of cultures and characters to find each other. Gabriel is assisted by his former intelligence co-worker, a beautiful French girl named Jacqueline, whose family was killed in the Holocaust. Jacqueline is hesitant to join Gabriel on this assignment, but in the end it is love that prevails, and she plunges head first into Tariq's lair, a deadly trap that Gabriel may not be able to get her out of in time to save her life. What I love about Daniel Silva is his smooth and uncomplicated style. He has a "rhythm" to his writing that hooks you somewhere in the beginning and stays with you long after you finish the book. It took me a little longer to warm up to these characters, probably because there isn't a lot happening in the way of relationships as there is in his other book The Mark Of The Assassin.

I recently read Daniel Silva's new novel, "The English Assassin," and I was very impressed with its intricate and assured plotting, its meaningful themes, and its fascinating characters. Unfortunately, "The Kill Artist," which was written first, does not measure up to the "The English Assassin." Both

novels feature Gabriel Allon, a tormented man who has done undercover work as an agent for the Israeli government. He now spends much of his time expertly restoring valuable works of art that have been damaged over the years. Gabriel is something of a loner who would like to forget his tragic past. He would prefer to stop working for the Israeli government completely and live a quiet and reclusive life in Cornwall, England. Gabriel's spymaster, Ari Shamron, has other ideas. He convinces Gabriel to get back into the spy game in order to trap an old enemy. Soon, Gabriel is on the trail of Tariq al-Hourani, a Palestinian zealot who recently assassinated the Israeli ambassador in Paris. Tariq and Gabriel are old enemies and Gabriel cannot resist the chance to finally even an old score and rid Israel of an ardent and deadly enemy. Naturally, there is a beautiful woman involved, as well. Jacqueline Delacroix, born Sarah Halevy, lost her grandparents in the Holocaust. She, too, has been recruited by Ari Shamron to help Gabriel trap Tariq. She is in love with Gabriel, but he is reluctant to get romantically involved with her, for reasons of his own. The plot thickens, as Gabriel and Jacqueline go undercover and place themselves in grave danger while they track Tariq. Their prey turns the tables on Gabriel and Jacqueline, and Tariq soon becomes the hunter. Gabriel fears that he will never capture Tariq.

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