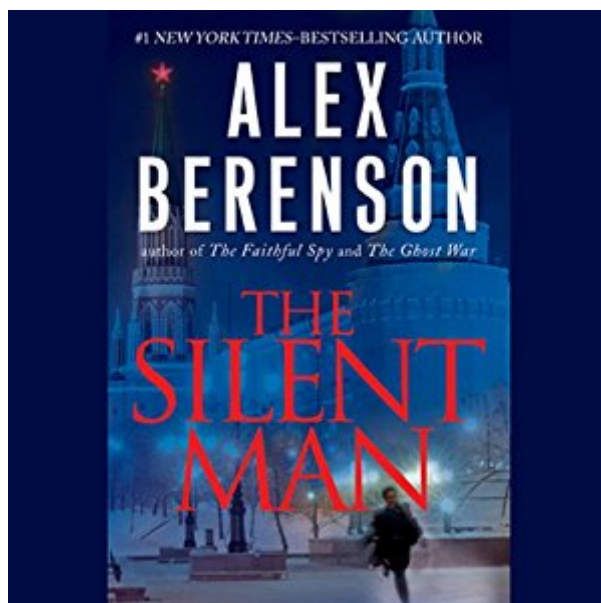


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The Silent Man



Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times[®] bestselling author comes another remarkable novel of espionage today[™]; and right around the corner. Alex Berenson's *The Faithful Spy* was declared "one of the best spy stories ever told" (The Wall Street Journal), and *The Ghost War* "mesmerizing . . . an extraordinary achievement. Wells is a complex blend of smarts, scars, cynicism and wile. And the book's imaginings seem not so much 'ripped from the headlines' as eerily destined to be set in type for tomorrow's" (The News & Observer). Berenson's third novel, however, is his most masterful yet. It isn't easy to steal warheads from the heart of Russia's nuclear complex in Mayak. It requires a great deal of money, coordination, ingenuity, and sleight-of-hand, and just a touch of luck. But if you're determined enough, anything is possible. It's been a rough few years for CIA agent John Wells. The undercover work in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the attack on the United States, the Chinese plot that could have led to war. Wells is exhausted, and his nights filled with disturbing dreams. But he knows he has no time for that. He has made many enemies, and the world won't stay quiet for long. Nevertheless, Wells is not prepared for what is about to happen. He and his colleague and fiancée Jennifer Exley are driving into work when traffic comes to a standstill, due to accidents on both bridges into Washington. A pretty big coincidence, he thinks, beginning to get a bad feeling; a feeling that only gets worse when he spots the red motorcycle zooming up between cars toward him. Before the day is over, several people will be dead or severely injured, Exley among them, and Wells will be a man possessed. The attackers are Russian, and it is to Russia that Wells must follow the trail. He finds what he's looking for; but also a great deal more. A plan of almost unimaginable consequences is in motion, and Wells has no idea if he has discovered it in time. The last few years have been rough indeed, but the next few weeks will be much, much worse. Real-world threats, authentic details, a scenario as dramatic as it is chillingly plausible, Alex Berenson's new novel is another "timely reminder of the extremely precarious way we live now" (The Washington Post).

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Berenson starts his books with the plot line and characters to be developed as the story unfolds. You wonder how, when and why John Wells will enter the picture, but when he does, usually right after the prologue, it is with a vengeance. His love interest is nearly killed protecting him and the threat of a nuclear dirty bomb being set off is motive enough for him to enter the fray and take all comers. John Wells is a former CIA operative and is under the protective eye of his mentor, Ellis Shafer, a sarcastic, sardonic, atheist who has John's back in any way that he can do so. When he realizes where and who has the bomb, he acts quickly and decisively, nearly losing his own life in the process, but when all the smoke clears and it becomes known what he has done, he is a hero.

Berenson is a good storyteller. He will set up the story and its characters allowing a very slow build if the main storyline. Once you know what is what and who is who, the story picks up the pace. In this one, the story never picked up pace. Somehow 85% of the book is the back story of the bad guys, their upbringing, their families, why they are plotting against the US, how long they have plotted, how they will feel when it's accomplished, what they plan to do in minute detail. Literally we go through the tools used to build the bomb and the material and how they spent days working on it. It took days to read about it. You think it's important so you hang in there but it's not important at all. What could have been two pages ends up being several chapters of their planning, page after page. And it goes on and on and on. I put this book down so many times it took me days to complete it. Over and over their motivation, the plot, the challenges. By comparison, John Wells has three related meets with bad guys and then the book closes with the final scene. John Wells is in the book honestly about 15% of the book. This is not the case with the prior two books. I have no idea what happened. Very frustrating.

While I really enjoyed the GHOST WAR-- The Silent Man was almost as good. Berenson does a

great job showing that his hero, John Wells, is a troubled being, troubled by his violent life, but unable to keep from being drawn back into undercover intelligence work and its violence. In this story, Wells is attacked by professionals hired by a nemesis left over from the GHOST WAR novel. While seeking vengeance, his nemesis clues him in on a threat to the United States that is imminent and would prove disastrous. How the agency gathers their info and seeks to track down terrorist cells and the threat is almost as interesting as the hero of the novel. This series is a great find and I'm enjoying it immensely,.

Alex Berenson's "The Silent Man," the third in his ever-lengthening series of shoot-em-up spy thrillers starring his alter ego John Wells, does not disappoint. The action-packed story is laced with emotional crises, self-doubts, relational challenges, and hair-raising stress. World-threatening bad guys come across as real people with thoughts and motivations that support their behaviors. BERENSON is one of the few mystery authors who delves deeply into the psyche and perceptions of characters who end up dead - a trick of story-telling not possible in non-fiction work where it's too late to interview the dead person to see how they thought and felt in the process of getting killed. Clever plot twists, split-second revelations, agonizing anxiety, terrific tension, graphic horror and violence - all combine to give a Berenson book a classy place in the genre..

The book deals with a serious stuff in an intelligent way. For the story the author has to connect two quite different threads, one serious, the other one bit marginal. After he merges them the book becomes quite plausible and the last pages look convincing to me. The author used to be a New York Times reporter and some of the details look more authentic than others. I specially appreciated the passage about the disillusioned fictional US Ambassador to Kremlin. When Soviet Union (a nominal superpower) became Mother Russia again, it was generally demoted from a superpower to a 'major power' and many people in Russia are not happy with that till this day (and probably never will). An idealistic US Ambassador who prepared for this post for decades tries to do his best in Kremlin without much success. Something bit similar, I think, that is now going on with Mr. Snowden, still at the Sheremetyevo airport as I write this review. The book is worth reading although I cannot give it all five stars like I gave Berenson's first book

Thanks Alex Berenson for another wonderful, can't put down, book. I really like your style of writing and how well it is written. Looking forward to many more.

A very quick read, but doesn't short the significant, or even the minor details that make this a compelling series, and group of characters. Get ready because the climaxes in the series often come about very quickly, and while satisfying for the most part, sometimes leave you thinking "is that it?", "it's over, just like that?". Berenson doesn't seem one to draw things out, much like his character John Wells - get to the point, do it quickly, and cover your bases! This is the third book in the series that I've enjoyed and don't plan on stopping now.

4 1/2 stars really. The stories and the characters are great but he drags the books out way too much. I like Berenson but wish he would "trim the fat" a bit.

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