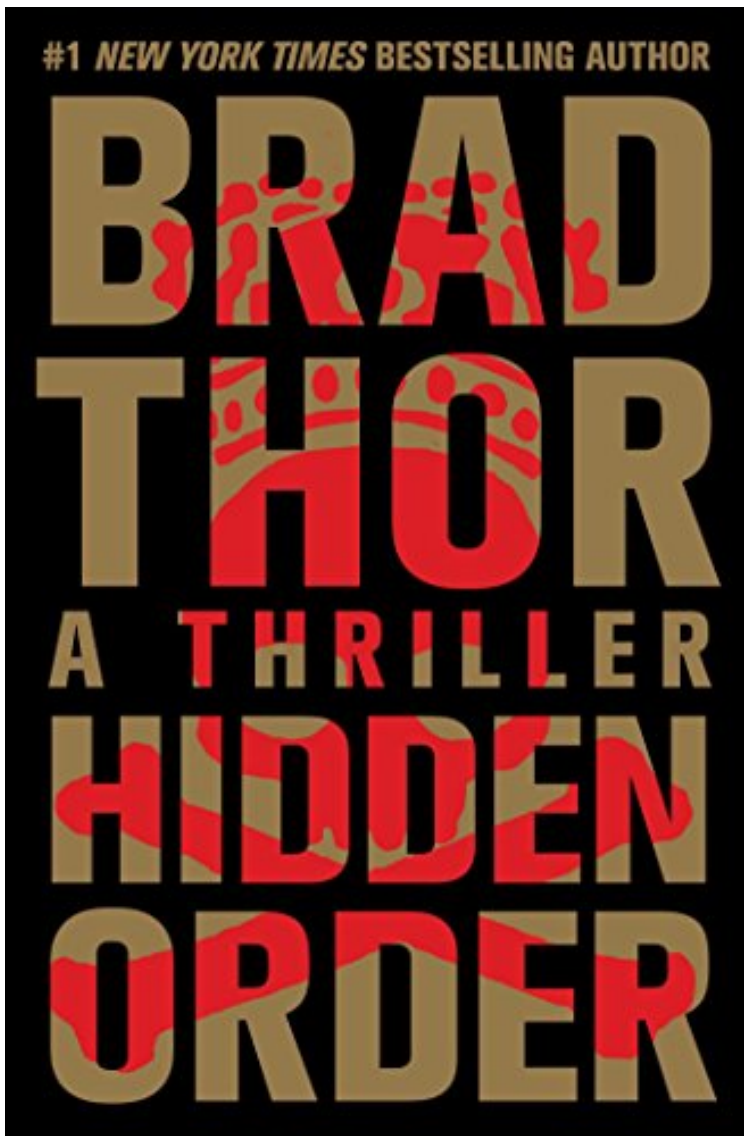


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Hidden Order: A Thriller



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur#1 New York Times bestselling author Brad Thor returns with his hottest and most action-packed thriller yet! And dont miss FREE FALL: A Prelude to Hidden Order, available for free download now!The most secretive organization in America operates without any accountability to the American people. Hiding in the shadows, pretending to be part of the United States government, its power is beyond measure. Control of this organization has just been lost and the future of the nation thrust into peril.

When the five candidates being considered to head this mysterious agency suddenly go missing, covert counterterrorism operative Scot Harvath is summoned to Washington and set loose on the most dangerous chase ever to payout on American soil. But as the candidates begin turning up murdered, the chase becomes an all-too-public spectacle, with every indicator suggesting that the plot has its roots in a shadowy American

cabal founded in the 1700s. With the United States on the verge of collapse, Harvath must untangle a web of conspiracy centuries in the making and head off the greatest threat America has ever seen. This is thriller writing at its absolute best, where the stakes have never been higher, nor the line between good and evil so hard to discern.

ExtraitHidden Order CHAPTER 1 LUFTHANSA FIRST-CLASS LOUNGE FRANKFURT AIRPORT GERMANY Lydia Ryan looked up from her tablet as a waiter set a drink in front of her. I didnt order this, she said. No, maam, replied the waiter. It is from the gentleman. Ryan shut down the tablet and cautiously glanced around the sleek, chrome-and-leather-accented room. She didnt see anyone looking back at her. What gentleman? As the waiter smiled, a man seated in the area behind her said, This gentleman. Ryan recognized the voice almost immediately. May I join you? he asked as she turned around to face him. Before she could respond, the man had already stood, his own drink in hand, and was walking around to her. While paths did sometimes cross in the intelligence world, Ryan knew better than to believe in coincidences. The fact that she and Nafi Nasiri, deputy chief of the Jordanian General Intelligence Department, were in the same airport lounge was no accident. He was in his late forties, tall, with medium-length black hair and refined, handsome features. He came from a wealthy family related to the King and had been educated in England and the United States. He had a penchant for dark Italian suits and his shoes were always highly polished. On his left wrist he wore the same elegant Patek Philippe watch that Ryan remembered. Its good to see you again, Lydia, he said as he set a briefcase down and took the seat facing her. Its been a long time, Nafi. Even so, you havent changed at all. Youre still as beautiful as ever. Still the player, she thought to herself as she smiled and shook her head. Hows the shoulder? she asked, beating him to the punch. Reaching across his body, he massaged his right shoulder. I find the changes in barometric pressure difficult, particularly before it rains. Three years ago, Nasiri had knocked her to the ground as a suicide bomber was about to detonate. He had taken shrapnel in his upper arm and had used the injury ever since as an attempt to guilt her into sleeping with him. Thats too bad. I guess its a good thing you live in the desert, huh? Nasiri smiled. He had worked with multiple female intelligence agents over the years and had been able to break all of them downall of them except Ryan. She was like no woman he had ever met. The stunning product of a Greek mother and Irish father, she was tallat least five foot, ten incheswith a mane of thick, dark hair framing an aristocratic face, illuminated by two large, deep green eyes. The fact that she had never said yes to him made him want her all the more. She was also a highly adept field operative. Despite only being in her early thirties, she had proven herself on multiple occasions to be just as courageous, just as skilled, and just as deadly as her male counterparts. He could only imagine how exceptional she would be in bed. Ryan took notice of him drinking her in with his eyes and decided to cut to the chase. What are the odds that you and I would both be passing through Frankfurt? Nasiri smiled. I needed to see you. So this isnt fate, then? she replied, pursing her lips in a disappointed pout. Unfortunately, no, he said, his buoyant, casual demeanor gone. His tone now was more professional, almost urgent. May we speak someplace more discreet? he continued. Ive reserved one of the private conference rooms for us. Whats going on, Nafi? Please, he said, standing. I was going to get something to eat before my flight. Theres already food in the room. Ryan had no idea what this was about, but he had definitely piqued her curiosity. Well, seeing as how youve gone to so much trouble, how could a lady say no? Gathering up their belongings, the pair made their way toward the conference room. Once inside, Nasiri closed the drapes as Ryan perused the assortment of appetizers that had been laid out. She prepared a plate of food and, after looking at the available beverages, poured herself a glass of mineral water. Wine was out of the question. She liked Nasiri, but she wasnt going to let her guard down around him. On the airplane back home, she could have a couple of glasses of wine if she wanted. Right now she intended to be all business. After sitting down, she placed her napkin in her lap and had just taken a bite of smoked duck when Nasiri took the chair across from her and, apropos of nothing, asked, Is Jordan next on your list? She had no idea what he was talking about. Swallowing her food, she said, Excuse me? Is Jordan next? I dont understand. Next for what? Cmon, Lydia, Nasiri replied. We know each other well enough; weve seen some very bad things together. We shouldnt play games. Nafi, no one is playing games here. You need to be specific with me. What are you talking about? Reaching down, he removed a folder from his briefcase and slid it across the conference table. These pictures were taken three days ago. Now he really had piqued her interest. Moving her plate aside, she drew the folder to her and flipped it open. The exhalation of breath that escaped her lips, as well the word shit upon seeing the first of the photos, was both unintentional and unprofessional. I guess we dont need to argue whether or not those are former teammates. They were in fact old teammates of hers. They had been part of a covert program that specialized in orchestrating social, political, and organizational instability abroad. Their primary expertise was in the

Muslim world. In addition to developing elaborate plots designed to create chaos inside organizations like Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Hamas, Al-Shabaab, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, they had also been active in the rendering of terrorists to disavowed black sites under the continuation of Americas supposedly discontinued extraordinary rendition program. In the program, code-named Eclipse, the CIA team had broken every rule in the book. And the more rules they broke, the more successes they racked up. It was a self-perpetuating cycle that had turned the team into success addicts and like real addicts, they kept searching for bigger and bigger highs by going after bigger targets and launching more audacious operations. In the team members minds, they could do no wrong. The funny thing about believing you can do no wrong is that you quickly begin doing nothing but wrong. It had started with small infractions as standards slipped, such as getting sloppy with reporting or sneaking alcohol along on ops. From there it grew into misappropriating Agency assets like Black Hawk helicopters for bighorn sheep hunts in the Hindu Kush, all the way to some members of the coed team developing off-limits personal relationships and sleeping with each other. These were men and women whose reputations on the covert side of the intelligence community were quickly outstripping their actual abilities. They were the CIAs golden children, a mixture of analysts and gunslingers, who had not only started believing their own press releases, but in the deadly fog of the global war on terror had begun to see themselves as almost immortal. They were careening toward a cliff with no one to pump the brakes. That was precisely when fate stepped in. Without the knowledge of the Italian government, they had attempted to snatch a high-ranking Al-Qaeda member off the streets of Rome and a shootout had erupted. Associates of the terrorist had opened fire, killing five Italian citizens, two of them police officers. It was the end of the Eclipse program. All of the members had been cut loose from the Central Intelligence Agency. All of them, that is, but Lydia Ryan. Where were these pictures taken? she asked. Cyprus. And you said three days ago? Yes, replied Nasiri. The only person missing is you. I have nothing to do with them anymore. But thats your old team, is it not? he asked. Sure, but all of them were cut loose. You know that. Do I? Im not so sure anymore. The CIA didnt cut you loose, did they? Thats different, Ryan argued. He leaned back in his chair, unconvinced. Really? Different how? I was assigned to police that team. They were good, but they were also a bunch of cowboys. People dont last long at Langley if you dont follow the rules. Interesting. I seem to remember you breaking a lot of the rules yourself. No, Ryan admonished him. What you remember is an imbecile of a CIA station chief and an American ambassador with a Pollyannaish worldview. Everything we did, everything, there was clearance for, especially the things we kept quiet from those two. Its hard enough doing the work you and I do without having to fight our own people in the process. Nasiri shrugged. I guess Ill have to take your word for it. She looked at him. What the hell is that supposed to mean? It means, my dear Lydia, that even by your own admission your destabilization team was very skilled. Yet despite that skill, someone chose to shut it down and fire all of its members. All the members, that is, except for you. If I recall correctly, you got promoted. Case officer now, isnt it? Glancing at her watch, Ryan said, If theres a point to all of this, Nafi, I suggest you get to it. The point is that your entire CIA destabilization team, minus your policing presence, was seen in Cyprus three days ago meeting with two men that my country is very nervous about. These two? she asked, pointing at one of the photographs. Who are they? Senior members of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Suddenly, it hit her. Wait a second. You think that the United States is planning to topple Jordan? Nasiri raised his hands palms up and tilted his head to the side. If you were in our position, with governments falling all around you, what would you think? I think a country like Jordan should be confident enough to trust its allies. Thats what I think. The Jordanian leaned forward and repeated his original question. Is Jordan going to be the next Middle Eastern country to be overthrown? There could be any number of reasons for that meeting in Cyprus. Really? he stated, reaching down and removing two more folders from his briefcase. He held them out over the table and then let them drop. Would any of those reasons be the same, or different, for why your team was seen in both Egypt and Libya before those governments collapsed? She wouldve stressed again that it wasnt her team, but she was too stunned by his remarks to utter the words. The Americans in those photos had not only been let go from the CIA; they had been let go with prejudice along with big black marks in their records. What was this all about? Lydia Ryan was good at reading people, so whatever intelligence Nafi Nasiri had, she could see he was one hundred percent confident in it. Which meant, by extension, so was his boss, and very likely, the King of Jordan himself. Otherwise, Nafi wouldnt have been sent here to meet with her like this. I dont know what to say, she finally offered. The Jordanian pushed the folders across the table to her. Tell me youll read whats in these files. Of course, but And that youll get me some answers. Nafi, I cant make you any promises. Nasiri looked at her, his face implacable. Reaching down, he removed a

final folder from his briefcase, but he didnt open it. He didnt push it across the table, either. He just sat there tapping his index finger on the cover. Im sorry to have to do this, he finally said. Sorry for what? Understand that we take any threat to the survival of the Kingdom of Jordan very seriously. There was now another tone in his voice, and she didnt like it. Whats in the folder, Nafi? The Jordanian lifted the cover, but only high enough so that he could see inside. From where she was sitting, Ryan couldnt make out a thing. Over the winter, we infiltrated a terror cell that has been moving bomb makers, bomb materials, and martyrs into Syria via Lebanon. While inside the cell, our asset learned of an advanced plot targeting the United States. Ryans eyes went wide. Youve known of an attack being mounted against the United States and this is the first youre telling us? Give me that file. I want to see whats in it. Nasiri shook his head. Weve been monitoring the situation. Monitoring the situation, my ass, said Ryan, her anger growing. You know what, Nafi? Fuck you, and fuck your monitoring. You cant sit on information like that. We didnt want to come to you until we were confident. This is blackmail. The Kingdom of Jordan is blackmailing the United States.

Thats whats going on here. Youre not going to give me what I want, until you get what you want. The Jordanian slid the file back into his briefcase and stood. Ryans blood was boiling. She knew her emotions were getting the better of her and that that was wrong, but she couldnt control her anger. You havent given me a shred of proof. What makes you think my superiors will even believe you? Nasiri frowned as he reached the conference room door. I think a country like America should be confident enough to trust its allies. Thats what I think. Have a good flight home, Lydia. With that, the Jordanian was gone, and in his wake, the CIA had been dropped into a nightmare involving a terrorist plot that might or might not exist, and no way to even begin running it to ground. Revue de presse [Brad Thor] and Harvath are the real deal, and you should accept no substitutes. (BookReporter.com) One of Brad Thors best books to date. (The Washington Post) [A] great, great thriller. - (Rush Limbaugh) Rockin from cover to cover. (Charlie Daniels) [A] must-read summer thriller. (Townhall.com) HIDDEN ORDER Freeeeekin awesome! (KCBR) One of the best writers you are ever going to read. (WROK) the thrills and detailed narrative combine to make Hidden Order a one-of-a-kind roller coaster run (The Blaze) A well thought out plot with a rollicking pace and would be a great summer beach read. (E-Thriller.com) Thriller writer Brad Thor is awesome Youll want to take HIDDEN ORDER to the beach. - (National) Brad Thor continues to write like nobody else writes Aint nothing else like it! (KCBQ)