



A Higher Power

Daniel Davidsohn

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Dollars, dueling egos, and a little psychic intrigue make this a refreshing addition to the thriller genre.

Action, intrigue, and globe-trotting plot twists make Daniel Davidsohn's third thriller, *A Higher Power*, an engaging and dramatic look at the dark side of living the high life.

Nick Dalca is the CEO of the Dalca Group, a sprawling, surprisingly private business empire that includes oil, energy, and other multinational cash cows. Nick had planned to continue leading Dalca until his son could take over, but when both his wife and son are believed to be killed in a plane accident, he loses his desire to run the company.

But nothing is simple in corporate politics. Nick's longtime confidant Douglas wants his own slice of the pie and is willing to play a high-stakes game to get what he believes is rightfully his—even if it means bringing the whole enterprise down with him. Under an assumed name, he travels to Switzerland with Anne, a secretary with psychic abilities. Anne's insights result in another twist.

At first blush the narrative appears intricate, but it is not too complicated to follow. It is made clear from the start that Nick is an uncommonly decent human being, and his so-called devoted assistant is his doppelgänger. The question throughout the book is not whether Douglas is going to attempt to bring Nick down, but how. This perspective is refreshing in the genre.

Rather than keeping readers in the dark and sewing everything up in the final ten pages, the author lays everyone's ambitions out from the beginning. The fast pace of the action is well reflected in the storytelling; without lingering descriptions of pastoral Switzerland or glitzy Manhattan, the text is able to zero in on the meat of the story.

Of the tight cast of characters, none is superfluous. Anne is devoted to helping her boss solve the mystery of his missing family; Douglas is duplicitous, an outwardly happy right-hand man who turns out to have a lot of blood on his hands; and Nick is down-to-earth, a wealthy but magnanimous CEO with a heart of gold. He's so goodhearted that his character borders on being farfetched, though. His growing love for Anne never turns into lust, even after he purchases her a home and car and transfers millions of dollars into a bank account in her name.

Skeptics may find the reliance on occult mediums to be strange for a corporate thriller, but it works. Anne's spiritual abilities never feel contrived or awkward, and she provides a satisfying counterpoint to the concrete world of dollars and dueling egos.

Thriller and espionage fans will find much to enjoy in *A Higher Power*.

BARBARA NICKLES (November 28, 2016)

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