



Black Order

James Rollins

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A sinister fire in a Copenhagen bookstore ignites a relentless hunt across four continents. Arson and murder reveal an insidious plot to steal a Bible that once belonged to Charles Darwin, the father of evolutionary theory. And Commander Gray Pierce dives headlong into a mystery that dates back to Nazi Germany . . . and to horrific experiments performed in a now-abandoned laboratory buried in a hollowed-out mountain in Poland.

A continent away, madness ravages a remote monastery high in Nepal, as Buddhist monks turn to cannibalism and torture. Lisa Cummings, a young American doctor investigating the atrocity, is suddenly a target of a brutal assassin working for clandestine forces that want the affair buried at any cost. Lisa's only ally is a hidden pilgrim, Painter Crowe -- director of SIGMA Force, an elite command of American scientists and Special Forces operatives -- who is already showing signs of the baffling malady that destroyed the minds of the monks.

Now it is up to Gray Pierce to save both Painter and Lisa -- and a world in jeopardy -- as SIGMA Force races to expose a century-old plot that threatens to destroy the current world order . . . and alter the destiny of humankind forever.

Combining the historic scope of *The Da Vinci Code* with the relentless thrills of today's best action novels, James Rollins's *Black Order* is a classic adventure -- an ingenious and breathtaking tour de force that explodes with revelations . . . while offering a startling new view of our place in the grand scheme of existence.

Black Order Details

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Author : James Rollins

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From Reader Review Black Order for online ebook

Chris says

The best Sigma Force novel by far (I've also read no. 5). I always learn so much about Science, Technology and History whenever I read a Rollins that my head spins! However, the science behind this novel is fascinating, for some they may find it a little hard to grasp, but his characters always explain it so well. The evolutionary bits were amazing, and I find evolution so boring at school - not any more thanks to Physics!

As for the history - there was clearly more to the Nazis than I thought. I won't spoil the plot.

Probably the best thing about Rollins is that he tells you what's true and what's not and then gives you the books to go and read to learn more - something I am definitely going to do having read this.

They just seem to get bigger and better - can't wait for the next one, but I might give my brain a bit of a rest from all the learning!

Yelania Nightwalker says

Datos históricos verídicos:

En los últimos meses de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, con la caída de Alemania; británicos, americanos, rusos y franceses se dedicaron a saquear la tecnología de los científicos nazis. Muchos científicos fueron asesinados, otros reclutados por Estados Unidos, laboratorios destruidos, proyectos ocultados con triple chapa ;) todo con tal de evitar que el conocimiento que ellos habían conseguido, fuese robado por otras naciones. Uno de esos proyectos de investigación tenía el nombre de Die Glocke, "La Campana". Se supone que el artefacto era el causante de las luces y las misteriosas enfermedades que aseguraban los aldeanos de la campiña circundante. Los rusos fueron los primeros en llegar a la mina donde se ocultaba el artilugio, encontraron a los 62 científicos del proyecto asesinados, y la campana brillaba por su ausencia. No se sabe el destino de la campana, lo que sí se sabe, es que era real.

El hecho de que la evolución constituya la columna vertebral de la biología, y que se dé la curiosa circunstancia de que ésta sea una ciencia fundada sobre una teoría perfeccionada, ¿significa que se trata de ciencia o de fe? --Charles Darwin

Nepal

Una misteriosa y terrible enfermedad ataca a un monasterio budista. Los monjes, antes pacíficos, comienzan a enloquecer y se matan y torturan entre ellos mismos. Uno de los monjes, que al parecer no ha contraído la enfermedad, va en busca de la Dra. Lisa Cummings que se hallaba en el Himalaya en un viaje de

estudios. De regreso en el monasterio, son testigos de la masacre que ha tenido lugar, y quedan atrapados por un francotirador cuyas órdenes es matar a todos los que ahí encuentre. Painter Crowe, el director de Fuerza Sigma, se encontraba ahí en el momento de la enfermedad y presenta los mismos síntomas. Painter y Lisa son secuestrados por el grupo al que pertenece el francotirador, durante su estancia en lo mas recóndito de las montañas del Himalaya, ambos descubren a los descendientes de algunos de los investigadores alemanes, trabajando en unos proyectos muy aterradores.

Dinamarca

El comandante Gray Pierce, perteneciente a Fuerza Sigma, se encuentra investigando una serie de transacciones en el mercado negro, todas pertenecientes a documentos históricos, uno de éstos es la biblia de Darwin. Hay muchas personas interesados en tener esos documentos a cualquier precio, y es en esa búsqueda de pistas que conoce a Fiona; una ladronzuela socarrona, y a Ryan, un chico que interesado en el descubrimiento de sus raíces queda atrapado en un lío inesperado. Gray, sus excéntricos conocidos y un amigo de Fuerza Sigma -Monk Kokkalis-, son secuestrados y enviados a África, donde la intriga sólo se vuelve mas poderosa y compleja.

Zululandia, Sudáfrica

Khamisi ha experimentado por primera vez lo que es estar cerca del Ukufa -"medio animal, medio fantasma"-, el ukufa es... muerte. Su excursión con una bióloga termina bruscamente, con ella asesinada y con él acusado del asesinato. Nadie le creerá a un hombre de raza negra, que el ukufa mató a la investigadora bitánica. Eso sólo son supercherías... Pero cuando él sufre un intento de homicidio, las cuerdas comienzan a tensarse hasta desentrañar el origen de la leyenda más escalofriante que se cuenta en su pueblo.

Fuerza Sigma tendrá que juntar todas las pistas, recorrer varios continentes y ser muy precavidos para poder desentrañar el misterio que esconde la biblia de Darwin y la campana. Un viaje que los lleva a replantearse todo lo que saben sobre ciencia, religión, evolución y diseño inteligente, para poder descubrir una cura para Painter, e intentar parar a unos idealistas obsesionados con la perfección, en su proceso de destrucción mundial.

Un libro de misterio que ha superado todas mis expectativas. James Rollin ha sabido conjugar a la perfección varios temas delicados y tratarlos de una manera tan simple y sencilla. La ciencia que se describe en el libro es amena y entendible, pocos autores logran hacer que el lector comprenda temas tan complejos como la física cuántica. Todo se expresa en su justa medida, de modo que el lector no se quede sin saber nada, y al mismo tiempo no se complique la existencia.

Creo que lo que hace tan bueno el libro, aunado a la trama perfectamente armada, es la maravillosa pluma de Rollins. Sus escenas son bien descritas sin ser pesadas, te muestra las cosas en lugar de explicarlas, es decir, tú estás ahí junto al narrador, siendo consciente de todo cuanto sucede, James Rollins te atrapa en el mundo de Fuerza Sigma. Pese a que la historia sucede en diversos lugares del mundo, todo está perfectamente cronometrado de modo que el lector no pierde el hilo en ningún momento. Todo lo contrario, sabes tanto y a la vez muy poco, que quieres ir corriendo al final de libro y ver qué pasa. Hubieron un montón de momentos de tensión en que creí morirme. Y muchos en los que no quería hacer ni una otra cosa (y eso que hay procesos fisiológicos vitales que no podemos ignorar) con tal de saber qué sucedería después. Pocos autores de thriller consiguen tramas tan buenas que me mantienen atados a sus páginas.

Y otra cosa maravillosa son los personajes. Siendo éste el tercer libro de la serie, se puede leer de forma independiente. Los personajes principales son vistos en libros anteriores, y aún así, no es difícil leer éste. Todos los personajes se hacen conocidos una vez que aparecen, con unas pocas palabras de Rollins sabes tanto de los chicos que no importa haber leído sus libros antes, pero oh sí, te apuesto que vas a desear leer los demás. En eso, el autor tiene un don inigualable para crear personajes profundos, bien dimensionados, con un pasado, y con sentimientos muy humanos... Porque incluso, no deja de lado el amor entre los protagonistas.

Creo que si son fans del misterio, y buscan historias bien cimentadas, con buenos personajes, buen ritmo y un poco de ciencia e historia, éste es para ustedes. Estoy ahora deseosa de leer algo más de James Rollins, que ha pasado a ser uno de mis autores favoritos. En La Orden del Sol Negro ha juntado mucho de lo que me gusta en un libro y le ha agregado palabras en alemán hih y temas evolutivos, qué más puedo pedir. Un thriller que recomiendo mucho, mucho.

Mike French says

Kept me up late two nights. That is why I gave it 4 stars.A wild roller coaster ride in Denmark,Nepal and South Africa! Non-stop action from start to finish.

Stephen says

4.0 stars. Having just finished book three of the Sigma Force series, I can certainly say I am a fan. I love the premise which is basically special forces agents with PhDs in multiple sciences working for a secret arm of DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) hunting down rogue technology and terrorists. Great action, smart, slick plots and a bunch of real "good guy" characters. Certainly the literary equivalent of junk food but it really tastes good.

Jacquelyn says

Curse you James Rollins! You kept me up until nearly two a.m. on a school night because I had to finish this book.

As with any author, Mr. Rollins has a distinctive style of writing, that leads me to know somewhat how the story will unfold. Because of this, I can only read one of his books every couple of months. Here's what I like about Mr. Rollins's books:

1. They fit directly into their genre
2. No One is precious (if you read him, I think you'll understand this a bit more)
3. The characters are real people, not 'super' people.
4. He does his research. (although he sometimes gets caught up in the "I learned this really cool stuff so I'm

going to explain all of it to you" thing. Sometimes it's okay to say "It works because of quantum mechanics" instead of explaining all about quantum mechanics)

5. In my opinion, he comes up with original and distinct story lines. I feel that each book can be a stand alone story (the first book I read of his is the seventh book in this series and I understood all of it), but if you read them in order you get a lot of little references and nuances about the characters a lot more. Like inside jokes...

This book was great. It integrated the characters well, and I feel that the plot line was quite original. Yes, it has to do a bit with Nazi's, but not in a way I've seen before. It had great potential to become a stereotypical evil Nazi story, but I think that it was kept in check. I also love how he creates a puzzle that you can try to put together for yourself, but if you can't he does bring it all together for you. This may cause some people to feel the books are 'predictable', but I enjoy them quite a bit. This one was no exception.

I'd like to finish with another curse: Curse you Chris, you said you have the next one in the series and you don't! Argh!

Mike (the Paladin) says

Well, I guess I'll never be a Rollins fan. I feel a bit bad about this as I have friends here who really like his work. bear that in mind and realize that my review is subjective...it's how I liked the book.

This one is better (imo) than the other I read by Mr. Rollins (The Judas Strain), but still it lost me. I mean you'd think a book with Nazi scientists, mutant horrors, a chemical/biological threat, daring rescues, harrowing escapes, action...and an/the answer to the ultimate evolutionary questions would hold the interest.

And it does/did, sometimes. It caught me at first...we'd dropped back to reliable territory, Nazis escaping with a mystery, a lost secret of some kind and so on. Then we move to an accidentally discovered conspiracy. There's murder, danger...and then we stop for a word from our interpersonal counselor. How will "our" love lives work out...will "I" get the nerve to "pop the question", "what are your intentions" toward that girl? Are "you" just leading her on"? (All these pronouns are of course addressed to our characters from each other to each other.)

Sigh.

The thing here is I'm sure the very things that "tuned me out" of the story and caused me to say..."get on with it", will be some readers' favorite part. By the time we got to the climactic culmination of the story I was tired of the whole thing, again. I "tuned back in" at the end a bit, but was just as relieved it was over and while I got through it the interpersonal lives of our protagonists had to be nodded to at the end also...of course.

The book has some loose historical background which I actually find more interesting than the novel itself (subjects I was already slightly familiar with). As in the last book I read he finishes with a bit of a bibliography and some sources. Some might find this interesting.

So, while I have another Rollins book waiting I probably won't read it, at least not now. I have other library books out and waiting (including two Brad Thor novels and A Storm of Swords, a book of not inconsiderable length). To you who are Rollins fans I am sorry I can't rate his books higher, this is my take and my taste. Just not books I enjoy.

Angela says

I picked up James Rollins' *Black Order* on another impulse buy, half-certain that it was going to suck after I'd gotten burned on my last attempt to impulse-buy a thriller. This time around I didn't get a spectacular read, but it turned out to be not half-bad. I did have the disadvantage of coming in partway into a series, which meant several character relationships had been established before the start of this particular story... but it didn't hinder the telling of this one too much.

Turns out this book is the latest in a series about something called Sigma Force, described by one of the character as "scientists with guns". That in and of itself kind of set the tone for the whole thing with me: i.e., something that's kind of fun and is not to be taken too seriously. Kind of like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, in fact. And hell, this story even had Nazis, giant mutated monsters, and a core cast of characters traveling around to exotic locations all over the world. All in all, it did rather read like one of the better *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* plots, even if its attempt to fuse the concepts of evolution and intelligent design into something it called "quantum evolution" was pretty silly. It did at least do it in an entertaining fashion. Two and a half stars.

Aaron says

Director Painter Crowe and Commander Gray Pierce (along with a few other Sigma Force colleagues) again plunge into action and adventure to save the world from some scary super-science. This time around, the focus is on an intriguing concept which combines quantum mechanics and evolution and the efforts of a secretive dark group with roots in the Nazis - a "Black Order", if you will - to both use it to create a master race and to weaponize it and "devolve" their enemies. Romps through the Himalayas, Germany, Denmark, and South Africa filled with shootouts, gas chambers, mysterious runes, and test-tube monsters again make this entry in the series a great diversion for those in the market for something with an Indiana Jones flavor.

Is it farfetched? Sure. (view spoiler) But it's a well-told tale with some characters that have more than the usual two dimensions. If you can suspend your disbelief, you'll be rewarded. You may even learn something, considering Rollins (as always) appears to have pulled a lot of the theories and history he presents from reality.

Freda Malone says

Himalayas - Everest Base Camp

Dr. Lisa Cummings has been requested to accompany a senior monk to a nearby monastery. Painter Crowe, Director of DARPA, has been assigned there to investigate a strange affliction. He is then afflicted himself. Dr. Cummings finds a gruesome scene and death. Among the dead, an elder monk has written rune like writing on the wall with his own blood, behaving quite mad before slashing his own throat. As the bombs erupt around the mountain, Lisa Cummings and Painter Crowe's lives collide and the journey begins.

Copenhagen, Denmark (around the same time)

Commander Grayson Pierce is investigating the bibliophile community in search of a Bible which was once owned by Charles Darwin, father of evolution. He is also surveying principals in connection with several other items up for auction.

- 1) A copy of Gregor Mendel's 1865 paper on genetics
- 2) Max Planck's Books on Physics
- 3) Botanist Hugo de Vries's 1901 diary on plant mutations

As he enters a bookstore, he is met with Fiona and the bookstore's owner. Seems that Gray is not the only one looking for the Bible. The owner decides to trust Gray but the scene quickly changes as assassins try to burn the place down and kill the trio inside.

Washington, D.C. (around the same time)

Monk and Kat also work for DARPA and are instructed to report to duty immediately. Painter has not been heard from and Gray is in trouble. Monk is dispatched to help Gray.

Zululand, South Africa - Game Preserve

A warden of the wildlife game preserve and a Dr. Marcia Fairfield are tracking a rhino in trouble. What they find is beyond comprehension. Sliced and diced, baby rhino pulled out and ripped apart nearby, but it is not the actions of poachers, it is something else. They soon find out and it is more horrifying than the lions or other meat eating vultures in the preserve. Run!

Without a doubt, James Rollins has created an action packed novel that keeps you turning the pages. All these locations and their findings have a connection. The Nazis and their experiments, here we go. I am truly amazed by the factual evidence in Rollins books and how he creates fiction around them. This centers around quantum evolution and physics as well as biology and other stuff, not to mention how we 'became' and where does god fit in all this. Makes you think. If I were a physicist I might not have liked this book simply because I would have a better understanding of the logistics and obsessively picked it apart. I love the unknown enough to expand my imagination and believe in the story, it is more entertaining that way.

Arif Zaman says

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Jean says

"The truth is too beautiful to die and too monstrous to set free."

It sounded like a melodramatic statement on the part of a doomed Nazi scientist at first, but when I actually got to the ending of the book... I felt that these words, repeated throughout the second half of the book, were truly appropriate for the conclusion of the book.

Black Order felt a little different than Rollins' other books. It seemed a little less frantic, but also a little less coherent; I attribute this to the fact that it simultaneously runs through multiple storylines and none can each receive the same in-depth treatment that I'm used to in his novels. But this approach brought together a larger cast of old characters and new: Painter is in Nepal, Gray is in Denmark, some new folks are in South Africa, and Monk & Kat are back home in Washington. (At first.) Eventually, all the diverse strands of the plot come together, of course. The bad guys were even flatter than Rollins' usual (maybe that's because this is the first where we're not questioning a mole in Sigma) and the relationships and dialogue again seemed forced.

The elements of the story were fairly thought-provoking, however. I am completely uneducated on the ancient topics of Rollins' other books, but I found some elements of *Black Order* that were familiar to me. With a little poking around on the internet, I was able to separate the fact from fiction myself and was pleased with what I found. Nazi biological experiments and Himmler's fascination with the Occult are historical fact, though they have proven ripe for fictional conspiracy theories (and no one seems to feel too bad about playing around with the reality of their atrocities...) I can't speak for how accurately Rollins explained quantum mechanics, but as usual, I was able to follow it and it seemed to gel with what little I have learned about it. Rollins' exploration on quantum evolution, I've learned, is a real, but very controversial theory. Where Rollins takes that theory is of course, fictional.

But I think where he went with the ideas was the best part of the book: imagining what new thoughts in science could mean for humanity, much like you'd find in a good sci-fi novel (not that I'd classify *Black Order* as sci-fi.) Rollins contrived a truly *beautiful* conclusion to the mystery. That's why I give this one four stars, despite the fact that I do have complaints about other aspects. I suppose I liked this sort of slant because I love fantasy and I love having my imagination stimulated like this. Rollins let his imagination take the ideas of quantum evolution to an almost religious place, though he also makes it clear that it's a science that's dangerous to mess with. Like Gray's own investigations into the yin & yang, it's beautiful and monstrous at the same time.

Angela says

Guess it just wasn't my style. The dialog was predictable, trite, and read like a script to a mediocre summer action movie. It didn't give enough credit to the readers, since instead of developing plot and story through understandable events and reactions, the characters stated obvious or unasked-for details to each other. Couldn't get into it.

On the plus side, it talked a little about some ideas about evolution and intelligent design in a somewhat creative way, but even this was washed out by lazy, fantastical conclusions, and even "magic".

Rollins needs to either choose to do something somewhat realistically, or go fantasy, but not both. He didn't make both work in concert with each other in this book.

Not recommended. Tossed it in the garbage on the airplane.

Nek0 Neha (BiblioNyan) says

In *Black Order* written by James Rollins, which is book number three of the *Sigma Force* series, our group returns to investigate a mysterious plague-like disease that is sweeping its way across the villages and temples surrounding Mount Everest. The disease also causes some very intense episodes of psychotic behaviour that cause the infected to murder relentlessly. Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, a powerful piece of Nazi technology is discovered, and one of the world's wealthiest families finally make their public appearance, leading to devastating discoveries.

My biggest issue with this novel was that it never felt like it was moving forward until the last two-hundred pages. Even then, it was super rushed and abrupt in execution. I felt that the story was starting to run out of pages and needed to immediately change its course of action in regards to character placement and story progression.

In the very beginning we get a flashback from World War II era Germany, but this never really plays a big part in the overall story. The Prologue came off as being wholly unnecessary when you look at the bigger picture. I bring this up first and foremost because this chapter sets up the mood and atmosphere for the entire book. Upon reading the Prologue, you end up with these expectations of a jaw-dropping story that will be laced in Nazi technology and crazy ass revelations, but it never arrives.

In the first two books of the series, *Sigma Force* goes from one part of the world to the next hunting down clues that will lead to new information and loot. In *Black Order*, it's 600-pages of them chasing down material regarding one item and one overarching issue. Normally, I wouldn't mind such a change in format. When you have a series that spans thirteen books, you have to learn to get creative. But the execution of this narrative was so terrible that it left me wanting so much more knowledge and fresh new action scenes than was given.

The device that *Sigma Force* is hunting is from World War II and all of the data that they uncover in regards to it just adds on to the previous data acquired. It became wholeheartedly repetitive as it continued to blazingly emphasise how the data affects what we already know, and that it's a dangerous, gargantuan risk to the world. The science is explained to people who are supposed to be elite specialists in very simple, Layman's terms. Again, normally this wouldn't bother me too much. But for a third instalment with characters who are capable of comprehending this intellectual level of stuff, it just didn't fit. You could argue that it was done for the reader, however. It wasn't written like this in the first two novels, where it would have been more applicable, and it detracts from the reliability of our characters' wiles.

For the first 300-pages to 400-pages, the foundation for the finale is being laid out. That's more than half of the book's total length! It should not take 400-pages to build a plot infrastructure, especially if that finale doesn't need rely on it all. Remember earlier how I mentioned that the last quarter felt very abrupt? When we hit the four-fifty to five hundred mark, one of our characters is magically poofed from one corner of the world to another. There was very little to no context on how he got there. In the process of his travelling, he also learned key information that would help him assist his teammates, with no explanation. Maybe he squeezed it out of the clouds, I don't know.

Lastly, and this probably irked me the most out of everything else, it was agonisingly predictable. The novel followed every trope of the genre that you could think of. Originally, the series had a few tropes here and there, but it always had some element of a twist to it to maintain suspense and avoid monotony. The predictability of *Black Order* severely detracted from any sense of tension that could have existed. I found

myself to be utterly bored and unimpressed with the arrival of each trope.

The only redeeming quality of *Black Order* was the lore used to create it. I did find the technology they discovered and the physics behind it to be immensely fascinating. The history and the understanding of how it works and what makes it work is the type of science that I attract to with an unnatural hunger. But I couldn't appreciate anything beyond that.

Also, please note that the book does have strong themes of Nazi sympathising, depending on the context of certain situations and scenarios. I know that this may be harmful for some readers.

Overall, I don't recommend the *Black Order*, but I do believe that its contents may surface later on in the series. I have started reading the fourth instalment, *The Judas Strain*, which already feels immeasurably better than this narrative. So, if you wish to read the series, you may want to find a summary for this, or go into it fully prepared for what's to come.

2.75 hyenas outta 5!

TRIGGER WARNING: Ableist language. Brief racist language, specifically against black people. Nazi sympathisers. Animal abuse.
