



At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA

by George Tenet
HarperCollins \$30.00
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Beginning with his appointment as Director of Central Intelligence in 1997, Tenet unfolds the momentous events that led to 9/11 as he saw and experienced them: his declaration of war on al-Qa'ida; the CIA's covert operations inside Afghanistan; the worldwide operational plan to fight terrorists; his warnings of imminent attacks against American interests to White House officials in the summer of 2001; and the plan for a coordinated and devastating counterattack against al-Qa'ida laid down just six days after the attacks.

Tenet's compelling narrative then turns to the war in Iraq as he provides dramatic insight and background on the run-up to the invasion, including a firsthand account of the fallout from the inclusion of "sixteen words" in the president's 2003 State of the Union address, which claimed that Saddam Hussein had sought to purchase uranium from Africa; the true context of Tenet's own now-famous "slam dunk" comment regarding Saddam's WMD program; and the CIA's critical role in an administration predisposed to take the country to war. In doing so, he sets the record straight about CIA operations and shows readers that the truth is more complex than suggested in other versions of recent history offered thus far.

Through it all, Tenet paints an unflinching self-portrait of a man caught between the warring forces of the administration's decision-making process, the reams of frightening intelligence pouring in from around the world, and his own conscience. In *At the Center of the Storm*, George Tenet draws on his unmatched experience within the opaque mirrors of intelligence and provides crucial information previously undisclosed to offer a moving, revelatory profile of both a man and a nation in times of crisis.



No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam

by Reza Aslan \$14.95
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Aslan's introduction to the history of Islam, which also devotes several chapters to the place of Islam in the contemporary world, tackles its subject with serious and well-informed scholarship. But, miracle of miracles, it's actually pretty fun to read. Beginning with an exploration of the religious climate in the years before the Prophet's Revelation, Aslan traces the story of Islam from the Prophet's life and the so-called golden age of the first four caliphs all the way through European colonization and subsequent independence. Aslan sees religion as a story, and he tells it that way, bringing each successive century to life with the kind of vivid details and like-you-were-there, present-tense narration that makes popular history popular. Even so, the depth and breadth here will probably be a bit heavy for some, who might better enjoy Karen Armstrong's shorter, if less authoritative, *Islam* (2000). That said, this is an excellent overview that doubles as an impassioned call to reform. John Green