

Twisted Dragons



Devil's Disciples!

by H.R. ESPINOZA

TWISTED DRAGONS,
DEVIL'S DISCIPLES

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THE CIA AND THE FBI FIGHT WORLDWIDE TERRORISM
BEFORE AND AFTER THE 9-11-01 ATTACK ON NEW YORK

FALSE COMFORT, THE AMERICAN EAGLE AWAKENS

BOOK ONE: BEIJING AND NORTH KOREA:

ASIA'S AXIS OF EVIL PURSUE THE NEW AGENT

A NOVEL

Henry Robert Espinoza

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1 : CIA Rookie of the Year.....	11
Chapter 2 : The Rookie Becomes a Professional	60
Chapter 3 : Cruel Communist Bastards	84
Chapter 4 : Moving Right Along.....	104
Chapter 5 : Back to the Front.....	180
Chapter 6 : Sleeping with the Dead	233
Chapter 7 : Hissing, Steaming, Lethal Monster	245
Chapter 8 : On the Front Page.....	257
Chapter 9 : Nonessential Foods, Refuse, Retrieval and Removal Detail.....	280
Chapter 10 : Wen Ho Lee: A Good Man's Nightmare.....	291
Chapter 11 : Traitor Catching at Los Alamos Labs	299
Chapter 12 : Facing the Devil's Red Eyes	343
Chapter 13 : The Hunt Continues at Los Alamos Labs.....	362
Chapter 14 : Collecting the Last Few Pieces from the Lab	382
Chapter 15 : Cleaning up Traitor Debris All Around the Lab.....	421
Chapter 16 : Beijing's Secret Army, Still Chasing Colonel Milner	446
Chapter 17 : The Devil Continues His Relentless Assault	478
Chapter 18 : Innocent Dupes or Dumb like Foxes? Dexter and Malone Face the Law.....	532
Chapter 19 : In Pursuit of the Devil: On the Road to Pyongyang	570
Chapter 20 : Satan's Message of September 11, 2001	600
Chapter 21 : My Darling, Please Let Me Touch Your Hair: A Mother's Agony After 9/11	649

DEDICATION

This series is dedicated to my mother,
Hortensia Rojas Espinoza, my father,
Henry Benitez Espinoza and especially

To those brave police officers and
Firefighters who gave their lives on
September 11, 2001, in a valiant effort
To save the lives of their fellow
Americans.

Everyone of us will never *forget* those
Whose lives ended on that day and whose lives
Were ruined on that day.

Henry Robert Espinoza,
September 11, 2003
Los Angeles, California, USA

BOOK ONE

BEIJING AND NORTH KOREA:

ASIA'S AXIS OF EVIL PURSUE THE NEW AGENT

CHAPTER 1

CIA ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Reese Milner has a lot on his mind this beautiful summer day at Georgetown International University in Washington DC. Thinking back, he remembers that he was the only one in his undergraduate history class that even had an interest in China for their term paper research project. He is also feeling a little guilty right now about how he has kept so much from his family. Reese didn't even confide in his loved ones, especially his parents, about his real plans to one day join the CIA and seek a career in a Far East assignment. As Reese sits alone backstage in the sun-drenched auditorium, he is contemplating just how much he should say in his address to his fellow graduates and their families. Not even his fiancée Amy knows of his already-arranged plans to immediately activate his CIA status and travel to China on his first official assignment. Amy is also fluent in Chinese but has not yet decided what career path she will be pursuing. No one but Biff, Reese's CIA contact, close friend, and mentor, knows of the immediacy of Reese's plans. Biff has become like a second father to him over the years Reese has spent in Washington completing his formal education. Biff approaches quietly from behind as Reese daydreams about his future in government service and about his true plans for his life and for his career.

"Well, how's the class president?" Biff asks, smiling and giving his young friend their familiar thumbs-up sign. Reese is a bit startled as he "wakes up."

"You know, Biff, in a way, no, in a lotta ways, I feel, these past few years especially, like I've been sort of dishonest with my mom and my dad, you know that. God, Biff, I've sure developed a whole lot of respect for my father these past few years especially. Like, you

know, me and my dad have always had sort of a 'businesslike' relationship as I grew up. But these last few years, well, he has really had to sacrifice to bring my mom out east, to see me so much. He and mom are getting pretty old, you know."

Biff puts his arm around him.

"Hey, fella, don't go getting down on yourself, OK? You know how much they love you, and foremost in their minds and hearts would be for you to pursue a career that would make you happy, correct?"

Reese nods, "Yeah, I guess so, Mom always says to follow my heart."

Biff grins, pats him on the back, his eyes gleaming. "Well then, don't you just love the assignment I went out on a limb to get you, huh? Well, I mean a whole lotta other young agents with a lot more experience than you would have given their little finger to get this one, don't you agree?"

Biff pats him again, Reese just smiles as Biff continues, "Working so closely with . . ." Biff now kids him a little, "with, uh . . . what's her name, my boy? Uh . . . Oh yeah, Sookie."

Reese looks up at him now, a slight smile creeping onto his face.

Biff continues. "Sure will, my boy, you'll be working with our *only* other top-level China Bureau agent, the beautiful Sookie. Correct, my friend?"

Reese stands and runs his fingers through his thick long hair then turns to make his case. "That may be true, Biff, but *you* know better than anyone else how well Sookie and I got along when I went over there on those so-called summer training sessions for the Kodak film company. Shucks, even her very dear grandfather took a liking to me, right, Biff?"

Biff puckers his lips to keep from smiling and nods slowly but says nothing.

"Well, then, I think I kinda deserved to get this assignment, huh? How about it, partner, didn't I kind of earn it?"

Biff stands, now smiling broadly.

"Actually, that last point you made—about the grandfather getting on so well with you—I'm sure that was a big factor in the director's

mind while he considered who to send over there on this very important assignment."

Biff now gets very serious, speaking slowly as he looks into his young friend's eyes. "You know how much I respect your maturity, Reese, so I haven't held much back from you over the years. You know my true feelings about the nature and the dangers involved in this job, my boy, and especially about where you've been itching to go ever since you first came aboard. Yeah. And it's not getting any nicer over there, I can tell you that. But I know that won't discourage you, huh? Well, just to keep you up to date, we've been getting a whole lot of questions from our other foreign bureaus about what's really up in China *and* in North Korea these days—you know—since Tiananmen Square and all of that ugly stuff the Commies did to those poor students. So, yeah, there are a whole lot of rumors we'll be expecting you to look into, Reese, and yes, Director Webster and I *will* be expecting a whole lot of results from our 'Rookie Agent, Expert in Chinese Dialects,' a whole lot. OK with you, pal? And yes, even if you really do deserve this assignment."

Reese smiles, responding excitedly.

"Hey partner, I bet my Chinese proficiency helped a lot, didn't it, Biff?"

Biff raises his eyebrows and nods.

"You bet, pal, it sure didn't hurt your chances when the director noted that you can understand and communicate better than our best Chinese interpreters. OK, I guess it was just meant for you, my boy. But getting back to your personal concerns, Reese, well, to tell you the truth, shucks, I never really thought you'd stick with us, Reese, with all your accomplishments, your university and community involvement. Hey, don't let anybody tell me that was dishonest, OK? . . . How about all those young people you've helped over the years, huh? Where would all those kids be now, Reese? You remember, those kids you gave all that time and effort to, where would they have ended up huh? Maybe hooked on drugs or worse, if it hadn't have been for a guy named Reese Milner who got personally involved in their young lives. They had no role models at all, except maybe for the free-spending drug dealers here in DC, yeah, what would have

happened to those kids, my friend? God only knows—jail, death? So, if anybody asks me, I'd say you can hold your head up pretty high when you go out there to talk to your folks and everyone else. Actually, Reese, I half-expected a call or a letter from you these past few months, you know, saying that you and Amy have decided to get hitched up right away, and that you're accepting that offer to teach at Yale law school, yeah, something like that, that you know, you and your girl have decided to pursue the American Dream, go to the big fancy office, make the big bucks, like that, but thank God! Nothing at all like that happened, did it, Reese?"

Biff now gets more animated as he continues, "Heck no, that's not at all what I've heard over the past few months, is it, Mr. Milner? No, not exactly, huh, Reese?"

They are both smiling broadly now.

"What has my staff at Langley been telling me, almost daily, huh, pal? What kind of questions have they been peppered with when I'm not there, huh, Reese?" He puts his arm around a smiling Reese. "Well? Oh, sir, Biff sir, Reese called again today. He wants to know exactly when he's leaving for China, sir. What should I tell him, sir? Gosh, my friend, you've been getting my poor office staff all flustered, my boy. But, what do I say to myself, huh? I say great! Thanks to God! Man, do we need him now! Amen. Sure you know I'm a religious guy, Reese, so that comes real easy for me, especially when it comes to saving our country and our way of life, you bet I am! The long and the short of it is, we really need you right now, Reese, our country really needs you now, OK, and if your grandmother wasn't part Chinese and if you didn't love those ancient Chinese dialects so much, well, it would be a little hard for me to swallow your passion for this job and especially for this assignment, no matter how pretty and sweet Sookie is, OK. But like I always say, I don't question a gift from above all right. Now, how about Amy? I'm not proud when it comes to saving our way of life, OK? Does she know what *she* wants to do with her Chinese fluency yet? Sure, I'll take all of you I can get, OK?"

Reese chuckles a little and quickly answers. "Ha ha ha, not really, heck, she doesn't even know for sure what I'm about to do with my Chinese fluency!"

Biff's eyes widen as he exclaims, "That's right! You haven't told her yet just how soon you'll be leaving, have you? Well, thank goodness, that's up to you, my boy. Wow! I sure wouldn't want to get in the middle of that session, that's for sure, whoo, whee, no thanks. Been there before. No way, Jose!"

Reese rubs his forehead, looking very concerned. "Yeah, don't remind me, I've got to do that this afternoon right after the graduation ceremonies. Hey Biff, why don't you join us, OK? Please, Biff ol' buddy, we'll get lunch or something, just a casual little get-together, just the three of us, OK? Come on, pal, whatta ya say, deal?"

Reese looks at his friend, nodding, smiling hopefully.

Biff immediately starts shaking his head emphatically. "No, no, no, no, not on your life, my boy. Well, if it meant that, but it isn't, so please count me out, OK? WOOO . . . WEE . . . I *sure* don't want to get blamed for taking her Reese away from her, OK? Please, pal, ask me for anything, but not that, OK, pal?"

Reese continues to urge him, squeezing his hands prayerfully. "Come on, Biff, she's not like that, OK, you know Amy, Biff, and you two get along real well together."

Biff frowns, still shaking his head. "Believe me, my boy, I've had situations I'd really rather not live through again with young ladies in similar circumstances. No way, pal, ask me anything but that, OK? You do what you must, my friend, I'll stay ensconced in the safety of Langley's security systems, OK?"

Reese is about to urge his good friend once again when their attention is diverted to the rear of the huge auditorium by a voice calling Reese.

"OK, Reese, you're on in three minutes 'Mr. Class President.'"

Reese straightens his tie and starts to hurry out, still anxious about what he must tell Amy but now resigned that his friend really doesn't want to be in on the little meeting he's going to have with his fiancée.

"Gotta go, Biff. Call you tonight, OK? Please get that final flight connection information for me, all right?"

Biff smiles and gives Reese a thumbs-up signal, chuckling as he wishes him good luck.

"Hey, pal, if I didn't know you so good I'd think you were trying

to flee your country. Ha, ha, ha, ha, just kidding, I'll have the final info for you tonight, OK? Just relax, and don't stub your toe, or whatever they say about 'performances,' OK? Hey, you'll be in the air soon enough, all right?"

The two friends exchange smiles, affectionate waves, and crisp salutes as Reese goes out to deliver the commencement address.

Amy is all smiles as she sits in the front row surrounded by all her family members. She's gushing with pride, love, and youthful exuberance as their eyes meet. Reese winks at her, and she blows him a kiss. Reese's commencement address touches on his now-confirmed plans to immediately leave on his first Far East assignment which brings a look of surprise to Amy's face. His parents remain oblivious to the clear message in his words and are just very proud of their son's achievements. After the ceremonies and some picture taking, Reese pulls Amy aside, and they take a stroll.

As they walk slowly out to a grassy area, they are both obviously enjoying the air, the sun, and just being together. Still, Reese has a strange, uneasy feeling he quickly dismisses as just apprehension about his pending trip and his first assignment as a CIA field agent.

He puts his arm around Amy's slim waist and pulls her closer.

Reese is beaming at her as the sun's rays dance on her gold-brown hair.

"You look so beautiful today, honey. I could just eat you right up, you know that, huh?" he snuggles her affectionately. Reese is then a little taken aback when she pulls away and looks at him in a manner he clearly wasn't expecting, not at this moment for sure.

Amy wrinkles her brow as she speaks to him with a concerned look in her deep blue eyes.

"Are you going to get honest with me now, Reese? Well, are you, honey? Don't I deserve to know all about your now-confirmed plans, huh, well?" He turns away, not wanting to get into this subject at a disadvantage; Reese knows all too well how determined his extra-smart fiancée is, and if she feels she's got him off-balanced she'll never let up.

"Come on, honey. What? Get honest? You know that you are the only one I've kept completely informed about my plans with Biff and the agency, you know that, Amy. Well, don't you? I mean, haven't I