



The Risk Agent

Ridley Pearson

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A Chinese National working for an American-owned construction company is grabbed off the streets of Shanghai in broad daylight. His one-man security detail goes missing as well.

Rutherford Risk is a firm specializing in extraction: the negotiation for, and the recovery of hostages. Private investigation is illegal in today's China. Operating within her borders will be difficult at best.

The security company recruits two unique outsiders to do their bidding. Grace Chu is a forensic accountant hired to follow the money; John Knox is a civilian with unparalleled training in both combat and culture. Grace's top-notch American education and Chinese military service make her an unassuming, but effective, operative, while Knox's take-no-prisoners attitude brings them perilously close to harm. Following the money leads to more complex – and dangerous – consequences than either anticipated. Who is actually behind the kidnapping? And more important, can Knox and Grace locate the two hostages ahead of the deadline?

Rich with the atmosphere of Shanghai and crackling with tension-filled suspense, Pearson's latest introduces two compelling new characters—and heralds in the start of a brilliant new series.

The Risk Agent Details

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Author : Ridley Pearson

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From Reader Review The Risk Agent for online ebook

Dan Downing says

Authors ebb and flow through my life. I used to read Tony Hillerman and Dick Francis, for example, and they never disappointed. Then I stopped reading them. Don't know why.

Ridley Pearson is another. For at least a half-dozen novels I let him entertain me; then I bought a paperback of his which still rests on my shelf unread. I did permit "The Risk Agent" to lure me in, however, and I do not regret it at all.

This was a departure for him, a new series. There are now 4 or 5 Risk Agent titles clattering around, and if I did not have 300 titles looming unread over me, I would consider picking up another. Oddly, and by chance, this was the second book in a row which I read that was set on the Pacific Rim.

Pearson writes passably well; his plots tend toward the convoluted, and he avoids the salacious.

Recommended.

Msgadget says

My enjoyment of this book was diminished only by the Playaway device. That's not an issue with the publisher or even Playaway - it's a library borrow so any wonkiness is probably attributable to a multitude of patrons. Anyway, the story is extremely well thought out with twists turns and no human action unsubstantiated or unexamined. I am now completely bound to the series and will be starting #2 as soon as it finishes downloading.

Tad says

Risk Agent, by Ridley Pearson is a very interesting thriller/spionage story. It pairs a male American ex-military (or as good as) with a female Chinese accountant (and ex-military officer) to track down two kidnap victims and important financial information belonging to an American company operating in China.

The Chinese setting and cultural differences make for an interesting backdrop. The story is layered like an onion with each layer pulled back only to reveal another mystery. The protagonists are developed nicely and easy to root for. They function well as a team in spite of, or perhaps because of, their cultural differences. There are a number of less developed secondary characters whose motives are harder to fathom, but they keep the story spinning in unpredictable directions.

There are a number of good action sequences but this book is more espionage and suspense than high octane thriller. Pearson does a good job of keeping you engaged and thinking, trying to unravel the mystery as clues are uncovered. Motives are complicated and trust hard to earn. The story concludes nicely, wrapping up all the major storylines while still leaving an opening to continue following these characters in future novels.

This is a well-written and interesting book, but not a pulse-pounding one. The action moves forward steadily, but never really builds to a crescendo. If your taste in thrillers runs more to the espionage side than the action side, you will likely enjoy this book.

I was fortunate to receive an advance copy of this book.

Dlora says

I thoroughly enjoyed Pearson's series about Sun Valley, Idaho, Sheriff Walt Fleming so I was looking forward to this series starring John Knox and Grace Chu. *The Risk Agent* is a fast moving adventure in China, with our main characters hired by Rutherford Risk to try to foil a hostage situation of a Chinese national and an American security PI. Not so easy to do when private investigation is illegal in China. However, I was very turned off by the Chinese social environment of graft and corruption. No one, from the top to the bottom layers of society, can be trusted not to betray you in exchange for money or other incentives. It just is the way of life. The author even included a note in the front material detailing how much embezzlement, bribery, dereliction of duty, and corruption cases were investigated in China between 2003 and 2009. I was also disheartened by the poverty and crowding of the country and the attempts to ameliorate the problem by resettlement. So despite the action and interesting main characters, I didn't much like the book. Not enough positive, uplifting--not any positive, uplifting elements in the story. I'm sure there were some but I can't remember them; the overall feel was dreary and dark.

Cathy Cole says

First Line: Lu Hao, a slim, well-dressed man in his twenties stood on the roof of a subcompact car the size of a toaster, peering over a ten-foot-high concrete-block wall and into the parking lot outside an aging tannery.

When a Chinese National working for an American company and his security detail are kidnapped on the streets of Shanghai, Rutherford Risk is called in to handle the recovery of the hostages. Private investigation is illegal in China, so handling this matter will be a very delicate affair.

The security company brings in two outsiders to find out the identity of the kidnappers. Forensic accountant Grace Chu is hired to follow the money. Her American education and Chinese military service make her a very effective agent. John Knox is a civilian who has a lot of training in combat and knows the language, but his friendship with one of the hostages makes him unpredictable.

Following the money proves to be even more complicated than originally anticipated, and people begin to doubt whether Chu and Knox can find out who's behind the kidnapping before the deadline. The further Chu and Knox probe, the more they come to realize that there's a lot more at stake than anyone realizes.

Author Ridley Pearson lived in China for a period of time, and it certainly shows in this novel. His portrait of modern China was my favorite part of the book. How the people behave during a national holiday, how the government attempts to find ways to be self-sufficient in agriculture, how huge cities can be built--seemingly overnight-- and millions of people expected to pack up and move in... all these details and dozens more brought the setting to life for me.

This is the first book in a proposed series featuring John Knox-- learned in languages and combat-- who runs an import-export business to pay for the help his developmentally disabled brother needs. His partner in this book, Grace Chu, is vital because she can go places and do things without causing suspicion. Character development in a book is very important to me, and I felt that was lacking here. Knox and Chu both have so

much potential, but they took a backseat to the action. Since this is the beginning of a series featuring Knox, readers will have the opportunity to learn more about him in future books, and I'm hoping that Grace Chu will appear again, too. (I know, I know. Thrillers aren't supposed to have a lot of character development, but I know some that do!)

The plot has plenty of twists and turns. It's everyone for himself, what's in it for me, don't trust anyone else... all further complicated because the Chinese play by an entirely different set of rules. I have to admit that, the more I read, the more I felt as though the plot had too many twists and too many turns. I was exhausted by book's end, and although *The Risk Agent* has two strong main characters and a superb setting, in the end it was just an "okay" read for me. If a few twists (and fifty to one hundred pages) had been removed, and the characters emphasized more, I would have loved it. If you're one of the many readers who prefer action to character (and believe me, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that), you probably will love it.

E.R. Yatscoff says

Complex story with many characters set in Shanghai. An investigation begins with a US construction company working in China and Chinese competitors. Big bucks, corruption, and loyalties all come into play as RR a security company hires John Knox to figure it all out. Many others do not want the truth to come out. The author is a very good writer and never a let down. As an author myself I admire the complex plots which I find difficult to do as they are time consuming. This story was a library book.

Richard G says

i am battling with i liked it, which sounds too strong and it was ok which sounds weak so i am going to give it 2 stars for the goodreads rating 2.5 stars for those who read these lines. it was a fun story and i was able to turn the pages without too much difficulty but it was a book of this ilk without any holy moleys to be said for it. for me, i need the holy moleys from these suspense mystery action who's the guy behind the guy behind the twist behind the gal behind the guy behind the original guy and so on etc, etc, etc... ummm behind the guy!

Randy Schultz says

I have long been a fan of Ridley Pearson. I have loved his consistent serious approach to crime fiction and I have until now been of the sort that buys his new books with nary a thought to what's inside. That ends with *The Risk Agent*. Pearson himself has become a Risk. This was pedestrian at best, far beneath his usual work and I suspect that old Ridley was just trying to use up all the wonderful material he'd accrued from his time in China. I'm glad that a small portion of the money I've given him enabled him to go to China for a few years but I wish he hadn't felt so compelled to write something exciting with it all. It comes off like a bad Baldacci, really a B effort at best.

Amy Lignor says

The first in a stunning new international thriller series; suspense readers can get ready for a truly non-stop tale of intrigue.

The Rutherford Risk firm's main objectives are finding and negotiating deals for the return of kidnapping victims that are being held as hostages. The latest job they're hired for is to find a Chinese gentleman, Edward "Lu" Hao, along with his security man, who are working for an American multinational called, The Berthold Group.

This kidnapping happened in China, where private investigations are illegal, so this recovery will be more than difficult when compared to others the firm has accomplished. Rutherford Risk hires two people who work outside the company for help. They are John Knox, an importer, and Grace Chu, a forensic accountant - two professionals who are highly skilled that must rescue the kidnap victims.

With Hao, are his records of bribes that he has been paying out for the American Berthold Group operating in Shanghai. Grace, who had helped Lu get the job in the first place, delves into the world of forensic accounting and tries desperately to find the missing books. From working as an 'insider' to delivering the ransom and extracting the hostages, John and Grace follow the money trail, trying to solve the puzzle before the deadline runs out.

This is a truly great thriller that not only captivates and entralls, but also brings people up to date on the inner-workings of the Chinese government. And the best part is, The Risk Agent is only the beginning of what appears to be a perfect prelude to an exciting series.

Until Next Time, Everybody!

Amy

Zohar - ManOfLaBook.com says

The Risk Agent by Ridley Pearson is a fictional mystery/thriller taking place in China. The book is the first of a new series.

The Rutherford Risk firm has a problem. They are trying to negotiate for a hostage which was taken in Shanghai, but are not allowed, by law, to investigate. The firm recruits two outsiders to bypass the Chinese laws, a dangerous game even when playing by the rules.

American Jon Knox, a civilian with military training, and Grace Chu, an accountant with military training, are put on the job. There are many things which are dangerous in corporate China, but following the money is certainly on top of the list.

The Risk Agent by Ridley Pearson is a whirlwind of a ride through the business world of China. While I don't know enough about the business world in that part of the world, that part of the novel certainly seemed authentic to me and made for a fascinating read.

It seems that in China many companies, especially those who are not based in China, have a habit of giving incentives to government officials in order to gain the upper hand in the bidding process, or simply just flat out to get a job. Much like elections “incentives” (campaign donations), the act is frowned on officially but it seems to be the standard operating procedure (SOP) with a large amount of recipients but only selective victims.

The Risk Agent is not a quick read by any means, the novel is plotted extremely well and takes time to digest and follow, but the reward of going on a great adventure is well worth the investment in time.

The two main characters, John Knox and Grace Chu, are fully developed and we get to know them before the final page is done. It is amazing at how much character development goes into this novel while running around the backstreets of Shanghai.

I have said time and time again and one of the main reasons I like espionage novels is that they are mostly gray. The line distinguishing bad from good are often blurred and horse hair thin. The novel's twists and turns had me guessing who is on whose side, what was most certain is that everyone has their own agenda which made the story more compelling.

An invigorating aspect of the book is the character of Grace Chu, a level headed accountant (and an ex-Chinese military). Contrasting Grace's cool head and world view with John Knox's impatience and impulsiveness added another interesting angle, as well as balance, to the story. While every partners story has some friction between the characters, I believe that this relationship

I believe that Mr. Pearson has created two of the most complex and fascinating characters which had the dubious pleasure of becoming partners. I, for one, am looking forward to their next exploits.

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Kelley says

This novel is the beginning of a new series for Ridley Pearson and I think it will be a hit! Because this story was set in China and had many characters, the reader must be totally focused on the book. It could be confusing in parts and I found myself doing some re-reading. The story opens with the kidnapping of a Chinese employee of a huge American corporation. Because Americans are forbidden from investigating any crimes in China, the company engages the services of a "private" firm. With much money at stake and the all-important saving face for the Chinese, the complicated plot takes the reader through the streets of Shanghai to solve the mystery. The author clearly spent time in China as the culture was very well informed and integrated into the story. The Chinese government and local/federal police organizations were a large part of the story. I think that is where my understanding in the story sometimes lapsed. The two main characters, Knox and Grace Chu, were well-developed and complimented each other throughout. The families/private lives of both characters were touched upon and very interesting. The surprise ending made it very clear that there will be more Knox/Chu novels coming from Mr. Pearson. I will look forward to reading them! This was an ARC that I won as a Goodreads giveaway.

Pepita says

Would have been a page turner only I was listening to it on CD; very Matthew Reilly-esq with non-stop action, unscrupulous Chinese, unstoppable Mongolian and corrupt American caught in their own 'sting' by an attractive Chinese accountant and hero American ex military 'good guy'. Phew!

Patti says

Ridley Pearson is such a fine author, so I was excited to read the first book with new protagonists Grace Chu and John Knox. I feel like the base premise of this plot could have been good, unfortunately it turned out to have too many confusing and unnecessary characters, our "detectives" had a lot of conclusion-jumping going on to connect the plot points and you can't really go to that well too many times in a good suspense/mystery novel . I will be reading the next one in the series in June; I have faith in Mr Pearson's ability so expecting improvement

Harmien says

I found the book confusing, full of clichées, too much zipping back and forth in and around the city on scooters, motorbikes and in taxis without really getting anywhere.

A slight-figured female is taking on menacing Mongolians around every street corner to protect a white foreigner, whilst risk managing is being attended to in stereotypical dens, brothels and backrooms with everybody who is not Chinese, called an 'expat'.

A disappointing product from Mr. Pearson.

After him having spent a year there, I had expected to find a more interesting image of the (Shanghai) Chinese culture entwined in this book..

My rating is really 1½ stars, as I could only manage about 2/3 of it.

Isabelle says

I received this book from LibraryThing's Early Reviewers program.

While I have enjoyed several of Ridley Pearson's books featuring Lou Boldt, I found this book difficult to get into. I never really cared about the main characters - John Knox an American mercenary type person and Grace Chu - a Chinese ex-military forensic accountant. I also had a lot of trouble keeping all the secondary characters straight and frequently got confused about who was who. I did really enjoy the Chinese setting for the story, but if there's another book featuring these characters, I wouldn't go out of my way to read it.
