



The Exiled Element

John L. Betcher

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In response to recent turmoil in Egypt's intelligence community, the CIA has recalled Beth Becker to active duty. Though she accepts the assignment, the backstabbing and deceit she finds festering within the Agency remind her why she retired from government work.

Meanwhile, her husband, "Beck," stays home in Red Wing, helping Chief Deputy Sheriff, Doug "Gunner" Gunderson, formulate what should be routine security plans for a visiting dignitary. But a less than stellar private security firm, and a determined sniper, result in a crisis situation that stretches our heroes' abilities to their limits. Filled with intrigue, humor, and ripped-from-the-headlines action, THE EXILED ELEMENT will remind you why you came to love the Beckers in the first place.

The Exiled Element Details

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Author : John L. Betcher

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From Reader Review The Exiled Element for online ebook

Jerry says

The book was well written, the plot interesting and the movement between the subjects and variations in time were easy to follow. I'm looking forward to the next installment.

LORI CASWELL says

Beth Becker takes the lead in this edition as she is called back into active service with the CIA. She is sent to Cairo, Egypt where there has been some trouble and her unique skills and contacts are needed. It doesn't take Beth long to remember why she retired. All the office "politics", backstabbing, lies and butt covering makes her want to turn around and go straight home. Ever the professional she sets about her tasks and knows the sooner they are completed she can return to Minnesota and her loving husband. "Beck" is not sitting at home pining for his wife. He is helping Deputy Sheriff Gunderson (Gunner) prepare security for an important dignitary that is coming to Red Wing. Things do not go as planned due to the out of town security but Beck, Gunner and Bull will try to clean up their mess and not get themselves killed in the process. Dollycas's Thoughts Betcher has done it again. A fantastic story with the ripped from the headlines feeling. Hang on to your seats, you will not be able to put this one down. I love the characters, the dialogues they have with each other, and the little ways they always surprise us. The plot is tight, complex, and realistic. The settings described to make you feel you are right there. You know the author has done the research to make this story come alive. From Red Wing to Cairo and back again, it is a thrilling ride. I have enjoyed this entire series and each one is better than the last. Betcher has a compelling writing style that takes this ordinary couple into extraordinary situations. I can see myself sitting down having coffee with Beck and Beth never believing how much danger they put themselves in. Retired, no way, I know these characters will be off on another adventure soon. I am anxiously awaiting.

William Bentrin says

The Exiled Element by John L. Betcher

Once again, James Becker, a retired agent of some type is a small town attorney with an international reach. James Becker has retired from a terrorism fight to live a sedentary life with his wife and girls safe in a small, insular community. In his first book, The 19th Element detailed the story of a Islamic terrorists' attack on a nearby nuclear plant. In the Covert Element Becker gets entwined with a drug cartel. In this book Becker and Beth, his wife and former CIA employee, get involved in assassination and spying.

Beth plays a greater part in this book as a major protagonist herself rather than Becker's loyal sidekick. The obsequious, devious and arrogant nature of some of the bureaucratic government "professionals" provided a despicable counterpoint to the refreshing patriotism of Becker and friends. My only suggestion to the author would be a smidgen of backstory on Becker for those who have not read the two previous books. This book reads very well as a stand alone but I think that most first time readers would enjoy it a bit more with a better understanding of Becker's background.

The book deals with the Arab Spring and current events in the Middle East. The interplay between Becker

and friends is, once again, quite entertaining. Betcher captures the normal interplay between good friends that enjoy and respect each other but due to their manly nature avoid showing their emotions. I enjoyed interviewing John Betcher and I feel that each book he writes shows his increased experience. In trepidation over being redundant, keep up the good work Betcher!

I highly recommend this book.

Paul Madsen says

An excellent techno thriller

Elizabeth and husband find themselves involved in mysterious intrigue at home and abroad. As the plot thickens they both must use their training and resolve to see each other survive. You will enjoy the wit of the main characters. This would make a wonderful full length movie. ?

Heather says

I had trouble staying focused in this book. I usually like mystery/thrillers but I just couldn't get into this book. It jumped around in time and persona making me wish it would just get to the point of the story.

David Rubin says

The plot is creative, but the characters where wooded and one-dimensional.

John R. Hoffman says

Book #4 of the James Becker series is the best so far. Former CIA code-breaker Beth Becker takes the lead in this story as she is recalled to active duty in order to respond to a security threat in Egypt. She learns of an planned assassination attempt in the US. Meanwhile, back in Red Wing Minnesota Beck is working with Chief Deputy Gunderson to plan security for a visiting dignitary. Coincidence... probably not since this quiet town has seen more than its share of intrigue in the first books in the series. In true "fictional" CIA operating procedures, Beth is put at risk trying to obtain just a little more information and captured. In response, Beck and Bull jet to Cairo to lead a team of Navy Seals in the rescue attempt. Reality is stretched throughout the story, but it is an incredibly enjoyable read.

Fran says

The Exiled Element
Author: John Betcher

A secret meeting between an army Colonel and a U.S. Senator reveal information about an Air Force base in the Mojave Desert. Area 51 houses the nation's black projects. Only a chosen select few know it even exists. Rumors spread as to the purpose of this base and what might be within its walls would definitely surprise the reader. Colonel Jackson and United States Senator Elbert Grossman were meeting about a project called Aurora. Special preparations were made to guard the true location of Area 51, its contents even from the Senator. Before touring the facility known as Hangar 16, the Senator needed to read and sign certain documents. But, an unknown observer for other reasons was monitoring Grossman's actions.

Appearances can be deceiving as one would be attacked and a mugger would find out. Beth Becker was leaving a fundraiser for the Minneapolis Art Institute and heading home. Leaving the hotel she strategically placed her keys in her hand in order to thwart off any danger. She was always prepared for the unknown. Taking her keys and placing them in her hand with the longest one protruding between her 2nd and 3rd fingers, Beth started toward the elevator and the garage to get to her car. As she entered the elevator she sensed another presence and an unknown man asked to share the ride with her. But, sometimes holding the door for someone made be a deadly mistake. One mugger would learn just what happens when a woman fights back.

Beth was able to take down her attacker and wound up in the hospital. Upon her release she was ordered to CIA headquarters. Recalled to active duty Beth reluctantly travels to headquarters and encounters a surly deputy director. But, Beth takes no prisoners and when confronted with certain deviations from protocol, she explains her position quite clearly.

Flashback to Egypt 18 months prior to this meeting with the deputy director where several Egyptian scientists were hovering over a pile of aluminum castings hoping to create a model airplane. This plane was called Aurora. Aurora was presented to them with the help of an American U.S. Senator who managed to get the planes and give them to the GIS or Egypt's version of the CIA in order to create a plane with revolutionary technologies. But, would these scientists succeed and what would happen if they did not?

Let's come back to the present where Beth is about to confront the CIA Director to learn just why someone at the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate wanted her and her alone to handle the assassination of the Egyptian President and much more yet to be revealed. Enter James Becker her husband as she relates some of the events to him and what her role might be.

While Beth is about to meet with the CIA Director, Beck is meeting with the Chief Deputy Sheriff who is about to enlist his help guarding a dignitary coming to Ottawa County. As they discuss the job Beth is about to learn more about hers. Will both turn out to be dangerous and just who is this dignitary and what will be involved in guarding him? But, no one will reveal who the official is and why he/she needs protection.

Flashing back to the Aurora project we listen to a discussion between the Commander and the Directorate wondering if the plane will fly and if the mission will succeed. As the Commander decides to move ahead with the making of the prototype out of titanium and magnesium the reader is privy to the innermost feelings and fears of both men dealing with this sensitive project. Reenter Elizabeth and the start of her mission learning more about the woman who is interested in working with her or is she as her superior states wanting to give her disinformation. The author shares his extensive research about the area, Israeli and Egyptian relations and the ramifications on all sides related to the death of the President of Egypt.

As the author relates the problems with the Aurora project and the lack of understanding of the Commander in charge the scientists pray for their lives and hopefully for success. But, the man who presented them with the information is a loose end and the end result for one Senator might not be reelection. Added to the mix we have Elizabeth who needs to find out just where this Rasha is and her reasons for wanting to contact her. No one seems to know where her message originated from or how to answer her. Just who Silver Star is remains a piece of the puzzle that has not been revealed.

Author John Betcher takes the reader deep inside the corruption of the CIA, depths to which one government will go to obtain the technology we have and the cost to the scientists of that country. The research in this book is extensive as we learn a lot about foreign relationships, security, diplomatic courtesies and Elizabeth's talent of code breaking.

While Elizabeth makes contact with Silver Star, Beck is learning more about the security detail that might be needed for the dignitary. Meeting with Silver Star she learned the reason she requested to meet with her alone. One reason for wanting to meet with Beth dealt with an incident from the past and the second and more grave would connect the security plan for the same dignitary that Beck was supposed to protect as a hired killer was being paid to eliminate the same man. The preparations in place but Beck and Gunner want to take more precautions as a killer that calls himself The Raptor is just waiting to take his shot. But, just how this connects with why Beth was sent to Cairo you just won't believe until you read it for yourself. But, the end result was not exactly what the local police expected as the assassin's bullet hit its target and now Beck, Gunner and his old friend Bull are determined to take this killer down. When Beth learns the end result of her mission and that it is linked to the assassination of the Senator will she come home or will she wait for her CIA contact to provide further information?

But, the red tape seems to be piling up as Beth employs the help of not only Hitch but hopefully the Deputy Director to get some answers as to why the Egyptians ordered a hit on a U.S. Senator and whether our government was going to take any action. Would they learn of his involvement in the Aurora project? Just why didn't the Army want the CIA to investigate a foreign spying issue? Why hide the issue of the stolen plans? Then we hear Beck's voice explaining how they are going to handle the investigation in Red Wing by giving the reader an inside course in police procedures, protocol and how their investigative team operates. With the help of Bull, Gunner and Beck manage to catch the killer. But, would they make a deal with him in order to get those behind the hit? When Beth is kidnapped and placed in a cell she felt isolated, betrayed by those she was working for and hoped that someone would rescue her. What happens and why Beck realized she was in danger and his plan to rescue her would reveal more than just who her kidnappers were and just who in her own government betrayed her. Trying to cast blame on Rasha and not admitting that there was much more behind the assassination of the Senator and the Egyptian President Beck and Bull race the clock to try and save Beth and hopefully find learn the real truth behind the Aurora Project, why it failed and the Army's secret. The ending you certainly won't expect. Who finally pays for the crime I won't reveal. Just who was behind the assassinations and why is classified by the CIA and the information is sealed between the pages of this book only to be revealed to the individual reader upon reading the book and promising never to divulge any of the information about the project, Area 51 or who was behind the killings and the kidnapping. Once again author John Betcher pens a novel filled with explosions, deceit, lies and disloyalty. Will Beth come out unscathed? What about Rasha? Filled with humor, suspense and definitely fast paced this is one book whose title might read The Exiled Element but the only place it should be exiled to tons of bookshelves waiting to be read.

Fran Lewis: reviewer

Martha Cheves says

The Exiled Element – Review by Martha A. Cheves, Author of Stir, Laugh, Repeat; A Book and A Dish; Think With Your Taste Buds

Inside a classified underground laboratory twenty-five miles northeast of Cairo, three white-coated Egyptian scientists labored over a small pile of aluminum casting on the table before them. They were building a model airplane. But it wasn't just any airplane...it was Aurora. They had manufactured the parts in 1/30th scale with the highest possible precision based on digitized plans provided to the engineers by the United States of America. Well...the plans were definitely of U.S. origin, but perhaps the word 'provided' wasn't entirely accurate. An operative of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate (GIS) – Egypt's version of the CIA – had procured the plans from the Americans. A certain U. S. Senator with an immense assortment of scandalous baggage had facilitated the delivery. After acquiring the Top Secret information, GIS had sought out these three scientists – considered Egypt's finest minds in aeronautical engineering. What was their opinion? Could they turn these technical drawings and specifications into a tangible product – into the fastest air-breathing plane on the planet?

Beth Becker is retired from the CIA but still works part-time doing CIA decryption work from her home in Red Wing, Minnesota. When she is summoned to their McLean, Virginia headquarters she is assuming it's another decryption project. That turns out to be not quite the case. She will soon be on her way to the U. S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt to make contact with a woman she knew from past years while serving at the embassy. Apparently the woman known as Rasha is now in a computer programming position with her own government and has run across information regarding an assassination that will be taking place in the U.S., target unknown.

Beth's husband 'Beck' has been asked by the Red Wing Deputy Sheriff Gunner to help out in a security job protecting an unknown Senator that will be coming into town. Seems that there have been other attempts on the Senator in the past so security has been beefed up and Gunner would like Beck's ex military help. The security goes well in the beginning but becomes a failed assignment when the Senator is assassinated while leaving the Red Wing Hotel where he had just given a speech. To find his killer, Beck engages the help of his long time friend Mr. Red Feather, AKA Bull.

Unknown to Beth and Beck, their assignments are about to collide and become one. The key to their jobs are non-other than the U.S.'s Top Secret plane Aurora. And when Beth comes up missing, Beck sees the Embassy as doing very little to find her, making it his and Bull's job to take on the task themselves.

I can't get enough of the "Beck" Suspense/Thriller Series! The Exiled Element is the 4th in the series and I've read them all. They just keep getting better and better with the stories of espionage, the CIA and a couple, along with their friends, who refuse to let the U.S. down. John L. Betcher has truly become one of my favorite authors.

S.L. Coelho says

Move over Clive Cussler, make room for John Betcher! From the gorgeous cover to the last word, this book grabs your lapels and doesn't let go until it's done. This carefully crafted, political thriller is sharp, suspenseful, well researched and reflective of the world today.

I love the strong female protagonist Beth, a former agent cajoled back into service because of her unique qualifications, and the character dynamic between Beck, Gunner and Bull. Mr. Betcher has penned a sophisticated novel with multiple layers to keep you turning the pages well into the night. You are whisked away to exotic Egypt where the sights, smells and culture come alive with Mr. Betcher's descriptions. The reader is treated to some local flavors of Red Wing, Minnesota and introduced to a cast of well-developed, believable characters.

Mr. Betcher has out done himself with his current offering. This perfectly-paced thriller should be picked up by all desiring a great story and excellent writing. Highly Recommended.

Jill says

Beth Becker is living a quiet life in Red Wing, Minnesota when she is called back into active service with the CIA. On assignment in the Middle East, she is captured and it is up to her husband and Chief Deputy Doug Gunderson to rescue her and he expects the CIA to help.

Suspend belief and you can enjoy this story.

Jacqueline says

interesting, spy/espionage/mystery...

Dolores Ayotte says

"The Exiled Element" is the fourth book that I've read and reviewed by this talented author. It's actually the third one I've enjoyed in the James Becker Suspense/Thriller Series. I believe I missed the first one, but I did enjoy "A Higher Court", one of the other books written by this gifted author. Right up front, I would like to state that I do not personally know him. Therefore, this is merely a random review by a fellow author who came upon Author John L. Betcher strictly by chance. As an author myself, I know how difficult it is to get book reviews, so I have made a special effort to read and review books on a regular basis. It's what I consider to be my "pay it forward" plan. It is my preference that this review be seen for what it is, rather than have someone second guess that my high praises for this novel might be biased.

Now back to "The Exiled Element"...in my opinion, this fictional novel is the best of the books that I have

read so far in this series. As stated, I have only missed one of them thus far. When reading this novel, it was like revisiting some old friends. I like the main characters, James and Beth Becker, Chief Deputy Sheriff Doug Gunderson/Gunner and bigger than life, Indian Terry "Bull" Red Feather. I like the interaction between the characters...the camaraderie, the teasing, and the respect. I also enjoyed the well-developed and well-researched plot.

When reading Betcher's novels, it is so easy to get drawn into the intensity of each and every challenging situation as it arises. I thoroughly enjoyed the three main and suspenseful threads..."Beck" being asked by Gunner to assist in protecting Senator Grossman from a possible assassination attack...Beth coming out of retirement from the CIA and going to Cairo, Egypt to assist in decrypting some very serious intelligence information...and the plan by the SCAF in Egypt to build Aurora, a technically advanced American plane, with illegally obtained plans. Betcher manages to tie all these loose ends together in a most creative and action-packed way. Honestly, I had a hard time pulling myself away from this thriller. It really is that good! Congratulations to Author John L. Betcher for a job well done!

Mark says

Book came from the Red Wing Public Library, 225 East Avenue, Red Wing, MN 55066!

Becky See says

Very well written suspense! Kept me interested until the end!
