

## SYNOPSIS

Wilderness of Mirrors is a spy novel about a djinn-driven arms race that is the secret history behind many tumultuous historical events, from the Tian-ah-men Square massacre, to the Khmer Rouge, to modern day attacks like Operation Desert Storm, the War on Terror and 9-11. Sorcerous mathematician and CIA officer Peter Fisher pursues his lost love – Sū Lín, a Chinese intelligence officer – across decades of secret missions, until Fisher double-crosses his masters, and escapes at last with Sū Lín at last out of the conspiracy. The book is divided into four interlocked sections that weave memory, real history, and sorcerous intrigues into one story.

**BOOK 1:** Peter Fisher is introduced in 2012 as a homeless vet without a memory. He is captured and interrogated by a Chinese faction. During his interrogation, he recalls his bizarre childhood, and his mother's experiments, as well as his introduction to occult espionage masters James Angleton and Robinson Gale. Peter escapes from the Chinese and is taken in by the Americans, who restore his memory and commission him to find his rogue mentor Robinson Gale.

**BOOK 2:** Peter recalls his 2002 mission after 9-11. Peter traveled with his old colleague Mahmoud El-Amin, to find a buried entity in the Iraqi desert. During their journey, Mahmoud relates his family history and his earlier war-time activities in 1991 and in Prague after 9-11. Peter tells Mahmoud about the arcane plot behind the building of the World Trade Center in the 1970s. Peter also tells the truth about what his mother did to him, and how his mother died. In 2002, Peter makes a human sacrifice and frees an unearthly force from Saddam Hussein. This action starts the Iraq War. As Mahmoud dies, he warns Peter against these terrible actions.

**BOOK 3:** The story then turns back to the 1970s-1980s, when Peter was a student at Yale. He met Sū Lín, a Chinese intelligence agent at Yale who became his lover. Peter is posted by the CIA to Hong Kong in the late 1980s, where he re-kindles a relationship with Sū Lín and she becomes a US double agent. Peter is then sent on a new mission to Tibet to subvert the Chinese from harnessing a supernatural power. Peter frees the entity in the Tibetan mountains, causing the Tian ah men Square massacre. During his subsequent incarceration, Peter surreptitiously communicates with Sū Lín. When he returns to the US in 2001, 9-11 occurs and Peter begins the mission prep that will lead him to the Iraq desert mission in 2002.

**BOOK 4:** Now back in 2012, Peter regrets his earlier activities and wants to atone for his actions. He undertakes the assigned mission to find Robinson Gale because he believes by doing so, he can redeem Mahmoud's death and make it have meaning. He travels to Dubai, and locates Mahmoud's estranged father, who admits that he killed Gale. He also tells Peter the secrets of destroying these entities. Later, at the Pentagon, Peter discovers that the US just want to use their newfound power to destroy more lives. Peter secretly plans with Sū Lín to subvert the mission.

Peter is appointed head of a new sorcerous attack team. Peter discovers that the entity he freed in Iraq in 2002 is now hidden on the slopes of Mount Rainier in Washington. He guides his new team to a strike mission on the mountain. His team is destroyed. Peter is now forced by events to use the same risky formula that his mother used years ago. In the end, he surmounts his own dread and takes final action to destroy the malevolent entity. His action becomes thus a personal triumph over his own fear and his family history as well as a strategic victory. Peter then escapes to a new hidden life on a distant island with Sū Lín, happy and at peace at age 61.

## EARLY ENDORSEMENTS

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“Like a literary Rubik’s Cube, puzzling and full of compellingly offbeat traps and escapes, *Wilderness of Mirrors* depicts a wide, strange world in which modern nations compete to harness and weaponize monsters, enslaving malevolent spirits using arcane mathematics and the death tolls of bloody wars. Ned Hayes writes with stunning empathy of a truly global cast of characters – an Arab professor of linguistics, and an aging female Chinese intelligence officer – who stumble through a landscape of political expedients toward a tempting yet horrific reality. Captivating.”

– Nisi Shawl, Nebula-nominated author of *Everfair*

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“Ned Hayes brings a deep well of knowledge to this story, and passion and seriousness in his approach. A powerful read - the book greatly deserves a huge readership!”

– Robert V.S. Redick, Author of *Master Assassins* and *The Chathrand Voyage Quartet*

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“A considerable achievement... powerful and elegant... morally complex and challenging. *Wilderness of Mirrors* is about the events of 9-11 and the War on Terror, but of course it’s also generally about many other topics... the novel provides a scathing critique of the CIA and the NSA and their roles in moving the country toward the precarious place it now occupies in international affairs.”

– David Huddle, former military intelligence specialist and award-winning author of over 20 books including *The Story of a Million Years* and *My Immaculate Assassin*

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