

WALTER DEAN MYERS

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF *FALLEN ANGELS* AND *MONSTER*

SUNRISE OVER FALLUJAH



"Gentlemen, ladies, welcome to Doha by the Sea.

I'm Major Spring Sessions and I'm overjoyed to welcome you to sunny Kuwait. If we actually have to enter Iraq, you will be playing a crucial role in achieving our objectives by interacting with the civilian population. There are many different areas of expertise among you but together you make up a very strong team – and that's a concept that will be stressed over and over again – and you have all expressed an interest in the Civil Affairs unit. I'm sure we'll all get along and make the army proud of us." Major Sessions was cute, black, and had a smile that lit up the headquarters tent. She looked sharp in her desert cammies. Jonesy nudged me with his elbow and I had an idea what he was thinking.

"Our entire detachment is made up of about forty-two people and there will be some switching around as we go along. We might increase some teams and decrease others. That's an important

concept because what we're going to be doing, as an advance Civil Affairs unit, is to assess future needs. Right now we have one medical team, one construction team, an intelligence team, security personnel, and a flex team that will work directly with the native population. Some of the security people will also be assigned to work with the locals, so you see how fluid the Civil Affairs unit will be. This is an important mission and you're important to it. Don't forget that. Captain Coles will brief you on your assignments, your mission, and your relationship to the Infantry while you're over here. Thank you."

Major Sessions smiled again, pivoted on her right heel, and moved smartly from the small stage.

I had been introduced to Captain Coles when I first arrived at Camp Doha and he seemed all right. Not too gung ho, but not sloppy, either. Tall and thin with blue-gray eyes, Coles always looked sincere, as if he really wanted to know about you and was interested in what you were saying. He waited until Major Sessions left before he went to his clipboard.

"I have everybody listed here but the three new security teams. When I call out your name give me some sign that you're here, that you're alive, and tell me your hometown," he said. "You're not trying out for *American Idol*, so be as brief as you can be. I just need all of you to start connecting names and faces and get to know each other. Evans!"

"Corporal Eddie Evans, Stormville, New York, sir!"

"Jones!"

"Corporal Charlie Jones, Stone Mountain, Georgia, sir!"

"Harris!"

"Sergeant Robert Harris, Tampa, Florida, sir!"

"Kennedy!"

"Corporal Marla Kennedy, Dix Hills, New York, sir!"

"Perry!"

"Private Robin Perry, Harlem, New York, sir!"

Captain Coles looked up at me. "What kind of name is Robin? Your mama didn't know if you were a boy or girl?"

"I think she knew, sir."

"Well, which is it? Boy or girl?"

"Man, sir!"

"Okay, I can deal with that," Coles said. "Darcy!"

"Specialist Jean Darcy, Oak Park, Illinois, sir!"

"Rios!"

"Corporal Victor Rios, Albuquerque, New Mexico."

"Nice town," Captain Coles said. "Danforth!"

"PFC Shelly Danforth, Richmond, Virginia."

"Pendleton!"

"Corporal Phil Pendleton, Leetown, West Virginia."

As Captain Coles read off the list of names I looked around to see how many of the guys and the four women I remembered from the flight over. We had all arrived about the same time from the States, which was good. No two-month "old-timers." I was glad to see everybody was wearing name tapes.

"Okay, listen up!" Captain Coles put his clipboard down and

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Robin "Birdy" Perry, a new army recruit from Harlem, isn't quite sure why he joined the army, but he's sure where he's headed: Iraq. Birdy and the others in the Civilian Affairs Battalion are supposed to help secure and stabilize the country and successfully interact with the Iraqi people. Officially, the code name for their maneuvers is Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the young men and women in the CA unit have a simpler name for it:

WAR

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A SPECIAL PREVIEW OF THE COMPANION NOVEL, *FALLEN ANGELS*!**