

Sleeper 13 by Rob Sinclair

5 stars

Brainwashing the very young into becoming the perfect terrorists.

Aydin Torkal, stationed in Paris, is watching TV with his administrator, Khaled. A bomb has exploded in Aleppo and a British charity worker has been killed. The photo of the woman comes up on screen and Aydin realises that it is his twin sister, Nilay. He has not seen her since he was a young boy. He had been kidnapped by his father and taken to "The Farm" where he had been held and trained in every aspect of fighting, electronics and bombmaking. He had lost his true identity, simply becoming Talatashar, the number Thirteen. But seeing his murdered sister, and knowing that one of his fellow trainees has murdered her, suddenly awakens long-suppressed memories of his mother and sister and the normality of his family life before his father had snatched him away to undergo the brutal and relentless training to turn him into a killing machine.

Maybe if Khaled had not said, "there'll be no place in paradise for that bitch, or any of the others" Aydin would have spared his life but, once the words leave his mouth, Aydin is unable to hold back his primal anger, pain and despair and he kills Khaled but, unfortunately, not before Khaled is able to send an SOS message back to their handler. Aydin knows he must flee, because a team will be on its way to kill him before he can cause any further damage.

Rachel Cox is employed by SIS, (Secret Intelligence Service) and is presently undercover in Aleppo. She had been working with Nilay trying to unravel the stories that they kept hearing about young boys going missing. She knew they were getting closer to uncovering the truth about a group of extremists that she'd labelled The Thirteen. Nilay was helping her because she was sure that her twin brother had been taken to such a training place by her father. After Nilay's murder, Rachel realises that her cover is blown and is extradited to Turkey.

We follow Aydin and Rachel as they cross paths. Both with the same commitment, to stop whatever this team of Sleepers has planned, coordinating deadly attacks across Europe. Neither able to trust the other.

Rob Sinclair's storyline is brutal. Hard-hitting, fast-moving and very compulsive reading. The two main protagonists, Aydin and Rachel, had me rooting for them and shouting as they managed to finally reach the story's final gobsmacking ending.

I have been left thinking that this type of "farming" may be already up and running and sincerely hope that the governments of the world are taking action to trace them and smash them before coordinated terrorist events can take place.

Rob Sinclair, you've taken a brave step as an author by moving out of your comfort zone to pen a storyline so completely different from your previous work. Congratulations! You've proved that you are an author who can change his style and still produce a book that may prove to be one of your best so far. I can see this being snapped up for a TV series.

Treebeard

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

