

# **Ark Angel Study Guide**

**Ark Angel by Anthony Horowitz**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">Ark Angel Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1, 2, and 3.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 4 and 5.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 6 and 7.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 8 and 9.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 10 and 11.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 12 and 13.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 14 and 15.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 16 and 17.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 18 and 19.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 20 and 21.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>



# Plot Summary

Anthony Horowitz's *Ark Angel* is the story of a young boy who has been drawn into the very grown up world of espionage. Alex Rider is fourteen, but that does not stop him from being the top operative for the British intelligence agency, MI6. This story begins shortly after Alex has been shot. An assassin attempted to kill Alex, but thanks to a low curb just at the right moment, the bullet missed Alex's heart. Alex is in a private hospital recovering from his wounds. Alex is just one day away from going home when everything goes horribly wrong.

Alex, much like any other fourteen year old boy would be, is bored and tired of being cooped up in his hospital room all day and night. He sneaks downstairs to see the night guard, who he knows will let him outside for a half hour or so, and stumbles into a conspiracy. Four armed men enter the hospital and kill the guard after locating the room of Paul Drevin. Paul is in the room next to Alex, and Alex is worried about the boy. Paul would not be able to defend himself against these men, so Alex hurries up to his room and swaps the room numbers. He then gets dressed and poses as Paul. After a good run through the hospital, Alex manages to take out all four of the assailants, one by one. On his way to call the police, Alex is hit from behind by the driver and kidnapped in Paul's place.

After escaping from the kidnappers, Alex learns that they were soldiers for Force Three. Force Three is a terrorist organization who seem to have a vendetta against the billionaire Nikolei Drevin, Paul's father. Alex's doctor orders two weeks vacation for Alex to rest, and nothing else. Paul's father insists that Alex spend his two weeks with them. He will get to relax at the spacious and luxurious Neverglade, home of the Drevins in London. He will get to tour New York City for a day, and then even go to the Caribbean and watch a rocket launch. This all sounds great, but Alex has a bad feeling about his vacation. He is right.

Upon arriving in New York, Alex is detained by a "customs" agent, who turns out to be CIA. The CIA tell Alex that Nikolei is one of the worlds biggest criminals, and that he is connected to the Russian Mafiya, Chinese Triad, and Japanese Yakuza. Alex is to continue his vacation with the Drevins and just keep an eye on Nikolei. If Nikolei tries to go anywhere from his island in the Caribbean, Alex is to notify the CIA. The CIA has a team just ten miles away on the island of Barbados, and at Alex's word, they will rush in and take Drevin.

Alex's cover is blown on the island, and Alex finds out that Nikolei has no plan of running. Nikolei plans to send a bomb up over the space station, *Ark Angel*. The bomb is placed just so that when it explodes, it will act as a push in the wrong direction, sending the space station hurtling toward the Pentagon, where the CIA has all of the evidence in Drevin's case. Enough of *Ark Angel* will survive reentry to completely level Washington D.C. The great part about his plan is that he invented Force Three! The terrorists get to take the blame for the bomb, and Drevin would get away. Alex escapes



the island and informs the CIA of what is going on, only to have to go right back to the island with them.

After Nikolei Drevin's plane crashes over the jungle, Alex finds out that there is no way to deactivate the bomb from Earth. Alex must take an ape's place in a second rocket to the station, then move the bomb to a more central location. In the center of Ark Angel, the bomb would blow up the entire station. When Alex reaches the space station, he finds that he is not alone. The leader of Force Three, who was also Drevin's chief of security, went up with the bomb to place it and activate it. He is awaiting the second rocket so he will be able to return to Earth. He and Alex fight, but Alex manages to kill him. Alex moves the bomb to the center of the station, leaving it nose first in a toilet. Alex then returns to the reentry module and returns to Earth. Ark Angel is destroyed in orbit.



# Chapters 1, 2, and 3

## Chapters 1, 2, and 3 Summary

Arch Angel is the story of a fourteen-year-old boy who has been caught up in some very grown up dealings with the CIA, MI6, and a world class criminal. His adventures take him from London to New York, then to Flamingo Bay in the Caribbean and even to space.

### Chapter 1 -Force Three-

Chapter one takes place at an international security conference. A former SAS agent, Max Webber, is talking giving a speech introducing Force Three, an Eco-terrorism group. He basically declares war on Force Three, and after the speech, he is questioned by MI6. He tells them that he cannot possibly reveal his source and that they should attend his next seminar, where hopefully he will have more information. He takes a phone call from some unidentified person who he is doing business with. The phone explodes while up to his head and he dies. Force Three claims responsibility the next day and announces that they have already marked their next target.

### Chapter 2 -The Boy In Room Nine-

Alex Rider is a fourteen-year-old secret agent. He works for MI6 and was recently shot in the chest. An assassin with a .22 rifle attempted to shoot Alex in the heart, but a step down from the curb just at the right moment allowed Alex to survive the gunshot. He is now in a very discrete hospital reserved for celebrities, the wealthy, and apparently government agents.

Alex is bored out of his mind, so he sneaks downstairs to try to convince the guard to let him outside for a half hour or so. Instead, he finds four armed men interrogating the guard. The men are looking for the boy from the room next to his, Paul Drevin. Once they discover what room the boy is in, they shoot the guard in the head.

### Chapter 3 -Emergency Treatment-

The four gunmen head for the elevator, so Alex takes the stairs. He quickly formulates a plan and poses as Paul when the men get off the elevator. They follow him when he runs from them, and he takes them out one by one on the trip across the hospital and down to the ground floor. At the receptionist desk, Alex pauses to call the police. It is at that moment that the fifth man, who did not come in earlier, knocks Alex unconscious.

## Chapters 1, 2, and 3 Analysis

### Chapter 1 -Force Three-



Max Webber is the first character introduced in chapter one. He once served with SAS, but they dropped him after his first tour of duty. He has written books on how to take care of yourself and has consulted with very wealthy businessmen. Webber has made a very successful business out of his short time spent with SAS. Max is at the International Security Conference, delivering a speech about a new terrorist group called Force Three. Force Three is much like any Eco-activist group, wanting to protect Earth and the environment. The difference is that these people are willing to kill to meet their goals, and in fact have already done so. They profess a deep love and respect of Earth, but apparently care nothing for humanity.

Next, Allan Blunt and Mrs. Jones are introduced. They are senior agents at MI6. Jones is attentive, but Blunt seems almost asleep. He is bored. It is clear that these two are at the conference to learn about Force Three, for as soon as Webber mentions Force Three, both of them perk up and even the bored Blunt becomes attentive.

Webber finishes his lecture on Force Three by introducing their leader, Kasper. Kasper is a very round headed individual who has tattooed his entire head to look like a globe. Kasper apparently "...cares about the planet so much, he's rather let it go to his head", as Webber remarks on page four. Kasper he describes as a man who loves his work, and would rather be able to push the button himself, whenever possible. Webber declares Force Three a dangerous organization that cannot be allowed to exist, and implores the various security forces present to find Kasper and Force Three.

Blunt and Jones move to intercept Webber as he leaves, and Webber instantly recognizes them and greets them as friends. They ask him about Force Three, but get very little information out of him. He tells them that if they want to learn more about Force Three, that perhaps they should attend his next lecture. Webber leaves the conference and retrieves his cell phone. Not long after leaving, the cell phone rings. The unidentified person on the other side comments on Webber's speech, and they discuss the quarter million dollars that they are supposed to pay him. The mystery employer warns Webber to be careful of making too big an enemy of Force Three, but Webber is arrogant and confident in his security methods and doesn't feel that anyone can get to him. The person on the other end tells Webber good-bye, and the phone explodes, killing Webber who was holding it tight to his ear.

Chapter one introduces two separate entities that will be predominant throughout the story. Force Three is effectively introduced to the reader as a very dangerous, and resourceful terrorist organization with radical ecological ideas and no qualms at all about taking lives. MI6 is an European intelligence agency that will likely play a heavy role in the search for Force Three and their leader Kasper. Max Webber, although a better developed character at this point than any other, merely served the purpose of introducing MI6 and Force Three to each other, as well as to the reader.

## Chapter 2 -The Boy In Room Nine-

Chapter two introduces Alex Rider, a fourteen-year-old secret agent for MI6, and Paul Drevin, the young son of a billionaire. Alex is recovering from an assassination attempt,



and will soon be leaving the hospital. Much of chapter two is devoted to an exposition dump, giving the reader history about Alex's wound and his status in MI6.

Paul is not so lucky as Alex. He had a very complicated appendicitis and must remain a few more days. His name is familiar to Alex, but Paul's full identity is not revealed in this chapter. He does explain that he spent his whole life in different cities being tutored, and it seems he has no friends. It also seems that, while his father can afford the very best in a hospital, he apparently cannot find the time to visit his son.

Alex wakes after midnight, and like any fourteen-year-old who has been in bed for a week, he is bored out of his mind. Alex sneaks downstairs to talk to Conner, the night watchman. He knows that Conner will give in after only a little argument and allow Alex to go outside for a short time. Before Alex can get to Conner, four armed men enter the hospital. After getting the location of Paul's room from Conner, the leader shoots him in the head with a silenced gun. After shooting Conner, the gunman admits that he already knew that, and that he was just checking. This amuses his companions, and they move off in good spirits to get Paul. Alex witnesses this from a dark corner, and cannot help but feel frightened.

Chapter two not only helps to identify Alex as a young James Bond, but also shows that despite his skills and training, he is still a fourteen-year-old boy, with all the same concerns of any other teenage boy.

### Chapter 3 -Emergency Treatment-

Chapter three opens with a frightened teenage boy huddling in a corner and four professional killers heading for the elevator. Alex recognizes that they are professionals, for whom killing is second nature, in the way they talk about the job and the way they move toward the elevator. These men work well together as a unit and have probably worked together for a while. Alex knows that the elevator moves very slow, so he take the stairs as fast as he can and beats the assassins to the second floor by a minute and a half or so.

Alex knows that he is just an unarmed, injured teenage boy, and that these men are well armed professional killers who work well together and outnumber him by three. However, he knows that he cannot just leave Paul in his room asleep for them to kidnap or worse. He quickly rearranges the numbers and names on his and Paul's doors. He gets dressed and poses as Paul when the men get off the elevator.

The men mistake him for Paul, which was his plan, and he runs from them, leading them on a chase down the hallways, and further away from Paul. Alex is a very resourceful boy, and manages to gain several advantages over his opponents by using the equipment of the hospital to his advantage. He electrocutes one of the men, then hits one other in the groin with an oxygen tank. After running further down the hallway, he fashions a slingshot out of elastic and fires a ten pound medicine ball at the leader, incapacitating him. The last man he disarms with the magnets of an MRI. He then traps him to the MRI by his heavy steel watch.



Alex displays great attention to detail throughout this action sequence and manages to save Paul by taking out four armed and experienced assailants. He heads for the receptionist desk to call the police, but is ambushed by a fifth man, the driver. Alex is knocked unconscious as the chapter ends.





# Chapters 4 and 5

## Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

### Chapter 4 -Kaspar-

Alex wakes up in a dilapidated room in an abandoned tower in East London. One of the men from the hospital comes and gets him and takes him to another apartment in the building, where he sees the other two of the four. The fourth man is not present, and Alex wonders if he made it out of the hospital. There is another man in this room. The man sitting in this room has shaved his entire head, including his eyebrows, and tattooed the Earth over his head so that his head looks like a globe. This is Kaspar, the leader of Force Three. Kaspar, who believes that Alex is Paul Drevin, tells "Paul" that his father is an enemy to the environment and that they will hold him for ransom. Kaspar prepares to cut off one of Alex's fingers to send as a message to Paul's father. Alex tells Kaspar that his men kidnapped the wrong boy and identifies himself. He points out his chest wound and the fact that his appendix is not located in his chest. Kaspar is angry that his men kidnapped the wrong kid and they are angry at Alex for the trouble he gave them in the hospital. Kaspar sends Alex back to his room while he verifies that Alex is not Paul. He tells Alex that he would have been better off if he hadn't been mistaken for Paul, as now Kaspar has no reason to keep his men from killing him.

### Chapter 5 -Fire Escape-

Kaspar sends for Alex and tells him that he knows that Alex got involved on purpose. Kaspar doesn't know who Alex is, but he certainly isn't going to let the boy making an enemy of Force Three go unpunished. Kaspar sends him to an apartment down the hall and nails the door shut. Then Force Three sets fire to the building.

Alex escapes through the ceiling and runs down the stairs. At the ground floor, Combat Jacket is waiting for him. Combat Jacket takes a few shots at Alex, but misses due to the smoke. Alex races back up the stairs and onto the roof. There is no fire escape, so Alex tightrope walks across the steel cable connecting a banner to an identical building across the street. The cable snaps, and Alex is wrapped up in the banner, dangling a few yards from the roof of the other building. He climbs up the cable, and onto the roof. He is helped up by some firemen who saw him going across the cable.

## Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

### Chapter 4 -Kaspar-

Chapter four opens with Alex regaining consciousness. He has experienced the feeling of being knocked out before, several times apparently, and so he recognizes that he was knocked out and taken prisoner. He can tell by the time of day that he has only been unconscious for a few hours. They couldn't have taken him too far in that amount



of time, so he is probably still in London. Alex's assumption that he is still in London is verified moments later when he looks out the window and sees a banner on a nearby tower labeling this area as East London.

One of the four assailants from the hospital, the one Alex has named Spectacles for his glasses, shows up. This is the man that took the oxygen tank to the groin. He has a gun, but Alex is not too scared to make jab at him. He asks Spectacles if his voice is an octave higher. Alex knows that these men think that he is Paul Drevin, son of multi billionaire Nikolei Drevin, and since they are likely holding him for ransom, they won't kill him no matter how insulting he is. Spectacles leads him out of the room where they meet Combat Jacket, the leader of the four man team from the hospital, so named for his old combat jacket that he wears like a uniform. Together they take Alex to an apartment that has been gutted out to make it one large open space.

There is a man in the room that Alex has not met before. He has a globe of Earth tattooed over his head. The man introduces himself as Kaspar and tells Alex that he had the tattoo done as a show of respect for the planet that has taken care of humanity for so long. He of course addresses Alex as Paul, and at first Alex does nothing to discourage this. Alex makes a few jokes at Kaspar about his name and the globe. Kaspar tells "Paul" that his father is responsible for the destruction of the environment, and that the ransom money the get from Paul will help fund their other operations. Kaspar tells "Paul" that a photo will not do as proof that they have him, and a lock of hair might make them look weak. He apologizes as if he really cares about the boy, but informs "Paul" that they will be taking a finger to send to his father.

Alex tries to tell Kaspar that his name is Alex Rider, not Paul Drevin, and that he was in room nine, not eight. Kaspar doesn't believe him until Alex points out his wound. Kaspar asks how he got that chest wound, and for the first time that day Alex must lie. He cannot tell this man that he was the target of an assassination attempt, so he comes up with a story about a bicycle accident. Kaspar seems disappointed in his men, and they are angry at Alex for being so much trouble. Kaspar tells Alex that it might have been better if he were Paul, as now he might let his men kill Alex slowly to appease them. He sends Alex back to his room so he can verify that he is indeed not Paul, and tells him that they will meet again later.

Alex has saved Paul Drevin from being kidnapped, but at the cost of making himself prisoner. To make matters even worse, Alex does not have the advantage of being the boy they want to hold for ransom, so he is in even more danger than Paul would have been. Alex is upset with himself for getting involved on his last day in the hospital, thereby giving up his chance to go home.

#### Chapter 5 -Fire Escape-

As chapter five begins, Alex is wondering about his captors. They claim to be freedom fighters and care about Earth and humanity, but they obviously enjoy killing. Combat Jacket shot Conner when it was completely unnecessary, Kaspar was going to cut off one of Paul's fingers when a photo or lock of hair would do, and now they were almost



certainly going to kill Alex simply because he was not Paul. Alex could tell that these men were insane.

Alex is taken back to Kaspar, who shows Alex a newspaper story telling about the events at the hospital. Kaspar then says that he knows that Alex swapped the numbers on the doors and that he got involved on purpose. Kaspar tells Alex that this was a mistake that would cost him dearly. He cost Kaspar a million dollars in ransom by being the wrong boy, so it should cost Alex his life. They take him away and lock him in a different apartment. The only window is barred, and the door is nailed shut. Alex is cannot figure out why they nail the door shut. Are they simply going to leave him to starve death? Soon enough, Alex gets his answer.

Alex soon realizes that Force Three has set fire to the building. Alex quickly assesses the situation. He cannot escape out of the window, as it is barred and located eight stories above the ground. He cannot escaped through the door because it is nailed shut. Alex attempts to break through the wall, but it is solid. This only leaves him the option of making it into the ceiling and crawling over a wall. He manages to do this and runs for the elevators. The elevators do not work and the doors are welded shut, but there is a stairwell nearby. Alex takes the stairs as fast as he can to the ground floor as the fire consumes the building from the ground up.

Alex emerges from the stairwell and can see daylight. This gives Alex some hope, but just then Combat Jacket appears out of nowhere and takes a few shots at him. Alex runs back up the stairs and eventually gets on the roof. He searches for a fire escape but can't find one. He is just about to back down stairs and try again when stairwell becomes an inferno. Even the rooftop door is on fire.

Alex can feel the tarmac underfoot getting very hot. He determines that his only chance is to tightrope walk across a steel cable. The cable is connected to the building on which Alex stands, and runs across the street to a matching building. There is a banner suspended from the cable. Alex takes a long pvc pipe and uses his bandages to tie two steel buckets of concrete to them. By using this weight to keep his center of gravity centered and slightly below the cable, it should be nearly impossible for him to lose his balance. Alex starts across the cable, and while it is cutting into his feet, it looks like he might make it. Alex is distracted by the emergency workers below, and almost falls. Just then the rooftop explodes and Alex runs across the cable. Alex is only a few yards away when the cable snaps, and jumps for the rooftop. Alex misses the ledge and falls, but gets wrapped up in the banner and hangs fifteen stories up by the banner. Alex eventually pulls himself up onto the other roof where he is met by some firemen who had seen him from the ground while he was on the cable.

Once safely on the roof, Alex passes out from the exertion and his wounds. Where most people would have probably died, Alex found a way to get out of and off of the burning building and once again manages to make it out of a very bad situation.



# Chapters 6 and 7

## Chapters 6 and 7 Summary

### Chapter 6 -R&R-

Alex ends up back in the hospital, and his doctor tells him to do absolutely nothing but rest for at least two weeks. Mr. Crowley of MI6 comes to visit him and debrief him. Alex tells him everything that happens in the hospital and the abandoned apartment building. Crowley tells him not to be surprised if Drevin contacts him.

The next day Jack cooks him breakfast and they argue about what happened. Jack says that she is worried about Alex and that she is upset at him for continually getting himself into trouble. Alex tries to tell her that he couldn't just lay there and let a boy get kidnapped. Jack admits that she knows that, but that she just doesn't think she can take the news the next time if Alex doesn't miraculously make it. Alex reassures her that there will be no next time, as he has no plans of ever working for MI6 again. The phone rings and Jack answers it. Nikolei Drevin has just invited Alex to have tea with him.

### Chapter 7 -At The Waterfront-

Alex and Jack arrive at the Waterfront Hotel. They are met by Drevin's personal assistant, who informs them that Drevin is still in a press conference and that they can either join or wait in the suite. They chose to attend the conference and learn what they can about Ark Angel.

After the conference, they meet Drevin in his personal suite. Drevin thanks them for coming and thanks Alex for saving his son's life. He says he has donated two million to the hospital for a new radiology wing in Alex's name, and he invites the two to spend Alex's two week vacation in luxury with his son Paul. Alex is unsure about something that Drevin has said, but Jack seems eager. They agree and Drevin leaves to take care of some other business.

## Chapters 6 and 7 Analysis

### Chapter 6 -R&R-

In chapter six the reader is introduced to Jack Starbright. She is an American who came to London as a student. She paid her way by working for Alex's father as a housekeeper, but now she stays on and is a good friend to Alex. She doesn't like to cook and refuses to cook anything that will take any longer than ten minutes, but she manages to set the breakfast table with scrambled eggs, fried bacon, and sliced tomato.

At this point in the chapter, the story jumps back to Alex's time in the hospital right after the kidnapping. The nurse checks up on him and warns him that the doctor is angry with



him for getting himself hurt again. Sure enough, when Dr. Hayward shows up, he seems a little less than happy with Alex. He prescribes Alex a two week vacation, no school, work, and definitely no MI6. He is to rest and recuperate fully before getting back to life. This does not sit well with Alex. He feels like a few days is all that he will need.

John Crowley from MI6 comes to visit Alex in the hospital. He congratulates Alex on a job well done and tells Alex that he is glad Alex made it. He hints at a time when he was a field agent working with Alex's father, but quickly gets down to business. Crowley pulls out a tape recorder and the debriefing begins. Alex tells Crowley everything he can about the kidnapping attempt gone wrong, and Force Three in general. Crowley tells Alex that Force Three is responsible for the deaths of several other people and the destruction of a few industrial plants. He tells Alex that Drevin is a target to Force Three because of his new hotel he is building ... in space. The Ark Angel will orbit Earth and will serve as a resort for wealthy businessmen and anyone else who can afford the tickets to get there. He also admits that the British government is partnering with Drevin in this endeavor and says that it will generate a huge source of revenue for the government. He tells Alex not to be surprised if he gets a check or at least a call from Drevin.

Back at the breakfast table, it has been two days since his adventure. Alex seems to be alright, except for his left arm, which he rubs as if it's sore. Jack is obviously upset with him. They discuss it, and she admits that she worries about Alex. She says that she doesn't know if she can just sit there at home and take the news the next time if Alex doesn't make it. Alex has no plans to ever work for MI6 again, much preferring at this point to just be a normal teen, and he tells her that there will be no next time. At this point the phone rings and Nikolei Drevin invites Alex to join him for tea. Alex is tempted to say no, but he decides that since he did save Drevin's son and a million dollars, that it is only normal that Drevin might want to talk to him. He says "let's go". The last sentence of this chapter, "Now two words were going to drag him back into the world he thought he'd left behind," hints at his future involvement with MI6, whether he likes it or not, and foreshadows the future of his connection to Drevin pulling him back into that world.

#### Chapter 7 -At The Waterfront-

Jack and Alex arrive at the Waterfront Hotel in a cab. Alex can understand Drevin's reluctance to send the Rolls, preferring to keep it low key and not attract any unwanted attention to the personal meeting. Drevin's personal assistant, Tamara Knight, meets them at the car. Tamara sounds American, and Alex finds her attractive if only she'd smile more. She says that she's glad they could make it, but she doesn't seem to really mean it. She does however seem very enthusiastic about working for Nikolei Drevin.

Drevin is still in a press conference discussing Ark Angel. Apparently the project is three months behind and three million pounds over budget. Drevin explains that any such project would have delays and expenses, but that ultimately it will be worth it, and that he has no regrets about joining the project. One reporter mentions the failed kidnapping of his son. Drevin says that he is glad that both boys are alright. He feels that Force



There is a group of thugs and criminals and that the authorities will take care of it. Another journalist mentions that the United States is investigating Drevin, something about inconsistencies in his spending. Drevin admits that he knows of the CIA's investigation, and that when someone spends that much money, they are simply doing their jobs by looking into it. He assures the press, and thereby the CIA and everyone else, that he has nothing to hide.

After the conference Drevin meets Alex and Jack and Tamara at the door to his private suite. He dismisses Tamara and invites Jack and Alex inside. The suite is luxurious, of course. Drevin seems genuinely appreciative that Alex saved his son. Drevin does not know Alex's full story, and also believes that his chest wound is from a bicycle accident. He asks Alex to allow him to make it up to him. In anticipation of Alex turning down his offer, he has already donated two million in Alex's name to the hospital for a new radiology wing. He is very insistent that Alex accept his offer for Alex and Jack to stay at Drevin's place for the two week vacation. Alex initially resists, but after Jack becomes excited about it, and when Drevin mentions that it would also mean a lot to his son, Alex agrees. Still, there is something off about either something that Drevin has said or the way he is behaving, but Alex can't quite put his finger on it. He does, however, remember that Drevin is a target to an Eco-terrorist group.



# Chapters 8 and 9

## Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

### Chapter 8 -The Lap Of Luxury-

Alex arrives at Neverglade, the castle home of the Drevins. He is greeted by Paul, who shows him around the place. At the end of the day they still hadn't seen the entire property, but it is time for dinner with Paul and his father. During dinner Nikolei talks exclusively to Alex, all but ignoring his own son. After dinner, Alex snoops around a little and wanders into Nikolei's private study. He sees pictures of Nikolei with many different celebrities and politicians. There are also newspaper clippings, and one is of Nikolei standing by the tower in which Alex was imprisoned. Nikolei Drevin had bought it just a few days prior to the kidnapping. Nikolei arrives and tells Alex that he does not want him in there anymore, and Alex goes to bed.

### Chapter 9 -Short Circuit-

Creative Ideas Animation is a front company that supposedly sells animation in SoHo. Inside the back rooms of the store, a secret meeting takes place, in which some unidentified men discuss the attempted kidnapping of Paul Drevin. They know that Alex is MI6 and that he intentionally put himself in the way of the kidnapping. They are not sure if MI6 set it up to start with, or if he was just in the right place at the right time, but now Alex is "part of the family" and staying at Neverglade. Alex will be accompanying the Drevins to New York, and they are to intercept Alex and bring him in for questioning.

Back at Neverglade, it is time for the cart race. Drevin's carts can do up to one hundred miles per hour, and have almost no safety features. The track is also dangerous, and if Alex wrecks he could be seriously injured or killed. Drevin tries to cheat several times to keep Alex from winning, but Alex does eventually cheat himself and win. Nikolei Drevin seems furious about the outcome, and declares the race void. Paul warns Alex not to make an enemy out of Nikolei.

## Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

### Chapter 8 -The Lap Of Luxury

Jack does not accompany Alex to Neverglade, the home of the Drevins. She has decided to go see her parents in Washington D.C. for their anniversary. Alex arrives this time in the Rolls-Royce and is greeted by an excited Paul. Paul is glad that Alex is there, but he understands if Alex wants to leave. Apparently most of the people that do show up are only there because Paul's father gives them free stuff, not because they like Paul. Most people see Paul as a stuck-up, spoiled rich brat. Alex says that he has to take a vacation anyway, and if Paul's dad wants to treat him like a millionaire, then he





won't stop him. This seems to make Paul feel better and they tour the house and the grounds.

The house is actually an old castle that burned in Scotland. Nikolei Drevin had it moved and rebuilt under a slightly different design, and made bigger too. There are thirty bedrooms, a cinema with all of the new releases, a fully equipped gym, an indoor pool and an outdoor pool, and hot tubs. There are two hundred acres, a lake for fishing, swimming, or boating, and a miniature race track. There are horses to ride, dirt bikes, and go-karts. By the time dinner rolls around, Alex still hasn't seen the whole property, or even the whole house.

At dinner, Nikolei asks what the boys have planned for the next day. Paul says that they'll probably take a walk. Nikolei thinks this is silly, since there is so many more adventurous things to do, but then decides that with both of the boys recovering from their time in the hospital, that maybe it would be a bad idea to get too wild. Nikolei seems skeptical about Alex's wound actually coming from a bicycle accident, but doesn't actually challenge it. Nikolei challenges Alex to a go-kart race the next day, and Alex feels as if he has little choice but to accept. Nikolei all but ignores his son during the dinner conversation, and it is obvious that there is a gaping chasm between the two. Alex is beginning to wonder just exactly why he is actually here.

After dinner, Alex roams around the house for a while, exploring. He goes into Nikolei's study and looks around. There isn't much there that tells Alex anything more than Nikolei is a wealthy businessman. There is one thing, however, that gives a little insight into Nikolei's personality. He is a vain man. There are pictures of Nikolei with many different celebrities and politicians. There are also numerous newspaper clippings that have pictures of him in the news. Nikolei catches him in the study and asks why he's there. He doesn't seem mad, just perplexed. He tells Alex that this is his private study and that he doesn't want him in there. Nikolei leaves it at that, but there is suspicion in the air between them. Alex leaves the study and heads for his room feeling even more awkward, and once again gets the feeling that all is not what it appears to be with Nikolei Drevin. He is beginning to worry that this is not going to be the relaxing vacation he was promised. Alex saw a newspaper picture of Drevin standing next to the buildings he purchased recently, the same building that Force Three used to hold Alex just a few days later.

#### Chapter 9 -Short Circuit-

Chapter nine opens with a description of SoHo. It is described as having a village atmosphere. Creative Ideas Animation is a company that sells animation, but their prices and service are both terrible on the outside. On the inside it is just a front, not actually meant to sell anything or encourage people to come in. The people who own the building also own the garage next to it and use the garage to secretly enter the main building.

There are seven people in a conference room discussing what happened in London a few days earlier. They know that Paul Drevin was supposed to be kidnapped by Force





Three. They also know that Alex Rider intentionally interfered and saved Paul. They also know that Alex is a top operative for MI6. They know that Alex will now be accompanying the Drevins to New York, and they will bring Alex in for questioning.

At Neverglade, Alex and Nikolei race. Paul tells Alex about the go-karts, which can go upwards of one hundred miles per hour, and accelerate faster than a Ferrari. He also tells Alex about a man who raced Nikolei once and wrecked. He ended up with a few broken bones, but if he hadn't been wearing his helmet, he would likely be dead. The carts have no safety features at all, and the track itself does not have many either. Paul warns Alex that Nikolei is very competitive and can't take losing, so it might be better if Alex does not even try to win.

Once the race begins, Alex sees that he will have to go full speed, as Nikolei is not going to give him the chance otherwise to beat him. Once Alex starts to get the lead, Nikolei starts hitting his cart. Once in front, Nikolei swerves around so that Alex can not pass. Toward the end of the race, Nikolei hits Alex's cart so that Alex must either stop or go over the bridge. Alex pretends to stop, but then drives through the guardrail made of tires and lands on the track below several yards ahead of Nikolei. Alex has no trouble winning the race at this point, and Nikolei crosses the line a few moments later. Nikolei is furious that Alex cheated, even though he makes no mention of his own cheating. Nikolei declares the race void, and says it was a draw. He storms off. Paul tells Alex that he may have made a mistake and that he does not want to make an enemy out of Nikolei, then he runs after his father.



# Chapters 10 and 11

## Chapters 10 and 11 Summary

### Chapter 10 -Injury Time-

On Saturday Drevin's soccer team was to play an important game against Chelsea, who Alex favors. Drevin and Alex arrive at the stadium in yet another Rolls-Royce and immediately head for Drevin's private box. Inside Drevin converses with some socialites and Alex just tries to stay out of the way. The game is not going well for Drevin's team, and they eventually lose. Drevin goes white and makes a phone call in Russian, then he sends Alex home with Tamara. Alex sees Silver Tooth, one of the Force Three goons in the stands and goes after him.

### Chapter 11 -Blue Murder-

Alex follows Silver Tooth to the Chelsea locker room. He peeks in the door and sees Silver Tooth, Spectacles, and Combat Jacket giving Adam Wright, the striker and team captain who had just lost the game, a present. The present is a medallion. Just then, Alex feels the cold touch of a gun barrel on the back of his neck. He turns around to see Steel Watch, minus the watch. Steel Watch tells him to slowly and quietly leave with him. Steel Watch directs Alex out and through the crowd toward a van. Alex insults a supporter of the losing team and he swings at Alex. Alex ducks and the punch hits Steel Watch in the throat, who then shoots the Stratford East supporter. Alex manages to get away in the resulting chaos. Meanwhile, Adam Wright is taking a shower. The water activates the caesium and it explodes, killing him.

## Chapters 10 and 11 Analysis

### Chapter 10 -Injury Time-

By Saturday, Drevin seems to have forgotten all about the race. Alex has not. He is nervous about the soccer game because his is a long time fan of the team that is playing against the team that Drevin owns, and Nikolei knows it. They arrive to the game alone, as Paul had to remain at Neverglade after a severe asthma attack. Nikolei mentions that Alex's preferred team was recently bought by another Russian who Drevin does not like. Alex gets the feeling that this is more than just a game. In the private lounge area, Alex feels alone amongst the celebrities and wealthy present, and wishes that at least Paul was there to keep him company. When the game starts, they head to the stands where they have perfectly located seats.

The game is a tough one. There are penalties and very few goals. At the end of the game Drevin's team is losing, two to one, but miraculously they get a penalty and a free kick. Drevin is fine with a tie, as it is not a loss. The striker prepares for the kick almost lazily. He has made many kicks just like this, and rarely misses. Today he misses.



Drevin's team loses, and it visibly effects him. Alex notices that he is colorless and shaking. Alex tries to stay as far away as possible. Drevin makes a phone call and then tells Alex that Tamara will take him home, that he has other business to attend to. Before Alex gets a chance to leave, he catches a glimpse out of the corner of his eye. He goes back to look, and finds that Silver Tooth, one of the Force Three men is in the stands. Alex knows that he should just head back to Neverglade, but he yells to Tamara that he will meet her at the car, and runs off after him.

#### Chapter 11 -Blue Murder-

Alex doubts that Silver Tooth is there to enjoy the game. He realizes that if Force Three is present, that it likely means that another attack will be made on Nikolei Drevin. Alex follows Silver Tooth and witnesses an odd event. Silver Tooth, Combat Jacket, and Spectacles are all in the locker room, surrounding Adam Wright. Adam seems to be a fairly dim individual. He is completely self absorbed, and fails to notice the nature of the men standing around him. The three soldiers of Force Three present him with a caesium medallion as a sign of appreciation. Adam accepts the medallion and thanks them, then tells them that he's about to hit the shower. They tell Adam that Caesium is very rare, and very expensive, but they do not tell him that it reacts violently with water and will combust when wet.

Alex feels a slight nudge at the back of his neck. He knows that this is the feel of a gun. Alex turns around to see Steel Watch. Alex is not too surprised to see him, but Steel Watch seems very surprised to see Alex. He has a score to settle with Alex, so he marches him off toward a van. Alex knows that if he reaches the van, he is as good as dead. He also knows that if he tries to run or says anything, that Steel Watch will shoot him and disappear into the crowd.

As they approach the outskirts of the crowd, Alex realizes that he is running out of time. Finally, he sees a Stratford East supporter who appears to be a drunk skinhead, and a plan unfolds. Alex stares hard at him long enough for him to know that Alex is staring. Once the skinhead notices him, Alex sneers at him and holds his hand close to his chest, holding two fingers out, then dropping his index finger, leaving the middle extended. In this way, he tells the skinhead two to one, and the one is the middle finger. He repeats the insult once more, just to make sure the guy gets the point. He does. He drunkenly approaches Alex, forcing him to stop. Steel Watch bumps into him, just as Alex planned. The Stratford East guy tries to punch Alex in the face, but when Alex ducks he hits Steel Watch in the throat instead. Startled, Steel Watch shoots the Stratford East skinhead while Alex escapes into the crowd. They both know that if Steel Watch shoots again he will be discovered.

Alex tries to get Tamara to get security to the locker room before Adam Wright can get in the shower, but when they get there, all there is left is the smoldering remains of Adam Wright in the shower. Once again, Force Three demonstrate their ability to kill in a very clever way.



# Chapters 12 and 13

## Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

### Chapter 12 -Expiration Date-

Alex, Tamara, and the Drevins leave for New York. Upon arriving at JFK International Airport, Alex is detained by immigration because his passport is expired. The officer tells Nikolei Drevin that he is really supposed to send him back to England immediately, but since they are only staying twenty-four hours, he will stretch the rules a little and allow Alex to stay at the airport until they are ready to leave. When they are ready, he can go with them back to England. Alex is taken by the immigration officer to Creative Ideas Animation, which he automatically recognizes as a front for the CIA. He also recognizes the man who greets him inside, Joe Byrne, the deputy director of operations in the Covert Action section.

### Chapter 13 -The Biggest Criminal In The World-

Joe Byrne tells Alex that Nikolei Drevin is under investigation due to his involvement with organized crime. Joe asks Alex to remain with the Drevins until after the launch. He feels that Drevin may try to give them the slip, and he would like Alex, who Drevin seems to trust, to stay with them so that if anything happens Alex can tell the CIA. Mr. Smithers from MI6 shows up and gives him some new gear and they prepare to take him back to the airport, where Alex can meet up with the Drevins without them ever knowing he was gone.

## Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

### Chapter 12 -Expiration Date-

As chapter twelve opens, Alex and Paul are playing table tennis. The score is close, but Alex does end up losing. They are on a remodeled 747, in flight on the way to New York. The plane has a game room, as well as a private study where Nikolei Drevin is working through most of the flight. Alex wouldn't even know that he was in a plane if it were not for the sound of the engines and the occasional turbulence. He is constantly amazed at the wealth of the Drevins and how they both seem to take it for granted. Alex is beginning to see that Paul is more like his father than he realizes. He has become just as accustomed to the billionaire lifestyle, where Alex still feels uneasy and out of place.

Alex can not help but be wary of Nikolei Drevin. He does not trust the man, and feels that what ever is going on between Drevin and Force Three may be a personal secret being kept by both sides. He considers a few things that have recently happened when he decides not to trust Drevin. First, during their race, Drevin almost killed him because he did not want to lose. Second, when he was kidnapped, he was taken to a building



owned by one of Drevin's companies. Finally, at the soccer game, after Drevin's team lost, Drevin made a quick phone call. Immediately after, Alex saw Silver Tooth in the crowd, putting something into his pocket. Could it have been a cell phone? Afterward, Silver Tooth met the other Force Three thugs and killed Adam Wright, the striker who lost the game. Alex wonders if Force Three is taking orders directly from Drevin, or if perhaps there is a personal vendetta between the two that Drevin has not admitted. Either way, Alex has decided that he will find Jack and stay in Washington D.C. when the Drevins leave for Flamingo Bay.

When the plane lands, a customs officer and an immigration officer board the plane. They take a quick glance around, then check everyone's passport. Alex's passport shows expired, the day before they left London. This is strange, as he has only had his passport four years and it should not expire for quite some time. Without a current passport, Alex should by law be sent on the next plane back to London. However, since the Drevins are only staying twenty-four hours, the immigration officer agrees to allow Alex to stay at the airport until they return, at which point he may leave with them.

Once Alex is in the car, they leave the airport and head for SoHo. Alex asks where they are going, but the officer only says that it will not take long and that he will be taken care of. When they arrive at Creative Ideas Animation, Alex remembers his last trip to Miami, and the office of Centurion International Advertising. Alex immediately realizes that the "immigration officer" had swapped his passport with a fake, and that he has been taken to yet another office of the Central Intelligence Agency. The names of the front companies change, but the CIA is always CIA. Once inside he is greeted by the deputy director of operations of the Covert Action section of the CIA. Alex had met Joe Byrne in Miami. Joe greets Alex and tells him that it is good to see him again. Alex is not sure yet whether it will be good at all.

### Chapter 13 -The Biggest Criminal In The World-

Joe Byrne tells Alex that Nikolei Drevin could very well be the biggest criminal in the world. He was a mildly successful businessman and former KGB agent during the collapse of the Soviet Union. When Russia started selling off all of its assets, such as manufacturing plants and oil fields, Drevin borrowed money from the Russian mafiya, Japanese Yakuza, and the Chinese Triad. With their money, Drevin bought a controlling interest in a Russian oil company, and became a billionaire almost instantly. After paying off the debts to the criminal organizations, he continued to do business with them, funding several operations with his own money. There is also some suspicion that Force Three is merely a tool that Drevin himself devised to distract the CIA from their investigation. They are worried that Drevin will try to give them the slip while at Flamingo Bay. Flamingo Bay is guarded by Drevin's own private security force of hired mercenaries. The CIA is set up in Barbados, about ten miles away, but cannot get their agents inside.

Byrne asks Alex to just go along as planned, enjoy his vacation, and keep an eye out. So long as Drevin does not try to run for it, Alex can just sit back and enjoy the vacation. If, however, Drevin does anything odd, Alex is to contact the CIA so they can run in and



arrest him early to keep him from escaping. Alex was almost killed on Skeleton Key, and two of Byrne's CIA agents were. Now Byrne is asking Alex to go through pretty much the same thing. Alex does not want anything to do with this operation, and had in fact already decided that Drevin was not what he seemed, was untrustworthy, and that Alex had no plans of accompanying the Drevins to the launch. Now, Alex has even more reason to stay away. However, he is hesitant to tell Byrne no. As much as he wants to avoid this situation all together, he does not want Byrne to think he is too scared to do it, so he gives in.



# Chapters 14 and 15

## Chapters 14 and 15 Summary

### Chapter 14 -Flamingo Bay-

Upon arriving at Flamingo Bay, Alex can tell that things are not going to go as Joe Byrne promised. They land a seaplane and ride in an electric buggy to a security checkpoint. There are guards armed with submachine guns, and according to the security chief, razor wire in the water surrounding the island. The launch site is impressive, and Drevin explains to Alex and Paul exactly what will happen, and how, in the next few days.

Alex and Paul go kite surfing, which Alex really enjoys. After surfing for a while, the boys head off to the house for dinner. Meanwhile, on the other side of the island, a different conversation is happening. Magnus Payne, the security chief, has told Drevin that Alex Rider is an agent for MI6. He says that he might not be working with them now, but if MI6 or the CIA had a chance to talk to him, they would certainly ask Alex to spy on Drevin. Drevin gives the order to kill Alex the next day.

### Chapter 15 -Deep Trouble-

The next morning, Nikolei Drevin seems to be in much better spirits. He asks Paul what the boys have planned for the day, and suggests water skiing. He then asks Alex if he has ever been diving before. Alex, who has been a certified diver since he was twelve, admits that he does dive. Drevin tells him of a sunken World War II battleship nearby. Paul can not join him, due to his asthma, and of course Nikolei has work to do. Nikolei assures Alex that one of his security guys would join him as his diving buddy for safety.

Later that day, Alex is met by Kolo, one of the security guards. He asks if Alex is ready to go diving, and they head out on a small boat. Once they are certain that their gear is ready, they dive in. Alex and Kolo look around the ship for a while, then Kolo signals Alex to go ahead of him into the hold. Alex goes in and is amazed by what he sees. There are old Jeeps, boots, and rifles, along with some other old military gear stacked in the hold. Alex hears an odd metallic clang, then realizes that the hatch has closed. He is near panic, but then he calms himself by reminding himself that Kolo is out there, and that he knows what has happened. Surely he will get help. Alex swims around to find another way out and notices a shiny new chain on the other door. Just then, he hears the sound of the boat leaving. Alex now realizes that Drevin must have found out about him and ordered Kolo to take him out there and trap him in the hold of the ship, seventy feet under water, to die.

Alex is about to run out of air when he sees a shape swimming outside that he recognizes as Tamara. She hands him his inhaler out of his suitcase through a hole in the wall, and he uses its hand grenade function to blow up the chain. Alex starts to pass out from lack of oxygen and Tamara swims in and gets him. On the surface, she admits





that she is CIA and that she started to worry when she saw the boat coming back without him on it. She apologizes for being cold toward him before, but explains that she didn't want to blow her cover. They return to the island and she slips off to get him some clothes and food. Alex must hide out in the wilderness so that he is not discovered.

## Chapters 14 and 15 Analysis

### Chapter 14 -Flamingo Bay-

Alex, Tamara, and the Drevins arrive at Flamingo Bay by seaplane. After landing, Tamara leaves and Alex and the Drevins get changed into more island friendly clothes. After driving to the security checkpoint, Alex becomes worried. Nikolei Drevin does indeed have his own security force, and they are armed with submachine guns. Alex also finds out from Magnus Payne, the chief of security on the island, that there is razor wire in the water surrounding them, so that no one can swim in. Alex notices that Payne speaks to him, not Paul when they are introduced. He tells Alex that he is glad to meet him, but says nothing to Paul.

Once they arrive at the launch site, Drevin and Payne describe the rockets to the boys and explain what is going to happen in the next few days. When they get to the command center, Paul and Alex are introduced to Professor Sing Joo-Chan, the flight director. He assures Drevin that everything is going as planned, and that they will be ready for launch Wednesday morning. Drevin, Sing, and Payne get ready for a conference as the boys go out.

Paul teaches Alex how to kite surf, and for the next few hours, all worries of CIA, MI6, and Force Three are swept away by the wind and waves. When they get done surfing, Paul asks about some of Alex's scars. Alex ducks the question by putting his shirt back on and asking when dinner will be ready. Paul admits that it is really nice having Alex around, and it is obvious that Paul has been lonely for a long time.

Paul says that he is sorry that Alex had to grow up without his parents, but that Alex cannot imagine what it is like to have a father like Paul's. Nikolei has all the money in the world, and everyone knows who he is, but Paul sometimes feels like he does not know him at all. Alex feels sorry for Paul. Not only does he have a father who doesn't seem to care about having a good relationship with him, but soon he will have to learn that his father is a murderer. Alex knows that the CIA plans to arrest Drevin in a week, and that all of his money will be confiscated by the American government, and that Drevin will be in jail. Paul would go to his mother, but would likely have to change his name after the world wide news sensation that it would create. Alex reminds himself that none of this is his fault, and that whether or not he was there, the CIA were still going to try to arrest Drevin.

On the other side of the island, Drevin and Payne are having a conversation of their own. After the incident in the hospital, the kidnapping, and the game, Payne became suspicious of Alex. He asked around and found that Alex Rider was a young MI6 agent,





and that the wound that landed him in the hospital was a bullet wound from his last assignment, not a bicycle wreck. Drevin asks for suggestions on what to do about it. There is no guarantee that Alex is spying on them, but if the CIA managed to get to him with the passport ordeal at the airport, that they would certainly have asked him to. Payne suggests killing Alex, and Drevin decides that although it would devastate Paul, that it must be done. Drevin gives the order for Payne to kill Alex the next day.

#### Chapter 15 -Deep Trouble-

When Nikolei shows interest in his son by actually discussing their plan for the day, it is clear that Paul is eating it up. The author makes the point from Alex's point of view that after getting even just that little bit of attention from his father, Paul would probably have been delighted to do anything his father suggests. Nikolei also suggests that Alex go diving to see a sunken ship. Alex is enthusiastic to do so, but feels bad that Paul can not go. Paul tells Alex that he can not dive due to his asthma, but that Alex should go see it, as he has heard that it is an amazing sight. On the boat ride out to the wreckage, Alex has a strange feeling. His memories of diving are all happy memories of enthusiastic divers, but there is no happy enthusiasm here. This is just some boat captain that Alex does not know, and a security officer that Alex does not know, taking the rich kid out to dive because that is their job.

Once in the water, Alex relaxes a little. He loves the feel of the warm water, and really does enjoy diving. Once they reach the ship, Alex is impressed by the sight. He goes in the hold first and is distracted enough that he does not initially notice when Kolo closes the hatch on him. Alex considers the sight of the old gear stack up and preserved by the salt water. He notes that on land, these items would be rusted and ugly. Underwater, however, these same items seem almost magical. Once Alex realizes that he has been trapped intentionally, he starts to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. Drevin has discovered his involvement with MI6, and perhaps even the CIA. When Tamara rescues him, he doesn't even think it odd that she would be there, or that she would have his explosive inhaler with her, or a second air hose. Once they're on the surface Alex figures out that she is the CIA agent that Joe Byrne told him about.



# Chapters 16 and 17

## Chapters 16 and 17 Summary

### Chapter 16 -Tropical Storm-

Tamara returns for Alex with some dark combat clothes for both of them. They wait until nightfall then sneak up to the fence. The guard change is about to occur, so their time is now. Alex snoops through the cabins until he finds what he is looking for, the guard locker room. Alex dumps a bottle of mosquito lotion on the clothes. This is no ordinary mosquito lotion. Instead of repelling bugs, it attracts them in droves. The guards arrive and change clothes, and sure enough, the bugs come. The three guards are overwhelmed with insects and abandon their posts. Alex and Tamara sneak past the checkpoint just as a ship is arriving.

Tamara trips, but Alex catches her. They hide near a wall and watch as the members of Force Three get off the boat and are greeted as friends by the security chief. Then, a voice comes over the loudspeaker telling them not to move, that they have been discovered. The members of Force Three, the security chief, and Drevin himself arrive and capture Alex and Tamara. Tamara is shot in the shoulder. Drevin tells security to take her away so that he does not have to see her anymore. Alex, on the other hand, he wants to talk to.

### Chapter 17 -Primary Target-

Magnus Payne, the security chief on the island, has tied Alex to his chair with electrical wire. The wire is cutting into Alex's skin and is making his hands go numb. Drevin, Payne, Alex, and Force Three are in an empty hanger. Drevin explains that he likes Alex, but that he must kill Alex. However, he can take the opportunity to talk to him first.

Drevin tells Alex that he has killed many people himself, and ordered the death of even more. He admits freely that he is a criminal, and does not care. He tells Alex that he had known of the investigation, and had been looking for a way to destroy the Pentagon, and thereby the evidence and all of the people working on his case. The British government approached him and asked him to partner their Ark Angel project, and Drevin jumped on it. It not only gave him part ownership in a new industry that promised to be very profitable, but also gave him an ally in the British government. He knew that the CIA were planning to arrest him, but that they might hesitate if they saw him with the queen. However, the plan was failing. The British government were taking too long to make a decision on anything, and the decisions they did make were all wrong. Ark Angel leaks, is over the deadline, and billions of pounds over budget. The idea came to Drevin that he could blow up the Ark Angel, and make it crash down in Washington D.C. He invented Force Three gave them a reputation by having them blow up some stuff. Drevin hired a journalist and security analyst to speak out against Force Three, then immediately had them killed. Alex wonders how they will get away without Drevin



looking guilty. Drevin explains that after the explosion, a fight would break out on the island, and the authorities would find the bodies of Force Three among the dead.

Payne shoots the four Force Three thugs and rips off his fake skin and wig, revealing a bald face covered in a tattoo of Earth. Drevin tells Alex that he regrets that things have worked out as they did, then leaves. Payne/Kaspar tips Alex's chair back, and drags him away.

## Chapters 16 and 17 Analysis

### Chapter 16 -Tropical Storm-

Alex is worried about Paul, who surely has heard by now that Alex died in an unfortunate diving accident. He wanted to find out, but Tamara did not run into him while she was getting their gear. Alex feels that he and Tamara make a good team, and that it feels good not to be alone anymore.

The plan seems to go along without a hitch until the ship arrives. Tamara trips and they end up against a wall, watching as Force Three get off the boat. Alex is shocked to see his old "friends" Combat Jacket, Spectacles, Steel Watch, and Silver Tooth being greeted by Magnus Payne as if they were all old friends. Alex and Tamara are discovered, and Alex realizes that when Tamara tripped, she had stumbled over a trip wire.

Drevin is disappointed to find that he was right about Tamara. He had suspected that she was CIA but had hoped that he was wrong. Tamara is injured, but Drevin orders her locked away where he will not have to see her. He appreciates what Alex did for his son, and he admits that he liked Alex from the beginning. However, Drevin says that Alex has abused his hospitality, and that he should not have made an enemy of Nikolei Drevin. Much earlier in the story, Kaspar had told Alex the exact same thing about making an enemy out of Force Three. Now Alex finds that Drevin IS Force Three.

### Chapter 17 -Primary Target-

Drevin freely admits that he is going to kill both Alex and Tamara. Alex interrupts Drevin to ask him why he is bothering to tell him his story if he is just going to kill him anyways. Drevin feels that since Alex is going to die, that there is no risk in telling him. Also, Drevin wishes that he could tell his son all of this, but he is afraid that his son will hate him for it. Drevin feels that Paul is weak, and needs to toughen up. Paul will inherit billions eventually, and Nikolei is concerned that he will not be ready for it. This famous "evil plot" conversation that occurs between almost every villain and his captured hero also serves to give the reader the full story in one coherent speech, just in case the reader has not put it all together yet.

Drevin shows himself to be ruthless and completely immoral. He admits to killing many people and ordering the death of many others to attain his wealth. He does not care that he is a criminal and admits it freely. Drevin feels that all successful businessmen lie and



cheat, so it is not a question whether they are criminals, simply a matter of degree. Drevin is certainly a criminal of the highest degree. He has killed many people. He has supported organized crime syndicates around the world, his money funding drug smuggling, human trafficking, and murder. Drevin has invented his own terrorist group and committed acts of terrorism against several companies and nations, then even hired two people to speak out against Force Three just to make publicity and have them killed. He is planning what will be the greatest terrorist attack in history. Using the Ark Angel hotel as a missile to destroy Washington D.C. would destroy the center of American federal government. Not only would the United States be devastated, but thousands of civilians would die. Then there is the ramifications for the British government. They have billions of pounds and thousands of man hours invested in Ark Angel. The destruction of Ark Angel could spell financial doom for England. Nikolei Drevin is so ruthless that he was even going to have his son maimed just to make himself look innocent. Drevin explains this away by saying that it was necessary, and that it might have served to toughen the boy up.



# Chapters 18 and 19

## Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

### Chapter 18 -Wind And Water-

Kaspar drives Alex to a building that looks an awful lot like a prison. He takes him inside and locks him in a cage near the ape and Tamara. Kaspar tells them that the rocket will launch in the morning, and then they will be killed afterward. After Kaspar leaves, Tamara gives Alex her shoelace, which contains a tungsten wire with diamond edges. Alex cuts through the bars, then races off to find a boat to get to the CIA on Barbados. He does find a boat, but there is no key. He does not have time to swim or paddle a canoe, so he goes to the shed where the kites are kept and prepares to kite surf the ten miles to Barbados.

While inside the shed, he hears a movement behind him. Alex turns to find Paul in the doorway. Paul tells Alex that Nikolei told him that Alex was sent to spy on them, and that Nikolei had put Alex on a plane out. Alex tries to explain to Paul what really happened, but realizes that Paul will not believe him. Alex instead tells Paul that he was sent by his mother. This throws Paul off enough for Alex to knock him out before he can hit the alarm. Paul take the surfing kite and sets off for Barbados.

After surfing for what feels like a long time, Alex notices the larger boat and two smaller boats following him. The island is almost out of sight, but he still cannot see Barbados. The two smaller boats run Alex down, and he manages to get in between them so they cannot shoot at him. He jumps the kite and hits one of the men with his board. The man he hit falls out and accidentally shoots the driver. The first boat, with a dead driver and unconscious passenger, swerves into the other boat and causes both to be wrecked. Seeing this, the men on the larger boat speed up and come after Alex. Alex can now see Barbados, and he is close. He is not, however, close enough to get there before the other boat can reach him. The boat explodes, and Alex is knocked into the water. When he surfaces, he sees another boat approaching, and the CIA's Ed Shulsky is aboard. Ed pulls Alex out of the water, and they exchange information. Just as Alex tells Ed what is really going on at the launch site, the rocket containing the bomb launches.

### Chapter 19 -The Red Button-

Alex debriefs Ed about the island. Ed orders the boat forward to the island, telling Alex that they do not have time to drop him off. Ed tells Alex that there must be a self-destruct device on the rocket just in case something goes wrong with the launch, so all they have to do is take over the island and activate it.

Upon arriving at the island, Ed tells Alex to remain on the boat, then he and his men head out through the jungle toward the launch site. They take all the guns with them. Alex notices the small sea plane and is certain that Drevin will try to escape in it once



the battle begins. Sure enough, shortly after Alex hears the first gun shots, Nikolei Drevin drives a buggy to the house. Alex leaves the boat to see if he can stop him. Drevin comes out of the house with a briefcase and a pistol. After a brief exchange with Alex, he fires the pistol at him. Of course, Alex was prepared for it, and he dives into the sand. When Alex gets up, he sees that Paul was behind him, and that Drevin had just shot his own son. Alex rolls, narrowly avoiding Drevin's bullets, until he is safe under the house. Drevin gets in the seaplane and leaves.

Shortly after, Ed and Tamara arrive, and Alex shows them the seaplane lifting off. Ed tells Alex that Paul will live, but that they will have to get him off the island as soon as possible. Alex has tied two canoes to the floats of the sea plane in hopes that they would weigh the plane down enough that it would not fly. Instead, it simply takes off and drags them behind, dangling in the air. Nikolei turns the plane around for a pass over the beach and fires on them. Once he passes, he attempts to turn over the jungle and make another pass. Drevin, not knowing the canoes are dangling below him, gets both boats caught up in the treetops, crashing the plane. Nikolei Drevin dies in a fiery explosion. Ed informs Alex that he was wrong about the button, that the only way to stop the rocket is now lost.

## Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

### Chapter 18 -Wind And Water-

When Alex is placed in the cage, all seems lost. After Kaspar leaves, Tamara gives him her only remaining gadget, and he manages to escape. Once he is out, he wants to free Tamara too. Tamara tells him not to waste his time, that he needs to get to Barbados or all really will be lost, and Alex knows that she is right. Alex has formulated a crazy plan. Since he cannot find a key to the boat, he will kite-surf the ten miles to Barbados. Alex knows that the trip will be nearly impossible, but he does it anyways.

In the storage building, Alex runs into Paul. Paul does not think that Alex is dead, but he does think that he is a spy. Nikolei has told Paul that, although he didn't want to believe it himself, he found out that Alex had been sent to spy on them. Paul feels betrayed and angry at Alex for betraying his and his father's friendship and trust. Alex is angry at Nikolei for trying to kill him, and at Paul for believing his father. Alex realizes that despite the terrible way in which Nikolei Drevin treats his son, that he is still Paul's father. Paul, who craves his father's love more than anything else, would never believe that his father is a criminal and that he tried to have Alex killed several times, not even coming from Alex. Alex realizes that he must act quickly, or Paul will activate the alarm. Alex tells Paul that he was sent to spy on them, but that he was sent by Paul's mother. Paul hesitates, and Alex does not. Alex hates that he must truly betray his friend, but he has no choice. Alex leaves an unconscious Paul laying on the floor and surfs his way to Barbados.

### Chapter 19 -The Big Red Button-



Alex is exhausted, but Ed tells him that there is no time to turn around, and besides, he needs Alex to tell him where Tamara is. Once they reach the island, Ed tells Alex to stay in the boat. Alex does not want to just stay in the boat, but he is too tired to argue. Once the soldiers are gone, Alex notices the sea plane. He knows that Drevin will try to escape in it, so he comes up with a plan to disable it.

Alex worries about Paul and wants the chance to apologize to him and explain what is happening and why it is happening. Alex is right about Drevin. Nikolei Drevin, who really does not care about anyone but himself, comes flying down the trail in one of the electric buggies. Drevin comes out of the house with a briefcase and a pistol, and then he notices Alex. Drevin tells Alex that he will simply hide out. The world is a big place, and a man of his wealth should have no trouble. Alex disagrees. He tells Drevin that someone like Drevin would never be able to hide without being noticed. Drevin tells Alex that it does not matter, and that he could guarantee that he would not see Alex again. Then he tries to kill Alex. Drevin makes a strange sound, like a wounded animal, when he realizes that he killed his son instead. This is the first evidence that he actually cares about his son, but it seems short lived. Drevin continues with his attempt to escape. Drevin would probably have gotten away if he had not come back for revenge. Even with the canoes dangling below him, he was able to fly the sea plane. It was his desire for revenge and his inability to lose with grace that was his end. Trying to turn the plane around for a second pass, flying low over the jungle, is what caused his crash.

With Drevin dead and the island under CIA control, all is still not well. The rocket that will cause Ark Angel to crash down has already launched, and the only way they could have brought it down is if Drevin told them how to unlock the computer system.





# Chapters 20 and 21

## Chapters 20 and 21 Summary

### Chapter 20 -Ark Angel-

Ed tells Alex that the only way to stop the bomb from going off and destroying Washington D.C. is for Alex to go move it. Alex must ride the second rocket, the one that was going to carry the ape, and take the bomb to the middle of Ark Angel so that it would blow up the entire station. At its current location, it would leave enough of the space station to level the city. Ed explains that Alex is the only one there who is small enough to fit in the ape's area of the rocket except for Tamara, who has a gunshot wound.

Alex grudgingly agrees to go and gets ready for launch. He changes into different clothes and is covered in monitoring leads. He is given a shot to keep him from getting sick in space. He is packed into the rocket, then blasted off into space. The rockets push Alex into space so fast that it feels like his eyeballs are being squeezed and his face pulled off. Once he is out of the atmosphere, however, he feels as if he is completely motionless, even though he is moving at thirteen and a half thousand miles per hour.

Once Alex gets on board the Ark Angel, he experiences a terrible moment. He becomes disoriented for twenty-five minutes before he is able to get himself back to a wall and begin moving forward again. Alex hears a hatch close, but can not figure out why. No one else is supposed to be on the station. As he heads for the end node, he sees Kaspar come out of a room. Kaspar has a knife and begins moving toward him.

### Chapter 21 -Reentry-

Kaspar launches himself at Alex, knife first. Alex propels himself forward under Kaspar, taking him by surprise. Kaspar tries to cut Alex, but narrowly misses. Alex finds a hammer and throws it, hitting Kaspar in the shoulder. Kaspar grabs Alex and strangles him. Alex blinds Kaspar by opening the shutter and exposing him to the sun. Kaspar screams and covers his eyes, giving Alex the chance to kick him away. Kaspar sails backward to a wall, where he is impaled by the knife. Alex continues on to the bomb.

Once Alex gets to the bomb he considers trying to disarm it. There are no symbols or markings at all on the six switches on the bomb, so Alex decides to go ahead and just move it. He takes the bomb to the living quarters in the center of the station, and leaves it nose first in a toilet. Alex stops for a brief look at Earth out of the window before returning to the rocket's reentry module. After a rough reentry, Alex splashes down in the ocean.





## Chapters 20 and 21 Analysis

### Chapter 20 -Ark Angel-

Alex has to go to space. He is the only one who has about the right weight and size to take the second rocket to the Ark Angel and disable or move the bomb. He does not want to go. He is afraid of not making it to space, not making it to the bomb in time, and not making it back to the relative safety of the ground. Alex finally gives in after thinking about Jack and her family in Washington D.C. and gets ready for launch. During the preparation for launch, Alex feels slightly disconnected from it all and disoriented. He hears people telling him stuff and giving him advice, but cannot tell who is telling him what. Alex describes the experience of the acceleration as terrible. He feels his face being pulled and his eyeballs being compressed by the pressure of gravity. Once he reaches space and is no longer being propelled by a rocket, he feels motionless. Even though he is almost there, he still worries that he will not make it. His description of the horrifying death by exposure to vacuum demonstrates his extreme fear. Most kids dream of going to space, but Alex never wanted to.

Once on the space station, Alex learns the unfortunate truth of weightlessness. His back hurts from the stretching of his spine. His stomach feels queasy due to his lack of balance, worry, and the imbalance in his body fluids. He gets stuck in the middle of an area, too far away from a wall to grab hold, and unable to move. Finally, he remembers a physics lesson and throws something, which springs him backward. When Alex finds Kaspar on the station, he is once again afraid. Kaspar has no trouble moving around in space, and he has a knife.

### Chapter 21 -Reentry-

After battling Kaspar, Alex reaches the bomb. It has six switches on it, but none of them have any markings on or near them. Alex considers risking it, finger poised over the first switch, just to keep the station from blowing up. He feels a sense of awe at the seventy tons of steel and the engineering and labor that went into putting it in space. He comes to the decision that a one out of six chance is not very good, so he moves the bomb. Alex wishes that there was a garbage disposal chute, but since there isn't, he just leaves it nose first in a toilet. It seems like the appropriate thing to do.

On his way back to the rocket, Alex stops for a once in a lifetime chance to view Earth from space. He knows that if he doesn't do it now, he never will be able to again. Looking down on Earth, Alex is filled with another kind of awe as he realizes that the entire planet is alive. He no longer cares about the giant, sterile dead station he is in. It's destruction will mean nothing compared to the mass of life below him.

On the way back down, Alex is worried about his chances. The reentry is very hot, but he knew that it would be. He was worried that the heat shields might not hold. Shortly after, he broke through the thicker layers of atmosphere, and the parachute deployed. Alex splashes down on the wrong side of the world, but this doesn't bother him. He is glad to be home.



# Characters

## Alex Rider

Alex Rider is a fourteen-year-old boy from London. He lives with Jack Starbright, who used to be his uncle's housekeeper. Alex is adventurous and cannot stand to let people see when he is afraid. He goes to school and watches soccer, much like any other teen in London. Despite his normal teen appearance, Alex is very different. He is also one of MI6's top operatives. Alex has had many successful missions for MI6, but has recently been shot. The assassination attempt failed, but the experience has convinced Alex that he has had his last mission with MI6. No matter how badly they want him, Alex is done.

Unfortunately for Alex, he seems fated to never be rid of the spy community. After saving a billionaire's son, Alex is recruited by the CIA to spy on the billionaire, who turns out to be the largest criminal in the world. Throughout the story, Alex is drawn deeper and deeper into the situation, and his protests can not keep him out of it.

## Paul Drevin

Paul Drevin is the son of Nikolei Drevin. He has all the money and possessions he could ask for, but none of these things can buy him his heart's desire, a father that loves him. Paul is carted around the world by his busy father and does not get to make any friends who actually like him for himself. Despite the fact that Nikolei is a terrible father, Paul still seeks out his love and takes his side when Alex tries to tell him who his father really is.

## Nikolei Drevin

Nikolei Drevin is a billionaire who is partnering with the British government on the Ark Angel project. His past is not so friendly. Drevin was once a high ranking officer in the KGB, and after the fall of the Soviet Union, Drevin used his contacts to do business with the Mafiya, Triad, and Yakuza. He is completely immoral and cares about no one but himself. Drevin is the world's biggest criminal and seems proud of it.

## Kaspar

Kaspar is the leader of Force Three, an eco-terrorist group dedicated to the destruction of anyone who harms the environment, especially Nikolei Drevin. Kaspar has shaved his entire head and has tattooed a globe of Earth over his head. While wearing a skullcap, fake face, and wig, Kaspar is also Magnus Payne. Magnus Payne is Nikolei Drevin's chief of security.



## **Tamara Knight**

Tamara Knight is Nikolei Drevin's personal assistant. She is cold and distant. She is also an undercover CIA operative, and once her cover is blown she warms up to Alex.

## **Jack Starbright**

Jack Starbright was Ian Rider's housekeeper. After Ian's death she stayed on and works for Alex. She and Alex are good friends.

## **Ian Rider**

Ian Rider was Alex's uncle. Alex lived with him after his parents died

## **Joe Byrne**

Joe Byrne is the director of covert operations for the CIA.

## **Ed Shulsky**

Ed Shulsky is the CIA operative in charge of the back up team on Barbados.

## **Diana Meacher**

Diana Meacher is the nurse at the hospital where Paul and Alex are recuperating.

## **Alan Blunt**

Alan Blunt is the head of MI6 special operations, and Alex's boss. He is known for setting up events to go in his favor, many times even making it look like a coincidence.

## **Mrs. Jones**

Mrs. Jones is the deputy head of MI6 special operations.

## **Max Webber**

Max Webber is a former SAS soldier who has capitalized on his experience by writing books. He is introduced and kill both in chapter one, but his presence serves as a great introduction to Force Three.



# Objects/Places

## Neverglade

Neverglade was once a Scottish castle. It has been moved by Nikolei Drevin to London, who now lives it.

## London

London is the capital city of England, and the setting for most of the beginning of this story.

## New york

New York is the American city where Alex is detained by "customs" and has a run in with the CIA.

## Creative Ideas Animation

Creative Ideas Animation is a cover for the CIA located in SoHo.

## Barbados

Barbados is an island in the Caribbean and is the base for the CIA back up team.

## SoHo

SoHo is a neighborhood in southern Manhattan.

## Flamingo Bay

Flamingo Bay is Nikolei Drevin's private island where he has all of his launches.

## Gabriel 7

Gabriel 7 is a rocket containing a bomb that will blow up part of Ark Angel, sending the rest of the station toward Washington D.C.

## **Ark Angel**

Ark Angel is a space station that will act as a hotel for space tourism.

## **kite surfing**

Kite surfing is one of Paul Drevin's hobbies. He stands on a special surf board and a kite catches the wind, allowing him to sail across the water.

## **MI6**

MI6 is a British intelligence agency.

## **CIA**

The CIA is an American intelligence agency.

## **Force Three**

Force Three is the eco-terrorist group that Drevin invented as a cover for his illegal dealings.



# Themes

## It is Lonely at the Top.

Paul Drevin learns the truth of the saying It is Lonely at the Top. Paul is the son of a billionaire. Paul has every possession he could possibly want to keep him happy, and many that he does not want. Paul is not allowed to go to a public school because his father feels that it would be a security risk. Paul is not allowed to roam about the city by himself for the same reason. Paul is unable to make friends his age in the conventional manner because he does not have access to kids his age. His father has arranged play dates with other kids and has invited many kids over in the past, but Paul can tell that they are only there for the money and the expensive toys. No one seems to genuinely like Paul for who he is, only for what he has. Paul is lonely and only wants a real friend. He does not care about the money, or the expensive things that his father buys for him. His father can not buy Paul any real friends.

The only thing that Paul wants from his father is some attention and his love. Paul is also lonely because his father tries to replace his own love and time with money. Nikolei Drevin is always so busy, and when he does talk to his son, it is clear that he does not really care very much about how Paul feels. On the rare occasion that Nikolei shows any interest at all in what his son wants to do, Paul clings to the attention. Where Nikolei does not really care about other people, and is fine with not having any true friends, his son Paul is an unfortunate victim of his father's greed.

## Greed

Greed is the driving force behind Nikolei Drevin. Drevin's only concern is acquiring more wealth. Drevin, who was once a ranking member of the KGB, used his connections to borrow money from several criminal organizations from around the world. At the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was forced to sell off all of the government assets at ridiculously low prices. Drevin used his borrowed money to buy an oil company from Russia. His actions caused pain and loss for many Russian citizens, and the buyout was bad for the country, but he did not care. Drevin only cared that he would become a billionaire nearly overnight, allowing him to pay off his criminal debts with plenty to spare.

Nikolei Drevin did not stop there. In his greed he continued to deal with the criminal organizations by loaning them money and funding various criminal activities. Drevin became sort of a bank for organized crime world wide. Drevin's Greed, and the criminal activities required to feed it, earn him an investigation from the US State Department, and the CIA watching his every move. To feed his Greed, in the name of his wealth Drevin has killed many and ordered the deaths of many more.



## Selflessness

Throughout the story, Alex Rider demonstrates that he is willing to put himself last and help those who need him, whether that be a sick boy next door, or the entire city of Washington D.C., or even the entire world. Alex shows great Selflessness when he rescues Paul from being kidnapped. Knowing that he was going home in a day, Alex could have easily hidden in his dark corner and waited for Force Three to leave with Paul. Instead he raced back up the stairs and tricked the men into thinking that he was Paul. He took on four armed professional soldiers and was kidnapped for a young boy he barely knew.

When Alex learns that Nikolei Drevin is the worlds biggest criminal, and that he has no qualms about killing, Alex could have refused to go along. Alex had already planned to meet up with Jack Starbright in Washington D.C. and go home with her. Instead of pulling himself out and going home, Alex agreed to stay with the Drevins and alert the CIA if Nikolei Drevin does anything suspicious while at Flamingo Bay, even though it puts his own life in great danger.

When Nikolei explains his plan to blow up Ark Angel and send forty tons of steel hurtling toward the city of Washington D.C., Alex escapes the island and informs the CIA. Instead of leaving, he returns with the CIA to the island, and eventually goes up to Ark Angel in a second rocket. Alex has not trained for space travel, and it is only a slim hope that he will make it there, move the bomb, and then make it back to Earth. Alex is scared and reluctant, but he goes anyway. Alex knows that if he does not go, then the entire city will be destroyed, thousands will die, and a world power will be thrown into chaos. Alex risks his life time and time again throughout this story to be the hero, and he is only a fourteen-year-old boy without any formal training.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view in this novel is omniscient third person. The narrator knows not only what is going on, but also the emotions and personal thoughts of the characters.

Throughout most of the story, the narrator follows Alex, making the reader privy to most of his thoughts and memories and feelings. This allows a large amount of exposition, giving the reader great amounts of history that explain how and why Alex does the things he does. The story is told mostly through exposition with a little dialogue. Toward the end of the story, a wealth of information is given to the reader through dialogue between Alex and Nikolei. This is the classic villain revealing his evil plan to the captured hero.

## Setting

This novel is set in either present time, or at least the very near future. There are not any indicators of a specific date, but the level of technology and the social interactions do suggest the present.

Most of the events in first half of the story take place in or around London. Once Alex agrees to spend his two week vacation with the Drevins, he becomes a bit of a traveler. Alex spends several days at Drevin's home, Neverglade. He flies with them to New York for a day and is supposed to spend the day shopping and exploring the city with Paul. Instead of the tour of New York from the billionaire perspective, Alex gets a ride to SoHo and the local headquarters of the CIA.

The second half of the book takes place in more exotic locations. Alex finds himself on Drevin's private island in the Caribbean, Flamingo Bay. From Flamingo bay, he kite surfs ten miles to the CIA camp on Barbados. The CIA takes him back to Flamingo Bay, where he is promptly packed into a cramped rocket and blasted into space. Alex gets to experience the sensations of accelerating through the atmosphere to over sixteen thousand miles per hour, then the weightlessness of space. He walks through a space station, then goes through the ordeal of reentry, finally splashing down off the coast of eastern coast of Australia.

## Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is very informal and often the narrator jumps into a flashback, triggered by some similar experience to one of Alex's memories. Large segments of the text delve into these flashbacks, so that by the end of the story the reader not only knows the events of the story itself, but Alex's life story as well.





The language is also very descriptive, explaining things in great detail to the reader, and showing that the author did research many of the events and objects mentioned in this story. This tendency combined with the frequent expository flashbacks does initially make the story a slow read. However, once the reader becomes accustomed to this style, the story does flow much easier. Since this is the sixth book in a series, these narrative methods do serve the reader well by bringing him up to speed. By the end of this story, the reader is able to keep up and enjoy the plot, knowing almost just as much about what is going on as one who has read the entire series.

## Structure

This novel is comprised of twenty-one chapters of varying lengths. The name of each chapter foreshadows an event to come in the chapter. Each chapter is full of descriptive exposition, and so not very much time passes from chapter to chapter. The entire book only covers a little over a two week span.

The plot of the story is not very complicated. The story follows Alex Rider through his adventure with the Drevin Family. Alex must keep an eye on Nikolei Drevin, who he has not trusted from the beginning. Even after finding out that the billionaire is the world's biggest criminal, Alex is not at all surprised. Alex is a little surprised to find that Drevin plans to destroy his own creation, Ark Angel, and that he plans to do so in a way that will also destroy Washington D.C. and thousands of innocent lives. Alex spends most of the novel simply trying to get out of the grasp of Nikolei Drevin.

The pace of this novel is somewhat slow due to the descriptive nature of the story telling. There are several flashbacks that certainly do not help the pace any. Over all, the book is an easy read, once the reader adjusts to the pace.



## Quotes

"I am often asked which is the most dangerous terrorist group in the world. The answer is not what you might expect. It is a group that you may not know. But I can assure you that it is one you should fear, and I wish to speak briefly about it now."

Chap. 1, p. 3: Max Webber

"You can cut off all my fingers if you want, but his father isn't going to pay you a penny. He doesn't even know I exist!"

Chap. 4, p. 54: Alex

"It was for you. I don't believe it! That was Nikolei Drevin."

Chap. 6, p. 87: Alex

"In Russia, children drink alcohol from an early age."

Chap. 8, p. 109: Nikolei Drevin

"You and I are going to leave quietly together. I am going to walk behind you. The gun will never be more than a few inches away. You will not speak; you will not stop. If you try anything-anything-I will put a bullet in your spine. Do you understand?"

Chap. 11, p. 151: Steel Watch

"We had to get you away from Drevin without alerting him to the fact that the CIA was involved."

Chap. 13, p. 173

"Welcome, you might say, to paradise."

Chap. 14, p. 190: Nikolei Drevin

"Whatever made you think I was planning to go anywhere?"

Chap. 16, p. 234: Nikolei Drevin

"Alex! You want a ride?"

Chap. 18, p. 270: Agent Shulsky

"I'm not an orangutan."

Chap. 20, p. 289: Alex



## Topics for Discussion

Alex shows great courage in his actions throughout this story. In what ways does Alex show this courage? Is there anyone else in this story who is courageous? If so, then who? In what ways do they show it?

Nikolei Drevin rises from a small business man to one of the wealthiest people in the world. Discuss his methods. What is the true cost of his wealth?

Paul Drevin is a very wealthy young man. What effect has growing up wealthy had on Paul? How does he feel about his wealth?

Jack Starbright was Ian Rider's housekeeper. What reasons did she have for staying on after Ian's death? What might life have been like for Alex if she had not been around?

Discuss Nikolei Drevin's arrogance. In what ways is his arrogance shown in the story?

Alex Rider is only fourteen years old, and yet he is one of MI6's top operatives. How did Alex become involved with MI6 to begin with? How has he proven himself to them? Why do they keep sending a young boy on dangerous missions?

Alex's family also worked with MI6. Discuss how this effected Alex's childhood. How has it effected him now that he is actively working for them?