

# **Executive Study Guide**

**Executive by Piers Anthony**

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



# Contents

<a href="#">Executive 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="#">Preface and Chapter 1.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 8.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 10.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 11.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 12.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>



# Plot Summary

Hope Hubris is the recently appointed head of the United States of Jupiter. He has circumvented the Congressional protocols, with his sister Spirit's help, to be appointed Tyrant, replacing President Tocsin. He urgently needs to balance the budget, in order to keep the nation from collapse, and he has to do this in the atmosphere of constant threats from the Communist planet of Saturn; he is also constantly distracted by erotic hi-jinks with the women in his staff. After facing down a threat from Saturn, Hope enters a playful and ultimately fulfilling affair with Amber, a girl of fifteen. When she bores him, he goes undercover and works his way up to a position of leadership and respect at Jupiter Bubble Company, which produces the bubbles people live in. As both Tyrant and President of Jupiter Bubble, Hope Hubris is now both the man who is overwhelmed by political responsibilities, and the man who is competent at managing definite tasks. In the end, his wife Megan leads the Resistance and ultimately deposes him, and the U.S. of Jupiter returns to a democracy.

Hope Hubris is a macho Navy man, whose wife cannot follow him into the highest levels of government because of the demands it will make on him. And as he accustoms himself to the labors of ruling, it is demanding indeed; he is surrounded by women who take care of his political and his sexual needs, and he is quite playful and erotic in his interactions with them.

In addition to the industrial and financial crises mounting around the Tyrancy, Hope has to confront a secret Saturnine mission to take over the Jupiter moon of Ganymede. This will put a knife to Jupiter's throat, by mounting destructive military capabilities very close to Jupiter, and Hope has to flirt with the possibility of total destruction of Saturn and Jupiter both, in order to face down the Saturnine threat.

Hope's victory wins him the respect of Admiral Khukov, who becomes the Saturnine leader, and Khukov gives Hope a gift of a young girl of thirteen. Amber seems to be a mute, but turns out to be a lingual idiot savant, with fluency in many languages. She helps Hope by eavesdropping on people who confer in other languages, and then she becomes a sexual partner of his, after sending him 'feelie chips' that depict her imagination of their union. This affair concerns him as he is organizing his government policies, but when he finally discovers her identity, he becomes bored with her fairly quickly—she was a good puzzle, but not as good a partner.

Throughout the last part of the book, Hope Hubris is occupied with learning the ropes in Jupiter Bubble, and he rises to the point of leading the company. He becomes a respected businessman, and as such, an articulate critic of the Tyrancy. When the Resistance develops, he is named as the mediator in the Resistance debate with the Tyrant. When he shows up for the debate, Hope/Jose finds that the Resistance is led by Megan, the wife who would not follow him into politics. The narrative ends there, as the shock of finding that his sane wife is leading the opposition pushes Hope out of politics, and the U.S. of Jupiter returns to being a democracy.



# Preface and Chapter 1

## Preface and Chapter 1 Summary

Preface: The preface summarizes the career of Hope Hubris, the Tyrant of the United States of North Jupiter. He had almost been disqualified from the role of Tyrant for a technicality, but his sister Spirit Hubris helped him.

This novel claims to be the personal diary of Hope Hubris. It purports to shed light on the Siege of Saturn, and sheds light on the question of whether Hope Hubris was mad. The editor, "HMH," claims that if, "Others had competence; Hope had magic" (p. 2).

Chapter 1: Executive begins in Pineleaf Bubble, which is floating in the Jupiter atmosphere. Hope Hubris has just been assigned the role of Tyrant for North Jupiter by the Constitutional Convention. His job is to balance the budget, but as he asks for an expert, his Secret Service men tell him that he should get on the ship, because the bubble is under attack.

Hope Hubris gathers his trusty advisers, Shelia, Coral and Ebony, and they suit up in pressure suits that will let them survive a depressurization of the bubble. The attacking sub will only be detectable when it fires, and Hope orders the engineers to lower the bubble into the atmosphere by cutting off the 'gee-shield' which keeps the bubble from being drawn down into the depths by gravity. As the bubble plummets into the Jupiter atmosphere, the pressure begins to build, and now instead of depressurization, Hope Hubris and his advisers are afraid that the bubble will be crushed as the atmospheric pressure increases.

The attacking sub fires, and hits the bubble, but only destabilizes its rotation. The soldiers within the bubble locate the sub and destroy it. As they wait to see whether the bubble collapses, Hope and Shelia comfort each other. He lifts her out of her wheelchair and makes love with her. In a trance-like state, he believes that she is Helse, his love who died at fifteen. When he returns from his trance, Shelia is ruffled—they have obviously just made love—it was not Helse after all. But Shelia is understanding. She herself felt her legs move during the lovemaking, in spite of her paralysis. Emerald tells Hope and Shelia that the ship is ready for them.

## Preface and Chapter 1 Analysis

Preface: A preface like this is a traditional technique for authors to distance themselves from their novels, by claiming that the book is a journal of a subject, instead of an invention. It is also used to provide background information and a context for the popular view of Hope Hubris' actions. Clearly the 'editor' is a strong supporter.

Chapter 1: Reality is subject to some interesting rules in Executive. Space travel has been accomplished (although budgetary problems persist) and gravity has been



mastered with a 'Gee-shield' that keeps the space bubble at the correct place in the Jupiter atmosphere. There is also a mind-meld between Hope Hubris and his long-dead love, Helse, and he is surrounded by understanding women, who allow him his trance-like lovemaking incidents. His personality is quite confident, to the point of braggadocio, but the reader is just meeting him, and has yet to see him in action, or being tested.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Aboard the flagship with his advisers, Hope Hubris describes how he has come to this position. He was declared Tyrant by the Constitutional Convention, not in an election, but through the machinations of his sister Spirit. When Senator Stonebridge asks Hope Hubris for direction in working on the budget, Hope has no ideas, and admits to Emerald that the women in his life have always run things for him. Emerald tells him that there is rebellion in some sectors, and other planets are getting restive as well. Emerald tells him to get his thoughts in order by consulting with "the Beautiful Dreamer" and Shelia gets him in touch with Lieutenant Commander Repro, who is dead. Hope contacts him by using a "Newton's Cradle," of five balls suspended on wires—when the outermost ball is swung, the force is transmitted directly through the other balls, so that only the opposite end ball swings out.

Hope tells Repro that he has the power but not the insight to balance the budget, but Repro tells him to be patient, work with what he has, and consolidate his power: these are the means of accomplishing anything.

Hope Hubris has been in contact with the dead since he was trapped in a bubble in space at fifteen, and his dead father appeared, and showed him how to survive.

When Hope Hubris returns from his contact with Repro, things are not going well, and Hope tells Shelia to get Admiral London on the line. When London shows up, it is not clear to him that Hope Hubris is in power, and Shelia has to tell him what has happened with the Constitutional Convention. In a moment, the rebellion within the Navy is isolated and quelled.

Hope Hubris says that later accounts would describe violent suppression of rebellion, but he says that he wants to set the record straight with his journal.

The first act of Hope's is to deal with President Tocsin, who refuses to acknowledge Hope's new authority. Tocsin resides in the White Bubble, where he has access to records that Hope assures him will never be used against him. He pardons him, and President Tocsin departs peaceably.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

When he steps into action, Hope Hubris reveals himself to be a bungler, who usually lets the women around him run things. Ebony provides him with the Newton's Cradle, and he conjures the dead, revealing the special talents that others do not have, and contacts Repro, who tells him the common-sense things to do. What might have become incompetence quickly turns to inspired management, and Hope's obstacles melt before him. The question now is what kind of obstacles will really test him?



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Emerald takes Hope Hubris to New Wash, where Spirit Hubris gives him strength and helps him prepare a transition speech, which delicately tells the people, "Accept the new order or else." (p. 34).

As Hope Hubris gets to the business of filling posts, he is troubled by the residual effects of a mind-wash, which removed some recent memories. He and Spirit agree that Senator Stonebridge should be in charge of the economy, and they name Admiral Phist for the suppression of crime and violence.

Hope Hubris is in power now partly because he implemented efficiencies in the Navy, making it an efficient and powerful organization, and then the Navy backed him over President Tocsin.

Before Hope Hubris can deal with the representatives who are walking out (to prevent a quorum), a baby is delivered from Ganymede. Hope decides to abolish Congress, and arranges to get diapers for the baby, Robertico. Spirit tells Hope that he can appoint new people to represent the people, instead of using the old system of elected representatives.

When RedSpot calls—the southern neighbor, where the Latinos live—Hope Hubris cannot do business because Robertico's diaper needs to be changed. Senator Stonebridge calls in and suggests a babysitter, but Hope Hubris says that he can't relinquish the baby to anyone else's care.

Columnist Thorley calls Hope Hubris's government the Tyrancy, and Hope Hubris says that some of the ancient Greeks were enlightened rulers. He tells Senator Stonebridge that he will be called the Tyrant, and his government the Tyrancy. He tells Senator Stonebridge that he is abolishing Congress.

Hope's daughter Hopie agrees to come take care of Robertico, and the Saturnine Ambassador phones in to ask for concessions from the new government, but Hope Hubris cuts him off before specifics can be addressed.

Hope Hubris spends hours making a list of people to include in his new government, before Coral convinces him to rest. She comforts him with her body.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Hope Hubris seems like a bungling leader, except for the organizational keenness of his sister. Their teamwork uses both of their strengths, but the novel follows Hope's domestic troubles. The questions of government are relegated to the background while



Hope tries to figure out how to change Robertico's diaper, and arrange for his daughter to baby-sit. His decision to abolish the old way and appoint representatives seems risky, but if he can be a benign Tyrant, then he will not be in much danger of being overthrown.

So far the plot seems to revolve around this challenge: will Hope Hubris be a benign dictator, or will he be corrupted by his power?





# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Over breakfast, Hopie argues that school is useless, when computers can perform calculations, and when knowing the parts of speech does not help a person understand ideas. As a result of her arguments, Hopie is put in charge of the Department of Education.

Spirit shows Hope the daily briefs, which indicate that Saturn is making a move on Ganymede. Hope summons the Ganymede ambassador, who runs Ganymede as Saturn's Communist puppet state. Hope Hubris agrees to support the Premier's government, provided he leaks information about the Saturnine move on Ganymede.

Emerald phones in, and Hope summons her for a strategy session about the Navy and Ganymede. Before she arrives, Hope Hubris continues the business of appointing people to the jobs they have already had, to preserve some continuity with the previous government.

Emerald and her husband, retired Admiral Mondy, arrive, and tell Hope Hubris that the Saturnine troops are coming to take over a naval base on Ganymede. This base had been given over in exchange for the Ganymede government ceasing to arm rebels around the solar system, but President Tocsin had tried to undermine the agreement, because open warfare was good for business in the military-industrial complex.

Admiral Mondy suggests that if the troops heading to Ganymede can be intercepted, and Saturn can be exposed in their hostility, the government there might fall, and Admiral Khukov, who is friendlier to Jupiter, might be put in power. Mondy and Hope make plans to set this in motion. They have seven days before the Saturnine ship arrives at Ganymede.

In the meantime, Senator Stonebridge phones in to say that he will need to impose steep taxes in order to balance the budget. Faith Hubris, Hope Hubris' sister, arrives to say that the only way to solve poverty is for the government to become the employer of last resort. Gerald Phist phones in to say that he can make industry more efficient by cutting 70 million jobs. As Hope grapples with these domestic problems, the Saturnine ship gets closer to Ganymede, and he tries to devise ways to intercept it. They cannot without giving away their source of information—the premier of Ganymede—but they cannot let it dock, either. Hope resolves to involve one of the invisible subs in intercepting the ship.

Hope Hubris sends his daughter to Columnist Thorley for information about the government from Thorley's perspective. Finally Coral comes to cut Hope's day short again, and force him to rest. He showers, but is still thinking about the ship, and Coral steps into the shower naked to take his mind from his cares. She starts a froth



massage, and rubs herself against him in a way that she has wanted to do for a long time.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Suddenly the government of Jupiter closely resembles the U.S., and Saturn looks a lot like the Communist Soviet Union, with Ganymede a satellite state like Cuba or Vietnam. Hope Hubris' deliberations mirror Kennedy's deliberations over the Cuban missile crisis, as he tries to invent a pretext for intercepting a ship whose arrival will have dire consequences for Jupiter's safety. Piers Anthony lightens the mood of the President's deliberations by surrounding him with women who are devoted to enacting his policies and also to ensuring his pleasures, like Coral, with her froth massage and lovemaking.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Hope Hubris settles on a plan to make the destruction of the Saturnine ship look like an accidental collision with one of the mines guarding Ganymede. He sends a Jupiter sub to torpedo it, but the Jupiter ship is torpedoed in turn by a Saturnine sub.

In the meantime, Hope Hubris interviews candidates for posts, and evaluates them in his intuitive way. He hears from Hopie, who is working with Thorley, and he says that he sees working with Hopie as Thorley's only chance of making any actual contribution to the government.

At a press conference where Hope Hubris tries to put people's minds at ease about the transition, journalists ask him about the next elections, and he cannot answer sufficiently to satisfy them. When a journalist insults him in a question, he allows the question, and does not punish the journalist, thus ensuring the freedom of speech.

As Hope and Spirit Hubris consider ways to prevent the ship docking, they agree to accuse Ganymede of running arms, and direct their Navy to Ganymede. A defector from the Saturnine Navy tells Hope Hubris that Saturn is shipping technicians trained in an experimental form of mind control to Ganymede to pick the locks of Tanamo. After staging a call with the Ganymede Premier, which establishes the cause for suspicion of the Saturnine ship, Hope Hubris contacts the Saturnine leader Karzhinov to ask for permission to search the ship. He puts the Navy on Full Alert, a step shy of declaring war.

Messages go back and forth between Saturn and Jupiter, as the Saturnine leader and Hope Hubris exchange insults and threats. The Ganymede premier calls, and expresses outrage, but Hope Hubris knows that he is playing a part. He sends an invasion force to Ganymede to intercept the Saturnine ship, and with lasers set at stun, his troops attack Ganymede forces at the Tanamo base.

With threats going back and forth, and live coverage of the battles on Ganymede, the Jupiter population gets upset about the act of war, and Columnist Thorley speaks for the opposition, with Hopie in the background.

In a dream state from lack of sleep, Hope Hubris sees the scene that might play out, as he and Karzhinov exchange insults and then Karzhinov accidentally triggers the war that destroys both planets. Megan phones in, but he breaks the connection, because the reminder of his tenderness and humanity is intolerable at the moment of great risk.

Saturn's deadline for action has passed, and Hope Hubris waits for the Saturnine response to Jupiter's invasion of Ganymede. In the end Admiral Khukov calls, and asks for a meeting, a sign that Hope Hubris's victory is at hand.



## Chapter 5 Analysis

Hope Hubris is experiencing the difficulties of ruling, for in every case, the proper course of action seems to require the kind of underhanded subterfuge he had condemned in his predecessor. But the Saturnine ship still has to be stopped, so it appears that some alteration of ideology will be called for.

This situation parallels the U.S.'s Cuban Missile Crisis, and the threat of mutually assured destruction is a potent background to the high-stakes brinksmanship with Saturn's government, trying to land a force that would put a knife at Jupiter's throat. The scene recreates the emotions associated with this feeling, which pervaded American and Russian culture from the 1950s till the fall of the USSR in 1989.

Piers Anthony's handling of the situation is light, almost humorous, and because the readers knows the history, the outcome is less suspenseful—which is a good explanation of why the book is still just beginning—there is much more to come, and this episode only proves Hope Hubris' mettle.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Spirit and Hope Hubris go to visit the Saturnine ship of Mikhail Khukov. They play billiards, and discuss the possibility of disarmament, if Khukov can become the Saturnine leader. They stage a public meeting, and put on the show that will keep the threat of war alive and remote at the same time, while Khukov can return to Saturn and negotiate to be Karzhinov's successor. Only he, after all, had been able to negotiate with the mad Tyrant, Hope Hubris.

Khukov gives Hope Hubris a gift of a young girl, of thirteen or so, who proves to be mute, when Hope gets her back to his ship. He bunks her in with Hopie, and Amber, the girl, becomes close with Robertico.

Within two weeks, Khukov is the leader of Saturn and the apparatus of war—and the fake occupation—are dismantled. Now the budget question returns, with Senator Stonebridge. At first, Hope Hubris plans to zero out the military budget, but cannot because of the economic impact it would have, with military contractors going bankrupt and people being put out of work. Every solution he proposes has complications he doesn't want to bring about, so he compromises by letting Senator Stonebridge institute a gold standard, pegging currency to the value of iron and other metals.

When Hope Hubris goes to Nyork to give a speech, someone makes an assassination attempt with a laser aimed at his lectern. After this, he is no longer safe in public. At the same time, though, he hates to give up his public contact, for fear of becoming isolated. With makeup that disguises him as a Secret Service man, Hope Hubris goes to see Reba at QYV. She uses a pacifier beam to subdue him, then makes love to him both as a woman, herself, and treating him as if he were a woman. To compensate Hope Hubris for allowing himself to be used for her need, Reba's experience with him gives him the message that he will have to develop another identity.

Hope talks with Hopie about ways to reform teaching, and then he puzzles over the enigma of Amber. He gets her to focus on the amber ring she wears, and so hypnotizes her. Under hypnosis, she speaks with him in Spanish. Apparently she enters a trance when she stares at the ring, and then she can speak in a number of languages.

Amber tells Hope that Hopie is unhappy, and blames herself for her parents' splitting up. Hope starts to explain to Amber, why it isn't Hopie's fault, and he tells her the rough version of how men and women become intimate.

Hope Hubris meets with Gerald Phist, who advises him to solve crime through a combination of legalization and eradication—legalize what can be legalized, and pursue everything else relentlessly. He recommends sending unrepentant criminals into deep space to perform thankless work there.



Hopie bursts into the room, and Gerald's wife Roulette, or Rue, tells Hopie about herself and Hope. She explains that in the Navy, sexual intimacy was required, but emotional intimacy was hard to find. Roulette tells Hopie that Hope had only ever loved two women: Helse and Hopie's mother, who is yet unnamed. She sings Hopie 'her' song (i.e. Roulette's song) which is beautiful and sad in a way that she says is consonant with life.

Phist proposes cuts to the military, and Hope tells him that they can make cuts because he trusts Khukov. Phist tells him that he might be the temporal authority, but he will need Admiral Mondy's approval for anything he really wants to do.

The next time Hopie sees her father, she is more understanding and less angry. Hopie talks to Amber in French, and she and her father settle upon a program of gentle exploration with regard to Amber's talents and intellect.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

Executive moves from the success in the Cuban missile crisis to the larger nuclear threat in general, as Hope Hubris and Admiral Khukov negotiate an end to the madness of mutually assured destruction. The balancing of the budget, something that was accomplished under Clinton at around the time of the novel, brings the book up to then-contemporary times. Hope Hubris has shown himself to be brave and sexy, wise and fortunate.

The difficulties of ruling are enormous and endless, as Hope Hubris is finding out from his ministers. Fortunately for the novel, this work is done off-stage by Hope's sister Spirit. But what we see of Hope's decision making process makes him look humane and considerate.

This chapter sheds light on the philandering that defines Hope Hubris as well, as Roulette explains that this is the Navy way of preventing intimacy, but requiring sexual relations. This makes Hope Hubris seem more human—he has only had two loves, after all—and it introduces the mystery of Hopie's matrilineal descent.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Two years pass. Spirit manages the bulk of the organizational work, and Hope is the figurehead for the Tyranny. Hope Hubris says that he finally gives Ebony her chance with him, and she shocks him by eliciting three climaxes from him, before she shares her first ever climax with him. Hope Hubris has been alternating between his three mistresses, Shelia, Coral and Ebony, who cater to his sexual needs, but he is growing dissatisfied: he does not love anyone.

Hope calls his first cabinet meeting, and introduces each of his cabinet members, and describes their responsibilities. He hears from Senator Stonebridge (economy), Gerald Phist (industry), Rue Phist (crime), Spirit (implementation), Ebony (population), Faith Hubris (poverty), Hopie (education) and then comes to Thorley. He asks Thorley to be in charge of freedom of the press; he asks him to make sure there is no censorship.

Linguists determine that Amber is fluent in many languages, a kind of idiot savant, and Hope Hubris learns to make use of her in negotiations when no one suspects her, but she can provide a summary of the conversations that take place in other languages.

Then Hope Hubris receives a letter from an anonymous admirer—he puts on a sensory helmet, and sees the vision that his admirer recorded: he enters a room wearing a long flowing cape, and there is a glow around him. He sees a woman, but her features are completely hidden from view by a veil. He thinks that he ought to reply to the message, and he records his own vision, in which he has less of a glow, but he embraces the veiled figure. Hope Hubris says that he has tried to keep his sexual life from causing embarrassment to Megan, from whom he is necessarily separated.

Senator Stonebridge comes to Hope Hubris with a plan for balancing the budget: he will reduce pensions and reform taxes. Spirit has apparently made a bargain with the Senator that compensates his tax reform with greater employment. They agree that the rich can get richer so long as the poor get richer as well. They also devise a way to measure the origin or money, so that if it accumulates, it can be recuperated through taxes more easily.

President Tocsin phones in and objects to Hope Hubris' reforms, but Hope Hubris says that he expects to follow the same rules as everyone else. When President Tocsin asks him what will happen when he (Hope) retires, Hope says that he expects to be assassinated.

Hope Hubris gets the feelie chip back from the anonymous woman. In it, he raises her veil, and she is featureless, like a dressmaker's doll. In his response, Hope imagines Helse's face on her, and he kisses her lips.



Roulette Phist comes to talk about crime reduction through legalization. She and Hope argue about the merits of legalization coupled with execution or exile for intransigent cases. As a cure for rape, Roulette recommends that they "make women more consenting" (p. 187).

The population is outraged by the reforms Hope Hubris' government institutes, but the statistics follow the path he had hoped for; crime is reduced, and employment is up.

Now when the feelie chip comes back, the face is raised to be kissed, but when Hope kisses the woman, she is not responsive, and he records a lesson on how to use the feelie helmet to record both sides of a scenario.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

Hope's separation from Megan is never satisfactorily explained, but it allows him both the virtues of marriage and a kind of sanction for his sexual relationships, which never really amount to betrayal. They are more like services his employees perform for him.

The feelie chip from the anonymous woman is therefore a tantalizing opportunity for the novel itself to delve into both the prolonged cat and mouse game that will enliven the political parts of the book, and the high-technology that defines this future world. Hope's encounters with the woman through the helmet are intriguing for the possibility that they could be political as well, and there is a danger to the mystery.

The social commentary that comes through Hope's conversations with Roulette and Faith are shallow, but they do illustrate the difficulty any individual would have, ruling a large and complex system that requires compromises at every turn. Ultimately this system is rooted in human nature, but the people whom Hope Hubris governs are not well defined at all, so society seems rather like a big difficult machine.





# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Gerald Phist proposes the solution the reader has heard before from Roulette, to use criminals for undesirable assignments in outer space. Phist recalls his whistle blowing on Navy corruption, and Hope recalls protecting him, and bringing him into his staff. Hope Hubris says that the iron companies had been colluding because their product was the source of energy for the entire society, and Phist recommends nationalizing a poorly-performing iron company to make the industry competitive again. Hope sees this as an opportunity to create employment and profit for the government. Of course as soon as the company is nationalized, the educated workers flee.

The feelie chip returns to Hope, and now the anonymous woman kisses and responds to Hope's attraction. But she does not know what to do after he has removed her clothes, so he gives her instruction about arousal and sex.

Admiral Mondy recommends forcing the leaders of industry to partner with the government, so that they can implement their reforms without resistance. Hope Hubris says that he would rather be loved than feared, but Mondy says that it is better, as Machiavelli says, to be feared.

Ebony recommends using chemical sterilization in the water, to reduce the birth rate. She says that it is not fair for people to have children they cannot care for, and then saddle the government with caring for those children. They propose to add sterilizing medicine to the water in Latin Jupiter as well, to stem the immigration that comes from poorer countries.

The feelie chip that returns takes Hope all the way to the verge of intercourse, but he realizes that the anonymous woman is not ready yet.

When there are riots about the reproduction initiative, Hope offers people pornographic 'holos' instead of babies, but this is cold comfort to individuals—the required social solution is still odious to them.

When the next chip comes back again, Hope Hubris gives the anonymous woman another lesson about how intercourse works, and he proposes a technique that will make it easy for them to copulate. When he gets the chip back the next time, he achieves intercourse with the anonymous woman, and tells her how to share her experiences with him through the helmet.

When Faith Hubris comes to discuss employment, she and Hope follow each other through effects back to causes and then back to further causes—from unemployment to industry to racism to education to healthcare. Hope and Faith agree that people's healthcare expenses should not continue beyond a certain age.



The feelie affair progresses, and the anonymous woman becomes a stirring lover for Hope Hubris. They discuss, through the correspondence within the feelie chip, the possibility of meeting up in person.

Hopie proposes a liberalization and a rigidity of education; she wants to remove requirements, but institute strict policies, so that learning can go on without disruptions, and help students really learn.

Hope invites Shelia into the helmet scenario, but Shelia refuses; she tells him he must manage this affair on his own, and he grumbles that he liked things better when his affairs were managed for him.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter confronts Hope Hubris with many of the difficulties of governing, and even though he is just a figurehead, and Spirit is really running things, he takes an active part in discussions about how to change society. All of his goals are noble—some, like the economy and the population question, are pressing—but implementing changes proves difficult. Human nature is a complex machine, and changing it is going to be complicated.

The big innovation in this chapter is the feelie affair with the anonymous woman. Hope is tantalized and intrigued by the opportunity to instruct an inexperienced girl in sex, and, as will come out later, the anonymous woman conjures Helse, who was fifteen when Hope loved her. The affair gives Hope ample opportunity to reflect on his own sex life, and the life of the Navy, which required people to sleep together. By the end of the chapter, he grumbles that he would rather have his affairs managed for him—but it seems like the growth in this novel follows him from being someone for whom things are managed to being someone who knows how to manage things for himself.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Hope Hubris takes Amber and Hopie to the zoo to see the Mastodon there, and he describes the steps that had to be taken to make an inhabitable environment for it. When the three are approaching the Mastodon's environment, Hope recognizes a laser spot on the ground, and realizes that this is an assassination attempt. He grabs Amber and jumps into the moat around the mastodon's cage, and when he pulls her out soaking wet, he recognizes her as the anonymous woman. When he gets the feelie chip back, Hope records a fantasy in which they recognize each other, and she acknowledges that she is Amber after all.

When Megan begins to criticize the Tyrancy, Hope arranges a Latin tour, to see how the poor people live. He takes a ship into the RedSpot, which is equivalent to Mexico, and tours the palaces before insisting on seeing the residential areas. In these areas, he finds trash everywhere, and squalid living conditions. When he takes Amber into the welter of makeshift houses, he is pounced upon by men with knives, who want to take Amber from him. He and Amber escape, and Hope realizes that he will have to limit his explorations in Latin Jupiter.

When Hope takes Amber to his home town on Callisto, he hardly recognizes the area, the growth has taken off, and the place is dirty. He talks to Junior Doc, the leader of Callisto, (i.e. Haiti) and gets Junior Doc to agree to limit emigration to Jupiter. He offers food for the people with the condition that he will lace the food with chemicals that make the people infertile. If the food shows up on the black market, Jupiter will withhold the antidote, and the people really will become infertile.

Amber asks Hope who Megan is, and he explains that she is his wife, but "cannot bring herself to participate in the Tyrancy" (p. 240).

When he sees her alone in his room, Hope Hubris tells Amber that he is afraid of her, because they have had the experience of the helmet tapes, but have not acknowledged their tie in real life. Overcome by Amber's resemblance to Helse, Hope Hubris says that he has to have her, even in spite of the difference between their ages. Before they can be together, they agree that they will have to tell Hopie. When Hope tells his daughter, she is outraged, for the betrayal of Megan and for Amber's age and dependency. She can only believe that Hope is raping her, and she lashes out, hitting him and bloodying his nose.

The next day, Hopie sends Hope a feelie chip, and in three different scenarios, the Hope figure threatens the Amber figure, but when the Hopie figure comes to Amber's rescue, the Amber figure herself saves the Hope figure. It turns out that Amber was in an adjacent helmet, and their fantasies were able to interact. Amber says that she wants to



be Hope's mistress, and Hopie is resigned. Amber shows Hopie her emotions, and the feelie chip provides an overwhelming experience of color and sensation.

The chapter closes with a letter from Thorley, advising Hope Hubris of the conversation Thorley has had with Hopie, telling him that he will keep the secret, since it is his private life, and has nothing to do with the Tyrancy.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

This chapter is the climax of the sexual theme centered on Amber. Hope has finally penetrated the secret of the anonymous woman, and come to see her for who she is—which is to say as a fifteen year old girl, totally dependent on him, resembling closely his lost love, Helse, and also his lost youth. The relationship is not particularly deep or elaborate, but she arouses him, and he enjoys taking care of her.

The complications associated with ruling the Tyrancy continue to frustrate Hope Hubris, but the policies his cabinet implements are taking effect, and he is successful in negotiating with Junior Doc to limit emigration from Latin Jupiter.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

Opposition to the Tyrancy is growing, as more and more reforms are implemented. Generally speaking, people want change, but they don't want it to affect them personally. There have been more assassination attempts, and Hope and Spirit Hubris decide that the best thing to do is to get Hope out of town for a while. Get him into industry, and let him experience things outside the 'bubble' of power.

Hope Hubris takes a job at the Jupiter Bubble Company, where he is known as Jose Garcia. He is told that he has to work his way up, so he and Amber are given a spaceship and sent off to prospect for new bubbles, which means driving through limited visibility to detect bubbles of bubbene large enough to act as housing.

Sequestration with Amber is a delight in some ways, as he is alone with his love, but Hope is also quickly bored with Amber, who is not intelligent enough to stimulate his intellect in conversation. Nonetheless, she conjures Helse, and makes him feel good, and now they have time to play the erotic games they had simulated in the feelie chips.

During a break from prospecting, Hope Hubris is told that Senators want to debate him, so he goes to a bubble where they have set up a theatre in the fashion of an ancient Roman hall. When the Senators file in, the lights go out, and one Senator says 'hail Caesar' and all twenty Senators descend on Hope Hubris and Ebony, his only accompaniment. Together, they fight off the attackers, suffering minor injuries in the process.

Back on the prospecting ship with Amber, Hope Hubris becomes bored by the routine of lovemaking without intellectual stimulation. They find a bubble, but it has already been claimed, and it is some time before they find another. When they do bring in a bubble of their own, Hope follows the bubble into the next step of its processing, and learns how to heat the bubbene and drill holes in it with a laser. His supervisor is a man named Gray, who complains about the erotic material in his daughter's reading primer, and now Hope Hubris gets a sense of the reforms his daughter has been instituting. Gray complains about reforms in healthcare. Hope Hubris brings Amena to work with his daughter learning to read.

When Gray tells Hope that he knows he is cut out for management, he tells him that he does good work, and Hope recruits him for his management team, when he rises high enough.

When Hope Hubris goes out with some of the guys after work, they go to the execution, and when the woman whose husband is to be killed cannot give the order, Hope himself is ordered to give it. He does, and the criminal dies, in spite of Hope's disgust with this process.



## Chapter 10 Analysis

This chapter begins a new part of Hope Hubris' saga, as he starts to tire of Amber, and begins to become interested in the Tyrancy again. He goes undercover, and now the eroticism falls to the background. He sees the Tyrancy from the perspective of the people who are affected by it, and he starts to resent it as much as they do. This poses the classic opposition between the individual and society, which is articulated in Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*. The individual must learn to love the society, even though its health and the individual's health, will often differ, sometimes substantially.

But it seems that the personal affection shared by men who are competent workers is a good foundation for an alternative to the overarching, impersonal state, and as Hope gets to know Gray, the novel becomes personal again, and the intractable social problems that have been plaguing Hope Hubris throughout his cabinet meetings become manageable again.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Hope Hubris learns to install apartment cubes, and built out a bubble to make it inhabitable. He notices the competent workers on his way up. When he is put in charge, he tells the people that they will be part of a new kind of organization, they will work together and collaborate and experiment and even sing together. The workers are baffled, but when they do burst into song, the unity he hoped for begins to establish itself. A Saturnine spy shows up, and Hope welcomes him into the meeting, and says that they have nothing to hide.

Business suffers at first, but improves as people streamline the business and attract creative talent. Eventually, Hope's business takes him to Cago, in the Prairie, where he witnesses a protest. The women are angry not to be able to reproduce, and when one woman sets herself on fire, a mob tears into the mayor's office, and threatens to kill the mayor if they are not given the ability to reproduce. The police overreact, killing people and making matters worse.

Jose Garcia is called in as a respected person to mediate with the Tyrant. He speaks to Shelia, and elicits the concession that the ability to reproduce will be restarted in a year, and permits will be issued to keep up with the death rate.

Thorley names Faith as a corrupt member of the Tyrant's cabinet; she has fallen in love with a man and allowed him to make corrupt appointments. Hope overreacts by arresting the man and firing Faith, but the harsh plan backfires on Hope when Faith kills herself.

Under Hope Hubris' leadership, the budget has been balanced, and the debt is being retired. He also oversees a program by which the clouds are seeded with bacteria that can be harvested as protein, so food costs are reduced, at the same time that food becomes more plentiful.

As Jupiter becomes a leader nation, it invades nations it has had disagreements with, and now has more influence with them. The people may dislike this, but as a nation, Jupiter is thriving.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter marks the triumph of Hope Hubris' theories of how to run the government of Jupiter. He has balanced the budget and relieved the nation of its debt. He has encouraged talented people and become a leader of industry. The split he has gone through—where he is hated as Hope Hubris and loved as Jose Garcia, has not created any trouble yet, but he does hint at his madness as something that has been developing, even then. This seems to be the last question: how will this madness

develop, and what will its consequences be? The question of the anonymous woman and Hope's attraction for Amber has been answered by his boredom.





# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Hope Hubris says that the iron industry has a great deal of power because iron is used for power throughout the solar system. The iron companies have been colluding to keep prices high, but Hope has nationalized Planetary Iron Company, and brought prices back down.

The Iron industry's opposition is different from the Resistance, which is a non-violent organization run by concerned citizens—like Jose Garcia.

At a meeting of Big Iron executives, Hope Hubris begins the discussions, but a robot walks into the room, and aims for him. Coral throws a grenade at the robot—and therefore also at Hope. A holo had made it look like Hope Hubris had already gotten out of his chair, so Coral does not know that she is throwing a grenade at Hope himself. Shelia alone realizes that the robot is a holo—not real. She catches the grenade, and holds it to herself, sheltering the others, but dying in the process.

After this, Coral feels guilty about killing Shelia, and she asks Hope to chop her head off after she disembowels herself. He refuses and gets her to give up thoughts of seppuku by promising to wash their bodies in blood; the Iron company executives are publicly executed.

Grieving for Shelia, Hope Hubris has a vision in which he floats out of the bubble through the atmosphere to where Shelia is in heaven, in her wheelchair. He sees Helse as well, but neither one can come back with him. They will still be there for him, though, when he needs them. Hope describes this as the beginning of his madness.

Hope's madness begins to be public knowledge, and even though the Tyrancy itself is thriving, the people are restive because of his madness. He is becoming more callous in his old age, and he is permitting more and more executions.

As Garcia, Hope sees the same thing everyone else sees, and acknowledges the Tyrant's madness. "It would be best to depose the Tyrant," he agrees (p. 324). He sees the Resistance as the best method for this, and as Tyrant, he issues a challenge to the Resistance, a contest to determine who should hold power. The Resistance chose Jose Garcia to mediate the debate between the Tyrant and the Resistance leader, a woman whose identity no one knows.

Hope Hubris says that he is not sure about which person he is—the Tyrant or Jose Garcia. It doesn't matter, though, he says, because the Tyrancy is being served, and the reforms are being implemented effectively.

When Hope gets to Ston to meet the Resistance leader, it turns out to be Megan, his wife.



In an editorial afterword, Hopie writes that Megan assumed power, there were democratic elections, and Hope Hubris was exiled. Jose Garcia retired as well, and the government is in better hands than ever. In closing, Hopie says that she learned to accept Amber, and accept her father's personality for what it was.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

The novel concludes with the Tyrant's abdication before the Resistance, led by Megan, "the one woman he could never deny" (p. 329). He is ready to hand things over to the women in his life again, a Cincinnatus returning to his crops. He does not return to the farm, though, he retires, both as Tyrant and also as Jose Garcia. The assassination attempts have finally cost him something—not his own life but Shelia's, and he cannot live without her, not without going a little mad. Hope sees visions, and no longer has control over them, as he did in the feelie helmet with Amber, who has disappeared from view.

The most important thing is that the government itself is more stable than ever, and in ten years he has turned things around. This is the last volume in the Bio of a Space Tyrant series, so presumably Hope Hubris has learned all he needed to learn, and can be put out to pasture, in Saturn, where he agrees to his exile.



# Characters

## Hope Hubris

Hope Hubris is the Tyrant of North Jupiter. He is fifty years old, a confident man, with the swagger that comes from confidence and power. He has a fifteen-year-old daughter named Hopie, and he is separated from his wife, Megan, who will not follow him as he leads the Tyrancy. Hope is renowned for his sexual conquests, and he leads the United States of Jupiter through the crisis of Ganymede, and also through a series of deep-reaching reforms, that save his society, but result in his loss of popularity. He regains this as his own alter ego, Jose Garcia; he goes to work in the bubble company, and is recognized as an effective worker and leader, who negotiates with the Tyrant on the behalf of the people.

## Spirit Hubris

Spirit Hubris is Hope Hubris's sister, and she is the one who pushed him into power by circumventing the electoral process, and using the Constitutional Convention. She is a trusted adviser, and leads Hope through his decisions.

## Amber

Amber is given to Hope Hubris as a gift by Admiral Khukov, after Hope Hubris faces down the Saturnine threat. The failure of the ruling Saturnine party to win this confrontation results in Admiral Khukov's ascent into a position of power, and Amber is his gift. Amber is at first thought to be mute, but it turns out she is an idiot savant in regard to languages, and can be set to different language 'modes' by entering a trance by staring at her ring—which has amber with a termite trapped inside.

Amber gets close to Hope Hubris as the anonymous woman, by sending him anonymous 'feelie' chips, with recordings of her approaching him, then yielding to him sexually. When Hope discovers that she is the anonymous woman, he takes her as a mistress.

## Hopie

Hopie is Hope Hubris' daughter with a woman who is not named. She treats Megan as her mother, though, and is upset about Hope and Megan's split. When she complains about the pointlessness of school, Hope appoints her Education minister, and she fills the school readers with racy content.



## **Shelia**

Shelia is Hope Hubris' executive secretary, in a wheelchair. She is a Saxon and she has worked for Hope for half of her thirty years. They have a sexual relationship in spite of her debility, and she manages his 'feelie chip' affair with the anonymous woman before she gives her life to save his life in an assassination attempt.

## **Helse**

Helse is Hope Hubris's lover from childhood. She died when she was fifteen, and Hope has idealized women of this age. Amber finds a place in his heart because of her resemblance to Helse.

## **Senator Stonebridge**

Senator Stonebridge is the main economic expert Hope Hubris with whom consults for advice on how to balance the budget.

## **President Tocsin**

Hope Hubris has replaced President Tocsin. His name means 'ringing alarm bell' but of course it conjures the word 'toxin' as well.

## **Columnist Thorley**

Thorley comes from the same region as Hope Hubris, and he is Hope's severest critic. Hope sends his daughter Hopie to work with Thorley to establish a line of communication between the leader and the critic.

## **Asoka**

Asoka is the Asian Tyrant whose example Hope Hubris hopes to follow, to become a benevolent dictator.



# Objects/Places

## Pineleaf Bubble

The novel begins in Pineleaf Bubble, as Hope Hubris has just been declared the Tyrant of the United States of Jupiter.

## Jupiter

Jupiter is the leading nation in the solar system. It is run by Hope Hubris, a benevolent dictator, and it is opposed by its longtime enemy, Saturn, which is a communist state, much in the way that the U.S. and USSR were in opposition in the 1980s when Executive was written.

## The holo helmet

This is the device that allows the wearer to make a recording of imagined things, many of them sexual in nature. Hope Hubris and Amber use the helmets to exchange 'feelie chips' with their experiences recorded.

## Bubbles

Bubbles are the structures in which Hope Hubris and the others live, floating in the Jupiter atmosphere. These structures have to be prospected for, searched for as they rise from the interior of Jupiter. Hope Hubris and Amber spend a month prospecting before they find a bubble to claim as their own.

## White Bubble

The White Bubble is the equivalent of the American White House, the seat of government. It even has an oval office.

## Saturn

Saturn is the communist superpower opposed to Jupiter, the American, capitalist state. Saturn tries to undermine Jupiter sovereignty by capturing the moon of Ganymede, but they initiate a Cuban Missile Crisis type standoff.



## Ganymede

Ganymede is the moon of Jupiter that the Saturnine forces come to conquer, making a tense confrontation between Saturn and Jupiter.

## RedSpot

RedSpot is where Latin Jupiter is. It is marked by elaborate palaces, but also by dire poverty and squalor in the outlying areas.

、

Description



# Themes

## Brinksmanship and strategy

One of the ways that Hope Hubris proves his manliness is by facing down his enemies and by outsmarting them in the application of policies and reforms to situations and problems that are rooted in the mobs and their irrational desires.

The first situation that proves Hope's power is the confrontation with Saturn over the Jupiter moon of Ganymede. Hope manages to bring the situation to a confrontation without revealing the identity of his ally who had tipped him off to the Saturnine threat. He is reputed to be a little mad, and this madness—the willingness to go all the way to destruction—makes his enemies blink, and he comes out in charge of a situation that could have turned catastrophic.

Hope survives at least three different assassination attempts, through sheer physical strength and also a little luck, and he has power, as Tyrant, to exile or execute those who would harm him. But his preferred method of dealing with enemies is to outmaneuver them with reforms aimed at changing the nature of the opposition, and he does this by nationalizing industries, and changing the nature of the market, by making commodities more competitive, and rewarding whistleblowers and innovators.

## Teamwork

As much as Hope Hubris is a super-macho man, he also freely acknowledges that he cannot do everything alone, and that he relies on the women in his life to run his affairs—literally, his erotic affairs as well as his affairs of state. His sister Spirit is the real leader, while he himself provides a level of organizational intuition and personal attentiveness that she does not have. Hope relies on a team of experts and values what they say, and even though he plays devil's advocate when they propose solutions to social problems, he trusts them and follows their recommendations. They are not always popular, but he puts them into effect nonetheless.

Even Hope Hubris' erotic life is subject to some scheduling teamwork. There is a mystical teamwork in the sense that Helse's spirit uses Shelia's body for seducing Hope, and Shelia monitors and watches in on the correspondence between Hope and the anonymous woman, who turns out to be Amber.

Even Hope's alter ego represents a form of teamwork, as Jose Garcia gives him the ability to work outside himself, and to complement his own efforts as Tyrant.



## Masculine and feminine power

There are two types of power in Executive, masculine and feminine. There is the typical physical power of men—which is represented in military aggression and seductive control over a woman—and the power of women to bear up under experiences, and to follow intuitions and urges that come from the unconscious, or from spiritual experiences.

Hope Hubris himself marries these different kinds of traits in one personality, for he is both super-masculine in his conquests of women and in his appeal to the women around him, and feminine-intuitive in his ability to discern the temperamental nature of the people around him.

This split is embodied in Hope's dual identity as Hope and also as Jose Garcia. As Garcia, he is a competent manager, who can oversee the business of the Jupiter Bubble Company. As Tyrant, Hope is the lightning rod for other people's emotions, and he is subject to their whims and angers.

This opposition also works the other way, for as Tyrant, Hope is in charge of implementing rational reforms, but as Jose Garcia, he can see that these rational reforms seem irrational to individuals who are affected by them.

## Reform and governing

The ostensible subject of this novel is the management of the nation of Jupiter, and also of the solar system around it. Jupiter is a superpower—much like the U.S. the late twentieth century—and as Tyrant, Hope is aware of an enormous and far-reaching responsibility for what goes on around him.

The government he inherits from President Tocsin is inefficient and deeply in debt, and Hope has to fix this by implementing reforms that touch almost every level of Jupiter society. Through diplomacy with other nations, and through reforms of reproduction and industry and education, his government changes the daily lives of everyone on Jupiter.

When these reforms stir up resentments in the common people, they begin to try to assassinate Hope Hubris as Tyrant, and Spirit Hubris decides that he should go undercover to get out of the way. As Jose Garcia, he is responsible for a smaller field of matters—a company is different to manage than a solar system—but Garcia does not encounter the same resentments. As one of the people, he can see why people resent the Tyrant, even though he can acknowledge the need for the reforms. This gets at a split in the life of every citizen, between the individualist and the society; one has to have loyalty to both.





# Style

## Point of View

Except for a brief editorial introduction and editorial afterword, *Executive* is told from Hope Hubris' perspective. He is a Navy man—which is to say that he has allowed the Navy's policies—particularly in regard to sexual conduct—to govern his life. Roulette Phist tells Hopie that the Navy prevents people from making lasting attachments, but requires that they have intercourse on a regular basis nonetheless. This is the rationale for a novel in which women are treated as playthings, never as equals, and this allows Hope Hubris to present his fifteen-year-old ward as a feasible partner for a mature sexual affair.

Hope Hubris is also defined by his straight-shooting management style. He rewards talent and does not hide corruption, which makes enemies for him, but wins him loyal assistants, and surrounds him with competent experts.

The editorial intro and afterword are presented from the perspective of Hope Hubris' daughter Hopie, as she fills in the history that makes his narrative make sense. She is more explanatory than evaluative, and sheds light on his decisions without judging them.

## Setting

*Executive* is set on the planet of Jupiter, in the solar system we inhabit. Some action takes place on Jupiter's moons Ganymede and Callisto, and Hope Hubris is in charge of some military actions near Saturn as well. The other planets—Earth, Venus, Mercury, Mars, and Pluto, are included in the action of the story, although the narrative does not actually visit these places.

The characters live in bubbles on Jupiter, and lenses magnify the sun's power so that life is possible. These bubbles are made of naturally-occurring bubblene, a super-dense material which is harvested, cleaned, and built out for living arrangements. Spinning them gives them gravity.

The physical trappings of the extra-terrestrial life are not excessively intrusive, but they do lend an other-worldly air to a story that is often-times very close to the American history of the last fifty years.

## Language and Meaning

*Executive* is narrated in straight-forward prose, which is stylistically modulated to carry the voice of a powerful and somewhat egotistical man. There are unique words, associated with the fictional science and extra-terrestrial setting. Things like 'bubblene'



and 'holo' images and 'feelie' chips are unique to Anthony's fictional universe, but they are similar enough to contemporary technology that they are not especially disruptive.

Otherwise, the language is not especially metaphorical or symbolic. Events are narrated in plain English, although there is a degree of artificiality to some of the descriptions. Particularly the descriptions of sexual intercourse are laden with obtrusive euphemisms that would make the action acceptable to a school librarian, and even educational to a younger reader.

## Structure

Executive is a linear novel, told in one voice by a narrator who has lived through the events involved in the book. Hope Hubris recalls these events after the fact, and organizes them so that they follow one after the other in chronological sequence. He is not living the events out as they happen. There are a couple of dream scenes, and the scenes in the helmet are leaps beyond physical existence, but they are carefully embedded in the narrative, and the reader does not have to wonder when things took place, since one episode in the helmet follows the next, with a cumulative effect resembling the progress of intimacy in a love affair.

The episode involving the moon of Ganymede does generate a good deal of tension—there is a lot at stake—and similarly the progress of reforms is a tension-producing storyline. These things are not all integrated, but take place on different planes, as Hope Hubris moves back and forth between his conversations with his advisers and his love affairs. The threads weave tighter and tighter until there is resolution, as with the Ganymede crisis, and then the novel starts to weave new tensions with new threads.



## Quotes

"Others had competence; Hope had magic" (p. 2).

"Such was my hubris, my namesake: the arrogance of pride and passion. Hope Hubris, the foolish dream of glory" (p. 31).

"My genius is reading (and making an impression on) other people, while Spirit's is organizational. We have always been a team, and there is no shame in that" (p. 49).

"Saturnine perceives an opportunity to achieve a significant advantage during your period of indecision, which will not only put Jupiter on the defensive but will thoroughly refute dissent in their own population" (p. 64).

"I was being forced into exactly the kind of dirty secret dealings I had condemned in Tocsin" (p. 85).

"The civilian populations of each planet were hostage to the Navy of the other. Karzhinov was not secure from that, and neither was I. We would both be dead men once the war began. But Karzhinov was a coward and I was not" (p. 109).

"Helse had introduced me to the joys of sex, and the Navy had introduced me to the joy of doing it with any woman handy" (p. 117).

"Everywhere I turned, the barriers were formidable and complex, not admitting any simplistic answers. So I needed simplistic relief and satisfaction, much as a child needs candy or fairy tales as a counterpoint to grim reality" (p. 236).

"Suddenly I appreciated on a gut level the common man's objection to the Tyrancy. I was beginning to feel it myself" (p. 284).

"I believe Faith Hubris died because the Tyrant lost track of basic human nature" (p. 303).

"The resistance was not looking for rabid partisans but for thoughtful, concerned citizens who had sensible doubts about the Tyrancy. I certainly fitted that description at the moment" (p. 304).



## Topics for Discussion

How seriously are you meant to take *Executive*? Is this a book about real life, or a mere fantasia, in which nothing real happens? Using examples from the book, describe the advantages and disadvantages of taking *Executive* seriously.

Describe the responsibility Hope Hubris bears as Tyrant of Jupiter. What tools does he have to implement his policies? What tradeoffs does he make in order to get them implemented? What does he have to do to subdue his opposition?

What is the relationship between sex and governing in *Executive*? Are they two different strands of the novel, meant to give variety to the narrative, or are they interwoven parts of the same story, told in two different keys? Using specific examples from the novel, discuss the relationship between sexual and political power in *Executive*.

What relevant, contemporary questions does *Executive* address? Judging from your own experience of the society around you, what concerns resonate with this novel? Using specific examples from the novel, describe how Piers Anthony resolves or answers the situations or questions that you can identify in contemporary, modern life.

What do you think Piers Anthony's political affiliations would be? What would Hope Hubris' be? Using specific examples from the novel, in addition to hot topics in contemporary politics, describe where the author and main character would fit on today's political spectrum.

In what ways is *Executive* dated? How has technology changed to either catch up with the high-tech in the novel, or advanced to make this fictitious world more absurd?

What is your evaluation of Hope Hubris' career as Tyrant? Has he attained Asoka's standard of the benign dictator? Using specific examples from the text, evaluate his reign.

What is missing from this book? What should have been covered or presented that was not? What is the effect of this absence? Describe an element that ought to have been covered, and explain why it would have made the book stronger.

Where is the climax of this book? Are there different climaxes? What questions does each climax resolve? What questions does each climax leave unanswered?

Use this book as a meditation on the value of a five-star rating system. Is a five-star system sufficient to a book like this? Would you need to have sub-topics for the rating system, for plot, characterization, language, and other elements? What other sub-topics would you need? What value or importance gets lost in a five-star scale? Design a scale that would be better for this book.

Would you recommend *Executive*? For what purposes would you recommend *Executive*, and for what kinds of readers would you recommend it? What other book



would you recommend that would cover the same material or tell the same story in a different way?