

Last of the Breed Study Guide

Last of the Breed by Louis L'Amour

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Plot Summary

Last of the Breed is the journey for freedom of Major Joe Makatozi, or Joe Mack as he is called, in the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian taiga. Mack is a test pilot for the United States Air Force, and his plane has been brought down by a Soviet Union Colonel named Arkady Zamatev sometime after the end of World War II. Mack is in a prison camp in Siberia when he is forced to return to the ways of American Indian ancestor to escape from prison and from Siberia.

During this journey, Mack finds help from others who, like Mack, are on the run from the Soviet government. Yakov is the first to befriend Mack on his journey. Yakov tells Mack of a place he can stay for the winter, the village. When Mack gets to the village he meets Natalya. Natalya Baronas and her father Stephen are two who offer to help Mack hide out during the roughest part of the Siberian winter. During this time Mack and Natalya become very close and when the time comes for Mack to move on Natalya decides to go to America with him. Now Mack not only has to escape from Siberia, but also come back and rescue Natalya and her father. Mack also has to take time out of his own escape to help his old friend Yakov who has been arrested.

As if surviving the brutally cold Siberian winter was not hard enough, Mack is being tracked by Alekhin. Alekhin is a Yakut, the Siberian counterpart to the American Indian. Alekhin knows almost every move Mack makes. Mack is consistently on the move trying to stay ahead of Alekhin. Along the way Mack leaves traps for Alekhin and his men in efforts to slow them down. On one occasion Mack causes an avalanche that kills a large part of the group that is closing in on him. Even though Mack is being tracked by hundreds of Soviet soldiers, he knows the true fight will be between him and Alekhin.

Mack and Alekhin come close to meeting several times, but Alekhin's patients' finally pays off when another tracker happens across Mack and alerts Alekhin's men. Mack is surrounded and knows there is no way out so he surrenders. After a severe beating by Alekhin, Mack still manages to escape. Even in his weakened condition Mack is still able to elude Alekhin and his men long enough to heal and make new weapons. Mack is able to secure a kayak to take him to Alaska just before he returns to the taiga to finish his business with Alekhin. In the end Mack and Alekhin have their final face off and Mack defeats Alekhin. Mack sends Alekhin's scalp to Zamatev with a warning that he will be next.



Chapter 1-5

Chapter 1-5 Summary

Page 1-3

Colonel Zamatev is talking to a soldier. The soldier is telling Zamatev about being caught in a trap set by the American, Mack. The soldier tells Zamatev that the only reason Mack did not kill him was because Mack wanted the soldier to give a package to Zamatev.

Zamatev is angry that Mack has once again escaped their capture and then asks if anyone has seen Alekhin. When Zamatev is alone, he opens the package.

Chapter One

This is the journey of Joe Mack, a United States Air Force Pilot, and his escape from not only his captures but also from Siberia. Mack uses the Indiana training he received from his grandfather during his childhood to help him survive the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian taiga. While fighting for his life, Mack finds not only a better understanding of his culture but also love for the first time in his life.

Major Joe Makotozi, or Joe Mack as he is called, is a United States test pilot who has been captured by a Russian Colonel named Zamatev sometime after the end of WWII. Zamatev and a Yakut named Alekhin are trying to get information from Mack concerning the US test planes. Mack is believed to be dead therefore no one in the US government is looking for him. Mack knows if he is going to get out this prison he will have to do it alone, he cannot wait for the United States or anyone else to help him. He also knows that Zamatev will begin to torture him and probably kill him when Zamatev does not get Mack to cooperate with the Soviets. Mack is never going to betray his country and he thinks that the torture will begin sooner rather than later.

Mack is at a prison camp in Siberia meeting Zamatev and Alekhin for the first time. Zamatev offers to give Mack a place in the Soviet army with his current military rank if he cooperates with them. Mack refuses to tell Zamatev anything and after a few heated words with Alekhin is sent back to his cell.

Chapter Two

Mack is making his escape plans. He is sizing up every aspect of the prison trying to find its weakness. Mack soon notices that the prison relies solely on the electric barbed wire fence and the sub-zero temperatures as a means to keep the prisoners inside the camp. Mack knows if he can make it over the fence he can escape and return to America. Mack meets another prisoner, Pennington, who offers to help him escape. All Pennington wants in return for helping Mack is for Mack to tell his family he did not abandon them. Pennington was taken from England, and his family has idea what



happened to him. His wife was expecting their first child and he just wants her to know what really happened to him. Pennington knows he could not survive with Mack in the taiga, and his best hope would be if Mack escaped then he could tell someone Pennington was in the prison.

Chapter Three

After the guards make their rounds the following night, Mack is able to slip out of his cell. Mack's escape from his cell is easy. The prison does not lock these doors. They think the electric fence and their location is enough to keep the prisoners from escaping. Pennington shuts off the power, giving Mack the opportunity to pole vault over the electric fence and escape into the taiga. Mack moves quickly once over the fence, leaving as much distance between him and the prison as possible before anyone knows he is gone. He knows the general direction he needs to travel, because he is headed for the Bering Straight, but he is not familiar with the area. This is not important at this point he just needs to go as far away as quick as he can.

Chapter Four

Meanwhile back at the prison, Zamatev thinks Mack can not get very far so the search is slow and Mack has plenty of time to get ahead of the search parties. Zamatev's search is following the path a normal prisoner would take not an American Indian. Zamatev questions Pennington about the escape. In the beginning Pennington refuses to have any knowledge about Mack's plans, but finally he admits that Mack told him what he was planning. Pennington continues to claim that he did not help Mack in any way.

Zamatev is busy trying to make sure Mack is captured quickly and without anyone finding out about the escape. Zamatev thinks he is covering the same path Mack would have taken, however he is going in the exact opposite direction. It does not take long for word to get out about Mack's escape and by this time, Mack is already fifty miles away.

While Zamatev and his men are doing all of this, Mack has already found a cabin where is able to get warmer clothes, a knife and some canned food, all without being noticed. The two men occupying the cabin are away for the day, and Mack quickly takes only what he needs and leaves. Mack also leaves the cabin much the same way he found it hoping the men would not realize he was ever there. The things he took could be easily explained away.

While on the run, Mack has been able to find shelter and even build a fire to warm himself without being seen. He never lets his guard down; he knows Alekhin will be coming for him sooner or later. Mack only stays in one place long enough for a short rest and to warm up, then he is quickly on the move again. He is always thinking ahead, Mack knows that if he is going to survive the winter he needs to start hunting and soon. He needs the hides for warmth and the meat for strength and endurance.

Chapter Five



Once Mack leaves the cabin, he begins making preparations for finding food and making clothing and weapons like he was taught to do by his Indiana grandfather. Mack is trapping animals until he has enough to make real weapons like a bow and arrows.

Zamatev is still searching mainly in the towns and nearby roadways. He is nowhere near Mack. Alekhin is aware of how far Mack has probably gotten by now, but he is sure he can still track him. Alekhin believes he knows where Mack is headed, and he plans on catching him as soon as the search is turned over to him. Alekhin is just watching as Zamatev conducts the search like they are looking for a normal prisoner, not an Indian.

On the thirty-second day of searching for Mack, Alekhin finds the cabin where Mack had taken the food, clothes, and knife. The men who are staying there have noticed the things missing but think the items are only misplaced, Alekhin knows Mack has been there and is soon on Mack's trail.

Chapter 1-5 Analysis

Analysis Page 1-3

This section of the story is located on the first three pages of the novel and does not have a chapter or title. Although it does not make much sense at this point, it will be cleared up in the last chapter of the book. This event actually takes place at the end of the story.

Chapter 1-5

Mack is in a Soviet prison camp in Siberia. The commander, Zamatev is hoping to learn secrets about the United States test planes from Mack. The United States knows that Mack's plane crashed but they believe he died in the crash; therefore no one is looking for him. If Mack is to escape from this prison and Siberia, he will have to do it without the help of the United States. What the Soviets did not take into account when capturing Mack was his American Indian background. Mack maybe trained by the United States Air Force and is skilled in martial arts, but he was also trained by his Indian grandfather to hunt, live and survive like his ancestors. Mack has also been raised with the same values as his ancestors and that makes him even more dangerous than Zamatev and Alekhim realize.

Alekhim is a Yakut the Siberian counterpart to the American Indian and he is Zamatev's tracker. Alekhim is known in the Soviet Army for his tracking skills, it is said that he can track anything or anyone. Mack knows when he escapes it will be Alekhim who will be the one to cause him the most trouble. If anyone would be able to track an Indian it would be a Yakut.

Mack meets a man in prison, Pennington who offers to help him escape. Pennington is a chemist who was captured from England. In return for helping Mack, Pennington wants Mack to tell his family he did not abandoned them. Pennington's family has no



idea what happened to him and no way of knowing he is being held in a prison in Siberia.

Once Mack makes his escape, he uses what his grandfather taught him to survive the Siberian conditions. When he makes his fire the first night, he uses materials that make little to no smoke. Mack steals a few things from a cabin so he can survive and provide for himself the remainder of his time on the run. Once Mack has the knife he steals from the cabin, he is able to begin making some weapons, a sling shot so he can kill animals for food, clothing, and more weapons. Mack's Indian training gives him the knowledge of how to do all this as well as how to make moccasins and warmer clothing from the animal hides. His grandfather has also taught him how to smoke meat so he can travel with it and make it last longer. Mack is also trying not to leave a trail for Alekhim to follow.



Chapter 6- 10

Chapter 6- 10 Summary

Chapter Six

While Alekhin is at the cabin, Mack is fifty miles away preparing traps. Mack has only been eating berries since the canned food ran out. His strength is running low and he knows he has got to eat some protein soon if he expects to keep moving in these sub-zero temperatures. Mack finally kills a fox with a sling he has made and soon he has also killed mutton for clothing. Mack is still hungry and weak from lack of food and the cold weather and falls asleep. When he wakes up a man, Yakov is pointing an AK-47 at him.

Chapter Seven

Yakov and Mack begin to talk and find that they are both on the run from the Soviets. Yakov can see how weak Mack is from lack of food and helps Mack for a few days. Yakov offers to help Mack and tells him of a place he can stay during the winter. Yakov tells Mack how to get to this village and that Mack will need to talk to a woman there. Yakov tells Mack the woman will have to decide if he can stay or not.

Chapter Eight

Soon after Mack and Yakov part ways, Mack kills a reindeer and makes several pairs of moccasins from the skin. Mack also uses the reindeer to finish a bow he has been working on. Things are starting to look up for Mack; now that he has the bow completed Mack can start hunting larger animals. He is still making arrows and needs warmer clothing, but with the addition of the bow Mack now has the means to survive the taiga.

Mack has to cross a couple of rivers and has some close calls on both rivers. The first time a dog barking almost gives away his location and the second time a man with a gun comes up behind him.

Chapter Nine

In this chapter we are back with Zamatev, and he is with a woman, Kyra. It seems the two are secretly involved and are discussing what to do about catching Mack. Kyra is not in love with Zamatev, and he is not in love with her. The two are just using one another to get what they want. Kyra is hoping that Zamatev will help her get ahead in her career. Zamatev is using her for much the same reason. She is always there to help and support him. Zamatev feels she is one of the few people he can trust. He knows she wants to further her own career, but he thinks that she do a better job for him if she expect to ride his coat tail. Kyra offers her help and Zamatev accepts. Zamatev sends Kyra to Aldan to oversee the searches there. Kyra is to take a man named Stegman with her.



Chapter Ten

Meanwhile back with Mack, he is trying to convince the man with the gun to let him go. He tries to tell the man he is only a tourist but the man does not believe that and decides to turn Mack in to the people working on the railroad. Mack tells the man he will make them believe the two were meeting for some secret reason and the man would also be in trouble. Mack convinces the man he would be in as much trouble as Mack if caught there, the man finally agrees to let Mack go.

Back on track, Mack comes across a construction site and goes into one of the offices and finds a map to help navigate the taiga.

After leaving the construction office, Mack heads toward the village Yakov had told him about. Mack comes across another cabin and camps near it for a few days. Just after Mack leaves the cabin a helicopter shows up at the cabin.

Chapter 6- 10 Analysis

Mack feels the loneliness of being in the taiga and talks to his ancestors as he makes his way through the Siberian taiga. He feels them encouraging him and helping him make the same journey they made many, many years before when they first came to North America. Mack has spent many summers of his youth learning how his ancestors lived, but now he is beginning to really feel connected to them for the first time. He is concerned that he has not truly lived up to his Indian heritage of being generous to others. Mack does not know it yet but he is about to get the chance to learn what it is like to be truly generous when he meets the people of the village. Right now Mack is feeling a lot of pride in his people and is making the decision to not just escape from Siberian and Zamatev, but to avenge himself and his country for this wrong he feels they have committed against him and his country. The more Mack gets in touch with his Indian heritage on this journey the more he feels that it was a great personal insult that he was captured. He has decided that Zamatev and Alekhim must pay for this action of disrespect.

While Mack is becoming more and more a part of his ancestors, Colonel Zamatev is still looking in all the wrong places for Mack. Zamatev has sent his girlfriend, Kyra to Aldan to oversee the search efforts there. Zamatev does not trust anyone, and is worried about too many people finding out about Mack's escape. Zamatev fears this escape could ruin his career, but he trusts Kyra that is why he sends her to Aldan. Zamatev is determined to find Mack as quickly as possible. Alekhim knows he can find Mack and that Zamatev is looking in the wrong places, and he begins his own search for Mack taking the route he would take if he were on the run. Alekhim quickly picks up Mack's trail.

Mack's path will soon cross with Kyra's because he has just met a man, Yakov who has told him of a place where he can ride out the winter, this village is close to the town of Aldan where Kyra is now headed.



Chapter 11- 15

Chapter 11- 15 Summary

Chapter Eleven

Mack finds a bear and kills it with only his bow and arrows. It takes him three shots but he finally takes down the large bear and quickly begins preparing the meat and the skin. Mack knows this skin will make him a very warm coat for the winter. Mack now has plenty of food and a lot of skins. After several more days of travel, Mack finally finds the village and the woman Yakov told him about. She is having what seems to be an argument with a man, so Mack waits until the man leaves before approaching her. Mack is sure this must be the woman Yakov told him to talk to.

Mack explains who he is and how he found the village and offers the woman, Natalya some of the meat from the bear. Natalya tells Mack about the people of the village and how the Soviet officials leave them alone in exchange for skins. She also explains that meat is in short supply this time of year, and Mack could help the people of the village with both meat and skins. Natalya asks Mack to stay. She tells him about Peshkov, the man she was arguing with when Mack first saw her. Natalya explains that Peshkov is the only one in the village who will have a problem Mack being there. Mack is happy to be able to help the people of the village with his skins and also to provide them with meat throughout the winter.

Chapter Twelve

Mack meets Natalya's father, Stephen Baronas. The three visit and eat the meat Mack has brought with him. Baronas and Natalya offer to let Mack stay with them, but he insists on finding his own place to stay. Baronas offers to teach Mack to speak Russian.

Mack finds a hideout in a cave. During the day he hunts and prepares the skins and at night he visits with Baronas and Natalya. By the time Baronas and two other men, Botev and Borowsky are ready to take the skins into Aldan to sell; Mack has enough to sell as well as enough for the village to use to fulfill their obligation the official.

Chapter Thirteen

While Baronas is in town selling the furs, Mack continues trapping and preparing more skins. Meanwhile Kyra and Stegan have arrived in Aldan. They talk to the official in charge and afterwards follow him to the local furrier. When the official leaves Kyra and Stegan decided to pay the furrier, Evgeny Zhikarev a visit.

Chapter Fourteen

Zhikarev is questioned by Kyra about the new skins that were just brought in. Zhikarev tells Kyra he has not seen the skins before, and that he does not recognize who would



have brought them. Zhikarev recognizes Kyra's driver, Stegman as the man who tortured Zhikarev during the war. Zhikarev is worried that Kyra may come back to ask more questions that he can not answer. He makes his plan to escape to Hong Kong as soon as Kyra leaves his shop.

Chapter Fifteen

Peshkov is tracking Mack in the woods hoping to find Mack's hideout. Mack sees him, and realizes how bad Peshkov is at it so he does not worry so much anymore about Peshkov finding where he has been staying. Mack still takes no chances and always takes a different route to and from his hideout.

When Mack returns from hunting, Baronas tells him about Kyra being in the city looking for him, and that the furrier has fled the city. Mack knows it is time for him to be moving on and starts making plans to leave the village.

Chapter 11- 15 Analysis

Once Mack finds the village, he meets Natalya Baronas who is the lady in charge of who can stay in the village. Natalya agrees to let Mack stay in the village in exchange for skins and meat. Mack is a good hunter and tracker and already had many furs. Natalya explains that the people of the village are also on the run from the Soviet government but that the local official in Aldan left them alone in exchange for furs. Natalya also explains that during the winter the people of the village do not have much if any meat to eat and he could really help them out by staying, Mack agreed to stay. He is happy to be able to help the people in the village and to finally have some company after so much time alone in the taiga.

Mack meets Peshkov, one of the better hunters in the village. Peshkov does not want Mack to be there because Mack is a hunter and trapper than he is. Peshkov causes a lot of trouble for Mack while he is in the village, even trying to scare him off at times.

Mack likes Natalya and her father and spends most of his nights visiting with the two of them. Natalya's father is teaching Mack to speak some Russian. Natalya and Mack are becoming close and that worries Mack because he does not want to cause any trouble for her or her father. When Baronas and two other trappers from the village, Botev and Borowsky, take the furs into Aldan and see Kyra questioning the furrier, Zhikarev, Mack decides it is time for him to prepare to leave the village.

Back in Aldan; Shortly after Kyra questioned Zhikarev he decides to escape to Hong Kong. Zhikarev recognized Stegman, who is with Kyra, as the man who tortured him during the war and ultimately crippled him. Zhikarev is afraid that if Kyra comes back to ask about the furs, she might use Stegman to get the answers she is looking for.



Chapter 16- 20

Chapter 16- 20 Summary

Chapter Sixteen

Yakov returns to the village and tells Mack that Alekhin is looking for him, but Mack already knows about Alekhin. Mack has always known that Alekhin would be the one he would have to outsmart. Alekhin will be harder to hide from because he thinks like an Indian. Mack wonders if Alekhin does not already know where he is heading and will be there waiting for him. Sometime later Mack meets Natalya in the woods and she tells him about a meeting the people of the village have had concerning letting him stay in the village. Peshkov wants Mack to leave, but most of the village wants him to stay because of the meat he provides to them. She tells Mack that the people have decided he can stay for now.

Mack knows the comfort of the village is a danger to him at this point. He is not as guarded as he should be and he needs to be moving on. He begins making several different paths to take him out of the village just in case he needs to leave quickly. He also leaves small packs that he can quickly take with him containing supplies if he does not have time to stop at his hideout before he leaves.

Chapter Seventeen

Zamatev is feeling pressure from his comrades to find Mack. He is worried about what will happen to his career if he does not capture Mack and soon. His comrades do not understand how this could have happened and question if he has done enough to find Mack.

Kyra tells Zamatev about Zhikarev and that she has issued a warrant for his arrest. She also tells him about the furs. Zamatev tells Alekhin about the new developments in Aldan and orders Alekhin not to kill Mack when he finds him.

Zamatev and Kyra have changed the guards at the border of China, thinking that is where Zhikarev is headed and now he has no way into China.

Chapter Eighteen

Back at the village, Mack is preparing to leave as soon as possible and is planning different escape routes out of the village. Natalya is making Mack a shirt so he can blend in in the cities if he needs to.

One night when Mack is leaving the Baronas house, Peshkov is waiting for him. Mack is a better tracker than Peshkov and is able to get around behind Peshkov without being seen. Mack gets behind Peshkov, and puts his knife to Peshkov's throat. Mack tells



Peshkov if he tries anything again he will kill him. This only makes Peshkov madder and more determined to get rid of Mack.

Chapter Nineteen

After a few more words with Peshkov, Mack lets him go and decides it is time for him to be moving away from the village. Before he leaves, Mack makes sure the people there have plenty of meat and he tells Natalya and her father to meet him at Plastun Bay. It is closer to the border and Mack thinks it will be easier for him to come back through there. Mack tells them when he escapes from Siberia he will come back there to get both of them and take them back to America with him.

Chapter Twenty

Mack leaves Natalya and goes to his hideout to gather his things. Soon Mack is back in the taiga, and he sees a helicopter. When the helicopter sees Mack it tries to land near him and a man gets out. Mack kills him with only his bow and arrow then quickly fires another arrow from his bow into the helicopter. Mack hits the pilot with this shot and the plane crashes. Mack wastes no time and is quickly on the run again. He has no way of knowing if the pilot had time to radio in what was going. Mack knows if the pilot did radio, there will be a lot of Soviet soldiers in the area soon. Mack once again needs to put as much ground between him and the Soviets as possible.

Chapter 16- 20 Analysis

Natalya and Mack are growing closer every day, but Mack is always worried about the danger his being in the village puts Natalya and her father in. Peshkov is trying to stir up trouble for Mack with the people of the village, and a meeting has been called to decide whether Mack should go or stay. The majority of the people want Mack to stay because of the amount meat he is providing for them. Even after Mack learns that the people want him to stay, Mack starts making his preparation to leave. Natalya has offered to make Mack a shirt just in case he has to go into a city he will not stand out. Up to this point Mack has been wearing clothing he has made himself from animal hides. He would be noticed very quickly dressed like this.

Mack and Natalya have been talking about America and Natalya has decided she would like to go there with him. Mack knows he can not take her with him now, but he tells her to go to Plastun Bay and wait there for him. He plans to return for her after he makes it back to America. He tells her that would be a safer place from him to return to. After they make their plans Mack is on the run again.

Meanwhile Kyra has told Zamatev about talking to the furrier about the strange skins in his store and that she thinks he knows more than he told her, especially since he has now disappeared. What Natalya does not know is the reason Zhikarev left town was not because of what he knew but who he knew. He had recognized the man with Kyra, Stegman as being the man who tortured him during the war. Zhikarev ran out of fear of Stegman, not because he knew anything about the furs. Zamatev tells Kyra to change

the guards at the Chinese border because they think Zhikarev may be friends with them and the guards may allow him to escape into China. This is exactly what Zhikarev had planned and where he is headed.



Chapter 21-25

Chapter 21-25 Summary

Chapter Twenty-One

Meanwhile back at Zamatev's camp, he has gotten word about the helicopter crash, but does not suspect Mack is behind it. He and Kyra are busy making plans to visit the village. She believes this is where Mack is and they want to get there quickly before he leaves. Alekhin is the one who figures out about the helicopter crash. He was at the crash site and found the arrows.

Zamatev goes with Kyra to the village to find Natalya. At the same time Zhikarev has found out the guard has been replaced and he can not get into China. He has no way of knowing how long his contact will be gone, but he knows he can not stay there and wait for him. Zhikarev is crippled and with the warrant out for his arrest he would be quickly spotted and taken to prison. He decides to go stay with his cousin for a while and hopes that the guard will return.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Peshkov takes Zamatev to the village to find Mack. Zamatev is not sure if he trusts Peshkov, but Peshkov swears that Mack is in the village. He even tells Zamatev that Mack was close with the Baronas family. When they get to the village almost everyone has gone including Natalya and her father. Zamatev is angry he thinks Peshkov has lied to them. Alekhin is with them and tells Zamatev that he believes what Peshkov is telling them. Alekhin wonders around the village and soon finds Mack's tracks leading out of the village but does not find his hideout. Alekhin tells Zamatev he will start tracking Mack from the helicopter crash site. He tells his men to keep their eyes open for Mack. He has already killed three men and crashes a helicopter. Alekhin is not under estimating this Indian.

Zamatev talks to Kyra about going to Magadan to see if she can get any more help in capturing Mack. She thinks she may have a friend who can help and agrees to go to Magadan to ask.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Alekhin is still in no hurry to find Mack. He is studying his habits. Alekhin wants to learn as much as he can about how Mack thinks and why he does what he does. Alekhin is enjoying this hunt, he likes tracking Mack because Mack makes it difficult for him. He feels he knows where Mack is headed, so there is no hurry. He is just going to enjoy the chase. Alekhin and his men are following Mack's tracks, and Mack has left traps for them along the way. Mack manages to kill one and wound another one of Alekhin's men in these traps.



Zamatev is starting to question Kyra's loyalty, not because of anything she has done, but because he is worried about his own personal career. He finally decides he has to trust Kyra; she is all he has at this point.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Mack is still in the taiga moving as quickly as possible, only stopping to eat and rest. He kills reindeer so he can make more clothing and have more meat. He knows that Alekhin is following him and he does his best to confuse Alekhin. He changes directions in the hopes of at slowing Alekhin down.

Mack catches himself thinking a lot about Natalya and what it would be like if they were together in America. He knows these thoughts are dangerous because he needs to focus only on getting out of Siberia. As long as he is still in this country he can do nothing to help Natalya or her father.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Natalya and her father are at the cabin at Plastun Bay. Three young Soviet soldiers come to visit them and they become friends. The soldiers come by often to visit and fish with Natalya and her father. One of the boys, Bocharov offers to help them get out of the country, the Baronas' decline the offer, and two weeks later, the boy dies.

Sometime later an official car pulls up to the cabin. Natalya and her father are worried they have been found.

Chapter 21-25 Analysis

Kyra is explaining to Zamatev that she has an informant, who turns out to be Peshkov that has told her the location of Mack. Kyra and Zamatev are making plans to visit the village when Alekhim informs Zamatev that Mack is responsible for the helicopter crash. Zamatev is slowly beginning to realize that he had underestimated Mack and his abilities to survive in this unfamiliar environment. He knows his best chance for catching Mack is Alekhim, but he is worried that Alekhim will kill Mack when he finds him. Zamatev still thinks he can get Mack to cooperate with him if he gets him back alive. He is still under estimating Mack and his warrior spirit.

When Kyra, Zamatev and Alekhim arrive at the village, they find out that not only is Mack gone, but so are most of the others as well as Natalya and her father. The trip is not a complete waste of time however; Alekhim is able to learn a lot about Mack's habits. He studies where Mack was hunting, and observes the fact that Mack had several ways out of the village as well as traps to slow down or kill anyone who might try to follow him. Alekhim now knows that Mack is able to make his own moccasins and has been storing food for his long journey. Alekhim is impressed with the knowledge Mack has for survival. He now knows finding and capturing Mack will be harder than even he had first thought.



Chapter 26-30

Chapter 26-30 Summary

Chapter Twent- Six

Mack is now following a road but still hiding in the taiga. While crossing the road he is seen by a car and the driver tries to kill him. Mack kills the driver and then takes the car and dead driver into town.

Alekhim finds the man and the car. Seeing the arrowhead right away, he knows it was Mack who killed the man. Alekhim talks to the man in charge in town, Petrovich and tells him to be on the lookout for Mack. Later that night, after Alekhim has left, Mack shows up at Petrovich's cabin and makes Petrovich fix him food and coffee.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The two men talk over the meal and then Mack ties Petrovich to his bed, stokes the fire and leaves. When Mack leaves Petrovich's office he puts as much distance between them as possible. By the following day Mack is more than seventy miles away.

At the same time Alekhim and his men are being led into another one of Mack's traps. Mack has used elk hooves tied to his feet to led Alekhim's men onto thin ice, and one of the men falls in before Alekhim can warn him.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Meanwhile back at the Baronas cabin, Natalya and her father are talking to the man who drove up in the official car, the young soldier's father. He has come to thank them for being so nice to his son. Young Bocharov has told his father about them and now Bocharov is offering to help them get out of the country.

Kyra is visiting her sister and brother in law. Her brother in law, Ostap says he will help her find Mack.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

The cold weather is beginning to wear on Mack. He is having a hard time keeping his mind on what he needs to be doing. He has been cold for so long now he can not remember being warm. His mind keeps drifting back to Natalya, and what she might be doing right now. He is trying to remember exactly when he fell in love with her and how it happened.

Mack is still in the taiga with little food, when he hears the soldiers. Mack has little time to find a place to hide, but soon finds a tree trunk and climbs inside as high up the inside of the tree trunk as he can get. The men search the tree but do not see him,



then they set up camp near the tree. Mack is stuck inside the tree unable to move until the men settle in for the night.

Chapter Thirty

Mack is trying to escape from the tree trunk without the soldiers hearing or seeing him. He once again uses the training of his ancestors to sneak out of the tree trunk unseen.

Once the men are finally asleep, Mack climbs out of his hiding place, and is quickly on the run again. The next morning a tracker sees Mack's tracks and tells the men that Mack came right through their camp while they slept.

While the men are deciding what to do about Mack, he is watching from a long distance away and sees their cars leave. He is wondering if they have found his tracks.

Chapter 26-30 Analysis

Natalya and her father have met the young soldier's father, Bocharov and he is thanking them for being so kind to his son. He realizes the reason for the two being on the run and yet he still wants to help them. He offers to get them out of the country if they would like to leave. Baronas and Natalya are not sure about accepting the offer, they do not know if they should trust him or not. They realize if he wanted to arrest them he could have already done that so they think they can trust Bocharov. He asks them if he can come visit them again and they agree although they are not sure they can wait for him to help them. They are ready to try for the border on their own. They do not want to wait in Plastun Bay for Mack. They feel that is too dangerous for him to come back for them, so they are going to try to get to America on their own and tell the Air Force where he is so they can help get him home.

Kyra has turned to her sister and brother in law for help in locating Mack. She feels that her brother in law, Ostap may have better connection with the trackers and people who do not like the government than she does. Ostap is only interested in how much money he can make if he finds Mack.

Mack is still making his way through the taiga, headed for the Bering Straights. The Soviet soldiers are coming closer to where he is, and at times Mack even walks right through their camp sites while they are sleeping. All the things Mack learned as a young boy are now helping him survive in the taiga, and he is becoming more like his ancestor with each day.



Chapter 31-35

Chapter 31-35 Summary

Chapter Thirty One

Natalya and her father are planning to go ahead toward the Chinese border. They do not think they can wait for Bocharov to help them and they are not sure they can really trust that he will be able to help them get out of the country.

Natalya tells her father she is scared that the Soviets will use her to capture Mack if they find her. This is one reason they do not feel they can wait for Bocharov's help. They are discussing asking Zhikarev for help, they are sure he has connection at the border. Baronas tells his daughter he thinks there must be some problem at the border and that Zhikarev will have enough trouble just getting himself out of the country.

Natalya goes into the city to pick up supplies for their trip. While in the city she runs into Yakov. Yakov asks if he can come back to their cabin and talk with both her and her father. On the way back to the cabin Natalya fills Yakov in on the plans she and her father are making to leave the country. Yakov tells her he agrees that they should leave quickly because Kyra has issued a warrant for both of their arrests. Natalya tells Yakov about Bocharov offering to help them and Yakov tells her to trust Bocharov. Yakov tells her that Bocharov is very powerful, even more so than Zamatev, and he can certainly help them get out of the country if he wants to.

Chapter Thirty Two

Once back at the cabin they all plan their trip to the border. Natalya quickly packs her things and even sleeps in her clothing so they can leave first thing in the morning. The next morning they leave. Yakov stays with them the first night but he has to leave the next morning. Yakov tries to prepare Natalya for what to expect in the taiga. He wants her to be safe once he has to leave, and he is worried that her father is not going to be much help to her. Yakov is concerned that Baronas will not even make the trip and Natalya will be left to make the journey alone. Natalya and her father continue on alone and camp early that evening. Natalya can tell that her father is having a hard time in the cold temperatures. She makes a fire and is hoping that once she gets him warm and he has a good night sleep things will be better. The next morning Natalya wakes up to find her father has died during the night.

Chapter Thirty Three

In this chapter we rewind a bit to the day that Bocharov visited Natalya and her father at the cabin. While this was happening Peshkov was back at the village looking for Natalya and her father. He still can not find them so he looks for Mack's hideout. He finds the hideout but just as he steps inside he falls off the ledge and into the bottom of the cave breaking his back. This is the last we hear of Peshkov.



Now we come back to the present and Zhikarev has been waiting at his cousins for quite a while. He decides to take his chances and heads back to the border hoping the guard he knows will be back at the border. He gets a ride with a truck driver and on the way he sees Natalya walking alone on the side of the road. He asks the driver to stop for Natalya.

Chapter Thirty Four

Mack continues toward the Bering Straights, all along looking over his shoulder for Alekhin. Mack kills a mountain goat to make warmer clothes and more moccasins. Mack is hoping to find a place to stay for a few days. He finds a place in a valley where he thinks he can stay hidden for several days. While Mack is here he sees the helicopters that are still looking for him. He believes they will not find him in this hiding spot. He is still setting traps for the soldiers following him.

Mack's thoughts again turn to Natalya. He wonders if she is safe and she still believes he will return for her. He also thinks about the others from the village and wonders if they are still in the village or if they were forced to leave. Mack considers trying to hide in a village through the winter, but decides his only chance for survival and freedom is to stay in the taiga.

Chapter Thirty Five

Ostap has a meeting with three men, one of them is Botev, about tracking Mack. He tells the men Zamatev will pay them a lot of money to find Mack. Botev plays along as if he wants to help track Mack.

When Ostap returns to his room Kyra is waiting for him. He quickly fills her in and she leaves. In the hallway she sees officers coming to make arrests and she quickly leaves.

Chapter 31-35 Analysis

Natalya and her father are too scared of being discovered at the cabin to wait any longer for Bocharov's help in crossing the border. She decides to go into the nearby town to pick up supplies for their journey. While in town Natalya runs into Yakov who tells her that Kyra has issued a warrant for both her and her father's arrest. Yakov goes back to the cabin with Natalya to help her prepare for the trip. He tells her how to survive in the taiga, and which direction to travel. Yakov is only able to travel with them for the first day then he has his own business to take care of. He is worried that Baronas is not strong enough for the trip and tries to convince them to wait. Baronas would not think of staying, he has lived too many years in hiding and Natalya has spent her entire life hiding. Baronas feels that it is worth the risk of his own health for his daughter to live in freedom with Mack in America. Yakov has good reason to worry about Baronas because the day after he leaves Baronas dies in his sleep leaving Natalya to continue the journey alone.



Meanwhile, Kyra is meeting with her brother in law, Ostap about finding Mack. Ostap has just come in from a meeting with several other trackers including Botev. He was trying to get the other trappers to help him look for Mack so he could collect on the reward Kyra assures him Zamatev will pay. Botev pretends to be interested in looking for Mack, but really he is trying to get information on his friend who has been arrested. His friend turns out to be Yakov. Although Botev acts interested in tracking Mack, he would never turn him over to Ostap or Zamatev.

After the meeting with Ostap, Kyra sees Soviet soldiers breaking into the rooms, and she runs out of fear of being arrested. Later Kyra learns that her sister was arrested but that Ostap got away.



Chapter 36-40

Chapter 36-40 Summary

Chapter Thirty Six

Mack knows that the soldiers are getting too close and he needs to put some distance between him and them. Because of how close the soldiers are to Mack at this point is not able to hunt as often as he would like and he needs food. Mack starts a grass fire to slow down the soldiers that are following him. Later that night Mack ties up three men at their camp site. He talks to them briefly and takes their weapons and some food and leaves.

Chapter Thirty Seven

As soon as the men free themselves the commander, Rukovsky orders his men to find Mack. Alekhin is watching them search for Mack and comes to the camp. Alekhin joins the group searching for Mack. While most of Rukovsky's men are on a mountain side Mack causes an avalanche. Alekhin hears the gun shot and tries to warn the men but it is too late, most are killed.

Chapter Thirty Eight

This chapter tells what was happening with Mack before and during the previous chapters, and why he caused the avalanche.

Mack knows they are closing in on him and he shoots one of the guns he stole causing the avalanche. Mack is getting as far away from Alekhin as quickly as possible. Another of the soldiers falls off a rock that Mack has set as a trap and breaks his leg. Although he does not die, Mack thinks this trap was better because instead of one soldier being out, it took two to carry the wounded man down the mountain.

Mack is now forced to find shelter and stay put for three days before he can continue on toward the Bering Straights.

Chapter Thirty Nine

In an effort to keep some hunters from following him, Mack pushes a bolder down the mountain towards them. The men are not harmed and they do not follow Mack.

Mack has another encounter with a helicopter, and with no place to hide he shoots at it with one of the guns. The helicopter crashes and when Mack goes to check it out he finds only one man alive. The man tells him they were not looking for him but had only circled back to see what he was. He also tells Mack that Yakov has been arrested and is in Khonun. Mack makes sure the man has enough to keep him warm and alive until he can be rescued before he leaves in search of Yakov.



Mack is going to risk his own safety to save Yakov. Mack knows how dangerous it is for him to go into town, but Yakov was the first person to help him and Mack wants to return the favor. Yakov also brought Natalya into Mack's life and he is grateful for that as well. Mack's mind is back on Natalya. He wonders if she even remembers the promise he made to return for her and her father. He also wonders if he will be able to keep that promise to her.

Chapter Forty

When Mack gets to Khonun he sees Botev and Borowsky. Together the three free Yakov and steal a helicopter. When they land somewhere in the taiga, Mack parts ways from the three men.

When Alekhin tells Zamatev about the avalanche, he also tells Zamatev that he believes that Mack intends to kill them both. Zamatev does not believe that Mack would take the risk of getting too close to him. He also does not see a reason why Mack would want just the two of them dead. Alekhin has been trying to explain the way Mack, an American Indian sees things, but Zamatev still does not understand who he is dealing with in this situation.

Chapter 36-40 Analysis

Alekhim and the Soviet soldiers are closing in on Mack. He is finding less food to hunt or trap and is forced to go into the camp sites at night for food. Although it seems the soldiers are right on top of Mack most of the time now, he still has enough protection in the taiga to elude capture. Mack is worried his luck is about to change, because if he can not get far enough away from the soldiers soon he will be in the part of the taiga that offers no shelter or hiding places.

When Mack is once again spotted by a helicopter, he shoots it down. This time one man is still alive inside. When Mack talks to the man he finds out they were not looking for him, instead they were going to transport a prisoner. Mack learns the prison they are going to transport is Yakov.

Mack knows his fight is not with this man and since the man has a family, Mack makes sure the man will not die while waiting to be rescued, before he leaves to help Yakov.



Chapter 41-47

Chapter 41-47 Summary

Chapter Forty One

Zhikarev and Natalya are together in a city near the border. They are looking for a man named, Potnin to help them cross into China. Natalya goes to a restaurant to find Potnin, but instead she sees Kyra outside the restaurant. Kyra does not recognize Natalya right away.

Natalya goes back to the restaurant one last time and finally finds Potnin, he agrees to help them. In the meantime Kyra is looking for Natalya and her father.

Chapter Forty Two

Mack is getting into land that does not offer much protection and little places to hide.

Zamatev is talking to Kyra about seeing Natalya and tells her to arrest Natalya. Immediately after talking to Kyra, Zamatev receives a phone call telling him to leave the Baronas' alone. Zamatev tries to get word to Kyra, but is unsuccessful in reaching her.

Chapter Forty Three

Natalya and Zhikarev are waiting for the time Potnin told them to meet him, and Kyra is looking for them. Finally Natalya and Zhikarev give up waiting and make their way to the border.

Kyra tries to stop them just as they are about to get to the check point, then Bocharov comes to their rescue and sends Kyra away. He then allows both of them to cross into China.

Chapter Forty Four

When Kyra reports back to Zamatev she tells him about her sister being arrested and asks for his help, but he refuses.

Ostap is in the taiga, he has been on the run ever since his wife was arrested, when he sees Mack. Ostap goes back into town to find one of Zamatev's men so he can turn Mack over to Zamatev. Ostap is going to use this to get his wife out of prison. Soon the Soviet soldiers have Mack trapped and he gives himself up.

Chapter Forty Five

The soldiers beat Mack until Alekhin arrives and then Alekhin takes Mack into a barn and beats him some more. After everyone is busy celebrating Mack's capture, Ostap



unlatches the barn door and allows Mack to escape. He feels guilty for how badly Mack was beaten, and he thinks he has already gotten credit for finding Mack, no one will think he was the one who also helped him escape.

Mack sets fire to the tent Alekhin and his men are in, then he steals a car killing the men inside. Mack knows he needs to find shelter soon because he is too weak to defend himself if he is captured again. He also knows the longer he stays on the road the better chance Alekhin and anyone with him has of catching him. Mack soon finds a cave shelter and quickly falls asleep.

Chapter Forty Six

At this point the story jumps ahead three weeks, Mack has used this time to heal and make new weapons. Now that spring is almost here Mack is dreading the next part of his journey. Once he gets a boat and is in the ocean there will be no more warm nights around the campfire. He wonders if he will really be able to make it across the sea even if he does manage to find some sort of boat. Mack finally makes it to the coast where he finds an old man who agrees to give Mack a kayak. Mack plans to sail the kayak across the sea and back home. Mack has one last thing to take care of first, he goes back to look for Alekhin one last time.

Chapter Forty Seven

Mack finds Alekhin and tells him he has come for him.

Zamatev opens the package Mack sent him and finds that it contains Alekhin's scalp along with a note stating that this was the first of two scalps he would take in his lifetime.

Chapter 41-47 Analysis

Kyra is still looking for Natalya and her father. She does not know that Baronas has died and that Natalya is now traveling with Zhikarev, who Kyra is also looking for. Zhikarev, Natalya and Kyra are all in the same town next to the Chinese border. Natalya and Zhikarev are looking for the guard who will let them cross into China, Potnin. Natalya thinks she would be less likely to be noticed in town, because Zhikarev is crippled he is easy to spot and he has a warrant out for his arrest also. Natalya sets out to find Potnin and sees Kyra instead. Luckily, Kyra does not recognize her right away and Natalya is able to talk to Potnin before Kyra can find her.

Things are happening very fast at this point for Natalya and Zhikarev. Potnin tells them to meet him at midnight and they are trying to stay hidden from Kyra till then. At the same time Kyra is telling Zamatev that she thinks she has found Natalya and her father. Zamatev tells her to arrest them. Shortly after this conversation Zamatev receives word from a high ranking Soviet official to leave the Baronas alone. That official turns out to be Bocharov. The problem is Zamatev can not get word to Kyra because she is waiting in car at the border for Natalya and her father to try and cross the border.



When Kyra tries to stop Natalya and Zhikarev from crossing the border Bocharov sends her away. Bocharov allows Zhikarev to cross with Natalya after he finds out her father has died and that Zhikarev has helped her get there. Bocharov is still very thankful for the way Natalya treated his son. This is the last we hear of Natalya and Zhikarev. We can only assume that she and Mack are reunited in America.

Back in the taiga, Ostap has been on the run since his wife was arrested when he sees Mack. Mack however does not see him. Ostap decides this is a way for him to free his wife and make some money at the same time. Soon Ostap has informed Alekhim's men in the near by town and Mack is surrounded.

When Mack realizes there is no way out for him he surrenders to the soldiers. He is severely beaten before Alekhim arrives and then Alekhim takes him to a barn and continues to beat him. Ostap feels badly for Mack and so when Alekhim and his men are busy celebrating later that night Ostap lets Mack out of the barn. Even badly injured, Mack is able to escape and in the process slow down and even kill some of Alekhim's men. Mack sets fire to their tent, and steals a car killing the men inside the car. Mack then manages to find a cave shelter he can hide in for several weeks until he has recuperated.

Mack has spent all these months in the taiga planning not only his escape but also his revenge against Alekhim and Zamatev. When he finally obtains a kayak to take him to Alaska, Mack can not leave until he tries just one last time to find Alekhim and defeat him.

When Mack goes back into the taiga he finally comes face to face with Alekhim. At this point we finally understand the meaning of the first three pages of the novel. After Mack and Alekhim fight and Mack kills him, Mack goes back and kills the soldiers who are with Alekhim. Mack only leaves one man alive. The reason he left this man alive is so the man could take Mack's message to Zamatev.

The message Mack sends back to Zamatev is a note with Alekhim's scalp. The note tells Zamatev that Mack will be coming back to do the same to him some day. Zamatev knows the scalp belonged to Alekhim because of the white strip of hair.



Characters

Joe Makotozi (Joe Mack)

He is the main character of this novel. He is captured when his test plane is brought down by a Russian Colonel named Zamatev. From the moment of capture, Mack begins planning his escape, with the help of a fellow prisoner, Pennington, Mack pole vaults the electric fence and escapes into the Siberian taiga. By the time Zamatev realizes Mack is gone, he is many miles from the camp.

From the first night on the run, Mack uses the training he learned from his Indian grandfather to help him survive the sub zero temperatures of the Siberian winter. He plans his escape using the same path his ancestors used years before him through the Bering Straights.

Along the way Mack stays alive by hunting for food and using these animals to also make clothing, moccasins, and weapons. Through Mack's Indian training he knows how to make adequate shelters, build fires with little to no smoke and how to leave no trail to follow. Mack spends several months in the village with Natalya and her father. It is here for the first time in his life that Mack falls in love. Mack enjoys Natalya's company and sharing his food and furs with the other people in the village. He finally feels like he is living up to his ancestor's way of life. Mack is worried his feelings for Natalya could get in the way of his main goal which is to escape from Siberia.

Mack contributes furs to be given to an official in Aldan for the continued safety of the village. On one of the trips into Aldan, Mack gets word that Kyra is looking for him in Aldan. Mack knows he needs to be leaving the village for his own safety as well as Natalya's and her fathers. He promises to return for both of them as soon as he can.

While back out in the taiga, Mack out maneuvers helicopters, taking one down with only his bow and arrow. At another point, Mack has to risk being seen in a town to rescue Yakov from prison. During this rescue Mack and the fur traders who help him, Botev and Borowsky, steal a helicopter.

Mack is surrounded at one point with no way of escape, so he turns himself over to Alekhin's men. Mack is then severely beaten and locked in a barn. Mack escapes from the barn with the help of the man who aided in his capture, Ostap. Mack kills several of Alekhin's men and steals a car to make his escape. Mack then spends three weeks hiding out in a cave recovering from the beating.

Once Mack is recovered, he finds a man by the coast who agrees to give him a kayak so he can finally make his escape from Siberia into Alaska. However, before Mack leaves he makes one last trip back into the taiga to find Alekhin. Mack and Alekhin have their final fight out and Mack sends Alekhin's scalp to Zamatev with a note indicating he will be returning someday for Zamatev's scalp as well.



Alekhin

Alekhin is a Yakut, the Siberian counterpart of the American Indian. His claim to fame in the Soviet Army is that he can track anything and no one has ever escaped him.

When Mack first escapes, Zamatev does not listen to Alekhin even though he is on the right track to finding Mack. Alekhin is always patient in searching for Mack, because he believes that he knows where Mack is going. He sees the traps that Mack sets for them, but not always in time to save the soldiers. When Mack shoots down the helicopter, it is Alekhin who finds the arrow heads and realizes that Mack is behind the attack.

Alekhin has a strip of white hair as a result of a scar. This is important because when Mack sends the scalp to Zamatev and the white strip of hair identifies it as Alekhin's scalp.

Natalya Baronas

Natalya is the one in the village who decides who can stay and who can not. When Natalya meets Mack, she immediately wants him to stay. In the beginning, she wants him to stay because of what he can provide for the village, but over time she falls in love with him.

When Mack leaves the village he promises Natalya he will return for her and her father. Shortly after Mack leaves, Natalya and her father leave the village headed for Plastun Bay, this is where Mack told her he would meet her.

While in Plastun Bay cabin Natalya meets a young soldier who offers to help her and her father. The soldier dies before he can help. His father comes to the cabin to thank her for being kind to his son and offers to help them leave Russia. Before he can help her, Natalya and her father get scared and leave the cabin headed to the Chinese border with Yakov. Yakov leaves the two to continue alone on the morning of the second day, the following morning Natalya wakes to find her father dead.

Natalya continues on toward the border alone until she runs into Zhirkarev. The two continue on to the border hoping to find that Zhirkarev's friend is still the guard at the border. When they arrive at the border, Kyra is waiting for them and almost stops them from crossing, until Bocharov, the father of the young soldier allows them to cross into China.

Yakov

Yakov is also on the run from the Soviets. He along with several other people from the village spends most of their time breaking their fellow Russians out of prison. Yakov is the first person to help Mack after his escape from prison. He tells Mack about the



village and how to get there. While Mack is staying at the village, it is Yakov who comes to tell him that Kyra is looking for him in the town of Aldan.

Yakov helps Natalya and her father when they are at the Plastun Bay cabin. When Natalya and her father leave for the border, Yakov goes with them as far as he can before leaving to go help someone else escape from prison. Yakov tells Natalya what to do to survive in the taiga.

While helping this person break out of prison, Yakov is captured. Mack, Botev and Borowsky come to Yakov's rescue just as he is being transferred by helicopter to another prison. When Mack and Yakov part company at this point, Yakov is not mentioned again.

Colonel Arkady Zamatev

Zamatev is the Soviet Colonel who captures Mack and who is hunting him throughout this novel.

Kyra Lebedev

She is Zamatev's girlfriend and she also works for him. Her brother-in-law, Ostap is the one who finds Mack and then helps him escape.

Stephen Baronas

He is Natalya's father. He is a Lithuanian soldier who fought the Germans in World War II. He dies while he and Natalya are escaping to the Chinese border to find Mack.

Stegman

He is Kyra's driver; he is also the man who crippled Zhirarev years earlier.

Evgeny Zhikarev

He is the furrier in Aldan who wore slipper most of the time because he was tortured during the war and his feet are crippled as a result. He escapes to China and meets up with Natalya after her father dies.

Ostap

He is Kyra's brother-in-law. Kyra asks for his help in finding Mack, after his wife's arrest Ostap finds Mack and uses him to gain his wife's release. Once Ostap sees how badly Mack is beaten, Ostap helps Mack escape from Alekhin.



Shepilov

He is a Soviet Officer who is trying to catch Mack before Zamatev in an effort to make Zamatev look foolish and ruin Zamatev's career.

Wulff

He is the man in charge at Aldan. He is the person he takes furs in exchange for leaving the people in the village alone.

Peshkov

He was one of the people at the village where Mack stayed. He is the one who told Zamatev that Mack was staying at the village. Peshkov broke his back in Mack's hideout and was never found.

Botev

He was one of the trappers from the village. He also helps Mack free Yakov from prison. Botev pretends to help Ostap look for Mack, but he is actually looking for Yakov.

Borowsky

He was one of the trappers from the village. He is the third man who helps Mack free Yakov from prison.

Nicholai Bocharov

He is the father of young Bocharov. He visits Natalya and her father when they are in the cabin at Plastun Bay. He helps Natalya and Zhikarev cross the border into China.

Young Borchev

He is one of the three young soldiers who would visit Natalya and her father in the cabin above Plastun Bay. He would bring them tea. He offers to get his father a high ranking Soviet official to help them before he dies when he hits his head in the rapids.

Nicolai Rudovsky

He is one Zamatev's commanders leading the search for Mack. He leads his men into several of Mack's traps including an avalanche and a fire that results in the loss of several of his men.



Objects/Places

Siberia

This is where the story takes place. The main character, Joe Mack, escapes from a prison in Siberia and is on the run in different locations within the taiga of Siberia for over a year.

Lake Baikal Region Prison

This is the prison barracks from which Joe Mack escapes from. This prison is surrounded by a ten-foot high electrified barbed wire fence.

Vanyushin's Cabin

This cabin is where Mack steals a sweat shirt, canned meat, and a knife in the beginning of his journey. Two geologists are staying in this cabin and they do not realize they have been robbed.

The Village

The village is a group of about 29 people who are on the run from the Russian government. They live in the mountains of Siberia and are left alone in exchange for furs they give to the Russian official in Aldan. Mack stays with this group for part of the winter and helps provide meat and furs for them.

Mack's Hideout

This is a cave shelter Mack finds while stay with the village. He stays here, and no one from the village knows where he is except for Natalya and her father. After Mack has left the village, Peshkov finds the hideout and falls inside it and breaks his back. No one ever finds Peshkov.

Topka

This a town in Siberia. Mack comes into this town and holds one of the Russian officials, Peter Petrovich, hostage. Mack makes Petrovich cook him dinner and get him up to date on where the searches for him are concentrated, before leaving Petrovich tied up in bed. Before leaving, Mack makes sure there is enough fire to keep the man from freezing to death before he is found the next morning.



Cabin Above Plastun Bay

This is where Natalya and her father go to wait for Mack. Mack has told them he will return to take them to America with him. While at this cabin, Natalya and her father meet a young soldier named Bocharov, whose father ends up helping Natalya escape to China.

Village of Plastun Bay

This is where Natalya runs into Yakov.

Chinese Border

This is where Bocharov's father and Potanin help Natalya and Zhikarev finally cross into China and escape Kyra and Stegman.

Khonuu

The village where Yakov is being held prisoner for helping another prisoner escape. Mack, Botev and Borowsky take control of a helicopter and free Yakov.

A Mountain Road Outside Evensk

This is where Mack is trapped by Alekhin and his men and Mack is forced to surrender to them. Mack is then severely beaten and then a few hours later, he escapes with the help of the man who helped capture him, Ostep.

The Seashore Leading to Alaska

This is where Mack finds the old man who gives him the kayak so he can cross the sea into Alaska.



Themes

Love and Hate

Mack loves his country and his people, the American Indians, and when he is captured, he feels this is not just an attack against his country, but also on him personally. The fact of being raised with the same values and traditions of his Indian ancestors, Mack feels the need to make Zamatev and Alekhin pay for the disrespect they have shown him. It was both his love of his country and his pride in his people that made him hate Zamatev and Alekhin. Mack is determined that if he does not kill them before he escapes from Siberia, he will return to kill both of them.

When Mack finally comes face to face with Alekhim alone in the taiga, he kills Alekhin and sends his scalp back to Zamatev as a promise that he will return for Zamatev's scalp as well. Although the story ends with Zamatev reading this note, there is no doubt that Mack made good on his promise to Zamatev.

Mack also falls in love for the first time while in Siberia. Throughout this novel, Mack indicates that he has never been in love before he met Natalya. When Mack comes to the village, he feels an instant connection to Natalya. During the time he spends with her in the village, the two become very close, however a physical relationship never develops. When the time comes for Mack to move on, they both realize they do not want to be apart and Mack makes a promise to return for her once he is safely back in America. Mack has only had himself to look out for all these years and now he struggles with his love for Natalya, wanting to keep her safe and bring her back to America with him, and keep her alive so that he can take care of her. Even while the two are separated, their feelings for one another grow stronger. Natalya's love for Mack drives her to leave the only home she has ever known and travel through the cold dangerous taiga, even after she loses her father, so that Mack does not have to risk his own safety to return for her. Although this novel does not allow us to see the reunion of Mack and Natalya, we know that she made it safely across the Chinese border and he crossed the ocean into Alaska.

The Value of Heritage

Joe Mack finds the value in his heritage long before he finds himself in a prison camp in Siberia. Throughout his childhood, he listened and learned what his Indian grandfather was teaching him about his people. Mack would spend his holidays living in the mountains just like his ancestors had done before him. He was taught not only how to live off the land, but also the values his people held dear. For instance their spirit of generosity, this value and others would help to save Mack's life in the taiga.

When Mack was in need of a place to stay for the winter he finds the people of the village. Like his Indian ancestors, Mack did not ask to be taken care of by the people in



the village instead he helped provide for them. The tracking and hunting skills he had learned from his grandfather were a great help to the people of the village. They did not have much if any meat during the winter, and they needed furs to guarantee their continued protection by the official in Aldan. Mack was able to provide both of these things for the people in the village.

Although Mack has never lived off the land like his ancestor did, the lessons his grandfather taught him gave him the knowledge of how to live in the taiga without being captured. He was able to make his own clothing, moccasins, and weapons from the animals he killed. Mack knew where to find the best shelter and how to build fires that did not produce much if any smoke. With each passing day, Mack is becoming more comfortable in the taiga, more a part of his own heritage. He even plans his escape route according to the route his people had taken many years earlier when first coming to North America.

If not for all that Mack had learned from his ancestors, from his heritage, he could not have survived the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian taiga.

Survival

Survival is possibly the most prevalent theme of this novel. From start to finish Mack is fighting for his own survival. In the beginning he is in the prison camp, and he knows his only chance for survival is escape. Escape into sub-zero temperatures of a country he knows very little about. Mack makes his escape from the prison by pole vaulting over a ten foot electrified barbed wire fence, into the frozen taiga. Mack has no time to stop and think about his next move, he needs to get as far away from the prison as quickly as possible. At the same time, Mack knows he needs to find some kind of food; warmer clothing and a weapon or he has no chance of survival. With these things in hand Mack can now begin the simple task of surviving. Mack kills whatever animals he comes across and makes what clothing, food, and weapons he can while still moving as far away from the prison as he can get. Little by little, Mack is able to eventually make a bow and several arrows as well as a sling shot, moccasins, and warmer clothing.

Mack's chances of survival could be improved if he had the luxury of being able to stay in one place. Mack, however, was constantly on the move until he found the people in the village. Mack was able to help them survive the winter by providing them food and protection, and they helped in his survival by allowing him to be able to stay in one place and store up food and supplies. All the survival skills Mack is using to help himself and the people of the village he learned from his American Indian grandfather. If not for the training he learned as a young boy, Mack would have most likely frozen to death in the taiga long before he would have had the chance to starve to death.



Style

Point of View

This novel is told from the third-person point of view and sometimes the omniscient point of view. There is little dialogue that takes place in this novel, for the simple reason that the main character is alone for the majority of the story. This omniscient point of view allows for insight into Mack's background that aids in his survival in the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian taiga. This point of view is also helpful in understanding the relationship between Mack and Natalya. Although feelings of love are never spoken between the two; this point of view allows an understanding of why Natalya would take the risk to escape to China just in the hopes of being with Mack even after her father dies along the way.

The third-person point of view allows the reader a better flow of the parallel story lines that are taking place. The third-person point of view keeps the reader from getting bogged down with the thoughts and feelings of the characters and easily transfers between the various story lines that are occurring. One example is when going back and forth between what is happening with Mack while at the same time knowing where Zamatev is in search for Mack. The reader is allowed to see how close Zamatev is to catching Mack time and again, and how Mack continues to outsmart him.

Setting

The setting of this novel takes place in Siberia. The main character, Joe Mack a United States test pilot is captured by Soviet Colonel named Zamatev and placed in prison camp somewhere in the Lake Baikal Region. When Mack escapes he runs into the taiga to elude capture.

Along the way, Mack stays in makeshift shelters inside the taiga. In an attempt to ride out the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian winters, Mack stays in the village near a town called Aldan. Mack stays here for most of the winter. He makes his home in a cave shelter not far from the others. No one in the village knows exactly where Mack's hideout was located. The landscape so far has been the same; woods with the occasional patch of ice or snow. It is not until Mack leaves the village and travels closer to the Arctic Circle that he runs into larger amounts of snow. Mack has had to cross the occasional river or railroad construction, but has mainly been in the woods.

In the months after leaving Natalya and the people of the village, Mack deals with large amounts of snow. Finding shelter has become harder and Mack makes his shelters out of packed snow; snow caves.

After being on the run for over a year, Mack is captured just outside a town called Evenks. Mack is beaten badly and left in a barn. During the night Mack escapes back into the taiga and finds shelter in a cave where he remains for several weeks until he is



healed from the beating. The cave Mack stays in during this time is near the Oklan River. Once Mack is healed he heads once again toward the Bering Straits where he finds a kayak to take him on to Alaska.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is typical for post World War II. It is slightly dated and sounds more intelligent than novels of present time. The emotions of the characters are clearly captured through the author's diction.

Although Mack is in Siberia and the people all speak Russian most of the people he comes across can speak English to some extent. At times the author uses this Russian/English dialect to add authenticity to the story. It helps the reader step into the illusion of the reality that the author has created with his story. Readers become more enticed by this choice of Russian/English slang.

The chapters in this novel are fairly short and the use of mainly nondescript language helps to allow for more time to be spent on learning about the characters and their environment. There is also not the use of multiple characters in the chapters so there is no need to distinguish them through language. The few times when a Russian/English dialect is used are enough to add the authenticity the novel needed.

The overall authenticity of the language in this novel lends to the allure of being carried away with the story line. This style of language is a very easy to follow and makes for a very comfortable read while easily keeping the readers attention.

Structure

This novel is comprised of forty-seven chapters with approximately ten pages in each chapter. The chapters are only numbered with no titles.

This novel has several parallel plots. The first plot follows the main character, Joe Mack and his fight for survival and freedom from Siberia. Along his journey, Mack crosses paths with several characters whose journeys then take a path away from Mack's. Such is the case when Mack meets Natalya and the people of the village. While Mack is in the village he and Natalya become very close and Mack promises to return someday for Natalya and her father. One day when the fur traders from the village go into Aldan to sell furs we are introduced to a furrier named Zhikarev. After Mack leaves the village, Natalya and her father go to the Plastun Bay cabin and Zhikarev makes his way toward Hong Kong. Although Mack never crosses paths with any of them again Natalya and Zhikarev met up after her father dies and it is the two of them who ultimately cross the border into China together.

The second main plot follows the Russians who are tracking Mack. It is through these parallel plots that we see how close Mack is to being caught as well as the mistakes Zamatev makes by not listening to Alekhim.

This novel is a quick read with only a few instances that seem to drag by the repetitive nature of Mack's daily life alone in the taiga. It is overall a very entertaining read.



Quotes

"I don't believe he could track a muddy dog across a dry floor!" (Chapter 1, pg 8.)

" The American pole-vaulted over the wire" (Chapter 4, pg. 27.)

" He is a man of the woods, a wilderness man. You would never catch him" (Chapter 5, pg. 39.)

" Go back, Old Bear, and tell your cubs that tonight you saw a Sioux warrior and he let you live because he had killed enough for the day" (Chapter 7, pg. 54.)

" You are saying this Indian shot one of our helicopters down with a bow and arrow?" (Chapter 21, pg. 159.)

"You gave him the last happiness he has. You welcomed him, treated him as a son and brother" (Chapter 28, pg. 215.)

"To leave here, of course, meant to abandon any help from Bocharov, so all he could do was hope that if such help was to come that it arrive before they fled from here" (Chapter 31, pg. 240.)

"He now has a broken leg," Yakov said politely. "What do you want broken?" (Chapter 31, pg. 243.)

"I may be the last Indian, he told himself aloud, "who will live in the old ways, think the old thoughts" (Chapter 36, pg. 279.)

"There was an instant of frozen stillness as the snow moved, and then his men scattered, some running forward, some running back, a few crouching in place looking for something they could grip" (Chapter 38, pg. 293.)

"You know, of course, that if we met in a war I should shoot you. I do not like our government very much, but I am a Russian" (Chapter 48 pg. 314.)

"Sometime, in a moment, remember my son" (Chapter 43, pg. 339.)

" Are you looking for me?" (Chapter 44, pg. 350.)

"This was once a custom of my people. In my lifetime I shall take two. This is the first" (Ch 47, pg. 367.)



Topics for Discussion

Why was Mack being held captive in Siberia, who captured him and why?

Who helped Mack escape and how did they help him? What did this person want in exchange for his help?

How did Mack escape from the prison and what experiences from his past help him achieve his escape?

What training from Mack's past helped him survive in the sub-zero temperatures of the Siberian taiga? Give at least four examples.

Who was the first person in the taiga to help Mack, and how?

In what ways did Natalya change Mack?

Why did Mack spare the man's life in the helicopter and what did he learn from this man?

Why did Mack risk being captured by going into the city of Khonuu?

Why did Mack surrender to Alekhin's men?

Why are Natalya and her father trying to escape from Siberia and why are they fugitives to begin with?

Why did Nicholai Bocharov help Natalya and Zhikarev escape into China?

Who tells Zamatev and his people that Mack has been staying with Natalya in the village and what happens to this person?

What does Mack send to Zamatev in the skin-wrapped packet and what is the significance?