

# **Mayday! Study Guide**

**Mayday! by Clive Cussler**

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# Plot Summary

Mayday by Clive Cussler is a techno-thriller set in the beautiful location of the Aegean Sea off the coast of the island, Thasos, sixteen miles across the water from Greek Macedonia. The book starts out with a very exciting assault on the American Air Force field on the island from an antiquated, bright yellow World War I biplane. The biplane causes a great amount of damage to the aircraft on the ground, prompting a Mayday call that is intercepted by Dirk Pitt and his friend Al Giordino. Despite disbelieving that the airfield is really being attacked by a biplane, they bring their Catalina PBY into the fray, and this is where the story begins. Their presence on Thasos Island is a direct result of the suspected sabotage that the First Attempt, a NUMA boat, is experiencing in their search for a prehistoric fish. The First Attempt is the precipitating factor in the drama of the story, Mayday. Her presence in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Thasos causes trouble for a resident of the island, Bruno von Till, a shipping merchant who leads a secret life as a drug smuggler and human trafficker. He fears discovery of his smuggling operation from the divers on board the First Attempt, and his air attack on Brady Field is designed to simply have the First Attempt removed from the vicinity. His calculations did not include Dirk Pitt being called into action. Von Till's activities are about to be uncovered and exposed to the world.

After the successful air campaign that saves the lives of the men at the airfield as well as the remainder of the aircraft, Pitt and Giordino take up quarters on the air base because the facilities aboard First Attempt are cramped. Pitt takes a very early morning swim in the ocean and meets Teri von Till. After a romantic interlude on the beach, she invites Pitt, believing him to be a base garbage collector, home to her uncle's villa for dinner. Dinner goes very well until they are finished eating. Von Till determines that Major Pitt is actually a very dangerous man to have in his home and sends him through the Labyrinth, with his vicious white German Shepherd to ensure his demise. Pitt, however, made of much sterner stuff, kills the dog and despite grave injury makes his way out of the labyrinth (a feat no one has ever accomplished before). He arrives back at the boat in time to prevent loss of life for the crew of scientists aboard the boat.

The events of the previous twenty-four hours cause Dirk to believe that something else is really going on, and he realizes that von Till does not want NUMA's boat to remain in the vicinity. Following his deductions, he determines that von Till is up to something nefarious so, joining forces with Z, Captain Zeno, and Darius, discovers that von Till is a world-class smuggler of heroin and sets about figuring out the mystery of how von Till has never been caught.

His discoveries lead him to the Queen Artemisia, one of von Till's merchant vessels, that appears to be almost a phantom boat. After an overnight search of the vessel, Pitt cannot find where the heroin is hidden and then realizes that the heroin is not on board but attached to the bottom of the boat in a submarine. Once he makes that determination, Pitt sets out to discover von Till's hidden submarine caves beneath the cliffs below von Till's villa. The discovery of the caves proves Pitt's theory, and



fortunately they are rescued in enough time to prevent any deaths to the scientific crew, and Pitt only suffers a flesh wound through his leg.

Dirk is satisfied that he has stopped a drug smuggler and also unmaskes von Till, proving him to be an ex-Nazi war criminal, who is still wanted for his war crimes of thousands of deaths. His greatest satisfaction comes when he realizes that Teri is really not von Till's niece, and also gaining

von Till's wonderful classic car the 1936 Maybach-Zeppelin back to the states for his own personal use.



# Prologue

## Prologue Summary

Mayday by Clive Cussler is a techno-thriller set in the beautiful location of the Aegean Sea off the coast of the island, Thasos, sixteen miles across the water from Greek Macedonia. The book starts out with a very exciting assault on the American Air Force field on the island from an antiquated, bright yellow World War I biplane. The biplane causes a great amount of damage to the aircraft on the ground, prompting a Mayday call that is intercepted by Dirk Pitt and his friend Al Giordino. Despite disbelieving that the airfield is really being attacked by a biplane, they bring their Catalina PBY into the fray, and this is where the story begins. Their presence on Thasos Island is a direct result of the suspected sabotage that the First Attempt, a NUMA boat, is experiencing while searching for a prehistoric fish. The First Attempt is the precipitating factor in the drama of the story, Mayday. Her presence in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Thasos causes trouble for a resident of the island, Bruno von Till, a shipping merchant who leads a secret life as a drug smuggler and human trafficker. He fears discovery of his smuggling operation from the divers on board the First Attempt, and his air attack on Brady Field is designed to simply have the boat removed from the vicinity. His calculations did not include Dirk Pitt being called into action. Von Till's activities are about to be uncovered and exposed to the world.

The prologue opens with on a hot, sunny, dusty day at the top of the control tower of Brady Field, a US Air Force Base on the Island of Thasos, just off the coast of Greece in the Aegean Sea. The air traffic controller is busy marking off the days remaining before he rotates back to the States, when he is taken by surprise, first by a call from a neighboring tracking station informing him of the approach of an unexpected airplane. When the plane arrives, it begins an aerial attack on the air field, gunning mostly at the aircraft on the ground, creating a burning inferno seen for miles. The air traffic controller is struck in the chest, but is saved by the very book he was using to mark off time. He is able to reach the radio and issue a Mayday call for assistance against the World War I biplane that is attacking their field.

## Prologue Analysis

Initially the story begins with a sense of hot, stuffy breathlessness, reflecting the sense of waiting on a hot summer afternoon when time seems to stand still. The air traffic controller is shaken from his complacent boredom to a situation of high alert in mere seconds when he is first alerted to the presence of an unexplained aircraft. The attack on Brady Field opens the book with high energy, excitement and explosions that ignite the aircraft on the ground. The technique is to first lull the reader into a sense of stillness and tranquility, then to shock the reader into absolute attention with the air attack. The first paragraph sets the scene:



"It was oven hot, and it was Sunday. In the air traffic tower, the control operator at Brady Air Force Base lit a cigarette from a still glowing butt, propped his stocking feet on top of a portable air conditioner and waited for something to happen." Page 5, Prologue.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

Chapter one opens with Major Dirk Pitt and his friend and copilot, Al Giordino, on the last leg of their trip to the Island of Thasos. As the Senior Security Officer for NUMA, troubleshooting is part of his job. Pitt is flying a PBY Catalina twin engine aircraft when he hears the Mayday distress call from Brady Field. At first he disbelieves that the air field is being attacked by a biplane but agrees to come in and render assistance. Because the distress caller has been injured in the attack, Pitt's sense of duty and righteousness comes to the fore, and he prepares for a sneak approach just over the water. Neither of the men really wants to engage in an air battle, but they are willing to do the right thing. Pitt flies the Catalina with great skill, surprising the pilot of the biplane with their stealthy approach. Giordino is at the back of the plane manning a couple of carbines, their only weapons. The aerial dogfight is a strange thing to see with a brightly colored World War I biplane against a World War II cargo plane, looking as mismatched as a mosquito and a buzzard. The uneven battle raged on for a full eight minutes, taking its toll on both pilots and Giordino. Pitt takes the Catalina into a stall that defies the specifications of the aircraft, then turns it into a dive, a maneuver that allows Giordino to shoot several well-placed rounds directly into the engine of the German yellow Albatros, sending it heading west over the island trailing black smoke.

Knowing that they have taken several rounds themselves, Pitt elects to land the Catalina at Brady Air Field for repairs rather than making a water landing in the Aegean Sea near the First Attempt. He makes a fine landing, steering clear of the inferno of aircraft and all is quiet once again. Pitt and Giordino are met by a reception committee of servicemen who are celebrating their victory over the unknown aircraft. Pitt vaguely recognizes the yellow Albatros; it reminds him of the stories he has heard about the Hawk of Macedonia.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Major Dirk Pitt and his friend and coworker, Al Giordino, come to the rescue of Brady Air Field because they simply happened to be in the area; their goal is to reach the First Attempt anchored off the coast of the island. Neither man is really interested in engaging in aerial combat with an unidentified aircraft, but their sense of duty prevails, and they rush in to the rescue. The opening scene defines Pitt as a man with a strong sense of duty, of right and wrong, and of the determination to do what it takes to fix a problem. He is brave, a highly-skilled pilot and very resourceful. He is able to take a huge cargo plane that is capable of landing and taking off in the water and engage in a dog fight with a vintage war relic of an airplane and win. This sets the stage for Pitt as he is a man who does not easily give in to failure and who has the attitude that he will do whatever it takes to be successful. The nature of the friendship of Pitt and Giordino is



established in the first chapter and continues throughout the book with Giordino Pitt's constant and very faithful companion.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

After sleeping for an indeterminate period of time, Pitt awakens to find it is still dark. He neither knows nor cares how long he has slept. With sleep eluding him, he focuses on the nature of the aircraft he had defeated earlier, and his memory recalls the picture he once saw of a photograph in the gallery of the Imperial War Museum. The caption of the photo identified the yellow World War I biplane as "The Hawk of Macedonia" piloted by Lieutenant Kurt Heibert, a German aviator, causing Pitt to wonder why a World War I airplane attacked Brady Field. With sleep continuing to elude him, Pitt decides to head to the beach for a swim. He feels very much at home in the water and he uses the opportunity to relax and meditate. While he is floating in the water, he feels cleansed and purified, rejuvenated, while listening to nothingness, the greatest treasure known to man. While in the water all things fade from his mind. When he returns to the shore, he is finally tired and simply drops at the edge of the water and falls to sleep again. When he awakens he realizes that someone is on the beach with him, and he is instantly alert. He relaxes when he discovers that it is a woman. She is more startled than the situation seems to warrant, thinking at first that he is dead. A brief conversation ensues before they end up making love on the beach. Pitt discovers that Teri's mother is Greek and her father was German, but that she was orphaned and is now taken care of by her uncle, Bruno von Till. She asks Pitt questions about himself, and he lies, telling her that he is the garbage collector for the base, and telling her that he has never been a sergeant. While they are talking, Pitt notices a bright flash as if sunlight glinting off something reflective. He is unable to locate it at the time. Teri invites Pitt to her uncle's villa for dinner that evening, indicating that she will send a car to the base to pick him up. Teri assures Pitt that her uncle will like him because he used to be a flyer in World War I, and he likes to talk with Air Force men. Teri confirms that her uncle used to fly with Kurt Heibert, the aviator from the photo, The Hawk of Macedonia. After Teri leaves the beach, Pitt discovers that there are tracks made with hobnailed boots that cover Teri's footprints in the sand. Someone followed Teri to the beach and watched them. This bothers Pitt. He follows the trail back to the road and discovers tire tracks with an unusual diamond-shaped tread on them, further strengthening his feeling that he and Teri had been watched during their antics on the beach. He wonders why he never heard the sound of the engine.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

The circumstance of Pitt being on the beach so early in the morning creates an unusual situation when Teri discovers him. When he sits up, she is very much alarmed, but more so because she at first thought Pitt was dead. The reader has to wonder at her reaction. Is her experience in life such that every time she sees a man sleeping on the beach, she believes him to be dead? Pitt does not give any indication that he finds it at all unusual to find a beautiful woman on the beach when he wakes, and after a very brief



conversation he chooses to make love to her, marking himself as a bit of a womanizer. What is interesting is that it is obvious that Pitt and Teri have been observed on the beach and the question is whether or not the watcher is interested in their lovemaking or in their meeting. Pitt finds further evidence that they have been observed, and he finds this to be a very curious state of affairs.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Pitt journeys out to the First Attempt, the NUMA boat for which he is charged with maintaining security. The First Attempt is a small ship, eight-hundred and twenty tons, one hundred fifty-two feet in length. She was originally made to be an ocean-going tugboat in the Dutch shipyards before World War II. She was slipped to England just after the Germans invaded and served throughout the war on the side of the Allies. The National Underwater Marine Agency purchased her from the Navy and she became a NUMA boat, a modern oceanographic vessel. Aboard is his friend, the commander of the vessel, Rudi Gunn. Gunn requested Dirk's help because he is troubled by all the problems they have been having since they anchored off the coast of Thasos.

Before giving Pitt all the information about the problems, Rudi Gunn launches into an informative lecture about why the First Attempt is even in the Aegean Sea. He shows Pitt ancient drawings of a fish, one a Greek illustration and another part of a Roman fresco. There were two more stylized drawings and lastly a photograph of a fossil in sandstone. The fish is believed to have been extinct over two hundred million years ago; however, the drawings and photograph of the fossil indicate that its demise was misrepresented. Gunn is excited about the fact that the fish is still alive because it shows the faint beginnings of the first mammal. What makes it such an exciting find is that the Teaser could be an early link in the evolution of mammals, including humans. Pitt is not sure he really cares about the importance of Rudi's possible discovery, but what he does know is that Rudi is a friend and is having problems. This is Pitt's forte.

Gunn covers the range of incidents in detail and chronological order. At first, he simply attributed the problems to accidents or just bad luck, but the coincidences became improbable. Gunn denies any evidence of sabotage, but Pitt asks to see the latest in the series of unfortunate events and examines the cable that mysteriously broke. Upon examining it closely, he finds evidence that it was exploded with Primacord, an explosive string or rope. Upon finding this evidence, Pitt is excited about the case. At first he thought it would be dully routine, but now that he has found evidence of sabotage, he is excited about the possibilities. He also links the explosion to the time that the biplane was attacking Brady Field. It is simply luck that he happened to be in the right place at the right time to stop the biplane attack.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Pitt calms Rudi's anger at being four days late in arriving at Thasos by informing him that he and Giordino had not originated in Washington as Rudi had thought but were caught in a blizzard while airlifting supplies into an ice probe station on an ice floe north of Spitzbergen. This gives a little more insight into Pitt's expertise and abilities. This impression is further developed when Pitt examines the broken cable, the latest in a



series of accidents suffered by the crew of the First Attempt. Pitt is able to determine that the cable was destroyed with Primacord, an explosive string or rope, which was likely detonated at the time that the attack on Brady Field was happening. By linking the two events, Pitt's mind is now focused on all sorts of possibilities, specifically why someone does not want the First Attempt to be anchored off the coast of Thasos, and what highly-motivating reason they must have to have launched such a blatant attack against the air field, when it seems that they also want the NUMA boat out of the way as well. Pitt's evaluation gives Rudi Gunn more determination than ever to stay anchored and find his fish. He could care less what else is going on, but once he discovers that the problems are all man-made, he becomes stubbornly obstinate and decides to stick it out.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Back at the air field, Pitt is interrogated by Colonel Lewis, the commanding officer of the air base. Pitt is interrupted in his shower for the interview, and emerges nude to answer the colonel's questions. The colonel is disappointed that Pitt does not have any concrete answers as to the identity of the pilot of the Albatros. Lewis is confused by the fact that the attack was very well planned and executed, that whoever is behind it is very familiar with Brady Field and knew that there were to be no other aircraft in the area during the attack, which is why the unknown aviator was surprised when Pitt arrives. Pitt presses for more information regarding the attack, asking Lewis if the situation were as threatening as it originally seemed, whether or not he would have ordered the First Attempt to leave the area. When Lewis answers in the affirmative, Pitt's suspicions are confirmed. The attack on the field is simply a decoy, the real target is the removal of the First Attempt. Whoever is responsible is afraid of what the NUMA boat will discover. His thoughts go first to sunken treasure. He warns Colonel Lewis that since the First Attempt is not going to weigh anchor and leave, that a second visit from the yellow Albatros is highly likely. Here Pitt asks the colonel not to warn Commander Gunn of the possible attack on his boat, which surprises Lewis. Pitt assures Lewis that he is not putting the lives of the seamen and scientists in danger immediately. He believes that he has at least one more day before another attack will take place. Lewis invites both Pitt and Giordino to a dinner of scallops in wine sauce, which Pitt declines and Giordino accepts. Pitt has another engagement, much to the surprise of Colonel Lewis, who simply cannot believe that Pitt found a woman in so short a time and actually arranged a date with her.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Pitt's disregard for clothing when the colonel invades his room is another key to his character. Pitt's view of the world does not coincide well with authority, even though he is firmly aligned with the side of the "good guys." One does wonder just how diabolical he could be if he chose to be evil. He has a good sense of humor and perverseness that is refreshing. Pitt files all the information away about the events of the past few hours and deduces that the true target is not Brady Field, but the First Attempt NUMA boat. There is something in the water that someone or something does not want the men aboard that boat to discover. Pitt shows a certain ruthlessness when he dissuades Colonel Lewis from warning Commander Gunn about the possibility of danger to the boat right away. He asks for a little time to find a creative solution to the problem



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Pitt is picked up at the gate of the air base by Willie, von Till's chauffeur, in a vintage car, the elite of German automakers—the 1936 Maybach-Zeppelin town car. He takes an instant dislike to Willie after noticing that the spare tire on the car has the same diamond shaped markings he had seen on the beach. He has found the watcher from this morning. After they arrive at the villa, Pitt promptly gives Willie the advice that he should not wear silver-rimmed glasses that reflect the sun when he is working on his Peeping Tom merit badge, then breaks Willie's nose.

The villa is a spectacular place with all the grace of a Roman Forum. The estate lies in a valley between two mountain peaks overlooking a beautiful panorama of the Aegean Sea. At the top of the entrance of marble stairs is a courtyard surrounded by more than twenty life-sized statues of helmeted Roman soldiers. Past the statues are massive double doors, where Pitt uses the immense lion knocker. The entire place reminds him of a mausoleum. The door opens silently, but no one is there. Inside he steps into the anteroom filled with tapestries of ancient battle scenes hanging from each wall. Still alone, he lights a cigarette, only looking around belatedly for an ashtray. Without warning, an old man with a white German Shepherd enters the room.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Pitt has very good taste in vintage vehicles and truly admires the 1936 Maybach-Zeppelin town car that Willie arrives in to pick him up for dinner up at the von Till villa. What he dislikes is discovering that Willie is very likely the person who had been on the beach that morning watching him and Teri making love on the beach. He really has to be wondering exactly why Teri needs to be watched; after all, their meeting was merely one of chance and not something ongoing or planned. Again, he shows his character in breaking Willie's nose; his affairs are his own business. He is impressed by the villa, yet he finds it somewhat disconcerting. It is a very grand place but reminds him of death, showing an element of foreshadowing.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Facing von Till for the first time, Pitt is reminded of the typical villain of late night television, with the unsmiling features of the typical German face—unshaven head, shifty eyes and absent neck. The huge white dog at von Till's side is daunting as well. Von Till welcomes Pitt and is surprised when Pitt introduces himself as Major Dirk Pitt. Pitt apologizes for his American humor and hopes that his deception has caused von Till no inconvenience. Von Till claims no inconvenience, but some concern. The two men chat about the history of the villa as they wait for Teri to finish dressing for dinner. Pitt, however, not one to stand on ceremony toasts the courage and skill of aviator Kurt Heibert really taking von Till by surprise. Von Till then admits his knowledge of the early morning seduction of his niece and that he had seen Pitt break his chauffeur's nose. He tells Pitt that he wishes to keep an eye on Teri as she is his only living relative and is concerned for her safety. Pitt is aggressive during their polite chit-chat, asking very direct questions about von Till's need to carry a gun in his own home, and asking what his business really is, a question von Till evades. Pitt then turns the conversation to the circumstances of Kurt Heibert and his death, something of which von Till is very knowledgeable. He also mentions Heibert's brother having looked into the circumstances of his brother's death, revealing that the brother was not an aviator but a fleet officer in the German navy.

Teri's entrance ends their acrimonious conversation, and they have dinner, which is delicious, but unremarkable. Von Till's dismissal of his niece immediately after dinner is remarkable and alarming. They continue their conversation with von Till asking about the attack on Brady field by the unknown aircraft. Pitt informs him that the aircraft was positively identified as an Albatros D-3 and that they expect to find the pilot and owner of the aircraft very soon. Pitt also suggests that Kurt Heibert might actually still be alive despite the stories of his death; Pitt feels there is some kind of a connection between Kurt Heibert and von Till's mascot, the white dog. He finally confronts von Till with anger saying that he believes that von Till knows more about the attack on Brady Field than he does. Von Till is affronted and tells Pitt to leave the villa, pointing to a corridor he claims will lead Pitt to the front entrance. He further threatens Pitt with Teri's safety if Pitt refuses to leave. Pitt snaps and tells von Till that the attack on the field failed to achieve its goal of getting the First Attempt to leave the waters of the coast of the island. He bluffs by saying that the ship has already discovered the sunken treasure, a falsehood von Till sees through. He forces Pitt into the corridor at gunpoint and slams the door. Pitt is trapped.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

Cussler uses some stereotypical descriptors when defining von Till as the typical evil villain of the late, late night movies on television. Once von Till realizes that Pitt is a





Major and not the garbage collector of the military base, he is even more suspicious of Pitt than he had to have been that morning after Willie reported about Teri meeting Pitt on the beach. A chance meeting for Pitt turned out to be a true bit of bad luck for him as anyone associated with either the base or the First Attempt is not welcome. Pitt also notices a single item decorating the study that becomes one of his first clues regarding von Till.

"The only item of décor, Pitt noted, that seemed out of place was a model of a German submarine, resting on a shelf above the bar." Page 63, Chapter 6.

Pitt's knowledge of German affairs shows that he is a true history buff and has done some research into the past of Kurt Heibert, the World War I flying ace. He is very direct and confrontational when visiting with von Till bringing up the fact that the biplane of the previous day was a good replica of the Hawk of Macedonia, then adeptly returning to the discussion of von Till's and Heibert's relationship. He gets von Till to admit that they were based together, a fact that Pitt will check out later. He is very suspicious of von Till's complete disclosure of Heibert's demise as no one else seems to have any knowledge of it. The mention of Heibert's brother investigating Kurt's death is a clue for the reader, a brother might not take his sibling's death lightly.

During dinner, Pitt heeds his premonition of danger and palms a paring knife from von Till's table. After dinner, the two men return to their verbal sparring, Pitt having lost patience with being polite. He tries to trick von Till by claiming that the First Attempt has already found the sunken treasure, but fails because von Till has no concern for treasure; he has a very different goal in mind. While he is pleased that Pitt is still in the dark about his affairs, he realizes that Pitt is dangerous and consigns him to the darkness of the labyrinth.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Once Pitt is trapped inside the corridor he realizes that von Till has no intention of him leaving the villa alive. Knowing that nothing but danger lies ahead for him, Pitt must mentally prepare himself for the challenge. He reflects on something that he had once read, that total darkness can be the most terrifying experience for a human and knows that he must counteract that.

"Pitt's spirits touched zero and he could feel the first terror striking symptoms of panic edging rapidly into his mind. He remembered reading somewhere that nothing is more horrifying or uncomprehending to the human mind than total darkness. To not know or be able to perceive what lies beyond one's sight or touch, acts on the brain like a short circuit in a computer; it runs amok. What the brain cannot see, it creates; usually some nightmarish event that is grossly exaggerated or embellished: like a delusion of being bitten by a shark or run over by a locomotive while locked in a closet." Page 75, Chapter 7.

Pitt hears a sound ahead of him and knows without a doubt that mortal danger awaits him. He crawls on his stomach for about eighty feet, feeling the change from modern concrete building materials to old rough masonry and hand-hewn techniques. He has entered the early Roman labyrinth. Again he hears the sound of an animal ahead of him, but has no idea what it might be, only that it is very dangerous. He decides to use his trusty Zippo lighter to briefly illuminate the tunnel so that he can identify the source of the attack and discovers that it is von Till's white German Shepherd. Pitt uses the stolen knife to slice open the belly of the dog, but not before he is badly injured. Knowing that the worst of the danger is over, Pitt realizes that he must now find his way out of the confusing labyrinth as quickly as he can. He bandages himself as best he can with the ribbons left of his shirt and uses the raging fury he feels toward von Till to spur him on to successfully leave the labyrinth. He never even considers that he might fail; the lives of all the men aboard the First Attempt are at risk, and he knows that because of him, von Till will likely step up his attack with the flying Albatros. Despite the loss of blood and his fatigue, Pitt continues on, tripping at one point on an unseen stone staircase, the fall knocking him out, whereon he loses precious hours of time. Once he recovers consciousness, he climbs up the stairway to discover at the top an ancient web of badly rusted, but still very functional, bars. He forces himself through the largest opening by stripping off his clothing and smearing his blood on the bars to grease his way through. He finds himself facing the stage of a great ancient amphitheater. Looking up at the sky, Pitt realizes that much more time has passed than he expected; there was no more time to lose or the lives of those aboard the First Attempt would be lost. He must win the race with the dawn.



## Chapter 7 Analysis

The ordeal of Pitt's painful journey through the labyrinth demonstrates very clearly just what sort of physical and mental fortitude the man possesses. His anger at being placed in a situation of mortal danger spurs him on, giving him the strength and cunning he needs in order to defeat the animal von Till sent to kill him. After that battle, Pitt is badly injured, yet must still find his way out of the seemingly senseless maze. He travels for hours in total darkness, going down one corridor after another, coming up against one dead end after another, and yet he does not give up. The only time he lies down is because he knocks himself out falling on some stone steps. Once he regains consciousness, he continues without faltering, further injuring himself by squeezing his man-sized frame through an opening no bigger than eight inches. The motivation behind his perseverance is initially due to his anger at von Till, but he also knows that von Till will send the flying Albatros on an attack mission against the First Attempt as soon as the sun rises. Pitt cannot risk the lives of all the men on that boat, and so for him failure is simply not an option.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Once Pitt escapes the crazy confines of the labyrinth, he now faces the truly daunting task of reaching the ship in time to warn everyone aboard. He is still miles from the beach, and he has lost great deal of blood. He knows that he has one hour and eighteen minutes before dawn, and that deadline spurs him on.

"Over and over, since his escape from the labyrinth, pictures of the defenceless scientists and crew of the First Attempt being strafed by the Albatros flashed through Pitt's mind. He could see in perfect detail the bullets tearing into flesh and bone, leaving heavy red splotches on the white paint of the oceanographic research ship. The carnage would all be over before the new interceptor jets at Brady Field could scramble, providing of course the replacement aircraft had arrived from the North Africa depot before dawn. These visions and others drove Pitt on to efforts beyond his normal capacity." Page 83, Chapter 8.

He finds an unattended donkey and mounts the beast. Having no experience in such matters, at first he is unable to get the donkey to move, but after discovering her sex to be female, Pitt then runs through the names of the Greek Goddesses before discovering the mule's name to be Athena. Once he reaches the small coastal village of Liminas, he ties Athena to a mailbox and leaves a ten dollar bill in her halter. He looks for a telephone, but there are no lines, so he realizes that he must steal a boat to get to the ship in time. The dory he chooses refuses to start, but again and again he pulls the crank until the engine finally catches. It takes him an agonizing half hour to reach the First Attempt, but he finally makes it just as the sun begins to rise.

He rouses the men aboard the ship and refusing any medical attention yet, convinces Commander Gunn to send up a meteorological balloon rigged with explosives. Watching for the biplane, Pitt finally allows the doctor to bandage his chest, noting that the plane is ten minutes late by his reckoning. Pitt firmly believes that the pilot will take the bait just as Kurt Heibert took the bait back in World War I with the balloon rigged with explosives, and he is absolutely right. The plane came in for a closer view, fires upon the helium balloon, and Rudi joins the rigged contacts causing the explosion. The plane did not instantly disintegrate, but is badly damaged, and the engine is not running; it glides away from the ship. Pitt watches as one of the wings falls off and the plane falls into the water. He is convinced that when they recover the wreckage, they will know once and for all the reason behind the attacks. Pitt finally allows the doctor to take him below and accept treatment.



## Chapter 8 Analysis

Using the donkey and the boat show a resourcefulness that the reader now expects from Pitt. His continued journey despite his injuries say a great deal about his character and fortitude. For him, failure is simply not an option. Once aboard the ship, he accepts only the most essential medical treatment as he helps the men to prepare for the upcoming attack. Dirk Pitt is a true student of history, and, believing in the adage that history will repeat itself, he convinces Commander Gunn to rig a meteorological balloon with explosives as a trap for the biplane as it makes its early morning attack on the First Attempt. They are ready with the balloon just in time to create a very tempting target for the pilot of the biplane. As Pitt expects, the pilot is fixated on the balloon, determined to shoot it down first before attacking the boat. As the plane comes closer to shoot down the balloon, Pitt and Gunn detonate the explosives, creating a shock wave that knocks the two men down. It does not immediately destroy the plane, but damages it badly enough that it falls to the water a short distance away.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Pitt sleeps only a couple of hours before waking and trying to make sense of the events of the past two days. He puzzles over Teri and von Till, wondering if she had tried to warn him in some way or if she was in on whatever it is that von Till is up to. Colonel Lewis and Al Giordino from the base are waiting when Pitt wakes, and they begin a council of war, trying to figure out what is behind von Till's behavior.

"They hadn't wasted any time in coming. If Giordino received an answer from NUMA headquarters, it might help to supply one of the many missing pieces to the puzzle. The four borders were forming, but the middle was a scattered conglomeration of uncertain and unknown quantities. Von Till's evil face leered from the maze, his tight-lipped grin curling in smug disdain. Pitt's mind raced on. The great white dog. He tried to force it into another piece of the puzzle, but it wouldn't fit. That's strange, he thought, the dog doesn't correspond to the piece it's supposed to. For some unfathomable reason he couldn't force the animal between von Till and Kurt Heibert." Page 95 - 96, Chapter 9.

They discuss von Till's business of running the Minerva Lines fleet, and Lewis tells them that while the ships come near the island, they stop in the water for an hour or so, yet they never actually dock there. Pitt finds this interesting as it is nearly five hundred miles out of the way one direction from the traditional shipping lanes. Pitt determines that something really important brings the ships to the vicinity of the island. Pitt also tells Lewis that the attack on the air field was merely a decoy, that the true intention was to sabotage the First Attempt's cable by blowing it up. This is where Lewis is finally informed that he lost millions of dollars in aircraft because of a nebulous search for a fish, the Teaser. They determine that von Till's motive is not looking for sunken treasure. Giordino feels that their job is over and that they will likely be leaving soon, but Commander Gunn comes in at that point after having dived for hours looking for the wreckage and tells them that the airplane and pilot simply vanished. Pitt and Giordino are going nowhere. The mystery is still unsolved.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

The debriefing with Pitt, Giordino and Colonel Lewis after the second attack of the biplane raises even more questions than it actually answers. Pitt is able to inform Colonel Lewis that he lost a lot of expensive military equipment because of Commander Gunn's search for a fish, something Lewis almost cannot believe. What they cannot figure out is why von Till is so determined to get the First Attempt to leave the coast of Thasos. They discuss the strange behavior of von Till's ships, coming a thousand miles out of the way to simply anchor off the coast of the island for an hour or so and then leave. Giordino researches information regarding possible sunken boats in the area,

trying to determine if there really is sunken treasure, but the results are not helpful. The only clue is a mention of a U-19 German submarine that was sunk in the area in 1918.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

Pitt and Giordino join a guided tour of the great amphitheater in order to reach the exit of the labyrinth from which Pitt escaped just hours earlier. They need to return to the villa in order to find any information that might give them a clue as to von Till's intense desire to frighten the First Attempt away from the waters off Thasos. Because it is daylight, reaching the exit unnoticed requires subterfuge. Pitt wishes to catch von Till off guard by returning to the villa as quickly as he possibly can. Once they reach the rusted web of iron bars, Giordino sets off a very quiet explosive so they can gain entrance without the discomfort that Pitt had endured earlier. Once inside, it is an easy matter to follow the trail of blood Pitt had left, ignoring the corridors that had two trails, indicating that Pitt had found a dead end. They reach the villa undetected and enter the study where Pitt had been with von Till the night before.

"The study seemed quite empty. It was exactly as Pitt remembered it; the columns, classic furniture, the bar. His eyes sped around the room, stopping at the shelf containing the model submarine. He walked over closely examined the workmanship on the miniature craft. The carved black mahogany that made up the hull and conning tower gleamed with a satin-like sheen. Every detail from the rivets to a tiny embroidered Imperial German battle flag looked fantastically real, so much so that at any second Pitt half expected to see a diminutive crew leap out of a hatch and man the deck gun. The neatly painted numbers on the side of the conning tower identified as the U-19, a close sister of the U-boat that torpedoed the Lusitania." Page 112, Chapter 10.

Pitt has found what he is looking for. After looking closely at the submarine, they realize that they are not alone in the room, that Teri is asleep in a see-through negligee on the couch. Pitt promptly gags her, gathers up the skirt of her robes and ties her hands over her head; Giordino throws her over his shoulder, taking her back through the labyrinth with them.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

Cussler opens this chapter from the point of view of the Greek National Tourist Organization guide, who is really Captain Zeno. The reader sees Pitt and Giordino through the eyes of an external observer:

"A tougher, more battered and villainous pair of hard cases he had never seen. The short one with the puffed out chest, obviously an Italian, looked more like an ape than a man. The taller brute with the piercing green eyes, carried himself with an air of sureness and sophistication, yet there was an aura about him that advertised 'Caution: highly dangerous.' The guide twisted his moustache again. German most likely. Must love to fight judging from the bandages on the nose and hands. Strange, most strange,



the guide mused. Why would those two take a dull tour of old ruins? Probably a pair of sailors who jumped ship." Page 105, Chapter 10.

This perspective of Pitt and Giordino helps the reader to more easily understand what Pitt has endured up to this point, and that he is not ready to give up. Giordino is also aptly described as a man who would be good to have on one's side in case of an altercation. Pitt, seeing the submarine model up close and in detail, discovers what he intended by coming to the villa. Taking Teri back through the labyrinth with them is merely to confuse and confound von Till. They reckon without being caught by the tour guide as they exit the labyrinth, a nice cliff-hanger chapter ending.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Pitt and Giordino are apprehended as soon as they emerge from the labyrinth with Teri still over Giordino's shoulder to face the business end of the tour guide's gun. They make an attempt to pretend to be two drunken sailors on shore leave just having some fun, but it does not work. Pitt fears the worst, that they will be charged and held for trial. They continue to pretend that Teri is a village whore who changed her mind about her price for her favors. The guide continues to disbelieve them, though Pitt begins to trust the guide to some extent, he senses no subterfuge in the man. Once Teri is released, she screams in outrage and protest, but ultimately defends Pitt, threatening her uncle's reprisal unless they are released. The guide denies their request, stating that they must make their case to his superior, Inspector Zacythus. He threatens to shoot Teri if Pitt or Giordino make a false move, thereby ensuring their cooperation. At the black Mercedes, they meet the Darius, the man who will drive them to see the inspector.

On their way to meet the inspector, the guide whose name is Polyclitus Anaxamander Zeno, tells them about the stories associated with the labyrinth, also known as the Pit of Hades, where no man has ever emerged alive. In the ancient times the prisoners were given no chance of survival as a hungry lion who was fed very little roamed the halls of the labyrinth. When the car turns away from the town, Pitt's internal alarm sounds again, and he has to wonder why the tour guide acts more like an undercover agent. He is even more sure of danger when the car enters a barn-like structure whose doors close immediately behind them. Teri is taken by Zeno to another room, leaving Pitt and Giordino with the monster of a man, Darius. Knowing that they will have to be cunning and strong, the two men watch for their chance, and when it comes they both have to work to overcome the giant man. At first Pitt fears that he will simply rip them apart, but every man has sensitive areas, and Pitt makes full use of this knowledge. Just as they overpower Darius, Inspector Zacythus appears, putting their idea of escape out of their heads.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

Pitt has a cavalier attitude toward danger for both himself and Giordino, speaking of a past history where they have proven their mettle. Putting Teri in danger before he knows what role she plays in the entire drama runs against his grain.

"Pitt relaxed against the seat and ran through a dozen different plans for escape, each with less chance of success than the previous one. The guide had them by the testicles as long as Teri was present. Without her, he thought, he and Giordino stood tossup odds of overpowering the guide and grabbing the gun. There was also the possibility that if they made an attempt the guide wouldn't have the courage to shoot a woman, but Pitt wasn't about to risk Teri's life to find out." Page 120, Chapter 11.



Pitt reflects several times throughout the scene that he somehow trusts Zeno, and distrusts Darius, a good piece of foreshadowing. Darius proves to be a very dangerous man, difficult to overcome, and once beaten is unlikely to forget the victors. Inspector Zacynthus appears at the very end of the chapter, described as looking like an account executive of an advertising agency, suave, neat and urban, smoking a pipe. There is no indication of Pitt's immediate reaction to this man.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Initially, Pitt and Giordino are antagonistic toward Inspector Zacynthus, and because of the damage they have caused to his man, Darius, he instructs the surprised Zeno to handcuff Giordino's right wrist to Pitt's left ankle, so they make no further attempt to escape. Pitt is relieved that it is Giordino and not he, who must crouch over to walk. Pitt is still very sore from his escapades of the previous night. Pitt's intuition tells him that they are not really talking to the Greek police authorities, and when Zacynthus repeats his request for their names, Pitt finally gives his real name, which Zacynthus at first disbelieves, but once Pitt recites song and verse of his father's appearance, position and history Zacynthus finally believes him. Zacynthus introduces himself as an inspector with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics of the United States. They are then able to begin to pool their knowledge regarding von Till's activities and why they were in the labyrinth in the first place. The full ugly stories of von Till are finally told to Pitt, who is already angry enough at the man to allow nothing to keep him from stopping him; the stories only give him more reason to pursue von Till.

" 'Immediately prior to Germany's surrender in World War II,' he continued, 'eighty-five high ranking Nazis suddenly materialized in Buenos Aires on the same day. How did they get there? Again, the only ship arrival that morning was a Minerva Lines freighter. Again in the summer of nineteen fifty-four an entire bus load of teenage school girls disappeared on an outing in Naples. Four years later an Italian embassy aide discovered one of the missing girls wandering aimlessly through one of the back alleys of Casablanca.' Zac paused for nearly a minute, then went on very quietly. 'She was completely insane. I saw photographs of her body. It was enough to make a grown man cry.' Page 136, Chapter 12.

Zacynthus relates to Pitt and Giordino how many men have made it their life's work to try to bring down von Till, but no one has ever been able to get any solid evidence against the man. He tells Pitt that a British Naval destroyer is currently following the Minerva Lines ship Queen Artemisia, and that detectives at the refueling dock in Marseille are on hand to board her, but they expect to find nothing as has been the case in the past.

Pitt persuades Zacynthus to release Teri into his custody so he can safely stow her aboard the First Attempt in order to keep her safe and neutralize any damage she might do by restricting her activities. At first Zacynthus is unwilling to do this, but he has to admit that Pitt has a very good point. They do not wish to alert von Till to any unusual activities, and releasing Teri to return to him and share the story of her kidnapping would put the old German on very high alert. Pitt gives Zacynthus a list of questions he would like sent to Germany, using Zac's official status. The last bit of information Pitt extracts from Zac is that the Queen Artemisia is to make her detour by Thasos the next morning between the hours of four and five.



## Chapter 12 Analysis

Initially, Zacynthus is suspicious of Pitt and Giordino, but once he realizes that they are indeed on the same side, he is more than willing to give them as much information as he possibly can about von Till's activities. Zacynthus still maintains his official status, ordering them to do and not do certain things, which Pitt completely ignores. Zacynthus does trust Pitt enough to release Teri to him in an attempt to keep their afternoon's activities quiet and hidden from von Till. Pitt actually has more information than Inspector Zacynthus in regard to the movements of von Till's ships. He knows that the Queen Artemisia is due to come by the island soon, and when Zacynthus speaks of the destroyer trailing her, Pitt is absolutely certain that the ship is due to come by the island in the very near future. He is beginning to unravel the crazy details of the situation, but does not yet have all the facts.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Knowing the time of arrival of the Queen Artemisia, Pitt and Giordino are waiting for her. Giordino is on the beach watching through binoculars, Pitt is in the water, disguising his presence under a wooden packing crate so that he can approach the ship without detection. Pitt climbs up the anchor chain to the deck of the ship, keeping very quiet, and yet everywhere he goes in the ship, there is nothing to indicate that there is even a crew. The entire ship is empty, and yet he knows that no small vessels left the ship with crew members aboard. The longer he stays aboard the ship, the more uncomfortable he becomes, a part of him believing in stories of phantom ships and phantom crews. He examines the cargo, and it is genuine cocoa from Ceylon, no drugs. While he is in the hold he hears a very strange sound but is unable to determine what it is. Pitt spent every precious minute he allowed himself to be on board the ship investigating, but it did him no good; there is nothing untoward about the ship except that there are no occupants on board to run the ship. As the sun begins to lighten the sky, he gets back into the water and briefly considers examining her hull, but decides against it, knowing it to be very dangerous in the dark. Just then the ship's engines begin humming, propelling him into frantic swimming to get as far away from her as possible. From a safe distance, he watches the ship come to life, but still without any visible crew. He watches in total disbelief. He cannot believe they have failed, that somewhere on board the ship is enough heroin to destroy most of the Northern Hemisphere, and he was unable to locate it. Once back on the beach, Pitt begins sketching with a stick in the sand and comes up with a drawing that more resembles a pregnant whale than a ship.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

Pitt is determined to get aboard the ship and see if he can discover her secret, why she takes a thousand miles detour just to weigh anchor off the coast of the island for an hour and then leave without making any sort of contact with anyone on the island. It is a great mystery to everyone observing von Till's activities. After spending nearly an hour on board the deserted ship, Pitt is discouraged and tremendously puzzled. He wonders how there could be that much heroin on board the ship and there be no trace of it. Once on shore he begins to doodle in the sand creating a drawing of von Till's ship, but thinking that it resembles a pregnant whale rather than a ship. This is the reader's first true clue that Pitt is on to something, but he has yet to take the reader into his confidence.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

Pitt meets up with Al Giordino, who is now asleep, but during the time Pitt was on the Queen Artemisia, Al kept close watch on Pitt's activities. He confirms that Zac and Zeno staked out von Till's estate and that Darius manned the radio to see if he could catch any radio transmissions from ship to shore. While they wait on the beach for Zac and Zeno to join them, Pitt stares out across the water and notices that to the north there is an area where the waters are calm as a garden pond and are not pounded by surf as they are at the beach where he and Al are waiting. When Zac, Zeno and Darius join them, they compare notes. None of the men noticed anything while the ship was anchored offshore and Zac is very frustrated and angry. He states his intentions to continue to pursue the ship until she reaches Chicago, explaining in detail to Pitt and the other three men just how he intends to do this. Pitt points out that they are as unlikely to find anything in Marseille or Chicago as he was just now, but Zac is determined that something will break in the case. Inspector Zacynthus is surprised at Pitt's information because his task was to simply watch the ship from the beach with Al. Pitt tells them that the ship is merely a façade, that there is room underneath the ship if she is pregnant. All the men look at him as if he has lost his mind, but Pitt persists, insisting that the ship somehow communicated with von Till, and that the only way it could happen is underwater. Pitt explains his theory of the submarine,—that the sub is released prior to the ship coming into port, explaining why they never find any evidence of drugs on board the ship.

At this point, the men disagree on how best to proceed. Inspector Zacynthus wishes to continue to pursue the boat to Chicago and apprehend her there. Pitt asks Zacynthus' permission to search for the submarine cave that must be hidden somewhere underneath the island, but the inspector refuses to give permission. They argue about whether simply confiscating the cargo is enough. Pitt wants to nail von Till, Zacynthus wishes to stop the shipment of heroin. Zacynthus finally decides to put Pitt and Giordino in jail until the entire operation is over in three weeks. Al decides that he has had enough talking, pulls a gun on the three officials, and he and Pitt take their leave.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

Pitt, noticing the calm waters under the cliffs where von Till's villa is located, has made a fortuitous discovery, and this small detail helps him to determine where they will look. Pitt and Zacynthus disagree completely on how best to proceed with the investigation. The inspector is completely bound by the laws of all the different countries; whereas, Pitt is only bound by his physical abilities. He and Al make an acrimonious exit from the beach, holding Zacynthus, Zeno and Darius at gunpoint in order to stay free for the next three weeks and run the investigation their way. The men are all on the same side; however, their belief in what they can reasonably do differs dramatically. As a hero

archetype, Pitt is expected to take some action and not wait patiently for the next three weeks to see if they might actually apprehend the cargo of drugs.





# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

As they leave the beach, Pitt teases Giordino about the gun, first because it is small and secondly because Al forgot to release the safety on the device. Al takes the teasing with good humor. When Al tells Pitt that he took the gun off Teri the day they kidnapped her, Pitt's mind takes off in thought again. Back aboard the First Attempt Pitt is confronted by an irate Gunn, who wants to know why he just got a message from Admiral James Sandecker from NUMA about rendering every assistance to INTERPOL that they can. Pitt evades the question but does tell Commander Gunn that von Till is a drug smuggler, and they should cooperate in discovering his lair. He does not inform Gunn that Inspector Zacythus asked them to remain out of everything. Pitt asks Rudi if he would spare some of the scientific divers for his expedition to discover the submarine cave. At first Rudi is very reluctant, but Pitt persuades him telling him that getting solid evidence against von Till is the only to permanently shut down the smuggling enterprise.

Pitt then readies everything for the proposed dive. He enters the radio room to retrieve all the messages sent for him and discovers that the radio operator has been feeling very unwell, but is happy to report that Teri has been nursing him, bringing him tea throughout the morning. Pitt confronts Teri with all the information about her uncle that he has gathered so far, but Teri continues to deny everything. He is angered by her acceptance of her uncle's wealth, but having no concern as to how he earns the money. It disgusts him. He warns her that her way of life is pretty much over as he intends to raid her uncle's underground caves and put an end to his smuggling activities.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

Pitt is determined to stop von Till. He has all the evidence he needs against the criminal, but Zacythus having to obey the laws of every governmental agency involved will tie his hands for a long time, so it's up to Pitt to take necessary action. He tells Commander Gunn only the critical information for him to make a decision—that they should be supporting the efforts of INTERPOL, but not that Inspector Zacythus has asked that they stay out of it. Pitt is being deliberately manipulative; however, he sees the end goal in sight and is not going to lose. He also discovers that Teri has had access to the radio room because of the radio operator's sudden illness. His suspicions about her continue to grow. He confronts her with the information he has regarding von Till, but she denies any knowledge of her uncle's activities. Knowing she has already radioed from the ship, he gives her just enough information to warn von Till of their anticipated dive, but not everything he has in mind.



# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

Pitt has his team of five divers from the NUMA ship—geophysicist Ken Knight, Stan Thomas, who is the ship's engineer, Lee Spencer, a marine biologist, Gustaf Hersong, another marine biologist, and Omar Woodson, the photographer armed only with his camera. They head for the quiet waters underneath the cliffs that Pitt had noticed earlier. It does not take them any more than five minutes to discover the underwater entrance to the cave. However, the first cave is deserted and Pitt simply does not believe his eyes. He is so sure of his theory that to find an empty cave does not agree with his conclusions. Just then one of the marine biologists shows Pitt a piece of brown algae but then reveals that it is plastic. It is a perfect replica of the sea growth, designed to disguise a second cave behind its camouflage. Once they penetrate the plastic kelp forest, they come up into the second cave. This time the cave is not deserted. The expected submarine is indeed there, and so is a welcoming committee headed by von Till and Darius.

## Chapter 16 Analysis

Pitt continues with his attack against von Till, taking five scientific divers along with him to help locate the entrance to the cave. He worries a little about their safety, but worries more about the effect of the drugs von Till is smuggling and continues on his own path. The first cave seems to disprove his theories; however, one of the scientists points out that the very thick forest of kelp is not real, but plastic, placed there to camouflage the entrance to the secondary cave. When they reach the real submarine port Pitt is at first elated, then chagrined, for with von Till as a reception committee, is the beast of a man, Darius, a traitor to the Greek Gendarmerie (police). Even worse, revealing that Darius is a traitor can only mean one thing; that von Till intends to kill Pitt and the five NUMA scientists who had accompanied him on the dive into the cave.



# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary

Darius is delighted to see Pitt, at the business end of a gun. Darius is still smarting from the beating he took at the hands of Pitt and Giordino the day before and intends to extract his pound of flesh. He immediately fires at Pitt, putting a bullet through his thigh, barely missing the bone, but causing Pitt extreme agony. Von Till directs the divers to drop their equipment to the bottom of the water and climb up onto the submarine. As he gives the order, lights are put on and the dimensions of the cave become clear for the first time, about the size of an entire football field. The lights also illuminate five men with machine guns trained on the divers. There is no mistaking their intentions. The divers obey; Ken Knight going over to Pitt in order to dress his gunshot wound. The mist that hung over the interior of the cave lifts and Pitt can then see that there are two submarines in the cave rather than the single submarine he expected to find. The second submarine is an old Japanese I-Boat, capable of launching a small plane from the water, explaining why the Albatros was not discovered after the explosion.

At this point, von Till clearly expects to execute Pitt and the rest of the men, but as with all criminals, he is eager for Pitt to know the whole story before exterminating him and so makes his story clear. The yellow Albatros was not an old plane, but a replica of the old plane, designed to his specifications. Pitt is happy to return the favor by revealing that he killed von Till's dog with von Till's own knife. Pitt taunts von Till, telling him that his first mistake was in trying to kill him in the first place, and his second big mistake was in hiring Darius, informing von Till that it is bound to backfire. Von Till delays their execution in order to use the extra hands to load the drugs aboard the submarine. At first Pitt refuses, but the divers, believing that they have no choice, agree. While they work, Pitt continues to converse with von Till, agreeing that von Till's plan is working very well, and that the INTERPOL agents will likely find nothing when the ship docks in Chicago. Pitt then reveals that he knows that von Till is playing a shell game with his ships, and that the cargo of drugs that was on the Queen Artemisia is now to be loaded onto the Queen Jocasta, soon to be bound for New Orleans. Von Till is surprised and upset that Pitt has figured this out but is satisfied that there is no way Pitt can tell anyone who matters about his theories. What Pitt does not know is how the drugs will be distributed, and so he simply asks von Till who is happy to oblige.

"Von Till smiled. 'One of my lesser known business ventures is a small fleet of fishing boats; not a financially rewarding venture, I might add, but one that becomes quite useful at times. At the moment, my boats are dropping their nets in the Gulf of Mexico, awaiting my signal. When it comes, they will raise their nets and arrive in port at the exact same moment as the Queen Jocasta. The rest is simple: the ship releases the submarine, which is in turn led by the fishing boats to a cannery. The cargo is then unloaded under the building and the heroin is packed into cans labeled cat food. I must say, it is ironic; all that powder being shipped into every one of your fifty states in cat food cans. The joke is on the Bureau of Narcotics. By the time their suspicions are



aroused, it will be too late. The heroin will have already been received and carefully hidden.." Page 207, Chapter 17.

Pitt then informs von Till that Teri is not his true niece, that the real one has been hidden away somewhere in England, out of von Till's reach by Zacynthus. Darius cannot believe that Pitt knows this information, but Pitt explains his deductions, that the girl was under constant surveillance, and that she carried a gun inside the villa. Those she feared were inside the villa, not outside of it. Pitt also acknowledges that his part in the entire drama is purely coincidental; his meeting on the beach that morning with Teri totally unplanned, even his presence when the Albatros initially attacked Brady Field was chance circumstance.

Pitt then reveals his final bit of information, that von Till's identity is really that of ex-Nazi war criminal Erich Heibert. He explains how he found the model of the U-19 submarine in von Till's study to be a strange memento for an aviator. But, if the owner were a German Fleet Commander, then the memento makes perfect sense. Even Darius is unaware of von Till's true identity until Pitt reveals it. Darius tries to deny it, but Pitt explains how Heibert killed von Till, then used plastic surgery and dental work to complete the disguise, which has worked for years. Pitt's time is running out; he knows that once the Queen Jocasta drops anchor, then he and his men are dispensable. The time has now come.

## Chapter 17 Analysis

This chapter is where everything is finally explained to the reader. Darius takes his initial revenge out on Pitt by shooting him in the leg, thereby ensuring the cooperation of the rest of the divers in assisting in loading the submarine. While the men are loading the submarine, Pitt and von Till exchange information. Pitt, because he still has ulterior motives; von Till because he is so proud of his accomplishments that he cannot ignore the captive audience of the wounded Pitt. Every detail of von Till's smuggling activities are revealed in the exchange between the two men, with Pitt proving his mental superiority when he tells von Till he knows that the two ships are used as shells, exchanging the drug cargo from one to the other, thereby preventing the INTERPOL authorities from ever finding the actual location of the final destination for the drugs. This scene could seem contrived if it were not for the fact that Pitt has already demonstrated a high tolerance to pain and discomfort. An average man would likely have lost consciousness from shock after being shot, but Pitt is not an average man—another characteristic of an archetypal hero.



# Chapter 18

## Chapter 18 Summary

Pitt lies waiting for the report of Darius' gun, but the sound he hears is not that of a Luger but a big forty-five Colt automatic. Giordino appears suddenly, blowing the Luger out of Darius's hand and then turning the Colt onto von Till by holding the gun next to his ear. Giordino then tells the five armed guards to drop their weapons or else he will kill von Till and instructs them to look down the tunnel where an elite guard of six men had their weapons trained on von Till's guards. Colonel Zeno is up on the I-Boat's conning tower and with a quick finger feather of the trigger shoots one guard who was unwilling to obey. The rest of von Till's men give up immediately. Giordino explains that they were slightly delayed because of having to explain to Inspector Zacynthus about Pitt's ill-advised activities and retracing steps through the Labyrinth to the elevator shaft had taken some time. Von Till is enraged, wanting to know who told Pitt about the elevator. Pitt tells him that he heard it the night he was consigned to the darkness with the attack dog. He determined later that the sound of the generator was an elevator to take von Till from his villa down to the caves without being seen from outside, which explains why Zacynthus and his men were never able to catch von Till leaving the villa when the activities were known to have taken place. Von Till tries to hold Zacynthus to the laws of the country by claiming to be a Greek citizen, but Pitt puts an immediate end to that by reminding von Till that he is actually a German citizen, and a wanted war criminal as well.

Pitt then instructs Zacynthus to allow the submarine to deliver the drugs to Queen Jacosta and then capture her and the submarine in American waters rather than trying to figure out all the details of Greek and International Waters Law. Pitt also informs Zacynthus that he discovered that Darius was a traitor when he realized the radio on board the Queen Artemisia was set for the same frequency as the set in Zac's office, manned by Darius. This explains why the boat was empty when Pitt searched it, because Darius did not know what Pitt planned to do; only Pitt and Giordino knew of those plans.

Pitt turns to von Till and delivers his final words of condemnation that he deserves to die a thousand deaths to repay all the lives that he has stolen. Pitt shares his delight that Heibert will finally hang at the end of a rope as he should have done years before.

Zeno then turns to Darius and hands him a gun with one bullet in it. As a matter of honor, Darius is to take his own life rather than undergoing a trial and death by firing squad. Darius takes the gun and heads down a tunnel. Pitt then instructs Giordino to take the scientists back to the boat before Commander Gunn loses his mind, and further tells Spencer that he actually saw a Teaser in a crevasse in the caves and to let Commander Gunn know of its location. His last request before he loses consciousness is to ask Inspector Zacynthus what Teri's real name is. The last thing he remembers is hearing a single gunshot from the depths of the labyrinth.



## Chapter 18 Analysis

The final scene of the high action of the book is as good as the entire buildup. The rescue team, led by Al Giordino, saves Pitt's life and the lives of the scientists brave enough to accompany Pitt on his search for the caves. Many last bits of story are finally tied up, from the existence of von Till's elevator from the villa to the caves, to Teri's real name. Zacynthus is able to orchestrate the capture of both the Queen Jacosta and the smuggling submarine in American waters, ensuring an easier way to accomplish what could have been a very complicated event. Darius meets an appropriate end for a traitor, and Erich Heibert is to finally be executed for the crimes of war he committed so many years before and for which he was convicted in absentia. For Pitt, this is the greatest triumph.



# Tally

## Tally Summary

Pitt enters the offices of The Bureau not in military uniform and is curtly dismissed by The Director's secretary. Angry, Pitt strikes his cane on her desktop and gives her his full title and accepts her immediate invitation to enter the office. Inside Pitt meets The Director for the first time, introduced to him by Inspector Zacythus. The Director asks Pitt how he figured out that the submarine was attached to the ship and Pitt explains how he doodled in the sand and the idea just became more and more plausible to him, requiring that he do additional investigating to prove his theory. Zacythus then relates the final details of the capture of the Queen Jacosta and the submarine in Galveston harbor, and determining the location of the exact cannery because of a prior shipment of sugar, often used to cut pure heroin in order to create greater quantities of the drug. They then discuss von Till's activities, changing his identity from Erich Heibert to the shipping magnate, and how a single detail is what convicted him. The real Bruno von Till suffered from a condition called Alopecia areata, causing complete and premature baldness. Heibert had no such condition, so he had to shave his head daily to keep up the illusion of baldness. Pitt is assured that the man was executed four days earlier. Finally, a call comes in to The Director's office informing Admiral Sandecker that the Teaser that Commander Gunn was able to bring back was pregnant and has just given birth to a baby Teaser. The story ends with Pitt going off with Amy, a.k.a. Teri, and Zacythus and Giordino consoling one another about their lack of a date.

## Tally Analysis

All final details are tied up in this chapter where Pitt has returned to Washington for a debriefing meeting with The Director of The Bureau. At the meeting are Al Giordino, Admiral James Sandecker, Inspector Zacythus, and The Director. All are delighted to see Pitt recovering from his gunshot wound. The last portion of the capture of the ship and submarine are detailed for Pitt by Zacythus. Then Pitt's motivation for flying back to the States on an Air Force cargo plane is revealed at the very end of the book when Amy pulls up to curb in the 1936 Maybach-Zeppelin town car. Al Giordino and Inspector Zacythus are left to go find a drink on their own. Pitt, once again, got the girl.





# Characters

## Dirk Pitt

Major Dirk Pitt, an Air Force officer, with dark sea-green eyes and dark hair, sometimes has a split personality where he is a man who sometimes is cold and efficient and makes no mistakes, while other times he is fun, unpretentious and makes friends easily. Pitt can sometimes be moody, often withdrawing into himself for hours. So far, no one has located the key to unlock the door between the two Pitts. He lost a woman he loved in the sea near Hawaii a year ago. He is the Surface Security Office (aka trouble shooter) for NUMA, which is the National Underwater Marine Agency. Pitt is the typical archetype of the modern male hero. He is strong, determined, seemingly invincible and ultimately reliable to do what he thinks is right. His sense of duty, however, often flies in the face of official demands. He is not above hiding facts to suit his purpose, as when he chooses not to inform Commander Gunn that they do not have the approval of Zacynthus to explore the waters underneath the cliffs of von Till's villa. He completely disregards Zacynthus's orders to stay out of the investigation into von Till, despite the fact that Pitt nearly lost his life getting the vital information Zacynthus needs in order to further pursue von Till. Pitt is a womanizer, hard and somewhat abusive in his treatment of Teri on the beach by slapping her across the face before he makes love to her. He allows Teri to be carried virtually naked through the labyrinth in order to further their investigation against von Till. Yet, he is not willing to risk Teri's life in order to elude Zacynthus and Zeno when they are apprehended in the process of kidnapping Teri. He has a very strong sense of justice and is willing to stop at nothing in order to correct an injustice. His determination makes him a powerful and very dangerous adversary. The reader is allowed into Pitt's head from time to time in order to know some of his feelings; however, most of his truly personal feelings are kept a secret from everyone.

## Al Giordino

Longtime friend of Pitt, boyhood friends, in fact. They were track teammates in high school, dated the same girls, etc. Knows Pitt better than any man alive. Giordino plays the role of Pitt's sidekick, always there when Pitt needs him, but always ready to take a retiring role should the occasion require it, especially when it comes to women. Al is there from the beginning of the book, manning the machine guns that forcibly persuade the World War I Albatros to stop its attack on Brady Field. He is not present while Pitt undergoes the torments of the labyrinth because that meeting was to have involved Pitt meeting Teri. After Pitt's horrible experience, Giordino accompanies him on his effort to re-enter the labyrinth from the exit side, retracing Pitt's bloody steps all the way back to the villa where they enter and find Teri sleeping. Giordino overpowers Teri, and they forcibly kidnap her, returning to the exit through the labyrinth. When they are apprehended by Zacynthus and Zeno, Al continues to fight alongside Pitt, bringing the formidable Darius to his knees. Al is a comedic character, promising Zacynthus that he will urinate on his floor if he is not unshackled and shown the facilities. It is also Al





Giordino who watches Pitt's back through binoculars on the beach while Pitt is aboard the Queen Artemisia. He is also the one responsible for bringing the cavalry to Pitt's rescue when they are apprehended in the caves below the villa. Without a trusted and firm friend as Al Giordino, Pitt would never be able to accomplish as much as he does. Al is happy to be his friend, to be there for Pitt when needed and fading into the background when he is not needed. When Pitt leaves with a girl, Al is the one who joins someone else for scallops in wine sauce or for a drink.

## **Teri von Till**

The niece of Bruno von Till, who has taken care of her from the unfortunate deaths of her parents twenty years earlier. Her father was von Till's nephew, and when he and her mother died, von Till became her guardian. Actually, the woman posing as Teri is a plant by Zacythus used to infiltrate von Till's fortress. Her real name is Amy. Her real identity is kept quiet until near the end of the story.

## **Commander Rudi Gunn**

The commander of the First Attempt, NUMA's boat that is in the Aegean Sea off the coast of the island of Thasos looking for evidence of a fish thought to be long extinct. Rudi is a very small, sparse man who is passionate about all things underwater, especially fish. His absolute determination to stay in the waters off of Thasos in order to discover the Teaser fish is characteristic of his scientific fervor. He has known Pitt for a little over a year and has learned to trust Pitt and his instincts.

## **Colonel Lewis**

The commanding officer of Brady Field, has a huge, red handlebar mustache and can cook scallops in wine sauce. He is only interested in protecting the Air Base and the airplanes stationed there. He has no interest in the Teaser, and when he discovers that all the damage to his airfield was due to a fish, he is pretty irritated.

## **Willie**

Bruno von Till's driver as well as the pilot of the Albatros. He is von Till's henchman and body guard for von Till's "niece" Teri, a job he enjoys with voyeuristic enthusiasm. He chauffeurs Pitt up to the villa for dinner with Teri and her uncle and receives a broken nose from Pitt, who accuses him of watching him and Teri making love on the beach. Willie meets his end while flying the Albatros, taking the bait Pitt has set for him to prevent him from strafing the First Attempt.



## Bruno von Till

Originally thought to be the man he is posing to be, the von Till that Pitt meets is actually Erich Heibert. The original Bruno von Till manages to see a way to make a very good living by providing shipping opportunities for Germany, smuggling arms against the Allies. He had married the daughter of a wealthy Bavarian businessman, who owned a small fleet of merchant ships that sailed under the flag of Greece. Von Till took out citizenship papers of Greece and became the Managing Director of Minerva Lines. He had no ethical problem in violating the Treaty of Versailles by smuggling arms and other war materials into Germany. Heibert met von Till because he helped von Till with his operations. Once von Till saw the light, he changed sides and moved to England. Heibert traveled to England where he murdered von Till and changed places with him.

## Kurt Heibert

A World War I aviator who died having been shot down by the British and crashed in the Aegean Sea. Kurt is the brother of Erich Heibert. He died because of a trick the British played on him by flying a decoy balloon filled with explosives and a dummy in uniform in the basket. Kurt saw the balloon as an enemy, thought the dummy was a sentry who was asleep and turned his guns on the hydrogen filled balloon. When he was close enough, the British detonated the basket filled with explosives, damaging his plane. The plane, the Hawk of Macedonia, flew over the Macedonian coastline and disappeared out to sea, believed to have crashed, killing Kurt Heibert.

## Erich Heibert

Kurt's brother (aka von Till) Erich Heibert is the man who became a devoted follower of Hitler when Hitler came to power. Hitler promoted Heibert, a submarine captain, to the position of Officer Commanding Transportation Fleet, a position Heibert held until the end of the war when he disappeared. It was at this point that Heibert traveled to England, murdered the real von Till and changed places with him. Heibert learned certain gestures and speech mannerisms, underwent plastic surgery to make him look more like von Till, and even had his dental work changed to exactly match that of von Till. After switching places with von Till, Heibert continued to smuggle, but the creation of the submarine that attaches to the keel of a ship completely changed the world of smuggling. Taking advantage of von Till's Greek citizenship, Heibert moved to Thasos, rebuilt the villa and pretended to be an eccentric recluse. From his castle atop the cliffs, Heibert was able to run business as usual with the use of a short wave radio. He also knew that he must keep his identity a secret because he was convicted in absentia by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and sentenced to death for his war crimes of placing Allied prisoners into the holds of old merchant ships and putting them into the North Sea, where the British and American bombers blew them up, thereby killing their own people.



## **The Director**

Stationed in Washington, D.C., the Director of the Bureau is never addressed by any other name than "The Director," and the name of "The Bureau" is never spelled out either. Pitt answers to The Director, going to Washington for a meeting with him, Zacynthus, Sandecker, and Al Giordino, for a final debriefing. The Director is tall with hard gray eyes, high cheekbones and a pockmarked face, looking more like a narcotics smuggler than the chief administrator of several thousand federal investigators

## **The Doctor**

A white goateed elderly man with blue eyes, wiry build and tanned, who works hard to force Pitt to agree to undergo medical attention after his night in the labyrinth.

## **The Cabin Boy**

A teenaged boy with flaming red hair who fetches Greek beer for Pitt and the other men.

## **The Tour Guide**

Colonel Polyclitus Anaxamander Zeno - member of the Greek Gendarmerie. Zeno is working with Inspector Zacynthus to stem the drug smuggling scheme of von Till's. They have determined that von Till is responsible, however are unable to get close enough to him to get evidence. Zeno doubles as a guide for the Greek amphitheater, so that he can keep a close eye on any suspicious activity.

## **Darius**

A member of the Greek Gendarmerie who is with Zeno when he apprehends Pitt and Giordino as they are kidnapping Teri. Darius is a double agent, posing as a Greek Gendarmerie, but has been on von Till's payroll for the past ten years.

## **Inspector Hercules Zacynthus**

Inspector Hercules Zacynthus - An American belonging to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the United States, posing as a Greek Police Inspector on the Island of Thasos. He has never failed to successfully close a case before von Till's and is therefore very happy to have Pitt's assistance as long as he feels it will not spook von Till. As soon as he feels that Pitt is getting too nosy, he threatens to put him and Giordino in jail until the threat of exposure is passed.



## **Ken Knight**

A diver and a geophysicist aboard the First Attempt. Helped Pitt board the First Attempt after his harrowing night in the labyrinth. One of the five men who joins Pitt's search for the submarine tunnel.

## **Stan Thomas**

Stan Thomas, short man, the ship's engineer aboard the First Attempt. Joins Pitt's search for the submarine tunnel.

## **Lee Spencer**

Lee Spencer - red bearded marine biologist, who also joins Pitt's team to search for the submarine tunnel.

## **Gustaf Hersong**

Gustaf Hersong - lank, six-foot tall marine biologist who joins Pitt's team.

## **Omar Woodson**

Omar Woodson - photographer who joins Pitt's team to search for the submarine tunnel/cave and "armed" with a 35 mm camera.

## **Admiral James Sandecker**

Admiral James Sandecker, chief of NUMA. He is a short, red-haired man who likes smoking zeppelin-shaped cigars.



## Objects/Places

### First Attempt

NUMA's ship that is harbored off the coast of the Greek island of Thasos.

### German Albatros

WWI fighter biplane, bright yellow with Maltese Cross markings identified as an Albatros D-3.

### Brady Field

Air Force Base on Thasos Island in the Mediterranean theater of operations. It was built under a treaty with the U.S. government and the Greek government in the late 1960's, permanently staffed with ten F-105 Starfighter Jets and two C-133 Cargomaster transports.

### Control Tower

Where the air traffic controller watches for air traffic on Brady Field.

### Island of Thasos

Greek island in the Aegean Sea, sixteen miles across the water from Greek Macedonia.

### Maltese Cross Markings

The black markings used to identify the yellow biplane as a WWI German plane.

### Little Black Notebook

The small book the sergeant in the opening scene carries in his breast pocket to mark off the remaining 54 days to his rotation back to the States. It blocked the path of the bullet enough that it likely saved his life.



## **PBY Catalina**

A big, twin engine airplane, sometimes called an old WWII flying boat; it is heavy and not swiftly maneuverable, large enough to carry passengers and cargo. The plane Dirk flies during the dogfight with the German biplane over Brady Field.

## **The Hawk of Macedonia**

The Hawk of Macedonia - a yellow WWI biplane piloted by Lieutenant Kurt Heibert, responsible for 32 victories over the allies on the Macedonia Front, believed to have been shot down in the Aegean Sea on July 15, 1918.

## **White German Shepherd**

A mascot of Kurt Heibert. A second, white German Shepherd is the mascot of ex-Nazi posing as Bruno von Till to increase the impression of a relationship with Kurt Heibert.

## **Zippo Lighter**

A cigarette lighter that Kirk always carries, coming in handy when he is ambushed in the labyrinth by the white German Shepherd.

## **Log Book**

The book aboard the Queen Artemisia shows recent entries despite a seemingly phantom crew aboard the ship.

## **The Sea**

Where Pitt is most comfortable, at peace, at one, where he listens to the nothingness of silence - a truly great treasure.

## **The Beach**

Where Pitt accidentally meets and seduces Teri, niece of Bruno von Till.

## **Hobnailed Boots**

The tracks of which are found on the beach alerting Pitt to the fact that he is being spied upon



## **Diamond Shaped Tire Tracks**

The tracks left by the beach along with the hobnailed boot tracks that alert Pitt to the existence of Willie and Bruno von Till.

## **Labyrinth**

Labyrinth, also known as the Pit of Hades. A circuitous labyrinth of tunnels with only one way in and one way out, used to kill unwanted people. In the ancient times a hungry lion roamed the labyrinth, ensuring that no one ever escaped.

## **Paring Kinfe**

The knife Pitt stole from Bruno von Till's table while he was at dinner, in response to a premonition of danger he was feeling. He used the knife to kill von Till's white German Shepherd that was sent to attack him.

## **Donkey**

The pack animal that Pitt found after escaping the labyrinth and used to get a ride back to the shore. She would not move until Pitt realizes she is female and uses her appropriate name, Athena.

## **Macrocystis Pyrifera**

The plastic replica of an ocean plant used to counteract the lack of plant growth because of the arsenic in the paint, the red anti-fouling paint used on ship hulls.

## **Meteorological Balloon**

A balloon from the equipment aboard the First Attempt used to lure the Albatros close enough to be blasted by the explosives attached to the aloft balloon.

## **Minerva Shipping Lines**

The old ships owned and used by Bruno von Till to smuggle drugs.

## **U-19 German Submarine**

U-19 - A German submarine sunk by British aircraft in 1918.



## **Hypsarion**

The highest peak on the island of Thasos.

## **Queen Artemisia**

The aging ship that anchors off the coast of Thasos for one hour between 4 am and 5 am. Used to ship the drugs to Thasos.

## **Queen Jacinta**

The next ship of the Minerva shipping lines that is scheduled to anchor off the coast of Thasos for one hour to be used to ship drugs from Thasos to Galveston, Texas. A decoy ship.

## **Wooden Packing Crate**

The camouflage device Pitt uses to get close enough in the water to the Queen Artemisia so he can board her without detection.

## **Submarine**

The clever storage and maneuvering device designed and used by von Till to transfer drugs to and from the ships without detection, cleverly created to attach to the hulls of his ships.

## **Bureau of Narcotics**

American agency used to enforce drug laws and to catch and apprehend any attempts to smuggle drugs into the United States.

## **25 Calibre Mauser**

The tiny gun used by Al Giordino to persuade Zacynthus to allow him and Pitt to remain free and out of custody once Pitt shares all he knows about von Till's smuggling operation. Giordino took it from Teri when they kidnapped her.





# Themes

## Things Are Not Always as They Seem.

Theme One - Things are Not Always as They Seem.

Mayday is a study of most things not always being as they originally seem to be. Clive Cussler uses the opening scene in the prologue to demonstrate that the feeling of hot, sultry boredom belies a sudden attack on the air field from the bright yellow World War I biplane replica creating sudden fear and havoc as the planes on the ground explode into giant fireballs seen for miles.

The author then creates a series of characters who are not who they claim to be. The woman Pitt makes love to on the beach, Teri, is not von Till's niece, but a spy. She is Zacynthus's plant, positioned to get closer to von Till. Zacynthus, too, is not the Police Inspector he is posing as, but an American agent of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the United States, working undercover on Thasos to try to catch von Till in the act of smuggling. Von Till is really Admiral Erich Heibert, a Nazi U-boat captain and a wanted war criminal. He has killed the real von Till, von Till's nephew and wife in order to take von Till's place. He even went so far as to have plastic surgery and extensive dental work done in order to complete the illusion. His only problem, which is what finally worked to identify him, is that the real von Till had a disease called Alopecia areata, which is what caused von Till's natural baldness. Heibert had to shave his head in order to complete the illusion. After his capture the growth of his hair is what settled the question of his identity. Darius is an informer on von Till's payroll and not a member of the Greek gendarmerie as he poses.

Cussler did not stop at having the masquerade of illusions pertain merely to people. Minerva Line's Queen Artemisia is a "robot" like ship with a crew of six or seven, with the ability to dock a submarine on her keel, underwater, as with the next ship, Queen Jocasta. Both ships give the outward appearance of being aging, rusty ships that run typical cargo of cocoa and graphite for the Minerva Shipping Lines, but in actuality, they are used in an elaborate and huge heroin-smuggling scheme.

The next object illusion is the submarine cave itself. At first it appears to be filled with natural sea growth but is actually filled with exact plastic replicas of *Macrocyctis pyrifera*. These excellent replicas give the impression of a true sea cave to hide where the smuggling submarine traverses to and from the ships.

## Perseverance in the Face of Adversity is the Mark of a True

Dirk Pitt has the amazing quality of perseverance despite all adversity, whether physical or mental. In his opinion, nothing should get in the way of him and what he feels is right



and good. Pitt has few qualms about rushing in with his PBY Catalina and assisting Brady Field during the air raid by the Albatros biplane. He makes a brief comment that his mother and Giordino's mother will be very sad if their sons die in a crazy rescue attempt against modern-day fighter jets. However, he rushes in to assist because of the Mayday call confirming that lives are at risk.

The next episode of perseverance is in the labyrinth after being attacked by von Till's German Shepherd. Pitt is badly injured and at one point loses consciousness, but knowing that von Till will attack the First Attempt and that all the innocent scientists on board will be killed if he does not warn them pushes him past the point of typical human endurance. He actually accomplishes what no man has ever been able to accomplish before—escaping the labyrinth. This feat alone puts Pitt in the realm of hero. Pitt does not stop here because he still has to reach the ship before dawn. He continues his journey by persuading a recalcitrant donkey to carry him to the beach where he takes a boat out to where the First Attempt is anchored. Knight's reaction upon seeing Pitt reminds the reader that Pitt is gravely injured, but Pitt does not give in to his injuries until the threat of the aerial attack has been planned for and carried out. Only then does Pitt give in to the demands of the ship's doctor.

As Pitt learns more about von Till, he realizes that his dislike of the man is not only due to his own treatment at his hands, but that von Till is a very dangerous person, looking out for his own interests without a conscience about how many lives he is damaging with his drug shipments. Pitt is a strong adversary, an excellent hero archetype. His determination to stop von Till pushes him to the extremes of his abilities, both physical and mental. In the end, he manages to stop von Till and save the many lives of innocent people throughout the world. Despite all obstacles, Pitt manages to bring about the capture of von Till and the smuggling submarine.

## **A Strong Sense of Justice Despite the Passage of Time Will H**

The story of Bruno von Till unfolds and with each new revelation, Dirk Pitt realizes that the man is responsible for some of the most heinous crimes known to humankind. At first, von Till appears to merely be a cunning, yet sleazy, drug smuggler who must be stopped. He has no qualms about putting Pitt into the labyrinth with his attack dog; he likewise has no conscience about the lives he is hurting with the smuggling of drugs. These alone are enough for Pitt to pursue the conviction of von Till, but as Pitt digs deeper and deeper into Bruno von Till's past, he realizes that von Till was an arms smuggler for Germany during the war.

Von Till's antics also include secret arms shipments from Europe to Central and South America that have aided in the many revolutionary bloodbaths those countries have suffered. He is also suspected of toppling Spain's economy by stealing the large government gold reserve from the Ministry of Treasury; the gold showed up on India's black market seven thousand miles away. It was known that a Minerva Lines Freighter

left Barcelona the day of the theft and docked in India one day before the gold appeared on the black market.

Pitt learns from Zacynthus that just before Germany's surrender in World War II, eighty-five high-ranking Nazis arrived in Buenos Aires the same day. The only link is the Minerva Lines ship. Then in 1954, a whole bus load of teenage girls on a school outing disappeared from Naples. One of the girls showed up later and was insane; her only memory being the M on the funnel of the ship where they were taken.

Now the story deepens even further. Bruno von Till is hardly a stellar citizen, but the man posing as von Till is actually Erich Heibert, a former German U-boat captain, who managed to kill thousands and thousands of men, women and children by forcing them into the holds of ships, placing them in the way of the Allies to be killed as the Allies torpedoed the ships. Pitt is disgusted with this information and is determined to somehow make von Till accountable for this terrible crime.

Pitt works with Zacynthus and Zeno to bring about the capture of Erich Heibert, the ex-Nazi war criminal. He cannot tolerate this injustice, specifically the idea of a Nazi war criminal remaining free to run a drug smuggling operation, as well as being responsible for the deaths of thousands and the ruin of many young women. Despite the very lengthy passage of time, Pitt is determined to somehow bring justice to all the innocent victims of Heibert's actions.



# Style

## Point of View

"Mayday" by Clive Cussler is a techno-thriller mystery told from a limited, third-person perspective of the main character, Dirk Pitt. Pitt is a tough, determined, intense character, who is determined to conquer what evil in the world he can by defeating a hardened ex-Nazi war criminal in his drug smuggling and human trafficking activities.

The reader follows the trail of Pitt, listening in on his conversations with all other characters, learning what he learns from those conversations; however, unlike other involved third-person perspectives, the reader is often kept out of Pitt's brain and his thought processes. Some of his thoughts and feelings are shared with the reader, especially when he is in a dangerous situation and is suffering, for example when he is in the Labyrinth and being attacked by the dog, the reader is along for most of the experience. On board the Queen Artemisia, the reader is involved with his activities and his thoughts as there are no other characters around with whom Pitt can hold a conversation. However, later in the same chapter, the reader is not privy to Pitt's thoughts while he is on the beach wondering why the Queen Artemisia is a smuggling ship and how she is getting away with it, since he has searched her completely finding no evidence of smuggled drugs.

"Pitt continued to absentmindedly gaze at the sand drawing. Suddenly his eyes took on a trance-like glaze and his rugged face lost all expression. The spark of a novel and fanciful idea lit dimly in his conscious mind. At first the idea seemed too outlandish for him to consider, but the more he dwelt on its possibilities, the more feasible it became. Quickly he traced additional lines in the sand. Completely absorbed again, he raced to match up the diagram with the picture in his mind. When the last change was finished, his mouth slowly twisted into a grim smile of satisfaction. Damned clever of von Till, he thought, damned clever." Page 155, Chapter 13.

Pitt's third person perspective is the primary story-telling style; however, authorial narration comes into play from time to time giving the reader a little insight into Giordino's thoughts, sometimes giving the reader a view or perception that only the author can make. From time to time other characters are treated in the same way, allowing a different perspective on the character of Pitt, specifically Colonel Zeno when he first poses as a tour guide capturing Pitt and Giordino at the exit of the labyrinth.

"Knight started to say something, but then he more clearly saw the bloody and ragged body beneath him. The sight of Pitt's condition made the young scientist wince and his face turned ashen. He sat rock-bound in unbelieving shock." Page 87, Chapter 8.

The author slips from one form of perspective to the other without definite indications to the reader that this is happening.



The story is straightforward, with a great deal of action, excitement and danger. Much of the information is given to the reader by the conversations that Pitt holds with the other characters. The quick changes in setting require that the reader pay attention on every page for fear of missing a vital piece of information. The characters are introduced at a good pace; however, one unfamiliar with military ranking will need to pay particular attention to the titles as they are sometimes used as character labels later in the story.

## Setting

Clive Cussler's *Mayday* is set in modern-day Greek Macedonia, specifically the Island of Thasos in the Aegean Sea at the time of publication of the novel, 1977. The story opens with a brief period of quiet at Brady Field, an American Air Force Base established on Thasos in the late 1960s. This setting is critical for the forward movement of events. The pending attack on Brady field is not done to cripple the Air Force planes on the ground there, but to create a situation of alarm and crisis. The purpose of the air field attack is to force the First Attempt to remove herself from her present location.

Just off the coast of Thasos is a NUMA ship called the First Attempt, and her purpose is to discover whether or not the stories of a previously-thought extinct fish called a Teaser are true, and if the fish is actually still alive in the waters off Thasos. If the scientific crew aboard First Attempt can capture one of the rare specimens, it would be a real find for the entire scientific committee of the world.

Atop the cliffs overlooking the sea and First Attempt is a villa belonging to merchant master, Bruno von Till. Von Till chooses to live in the ancient building, a Roman temple to the goddess of Wisdom, Minerva, built in 138 B.C. The villa gives von Till a complete view of the sea where he can oversee his drug smuggling ships as they anchor off the coast for pick up and delivery. Just below the villa are very rugged cliffs that hide caves he uses for his submarines that manage to pick up and deliver the drugs from boats to the caves and back undetected. He has built an elevator that takes him easily from his villa at the top of the cliffs to caves below sea level. Von Till has managed to run his business undetected by all the enforcement agencies of INTERPOL and other world powers.

Attached to the villa is the labyrinth, again built in ancient times to torment, torture and ultimately kill any victim chosen for the adventure. There is only one entrance and one exit with many tortuous corridors in complete darkness, designed to mystify, terrify and completely confuse the victim. Pitt is consigned to the labyrinth by von Till after von Till realizes that he is a Major with the Air Force and connected to the NUMA vessel. Pitt manages to evade the animal attack, a German Shepherd in the modern-day version, imitating the hungry lion used in ancient times.

Aboard Queen Artemisia, Pitt discovers that there is no one aboard the large vessel, at first puzzling him into believing that it is a phantom vessel with a phantom crew, but his nocturnal visit to the boat shows him that there is evidence of at least some human activity. During his illicit visit aboard the Queen Artemisia, Pitt hears strange sounds that



emanate from deep within hull of the ship, like the keel scraping along a ridge of coral; however, the ship is anchored at the time and not moving. This is the final clue for Pitt as he slowly realizes how von Till is able to run his drug smuggling scheme.

Pitt is very comfortable around water and is most at home on the beach and in the sea. He feels a real sense of peace and belonging in the water, a sense of oneness that he never feels anywhere else. This gives an interesting view into Pitt's personality. A tragedy concerning water is mentioned in passing where Pitt lost the woman he loved in the waters off of Hawaii a year before the current events take place. Despite that loss, Pitt is still strongly attached to the water.

## Language and Meaning

Mayday by Clive Cussler was first published in the United Kingdom, resulting in a few spelling differences for the reader, for example:

defenceless r/t defenseless

amphitheatre r/t amphitheater

coloured r/t colored

practise r/t practice

spectre r/t specter

odour r/t odor

theatre r/t theater

favours r/t favors

calibre r/t caliber

Cussler's use of language is direct and explicit. It is easy for the reader to follow the story as it unfolds. From time to time the author has Pitt recall a past event that reminds him to be afraid in a specific situation, or a previous experience that has prepared him for what he is now facing. However, while there is a reference to some past event, the author does not take time away from current action to explain the experience in any kind of detail.

Where the author does include a lot of detail is in his scenes. His language is relatively simple, but the details that he uses in his descriptions make it very easy for the reader to "see" the scene unfolding in perfect precision. The author uses many adjectives and adverbs when describing most of the activity; from time to time this is distracting for the reader.



Cussler does keep the reader in the dark about certain points in the story that might allow the reader to solve the mystery before Pitt does. This intentional pacing of the story forces the reader to continue reading, but with mounting frustration knowing that not all facts that Pitt has have been revealed.

## Structure

The book is divided into eighteen chapters ranging from five to eighteen pages long, with a prologue and a tally at the end. There is no definite pattern to the number of pages per chapter. The book covers the course of just a few days in time, packing much into each chapter. The only chapters that have names are the "Prologue" at the beginning and the "Tally" at the end of the book. The rest of the chapters are numbered only. The story progresses chronologically from the beginning of the story to the end. The final chapter sums up all that has happened since Chapter Eighteen, where Pitt was not present, and yet has much interest in how the problem has been resolved.

The story-telling style Cussler uses for *Mayday* is that of many folk tales, where as the author is in the head of several characters and has an omniscient approach to the story; however, most of the story is told from Dirk Pitt's character. Cussler uses the standard cliff-hanger approach at the ends of his chapters, prompting the reader to immediately turn the page to the beginning of the next chapter to see if Pitt is soon to be out of danger, or if a pertinent clue will be revealed.

The story starts out with a scene of a lazy, hot, quiet day at Brady Field when seemingly out of nowhere a World War I Albatros approaches the field and begins to shoot at the airplanes that are stationed there. The story moves from a quiet, lazy feeling to one of frenetic activity where the air traffic controller is in fear for his life and calls "Mayday" repeatedly over the radio. The action has begun and continues until the end of the book.

Dirk Pitt is the traditional male hero archetype. He is strong, ruggedly handsome and knows how to deal with women, his reputation for finding them just about anywhere preceding him. Dirk faces danger with courage and defiance. When he believes an injustice has been done, he feels a strong sense of responsibility to rectify it. If he feels that he has put another person in danger, he works even harder to protect that person as he does when Teri is in danger and when he realizes that he has put the entire crew of the *First Attempt* in danger in his verbal sparring with von Till. Despite grave physical injury, Pitt's determination to prevent injury to innocent parties compels him to continue long past average human endurance. This gives Pitt the reputation of being a man to be counted on when dangerous situations require a cool head and absolute determination to get the job done.



## Quotes

"Pitt was, in a sense, two men, neither of them directly related to the other. There was the coldly efficient Dirk Pitt who rarely made a mistake, and yet was humorous, unpretentious and easily made friends with everyone who came in contact with him; a rare combination. Then there was another Pitt, the moody one, the one who often withdrew to himself for hours at a time and became remote and aloof, as though his mind were constantly churning over some distant dream. There had to be a key that unlocked and opened the door between the two Pitts, but Giordino had never found it." Page 14 - 15, Chapter 1.

"One picture stood out above all the rest. It was the photograph in a gallery of the Imperial War Museum. Pitt could recall it vividly. The camera had caught a German aviator posing beside a World War I fighter plane. He was garbed in the flying togs of the day, and his right hand rested upon the head of an immense white German Shepherd. The dog, obviously a mascot, was panting and looking up at his master with a patronizing, doe-like expression. The flyer stared back at the camera with a boyish face that somehow looked naked without the usual Prussian dueling scar and monocle. However, the proud Teutonic military bearing could be easily seen in the hint of an insolent grin and the ramrod straight posture." Page 22, Chapter 2.

"The whole thing boils down to this; the Teaser could be an early link in the evolution of mammals, and that includes man. What I didn't tell you was that the fossil found in Austria shows definite mammal characteristics in its anatomy. The protruding limbs and other features of its internal organs, place it in a perfect evolutionary line to advance in a general pattern toward the development of humans and animals." Page 43, Chapter 3

"As you know, Colonel, Admiral Sandecker ordered Giordino and myself to Thasos to investigate the strange mishaps that have occurred during NUMA's offshore operations. This morning, while conversing with Commander Gunn, I discovered evidence of connection between the raid and the accidents aboard the First Attempt. Now, if we take this assumption one step further, we begin to see that Brady Field was not the main objective of our reincarnated adversary. The raid was only an indirect means of removing Commander Gunn and the First Attempt from Thasos." Page 53, Chapter 4.

"It was a Maybach-Zeppelin town car, complete with a sliding glass partition separating the enclosed passenger compartment from the driver, who sat in the open exposed to the sun. Behind the large double-M ornament on the radiator, the hood stretched back six feet and ended at a low split windshield, giving the car an image of great brutish power. The long coachwork was painted a deep multi-coated silver. It was a classic among classics; superb Teutonic craftsmanship evident in every fitting, every nut and every bolt. If the 1936 Rolls-Royce Phantom III typified the British ideal of silence and distinguished mechanical efficiency, then its German counterpart was found in the 1936 Maybach-Zeppelin." Page 57, Chapter 5.





"He took a long breath, sensing something very wrong. An odd prickle crept up his back; that old familiar feeling of danger. Like an old and trusted friend, it always tapped him on the shoulder and warned him when a nasty situation was brewing. Unseen, Pitt slipped a paring knife off the plate of fruits and pushed it under his pant leg and into his sock." Page 70, Chapter 6.

"Blood seeped from four evenly spaced furrows that began just above the left nipple and extended up and diagonally over his chest to the right shoulder. The claw marks were deep in the skin but their depth barely penetrated the muscle tissue. Pitt's shirt hung down like a shredded flag of red and khaki. All he could do for the moment was tear off the dangling strips of ragged cloth and pad the gashes. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to collapse to the ground and let a wave of comforting unconsciousness gather him in its trough. The temptation was strong, but he resisted it. Instead he stood on steady legs with a quartz clear mind, planning his next move." Page 78, Chapter 7.

"The elderly physician, oblivious to Pitt's movements on the ship's bridge, cleaned and dressed the raw cuts without bothering to turn and look at the approaching plane. He tied the final knot tightly, making Pitt wince and display a wry face. 'That's the best I can do for you Major, until you stop running up and down the deck, shouting orders like Captain Bligh.'" Page 89, Chapter 8.

"Von Till had to find another direction. Using the old aircraft was a stroke of genius. If he had sent a modern jet fighter to attack Brady Field, all hell would have broken out in the form of an international crisis. The Greek Government, the Russians, the Arabs; all would have become involved, and this whole island would have been teeming with military personnel on emergency alert. No, von Till was smart: the antique Albatross caused our government some embarrassment and cost the Air Force a few million dollars, but spared everyone a diplomatic mess and an armed conflict." Page 99, Chapter 9

"Giordino could easily feel and see the revenge in Pitt's eyes. He remembered watching Pitt move slowly, painfully, as best he could, over the steep trail through the ruins without complaint. He had also watched the bitterness, the hopelessness that took and held Pitt's face after Gunn announced the disappearance of the mystery plane. There was something ominous about Pitt's grim features and unmoving concentration. Giordino wondered dimly whether Pitt was driving himself with a sense of duty or with an insane compulsion for retaliation." Page 106 - 107, Chapter 10.

"'I assure you it is no myth,' Zeno said seriously. 'The number of condemned Greeks who died in the Pit of Hades, their screams echoing through the dark tunnels, is endless. Even in recent years, before the entrance was barred, several people wandered into the pit and vanished, swallowed up by the unknown. There is no record of a successful escape.'" Page 122, Chapter 11.

"'No one, that is, except Bruno von Till.' The voice was a low murmur, and Pitt suddenly felt cold. 'It's not his real name of course. That was lost somewhere in his past, long



before he became an elusive smuggler, the most diabolic and crafty purveyor of human misery of all time.' Zac swung around and gazed unseeing out of the window. 'Captain Kidd, the blockade runners of the confederacy and all the slave traders rolled into one couldn't hold a candle to von Till's setup.'" Page 135, Chapter 12.

"The Queen Artemisia lay silent, only the faint hum of her generators and the slap of the waves on her hull betrayed her presence. Gradually the sounds faded away and the ship became a part of the silence. For a long time Pitt listened, but no other sounds traveled across the water to his bobbing outpost. No footsteps on a steel deck, no masculine voices shouting commands, no clank of human operated machinery, nothing. The silence was total and very puzzling. It was like a phantom ship with a phantom crew." Page 144, Chapter 13.

"Pitt started to leave, then he stopped. There it was again; the same mysterious sound, echoing through the ship's hull. He stood stock-still, holding his breath for what seemed a lifetime. It was an odd, uncanny sound, like the scraping of a ship's keel over a submerged rock or coral reef. Pitt involuntarily shivered. It also reminded him of the way chalk squeaked across a blackboard. The sound lasted for perhaps ten seconds, then it was punctuated with the dull clank of metal against metal." Page 149, Chapter 13.

"A seething flood of frustration swept over Pitt as the great hull slowly slid past his bobbing head. It was as though he was watching a ballistic missile lift from a launching pad and hurtle on its pre-set path toward devastation and death. He was helpless, he could do nothing to stop it. Hidden somewhere on the Queen Artemisia was enough heroin to drown half the population of the Northern Hemisphere in delirium. God alone knew what chaos would erupt in every city and town if it was distributed to all the peddling scum who preyed on its malignant addiction. How many people would become listless dregs and eventually die from the drug's deadly narcosis? One hundred and thirty tons of heroin on the ship." Page 153, Chapter 13.

"'There you have it. As neat a little set-up as you can find.' He smiled wryly. 'The Queen Artemisia is in reality nothing but a false front. Oh sure, it sails the briny blue, picking up and delivering cargo. That's where any similarity between a bona fide cargo freighter and the Queen ends. She's an old ship, true, but beneath her steel skin beats a complete up-to-date centralized control system. I saw the same equipment on an old ship in the Pacific just last year. No large crew is required. Six or seven men can handle her easily.'" Page 161, Chapter 14.

"Call it fate, coincidence, or any other term you wish to choose, that put the First Attempt at Thasos at the exact moment to expose a beautifully planned criminal conspiracy. Von Till's entire smuggling operation depends upon the use of a submarine, maybe more than one, we don't know yet. The heroin is the biggest job he's ever undertaken. It's damn hard for the mind to conceive, but he could easily net over two hundred million dollars on this one shipment. He planned well, nothing could stand in his way. The one day he looks out of his window and there sits an oceanographic research ship, not over two miles away. Learning that you were scouting the water for a legendary fish, he began to run scared. There was a good chance that one of your



divers might discover his base of operation, and what's more important, his method of smuggling. He was desperate." Page 177, Chapter 15.

"The forest of counterfeit kelp was thick and nearly impenetrable. Thin branches rose from the bottom to the surface, flaring into a wide, spreading canopy. Hersong was right; it was a work of art. Even at arms length Pitt couldn't have told the plastic from the real thing. He unsheathed the knife and began slicing his way through the brown swaying stems. Working his way forward, stopping only to untangle his air tank, he finally broke into another tunnel. The second had a larger diameter than the first but was much shorter in length." Page 197, Chapter 16.

" 'It wasn't only possible,' Pitt said to Darius, 'it was accomplished to the letter. They were both roughly the same size and build. A few alterations here and there by a skilled surgeon, a few gestures and speech mannerisms, practiced until perfect, and the man who stands before you became a dead ringer for the original Bruno von Till. Why not? There were no close friends, von Till was sort of a loner, no one knew him well. His wife had died childless. There was, however, a nephew who had been born and raised in Greece. Even he didn't catch on to the switch till years later. Then it cost him his life. Mere child's play for a professional killer like Heibert. The nephew and his wife were murdered in a faked boating accident. Teri, their young daughter, was spared. No benevolence on Heibert's part I assure you. The public image of a considerate and protective grand uncle was too good to pass by." Page 214, Chapter 17.

" 'No one,' Pitt replied tersely. 'Wandering through the labyrinth, I accidentally took a side corridor that ended at a ventilator shaft. I heard the sound of generators somewhere beyond the opening. Their purpose came to me when I was sure of the sea cavern. Your villa sits on a near vertical line above the shoreline cliffs. An underground elevator had to be the only means of moving from the villa to the cavern without detection. The shaft, the cavern, and passageways were made to order arrangement for smuggling, courtesy of the Phoenicians over two thousand years ago.'" Page 218, Chapter 18.

"The Director, still grinning, stood up and laid his hand on the Admiral's shoulder. 'It seems that your marine oddity turned out to be a viviparous female. Consequently, you, sir are the proud papa of a bouncing baby Teaser.'" Page 234 - 235, Chapter 19



## Topics for Discussion

Who finds a Teaser location for Commander Gunn? Where?

Do Pitt's methods of investigating that break the law, i.e. breaking and entering and tampering with evidence justify the end result? Explain.

How does Pitt figure out von Till was using a submarine to smuggle the heroin? Explain how von Till used the submarine.

Why does Pitt press on despite setbacks and injuries?

Explain the motivation behind the air attack on Brady Field. What was the intended result? Why?

Explain the significance of the Teaser and why Commander Gunn is so determined to find one.

Compare and contrast the two distinct personalities of Dirk Pitt when it comes to a) his work, b) his friends, and c) women. Give examples of each from the text.

Explain how the author is not entirely fair with the reader in the way information is relayed to the reader.

Evaluate the role Al Giordino plays in the story.

Who is Bruno von Till? Who steals his identity and why?

Who is Teri von Till? What is her real identity?

Why is the PBY Catalina able to win the dogfight over Brady Field?

Describe what Pitt finds aboard the Queen Artemesia. Is this unusual? Why or why not?

Explain how von Till uses the labyrinth and compare it to the original Roman purpose.