

Sharpe's Devil Study Guide

Sharpe's Devil by Bernard Cornwell

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Plot Summary

Sharpe's Devil is a novel about the ongoing adventures of Lieutenant Richard Sharpe. In this adventure, Sharpe is hired by a wealthy Spanish countess to go to Chile and find her missing husband. Along the way, Sharpe must negotiate obstacles presented by corrupt Spanish officials, rebel fighters, and even Napoleon Bonaparte.

Since leaving military service, Richard Sharpe has lived with his companion Lucille and their two children on a farm in Normandy. Sharpe's calm and rustic life is interrupted by a visit from the Countess of Mouromorto. Sharpe first met this woman many years previously when she was simply Louisa Parker, a young English woman fleeing the warfare in northern Spain. Louisa met and married Don Blas Vivar, Count of Mouromorto. Sharpe is a friend of both Louisa and her husband, and Don Blas once helped Sharpe during the war. Louisa has come to reclaim the favor.

To stop the Chilean rebellion, the government of Spain sent Don Blas to Chile. Sometime after his arrival, Don Blas disappeared, and no one, not even the Spanish government, seems to know what happened to him. Louisa believes he is still alive, and she hires Sharpe to go find her husband.

After accepting the job, the first thing Sharpe does is to contact his friend Patrick Harper. Harper was Sharpe's Regimental Sergeant during the French Wars, and the two men are close friends. Since leaving military service, Harper has been operating a pub in Dublin with his wife and children.

Sharpe and Harper appear as an odd pair to outsiders. Sharpe is tall, thin, and battle scarred. His personality tends to be a bit stern. Harper is hugely obese and jovial.

The two men get passage to Chile on a Spanish frigate, the *Espiritu Santo*. Along the way, they stop at the island of Saint Helena where Sharpe meets Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon asks Sharpe if he will deliver a gift to a friend in Chile. Sharpe agrees. Napoleon gives Sharpe a portrait to deliver.

After arriving in Chile, Sharpe finds that the local authorities are not at all cooperative in his quest to find the missing Don Blas. Everywhere Sharpe looks he encounters resistance and cryptic information. Not long after arriving in Chile, all of Sharpe's and Harper's belongings are stolen. The belongings are recovered and returned to Sharpe and Harper by the sadistic commander of Spanish Chile, Captain-General Miguel Bautista. One possession remains missing: the portrait of Napoleon.

Captain-General Bautista later finds the portrait and discovers that a coded message is hidden inside. He uses this as a reason to banish Sharpe and Harper from Chile. On the sailing trip back to Europe, the ship Sharpe and Harper are on is captured by the Chilean rebels led by the charismatic and daring Thomas Cochrane. Sharpe and Harper join with Cochrane and fight several bloody battles alongside the Chilean rebels.



After helping Cochrane capture the last remaining Spanish stronghold in Chile, Sharpe is surprised to discover that he still cannot find Don Blas. He is even more surprised to discover that Cochrane has been misleading him all along. The likable and brilliant trickster Cochrane has been in control of everything since the beginning, and he has a succession of surprises in store for Sharpe until the very end of the novel.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

Sharpe's Devil is a novel about one of the many adventures of Richard Sharpe and his steadfast friend Patrick Harper. The two have been hired to find a missing Spanish nobleman. Sharpe left his home in Normandy, and Harper left his home in Dublin. The two must travel to Chile in their latest adventure.

The book opens with sixteen men waiting under heat and humidity at a small port on an island. Three sailing warships, two British and one Spanish, are moored nearby. All of the waiting men are wearing military uniforms. All but two of them are Spanish. Those two are Richard Sharpe and Patrick Harper.

Richard Sharpe is described as tall and thin and scarred from years of battle. The uniform he wears, old and faded, bears the insignia for the rank of major, but the last time Sharpe was in the military he held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Harper is described as extremely obese. While Sharpe is criticizing Harper for his weight and appearance, this banter is just for amusement, and the two men have known each other a long time. In fact, the narrator states that Harper had been Sharpe's sergeant for most of the French wars, and there is no one Sharpe would rather have helping him in a fight.

The men are waiting for some British soldiers to find enough mules for a ride into the interior of the island. Sharpe and Harper observe that while there are British flags and British soldiers, the island is not part of Britain. It is an island maintained and administered by the East India Company. After the mules arrive, the men begin their journey inland. Along the way, Sharpe and Harper discuss all that they see.

When the men on mules arrive at a house at the interior of the island, Sharpe observes that many of the soldiers around the house do not wear the red uniforms of British soldiers. In fact, they wear the blue uniforms of the French army that Sharpe fought until five years earlier. It is revealed that the island is Saint Helena and the men are going to visit Napoleon Bonaparte.

After the mules are gathered, the men ride to the house where Napoleon is confined. Once in the house, Sharpe thinks about how five years earlier in 1815 both he and Harper had been involved in Napoleon's defeat. They are told repeatedly by Napoleon's servants that they can meet Napoleon only if they agree to address him as "Your Majesty." When the men are ushered into a room, they see and meet Napoleon. Napoleon speaks to the Spanish soldiers, mainly Colonel Ruiz. Eventually Napoleon addresses Sharpe, and in the following brief conversation Napoleon learns that Sharpe had fought at Waterloo, the battle that marked Napoleon's defeat. Napoleon takes an interest in Sharpe and asks him and Harper to remain after the Spanish soldiers are dismissed.



During the conversation with Napoleon, Sharpe reveals that he is going to South America to search for a missing Spanish officer. The wife of the missing man has hired Sharpe because she has received no assistance from the Spanish government in finding her husband in Chile. Also during the conversation Sharpe and Napoleon discover that they have a friend in common, Jean Calvet.

Napoleon asks Sharpe if he will deliver a gift to a friend living in Chile. Napoleon says the man is an Englishman. Sharpe agrees.

After the visit with Napoleon is over and after all the men have ridden the mules back to the port, a British Major stops the group. The Major asks Sharpe if Napoleon gave him anything. Sharpe reveals a locket that Napoleon gave him as a personal gift, but Sharpe does not mention that Napoleon gave him another gift to take to a friend in Chile. In fact, Sharpe denies that Napoleon has given him anything else. Napoleon has in fact given Sharpe a framed portrait of Napoleon, and Sharpe is supposed to deliver it to Lieutenant Colonel Charles in Chile. The Major accepts Sharpe's lie, and allows the party to board the *Espiritu Santo* and leave Saint Helena.

Prologue Analysis

The audience receives an introduction to the two main characters and the special relationship between them. The time the characters spend waiting for their transportation, mules, to arrive gives the reader a feel for the setting of the novel, the early nineteenth century.

Of particular significance is the fact that the author waits until many pages into the prologue to reveal the name of the island. Withholding the name of the infamous island, Saint Helena, helps to build the suspense and generate interest in the next section of the prologue, the meeting with Napoleon Bonaparte.

Despite having had numerous close calls with death and having witnessed first-hand things that his contemporaries have merely heard or read about, Richard Sharpe feels intensely nervous before meeting Napoleon. This enables the audience to empathize with Sharpe. While the name Napoleon Bonaparte may not mean much to the average person today, in his time he was every bit as famous as any celebrity today. Indeed, the author states that Napoleon had the most well known face of the time.

When Sharpe is charmed by Napoleon and agrees to take a gift to Chile, the reader might be suspicious of Napoleon's motives, but the reader should have no trouble believing that Sharpe, an otherwise experienced and wise man, agrees to the errand because Sharpe was, as one may say today, "star struck."



Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 1

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 1 Summary

Part one, chapter one opens with Sharpe on his farm in Normandy. A wealthy woman arrives in an expensive carriage. Sharpe recognizes the woman as the Countess of Mouromorto, who he first met many years ago when she was simply Louisa Parker.

While at Sharpe and Lucille's house, Louisa meets Lucille, who Sharpe introduces as the Vicomtesse de Seleglise, and Sharpe's two children, Patrick and Dominique. Louisa assumes Sharpe and Lucille are married, and Sharpe thinks about how he has a wife in London who he cannot afford to divorce.

Soon after arriving and meeting Sharpe's family, Louisa says that the reason she has come is to ask for Sharpe's help in finding her husband. Her husband had been sent to Chile to stop the rebellion against Spanish rule, and he has been reported missing. Neither the rebels or the forces loyal to Spain claim to know what happened to Louisa's husband, Don Blas, also known as the Count of Mouromorto and Captain-General of the Spanish Forces in His Majesty's dominion of Chile.

Sharpe does not want to go to Chile, but Louisa reminds Sharpe that her husband once helped Sharpe. Louisa mentions that she intends to pay Sharpe. Upon hearing that Sharpe will be paid, Lucille mentions the many repairs the farm needs. To Sharpe, it seems like the two women have decided for him that he will go. Lucille suggests that Sharpe write to Patrick Harper in Dublin, Sharpe's oldest friend.

Once the backflash to events at Sharpe's Normandy farm is complete, the chapter picks up with Sharpe and Harper sailing on the *Espiritu Santo* in the Atlantic Ocean. The ship has left Saint Helena and is nearing Cape Horn. The seas are rough, and the Spanish military officers are terribly sick. Sharpe and Harper are not afflicted by seasickness, but they spend a considerable amount of time in their cabin because it is freezing cold on deck. In conversations with the Spanish army officers, Sharpe discusses how the rebel naval forces in Chile are commanded by Lord Thomas Cochrane, a former British Naval hero.

During a walk on deck, Sharpe encounters Captain Ardiles. Sharpe and the captain have a conversation discussing the events in Chile. Captain Ardiles believes that the rebels have killed Don Blas, but Sharpe does not believe that is true since the rebels would have likely bragged about such a victory. Instead, Sharpe believes that forces loyal to Spain betrayed Don Blas.

As the ship nears land, Sharpe learns that once ashore he will have to hire a smaller boat to take him fifteen miles upriver to town.



Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 1 Analysis

The first part of chapter one backtracks to the time when Sharpe first agreed to the errand that placed him and Harper on the route to Chile. It also gives the reader a picture of the wonderful life Richard Sharpe enjoys after having left military service. The reader meets Lucille and the two children she has had with Sharpe.

Of particular importance are some details that might not be noticed. As soon as Lucille decides that Sharpe will go on the voyage, she immediately says that he should write to Patrick Harper in Dublin. This further reinforces the friendship of the two men seen in the opening pages of the novel. Also, the reader might notice that Richard Sharpe's son is named Patrick.

With the back-story mostly complete, the action picks up in the middle of the Atlantic. The most significant elements of this part of the voyage come from the conversations between Captain Ardiles and Sharpe. Captain Ardiles is able to explain the situation in Chile and offers mention of some of the colorful characters who will be introduced in later chapters.



Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 2

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 2 Summary

Sharpe and Harper arrive in Valdivia and meet George Blair, the British Consul. Blair informs them that Don Blas has died and been buried in the town of Puerto Crucero. Blair claims to know many people who were present at the funeral. Sharpe seems doubtful at first, but Blair tries to explain. He says that Don Blas rode ahead of his guard and was ambushed by the rebels. Later some Indians found the body and turned it over to the Spanish authorities.

Slowly Sharpe begins to believe Blair. Sharpe decides that the best thing to do is to return the body to Spain and to Louisa. Blair says that Sharpe will need permits to travel to Puerto Crucero, and he directs Sharpe to visit Captain Marquinez at army headquarters.

While walking to army headquarters, Sharpe and Harper discuss their plans. Sharpe thinks the best thing to do is to have an airtight coffin built so he can transport Dan Blas's corpse back to Spain. He wonders if he will have to travel overland to Puerto Crucero, or if he will be able to go there by ship.

Sharpe and Harper meet Captain Marquinez, who is a polite and formal man. After hearing that Sharpe and Harper have come to investigate the disappearance of Don Blas and that they wish to take his body back to his wife, Captain Marquinez offers to help them secure the permits to travel to Puerto Crucero on the *Espiritu Santo*. Marquinez says that bribes might be required, but he also gives the impression that the matter can be resolved easily.

When George Blair hears how helpful Captain Marquinez was he makes the cryptic and ominous statement, "That means you're in trouble."

That evening there is a heavy rain and Sharpe and Harper stay indoors visiting with Blair. They discuss the situation in Chile. Blair has nothing but contempt for the Spanish authorities. He says they are all corrupt, and that everyone knows that Spain has already lost Chile. Remembering the gift from Napoleon that Sharpe is supposed to secretly deliver, Sharpe asks first about the whereabouts of the American Consul. Blair says that he is away and unavailable. So Sharpe asks about Lieutenant Colonel Charles, the man to whom Napoleon sent the gift. Blair says that Charles is one of "O' Higgins military advisors." Blair explains that many of the rebel combatants are former European military officers.

The following morning Sharpe and Harper are summoned to meet with Captain Marquinez. When Sharpe and Harper arrive, they are ushered to a room where they wait and wait. After hours of waiting with no word from the Captain, Sharpe and Harper give up and return to Blair's home. There they discover that the house is being robbed.



Sharpe and Harper chase the thieves, and Harper is shot. Fortunately the bullet merely grazed Harper's scalp. The thieves escape. That evening Blair returns and upon hearing of the thieves, he says that thievery is very common in Valdivia.

In the morning Captain Marquinez arrives and says that Captain-General Bautista would like to meet Sharpe and Harper.

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 2 Analysis

Immediately upon meeting George Blair, the reader can see what many characters in the novel believe about lawyers and bureaucrats: they are mostly impotent but when they do have real power, they are corrupt and parasitic. At his best Blair offers cynical or cryptic answers to the questions Sharpe asks. At his worst Blair is a crude drunk who offers to let Sharpe and Harper use and sexually abuse the household servants.

The complex nature of the government is further illustrated in the character Captain Marquinez. Marquinez is pleasant and seems to be eager to help on the exterior, but it doesn't take long for Sharpe and Harper and the reader to see that this is just a façade. Blair's remark that Marquinez's offer of assistance really means that Sharpe can expect trouble, becomes apparent very soon. While Sharpe and Harper are waiting to discuss matters with Marquinez, thieves steal all of Sharpe and Harper's belongings.



Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 3

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 3 Summary

When Sharpe and Harper enter the room where Bautista is, they see that he already has a large audience of over twenty military officers. Bautista makes the decisions of a military commander, periodically asking questions of the officers. Bautista asks a few questions of Sharpe regarding his experiences at Waterloo, and then Bautista uses Sharpe's answer to support his boasting that soon he will defeat the rebels. Then Bautista announces that they have caught the thieves that stole Sharpe's belongings and shot Harper.

After Sharpe and Harper examine all of the belongings that Bautista has his men display on a table, Sharpe notices that the portrait of Napoleon, the gift Sharpe was supposed to give to Colonel Charles, is missing. Sharpe decides not to mention the missing portrait. Bautista calls for the two thieves to be brought in shackles. Sharpe looks at the men but doesn't think they are the men he saw running from Blair's house. Bautista takes a hot iron from the fireplace and brands the letter "L" into the men's foreheads. Sharpe notices that Bautista seems to enjoy this sadistic act.

After witnessing the cruel treatment of the alleged thieves, Sharpe and Harper encounter Marquinez, who says he has their travel permits. But instead of sailing on the *Espiritu Santo* to Puerto Crucero, Sharpe and Harper must travel overland. Marquinez offers to travel for part of the following day and treat the men to a luncheon.

After the lunch break, Marquinez and his party turn back, and Sharpe and Harper travel on alone. They talk and agree that the change in travel permits is suspicious, and they suspect Bautista may be planning to kill them. By night they reach a place called Celestial Fort. There they meet Captain Morillo. Morillo had been an admirer of the late Don Blas. Morillo also tells Sharpe and Harper that he suspects that Bautista has ordered one of Morillo's men, Sergeant Dregara, to follow Sharpe and Harper the next day and kill them. Sharpe, Harper, and Morillo develop a plan where Sharpe and Harper will sneak away from the fort long before the other soldiers wake.

Early the next morning, well before dawn, Sharpe and Harper depart. Morillo sees them off and tells them that he has assigned an Indian guide named Ferdinand to take them through a shortcut. All through the rest of the night and the morning, Ferdinand guides Sharpe and Harper through the woods. The next day he leaves them on a road and points the way to Puerto Crucero.

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 3 Analysis

In the narcissistic and sadistic Bautista, the novel gets a true villain. Unlike other characters who might be classified on the villain side of the continuum, Bautista has no redeeming qualities. Bautista delights in causing human misery.



Receiving permits to travel overland but not by sea immediately make Sharpe and Harper suspicious. The most likely explanation is that Bautista intends to have them killed. This suspicion is later confirmed by Captain Morillo. Now Sharpe is even more certain that Bautista had something to do with Don Blas's disappearance or death.

While thinking about the home he left in Dublin, Harper thinks about his four children, and the reader learns that one of his sons is named Richard. This means that Sharpe and Harper each have sons named after the other.



Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 4

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 4 Summary

Sharpe and Harper arrive in Puerto Crucero and present the permit from Bautista to the local commander, Major Suarez. While Major Suarez is preparing lodging for Sharpe and Harper, the two visit the church where Don Blas is buried. After finding his grave marker inside the church, Sharpe and Harper break open the floor and dig. The church is filled with the odor of decay, and while Sharpe and Harper stand wondering how to deal with the stench, many armed men burst into the church.

Sergeant Dregara, Major Suarez, and many troops approach Sharpe and Harper. Dregara wants to kill them immediately, but Suarez says he has other orders. Sharpe and Harper are imprisoned for six days.

Once Sharpe and Harper are removed from their imprisonment, they are led to a large room where many troops, Captain-General Bautista, and Consul Blair wait. Bautista produces the portrait that was stolen while Sharpe and Harper were in Valdivia. He shows Sharpe where a message written in code has been inserted into the frame. Bautista accuses Sharpe of trying to get a message to the rebels. Sharpe denies this accusation, and Bautista tells Sharpe to look out the window. Sharpe sees Ferdinand tied to a post in front of a cannon. Bautista gives the order, and Ferdinand is blown apart.

As punishment for trying to collaborate with the rebels, Sharpe and Harper are exiled from Chile. Bautista orders that they must leave on the *Espiritu Santo* immediately, and he orders Captain Ardiles to force them into hard labor all during the voyage back to Europe.

The leader of the seamen, Balin, orders Sharpe to surrender his fine coat, and Sharpe pretends to comply before he savagely beats Balin and takes his knife. Harper also strikes a seaman and takes his knife. Sharpe and Harper have demonstrated that they cannot be bullied, and they take a moment to discuss the situation. Sharpe believes that the message was from Napoleon to Colonel Charles. Harper says that if the message was from Napoleon, then he must have also tried to send the message with many other people. Both men fear what could happen if Napoleon ever escaped from Saint Helena.

Part 1: Bautista, Chapter 4 Analysis

Chapter four confirms that Bautista intended to kill Sharpe, but it also reveals that Bautista no longer needs to kill Sharpe. In discovering the coded letter, Bautista has found all that he needs in order to be rid of Sharpe for good. There is absolutely no excuse for Sharpe being in possession of such a letter. If it is a letter intended for the Chilean rebels, then Bautista may have found proof that the British are secretly supporting the rebels. If the letter is from Napoleon, then the implications are more



severe because few will believe that Sharpe did not know he transported such a letter. Sharpe is fortunate to escape Chile alive after the discovery of the letter.

When Blair, the British Consul, could have spoken up in Sharpe's favor, he declined to do so and even agreed with Bautista's accusations of Sharpe. Blair has proven to be useless and even despicable.

Again Bautista demonstrates his love of sadism when he has Ferdinand shot with a cannon. This method of execution is beyond overkill. It is horrific. Bautista knows that Ferdinand's people believe that it is important for a man's body to stay intact after death in order to get to the afterlife. So for an added element of cruelty, Bautista ensures that there will be no body at all.

After Sharpe and Harper are sentenced to hard labor aboard the *Espiritu Santo*, the reader witnesses an act that shows how Sharpe was able to survive so many years of war. During the fight with Balin, Sharpe demonstrates some brutal tendencies, not at all what most readers expect to see in a hero. Sharpe's behavior is devoid of any kind of chivalry as he stomps a man who is already down. Even after it is obvious that the man no longer presents a threat, Sharpe continues to stomp Balin, breaking his nose, ribs and fingers. This graphic violence pales in comparison to what follows in later chapters.



Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 1

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 1 Summary

While sailing south, the *Espiritu Santo* encounters a damaged American whaler. Captain Ardiles orders his crew to pull alongside the damaged ship and offer assistance. Just as Captain Ardiles begins to suspect that the whaling ship is not what it appears, a battle breaks out. The whaling ship is full of rebels, and they wage battle on the crew of the *Espiritu Santo*.

Sharpe quickly decides to join the battle on the side of the rebels. The battle is long and bloody. After the rebels win, Sharpe and Harper meet Thomas Cochrane, Admiral of the Chilean Navy.

The *Espiritu Santo* is badly damaged, and Cochrane orders his men to do everything possible to keep the ship from sinking. The ship is able to sail slowly. Cochrane visits with Sharpe and Harper, and he reveals his plan. Sharpe and Harper are shocked to learn that Cochrane intends to sail immediately to Valdivia. Sharpe believes Cochrane must be insane to attempt to capture Valdivia with a damaged boat and a wounded crew.

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 1 Analysis

In conversations with Captain Ardiles, Sharpe discovers that while Ardiles may have little patience or understanding for the niceties demanded by civilians and government officials, he cares about the men under his command. Sharpe has a great deal of respect for Ardiles. When Ardiles asks which side Sharpe will take if the rebels are encountered, Sharpe is honest and says that he will side with the rebels. Sharpe knows that this means he may be killed if the rebels are sighted.

The surprising and ingenious way that Cochrane tricks the crew of the *Espiritu Santo* means that Sharpe is not killed and able to join the rebel forces. This trickiness is something the reader will see in Cochrane time and time again. He never seems to run out of tricks, and despite who the tricks are aimed at, it is impossible not to like Cochrane. Also significant about the manner in which Cochrane fights is that he seems much more like a swashbuckling pirate than a decorated naval commander. It is this tendency toward the unconventional that has made Cochrane such a formidable military opponent, but also made him incompatible with civilized society and rigid rules.

With the first meeting between Sharpe and Cochrane, the reader gets an introduction to what Cochrane thinks of lawyers. Cochrane will repeatedly rant about useless lawyers throughout the remainder of the novel. Also, Cochrane is one of the many characters who recognize the names Richard Sharpe and Patrick Harper.



The author goes to great effort to describe early nineteenth century naval warfare in all its gruesome detail. Even Sharpe, who is a veteran of countless land battles, is horrified. Rather than focus on the glorified and romanticized tales of heroics on the high seas, the author describes the blood soaked decks full of crushed and disemboweled bodies.



Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 2

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 2 Summary

Cochrane's rebels and the captured crew of the *Espiritu Santo* work to keep the ship from sinking. Even Sharpe and Harper take turns operating the bilge pumps. While the crew works endlessly to keep the ship from sinking, Sharpe and Cochrane have the opportunity to talk. Cochrane had been a Naval officer for the British and even a member of parliament. But his reckless and impulsive ways got him into trouble with the British government. Cochrane came to Chile to fight as a paid naval officer.

So far the rebel Chilean government has had difficulty paying Cochrane. In fact, they are so far behind in paying Cochrane, that many in the rebel government wish for a way to avoid paying at all. This is the reason Cochrane believes the rebel government has ordered him to attack Valdivia. They know it is an impossible task. If Cochrane refuses, they can dismiss him and refuse to pay. If he attempts to take Valdivia, he will most certainly be captured or killed. Either way, the rebel government can avoid paying the debt.

Sharpe tells Cochrane that he does not believe Valdivia can be taken, but Cochrane says he plans to rendezvous with his flagship, the *O' Higgins*, and use the two ships together. Again Sharpe says that it cannot be done, so Cochrane says that perhaps he will consider attacking Puerto Crucero instead. Sharpe feels slightly relieved, and he says that Puerto Crucero will also be difficult. But Sharpe also says that he would like to go back to Puerto Crucero. Cochrane asks why, and Sharpe says that he would like to retrieve Don Blas's body. Cochrane appears shocked at this answer, and Sharpe observes that Cochrane acts strangely when the two discuss Don Blas.

During the next few days, the *Espiritu Santo* is closer to sinking. All of the stored food has been damaged or consumed. Most aboard have lost hope. Then several sailors spot another ship far away. For a while many fear that it could be a Spanish ship. But it is the *O' Higgins*, the rebel flagship. When the two ships meet, the wounded are transferred to the *O' Higgins*, and the *Espiritu Santo* takes on extra crew and extra pumps.

Now with two ships, Cochrane insists on attacking Puerto Crucero. Sharpe tries to tell Cochrane about the fortresses and cannon he saw while in Puerto Crucero, but Cochrane laughs and says he truly is the devil the Spanish fear.

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter provides the opportunity for the reader to get to know Cochrane, a figure we have heard about and who so much of the rest of the novel depends. During the time that crews are frantically working to keep the *Espiritu Santo* from sinking, Cochrane



and Sharpe have time to talk. And aside from Cochrane's plan to assault Valdivia, which Sharpe believes is suicidal, the two have time to discuss Cochrane's worldview.

Cochrane has a definite view of the world. Some may argue that it is overly simplistic, but all must agree that Cochrane surely believes it. Cochrane sees the world as inhabited by two types of people: those that do, and those that say. Cochrane sees men like himself and Sharpe among those that do. He sees those that have ordered him to take Valdivia as those that say, and it would be fair to claim that Cochrane sees these types of people as useless.

Repeatedly during these discussions, Sharpe reminds Cochrane of the heavy fortifications at Valdivia Harbor. Cochrane counters by saying that he has no choice. He has been ordered to take Valdivia, and if he does not that could give the Chilean government the excuse it needs not to pay him for the services he has already provided. After the Espiritu Santo rendezvous with the O' Higgins, Cochrane settles on a plan to attack Puerto Crucero instead of Valdivia. The ease with which Cochrane changes his mind leaves the reader wondering if he hadn't planned to take Puerto Crucero all along.

Other actions of Cochrane are somehow telling yet not revealing. Cochrane is acutely interested in hearing about and talking about Napoleon Bonaparte, but he acts strangely uninterested when the subject of Don Blas arises. The reader gets the sense that perhaps Cochrane knows more than he admits and that this behavior could be a form of foreshadowing.



Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 3

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 3 Summary

The badly damaged Espiritu Santo sails toward Puerto Crucero, followed by the O' Higgins. Cochrane has devised a plan for attacking the fortified port. The first part of his plan involves getting the Espiritu Santo into the port and getting his fighting sailors and marines off the ship before the Spanish troops realize that the ship is in the control of the rebels.

The Espiritu Santo flies the Spanish flag, and the damage to the ship is obvious. The crew of the O' Higgins have made alterations to their ship to also make it appear that it has been in a battle. Long before arriving in Puerto Crucero, the ships will begin firing their cannons, but intentionally missing each other. The Spanish observers in the fortifications high above the port will believe they see the Espiritu Santo and the O' Higgins in battle. They will believe that the Espiritu Santo is trying to escape to the protection of the harbor, and they will try to help by shooting only at the O' Higgins.

The second part of Cochrane's plan involves his forces once on land. After leaving the Espiritu Santo, they will have to capture the citadel before the Spanish forces realize they have been tricked. If the rebels don't capture Puerto Crucero immediately, the Spanish forces will have time to put infantry in place guarding the narrow passage up to the town, and the rebel forces will be defeated.

The first part of Cochrane's plan works well. The Spanish forces see what they believe is running naval battle, and they train all of their guns on the O' Higgins, which is at first careful to remain out of range. The Espiritu Santo, still flying the Spanish flag, races to dock, and all aboard hope that the tide is high enough for the ship to make it all the way to land. An American warship is in the harbor, and the O' Higgins maneuvers behind it. The Spanish gun crews will not fire near the American ship and risk hitting a vessel of a neutral country. Just as the Espiritu Santo reaches land, Cochrane orders the Spanish flag lowered and the rebel flag raised. The fighting sailors and marines leap from the Espiritu Santo and rush toward the fortress.

Sharpe and Harper fight alongside Major Miller, who is in command of the marines. They reach the narrow passageway leading up to Puerto Crucero, and the fight intensifies. The fight is bloody and horrific. Men are shot with pistols, rifles, and cannon, and some fighting is close-quarters with swords. Many of the rebel forces have been killed as they near the top of the narrow passage. Just as it seems that the rebels will reach the top, the Spanish forces gather, and the Spanish troops are able to use rifle fire to keep the rebels from advancing any farther. All seems lost. Even Sharpe and Harper believe that they will surely die.

But Cochrane, who has joined the rebel troops on land, shouts for everyone to stay put and try to remain patient. All around rebel forces are being killed from the Spanish rifle



fire, but still Cochrane yells for his men to remain in place. A huge explosion seems to tear apart the fortification walls. Sharpe looks back to the harbor and sees that the O' Higgins has taken advantage of the Spanish forces focus on the land troops. The O' Higgins has left the protection of the American warship and moved into the harbor so that the ship's cannons are facing the fortress. The O' Higgins fires barrage after barrage until the rebel troops on land are able to break through to Puerto Crucero.

Once the rebel forces break free to the top, the rest of the Spanish defenders flee. After the last of the fighting is complete, Sharpe and Harper are glad to have survived. Harper says that he is tired, and Sharpe says they can get plenty of rest after they've retrieved Don Blas's body from the church.

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 3 Analysis

The rebel forces embark on Cochrane's plan, which Sharpe believes is hopeless. As in all battle scenes, the author describes in vivid details the horrors of warfare. There is nothing valiant or glamorous in this fighting. It is brutal and bloody. In one telling instance, even a ten-year-old boy is killed in the fighting, and based on the lack of reaction from the adult combatants, this sort of occurrence must not have been in the least unusual.

Just when all seems lost, when the rebel forces are pinned down by Spanish infantry and have no hope of victory or escape, another element of Cochrane's plan surfaces and saves the rebels. Once again it seems that Sharpe and Harper have reached the end of their quest and they can complete their mission. But just as Cochrane's complex plan demonstrated that perceived endings can be deceiving, the end of Sharpe and Harper's mission may yet be far in the future.



Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 4

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 4 Summary

When Sharpe and Harper enter the church, they find that the grave has been repaired since they last tried to exhume the body. Using the same shovels and pry bars, they try to open the grave only to discover that it has been filled with cement. Harper strains to swing a sledge hammer to break up the rock. Cochrane joins Sharpe and Harper, and while Harper tries to break the stone, Cochrane tells the two how pleased he is with the outcome of the attack on Puerto Crucero. He also takes the opportunity of being inside a church to share some of his thoughts on Catholicism in very colorful language.

After Cochrane becomes aware of the difficulties Sharpe and Harper are encountering in trying to reopen the grave, he orders some prisoners to assist in the effort. Major Suarez and two other Spaniards begin digging. While they dig, Sharpe asks who filled in the grave with cement, and Suarez answers that Bautista ordered the task before he left Puerto Crucero. Sharpe also asks Suarez about the details concerning Don Blas's death. Suarez answers that he does not know much except that after Don Blas's disappearance, many parties were sent to search for him. Ultimately it was Captain Marquez who discovered the body.

When the Spanish prisoners finally reach the coffin the stench and their superstitions prevent them from opening the coffin. Cochrane jumps into the grave to assist. Sharpe also assists, and when Sharpe pulls aside the shroud covering the corpse, the men are shocked that the coffin does not contain Don Blas. Instead it holds rocks and a decomposed dog.

The men speculate about why the coffin holds a dog instead of Don Blas. The most likely explanation seems to be that because of the pressure from Spain, Bautista thought it best to report that Don Blas had died and been buried in the church rather than to report that his body had never been found. In order to fake the funeral and burial, Bautista and Marquez needed only a heavy coffin that emitted a foul stench.

Cochrane notes that Sharpe's quest to find Don Blas is likely now futile, so he tries to convince Sharpe to join him in an upcoming attack on Valdivia. Sharpe refuses. He says that he wants to be forever finished with fighting and that his only remaining task is to find Don Blas. Still, Cochrane persists. And Sharpe continually refuses.

In Cochrane's persistent effort to get Sharpe to join his forces, he says that Sharpe did not believe that the capture of Puerto Crucero was possible. Sharpe agrees and says that it worked only because Cochrane used a trick. Cochrane admits that he has another trick in store for Valdivia. He mentions that the two Spanish ships carrying troops and cannon for Colonel Ruiz's forces are expected soon. Cochrane plans to disguise the *Espiritu Santo*, which he has renamed the *Kitty* after his wife, and the *O' Higgins* to resemble the two expected Spanish ships. Cochrane believes this will allow



his forces to get past the many fortresses and guns guarding the port closest to Valdivia.

The night before Sharpe and Harper intended to ride out of Puerto Crucero in search of Don Blas's body, they get some unexpected news. A Spanish soldier claims to have information regarding Don Blas. When the soldier, Marcos, is brought before Sharpe and Cochrane, he says that he had been stationed in Valdivia and knew members of the cavalry troop that guarded Valdivia. He says that Don Blas vanished during a trip from Valdivia to Puerto Crucero. He also says that the commander of the cavalry had left Valdivia a Captain and returned a Colonel. Marcos also tells of a mysterious prisoner that is being kept in the Angel Tower in Valdivia. The Angel Tower hasn't been used in many years. Only Bautista has a key, and only Bautista visits the prisoner. Marcos claims that he once saw the prisoner, and the prisoner was Don Blas.

Sharpe, Harper, and Cochrane contemplate the implications of this new information. They understand that it means that Sharpe and Harper will have to join Cochrane in his attack on Valdivia.

Part 2: Cochrane, Chapter 4 Analysis

When Sharpe asks Cochrane why he did not reveal his plan to have the O' Higgins shell the fort, Cochrane answers that when one has an ace up one's sleeve it is best to keep it hidden until ready to use it. In other words, Cochrane believes that if his men had known that he had one last trick in store, they might not have fought as hard because they expected Cochrane to save them. This is a significant element of Cochrane's character. He seems to keep secrets from everyone, even—and sometimes especially—from his allies.

Just when all seemed to be neatly wrapped, Sharpe and Harper discover that they are no closer to finding Don Blas than before they arrived in Chile. All during the time Sharpe and Harper worked to excavate the grave, Cochrane has been trying to convince Sharpe to join him in his planned assault of Valdivia. Sharpe continually reminds Cochrane that he came to Chile to find Don Blas, not to get involved in the rebellion.

When Marcos tells the story of seeing a prisoner at Angel Tower, it seems that Sharpe and Cochrane's goals remain intertwined.

It's not just in the descriptions of battle that the author strives for accurate historical detail. Marcos's open and aggressive scratching of his genital lice is a shocking and vivid picture of the hygienic standards of the time.



Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 1

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 1 Summary

Cochrane calls a meeting where he explains his plan to capture Valdivia. Work is continuing on the O' Higgins and the Espiritu Santo, which has been renamed the Kitty. The sailors are disguising the ships to look like the cargo freighters that are carrying guns and troops to reinforce the Spanish. Cochrane's plan to capture Valdivia is very similar to the plan he used to capture Puerto Crucero. The two ships will be allowed to enter the harbor, and then the rebel troops will take the forts guarding the port.

Sharpe doesn't like Cochrane's plan because he doesn't believe it will work twice. He thinks the Spanish will be expecting a trick and will take extra precautions. Sharpe names several likely things that could ruin Cochrane's plan. Cochrane says he is willing to consider suggestions, so Sharpe suggests that rather than go directly into the port, groups of men should be landed on a nearby beach, then they can attack the fortresses from the land. Cochrane considers the idea but decides to stick to his original plan.

When the ships finally sail, the O' Higgins leads the way. Many don't believe the Kitty is seaworthy, so to boost confidence in the ship, Cochrane decides to travel to Valdivia on the Kitty. To remain hidden from Spanish forces, the two ships sail without any lights. The O' Higgins burns one small light in the stern so that the crew of the Kitty can follow and stay close.

The two ships arrive at their destination before sunset. The Spanish forces see them and use signal flags to send messages. The crews of the O' Higgins and the Kitty don't know how to answer the questions the Spanish send, but they know that the two ships are silhouetted against the setting sun, so they simply hoist a string of signal flags and hope for the best. The Spanish cannons don't fire, and the ships' crews are briefly happy and believe they will be able to easily sail into the harbor. Then they see a small boat coming to meet the two ships.

Cochrane yells to his men to speak only Spanish, and only men wearing Spanish uniforms are allowed on deck. When the boat arrives, a Spanish captain asks a series of questions. Most of the time Cochrane guesses at answers and his Spanish-speaking crewman shouts the answers to the captain in the small boat. The captain in the small boat isn't satisfied with the answers, and he says he will need to board the ships. Cochrane tells his crewman to say that the ships are carrying sick men. The ship hoists the flag that signals that yellow fever is on board.

The captain of the small boat instructs the two ships to drop anchor and wait until morning, when doctors will be sent to visit the ships. Cochrane is saddened by this event, and he believes his plan has been defeated. Cochrane is thinking about whether to try to rush into the harbor, whether to obey the order to anchor, or whether to sail away from the area and give up on the attack. Rushing into the harbor isn't possible



now or after dark when there will be a moon. Whether to drop anchor and stay or whether to leave doesn't seem to matter now that the Spanish are suspicious and the element of surprise has been lost.

Sharpe reminds Cochrane of his idea to land men on the beach and then take the fortifications by land. He says that if the Spanish see the ships drop anchor, they will believe the ships are obeying orders. Cochrane is overjoyed. He orders the ships to drop anchor and for preparations to begin for taking men ashore. He also orders that the ships be positioned in such a way as to hide the lowering of the longboats.

All seems to be going well until the wind shifts and moves the ships. This reveals the assembling of the longboats to the gun crews in the fort. The gun crews open fire, and two rounds immediately slam into the Kitty.

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 1 Analysis

The conclusion of the chapter seems to indicate that Cochrane's trickiness and his luck have run out. Despite his optimism and daring, the Spanish forces have caught onto the ruse, and they have opened fire on the two ships that are virtually helpless under the massive array of Spanish artillery.

This is significant because it seems to indicate that Sharpe's urging for caution and prudence has proven to be the better course that Cochrane's reckless abandon. Perhaps Cochrane began to believe the rumors that he was a devil and could not be killed.



Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 2

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 2 Summary

When the cannon rounds slam into the Kitty, Cochrane shouts for the men to immediately get into the longboats. Round after round strikes the Kitty. The O' Higgins attempts to return fire at the forts, but the range is too great. The Kitty suffers a great deal of damage, and the carnage is great. Sharpe shouts for Harper, and then he remembers that Harper had gone to get something to eat, and that he was in the area of the ship where the first rounds struck. Sharpe fights his way through panicked seamen shouting for Harper. When Harper finally answers, Sharpe says that the two should meet on shore.

The trip to the beach in the longboats is treacherous. In addition to the danger from the cannon fire, Spanish infantry have gathered on the beach, and they fire muskets at the longboats. Periodically the longboats get caught in seaweed. And for those longboats that survive the trip to the beach, there is one final obstacle in the form of rough breakers.

On shore Sharpe expects that all of the men will be destroyed by the infantry on the beach, but he is surprised to see that the infantry flees with hardly a fight. Sharpe and Harper reunite, and all of Cochrane's surviving men, around 250, gather on the beach. Before Cochrane can give an order to storm the fort, more infantry troops fire muskets from the fort and trap all of Cochrane's forces.

Sharpe asks Cochrane to give him a group of men and let him lead an attack around to the other side of the fort. Sharpe leads the group of men, including Harper, and along the way he thinks about the situation. There are five forts on this side of Valdivia Harbor, but all it will take to finish off Cochrane's men on the beach is a mere couple hundred of Spanish infantry. If Sharpe and his group can capture just the one castle nearest the rebels, they can hold out against the other forts until the rebel naval forces can mount a rescue. Sharpe and his men have to take the fort before the rest of the Spanish infantry gets into position.

On the way around to the other side of the fort, Sharpe and the men encounter a wooden fence. Sharpe tells Harper to have some men disassemble part of the fence so it can be used as a ramp when they reach the fort. In the final one hundred yards to the fort, Sharpe and his men are spotted by a sentry who alerts other soldiers. Before the Spanish soldiers can do much damage to Sharpe's assaulting force, all of Sharpe's rebel soldiers are inside the fort, and again the Spanish flee.

Sharpe cannot believe how easily the Spanish troops give up. The fleeing troops head for another fort. Before he realizes it, Sharpe and his men are also running toward the second fort. Cochrane and his forces, freed from the beach, are joining the fight. The



second fort falls just as easily. Sharpe watches as Cochrane and his men take a third and a fourth fort.

After the fight as Sharpe and Harper are resting, Sharpe receives a message from Cochrane. The following morning, Cochrane intends to bombard the remaining Spanish positions around the harbor in order to let the O' Higgins and the Kitty into the harbor. After all of the harbor defenses are neutralized, Cochrane intends to go upriver to attack Valdivia.

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 2 Analysis

Where Cochrane's guile and strategy ran short, his luck compensated. Sharpe and Harper are absolutely astounded at how easily the Spanish forces give up the fight. This is significant because it illustrates something Cochrane has known all along: that perception of reality is every bit as important as reality itself. The demoralized Spanish forces believe that Cochrane's rebel force cannot be defeated, so they retreat. Despite hugely outnumbering the rebel forces and having every possible advantage, the Spanish troops believe they have lost so they accept defeat.

Cochrane's character is the polar opposite of the Spanish troops who give up the fight. Time and time again Cochrane has found himself in situations where any rational person would have acknowledged defeat. But because Cochrane wants victory, he simply refuses to acknowledge the facts. Often he has said that his plans work because they defy logic. Sharpe's and Harper's way of thinking seems to lie somewhere in the middle of these two positions. Sharpe and Harper fight because, though they often believe the situation is hopeless, they have nothing to lose if defeat occurs, but they have much to gain with the slim chance of victory.



Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 3

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 3 Summary

The O' Higgins and the Kitty sail into Valdivia Harbor, but it hadn't been necessary to bombard the forts remaining in Spanish control. Cochrane had ordered one shot fired, and though the shot did no damage, all of the remaining Spanish surrendered.

Some of the Spanish troops board longboats and begin traveling upriver toward Valdivia. Cochrane and Sharpe know they must stop them from joining the remaining troops defending Valdivia. Sharpe and Harper go with a crew of one boat, and Cochrane joins the crew of another. The rebel crews row furiously to overtake the fleeing Spanish troops. After rounding a bend in the river, Sharpe is surprised to see that all of the Spaniards in longboats have stopped. He is even more surprised to see that they wish to surrender.

Once Sharpe steps ashore he sees that a group on horseback approaches. None of the riders are wearing military uniforms. When the group arrives at Sharpe's position, the leader of the group, Manuel Ferrara, Alcalde of Valdivia, tells Sharpe that the men of the town have come to surrender and to plead with him to avoid more violence. Sharpe notices that George Blair is in the group. Blair tries to greet Sharpe, but Sharpe throws Blair off of the horse and mounts it himself. He then tells the alcalde to give his horse to Harper. When Cochrane's boat arrives, the rebel forces take the rest of the horses, and the group rides toward Valdivia.

The group rides for two hours before reaching Valdivia. Once again, the defenders are readily willing to surrender. Very few Spanish troops have the will to fight. Once Sharpe passes through a doorway into the inner courtyard of the citadel, he sees that a gun crew is aiming a cannon at the door he just passed through. Sharpe notices that Captain Marquinez is in command of the crew, and Sergeant Dregara is about to light the fuse. Sharpe kills Dregara, but Marquinez flees and runs through a door into Angel Tower. Sharpe tries to follow, but the door is locked and reinforced with iron. Harper and Sharpe point the cannon at the door to Angel Tower. The cannon obliterates the door, and Harper and Sharpe are able to enter Angel Tower. A stairway leads up to a trap door, and Sharpe and Harper cautiously climb the stairs.

Sharpe and Harper hear an unusually loud gunshot and then notice blood seeping through the ceiling above. Sharpe runs up the remaining stairs and passes through the trap door. He finds a room with extravagant furnishings of rugs and furs. He also finds Marquinez and Bautista. Bautista has shot himself. Marquinez sits on a bed pointing a pistol at his own head. Sharpe stops Marquinez from killing himself and asks many questions. Marquinez says that he and Bautista had been lovers, and he admits to burying the dog at the church in Puerto Crucero, but he swears that he has no idea of the whereabouts of Don Blas.



Also in the room where Bautista killed himself are many boxes, and all are filled with treasure such as gold and pearls. Harper takes the time to fill his pockets, but Sharpe is intent on finding Don Blas. Sharpe orders Marquinez to direct him to Bautista's office. Once he reaches Bautista's office, he finds Cochrane at a desk examining papers. One of the papers Sharpe recognizes as the coded message that had been hidden in the portrait of Napoleon.

Sharpe asks Cochrane if a Colonel Charles really exists, and Cochrane claims that such a man truly exists, but he was merely the person who was supposed to receive a message intended for Cochrane. Cochrane then admits that it has been his goal to help Napoleon escape so he could come to the Americas and create a new empire. Cochrane needed to capture Valdivia so that Napoleon would have a base of operations.

When questioned about Don Blas, Cochrane says that Don Blas is well, and that he has been held on a faraway island all this time. In fact, Cochrane says that he has held Don Blas in the same group of islands where Alexander Selkirk was once marooned. Alexander Selkirk was the man upon whom the character Robinson Crusoe was based.

Cochrane had to keep Don Blas prisoner because he had tried to convince Don Blas to betray Spain and join the rebel forces. Don Blas refused, and Cochrane had to prevent him from revealing the secret plans. The only options were to kill Don Blas or to take him prisoner. Cochrane invented the story that Marcos told about Don Blas being held in Angel Tower and recruited Marcos to tell the story because Cochrane needed Sharpe's help in taking Valdivia.

Cochrane tries to convince Sharpe to join his forces, but Sharpe says he is finished with battle, and he just wants to go back home to Lucille and the children. Cochrane understands but says that until enough time has passed that he is certain his plan to rescue Napoleon is underway, he will have to keep Sharpe in Valdivia. Cochrane then promises to bring Don Blas to Valdivia and then later let them sail back to Europe together.

Sharpe says that Cochrane will not be able to rescue Napoleon from Saint Helena, and Cochrane says he has already set a plan into action. He will send the O' Higgins to Saint Helena. There they will switch a double for Napoleon, and bring the real Napoleon Bonaparte to South America.

Part 3: Vivar, Chapter 3 Analysis

Until the very end Sharpe and Harper are, like the rest of the characters and the reader, unaware of the complexities of Cochrane's plans and actions. This final chapter does resolve all unanswered questions, yet even in the final pages the adventure of Sharpe and Harper is far from over. From the very beginning of the voyage Sharpe and Harper have been pawns in other people's games. First Louisa asks Sharpe to find her husband. Then Napoleon uses Sharpe as a messenger. Once in Chile, Sharpe and



Harper find their situations controlled first by Bautista, then Cochrane. The only person in this long quest who has been honest with Sharpe is Louisa Parker, who knows nothing more than that her husband is missing. All of the other characters who possess knowledge guard it and use it to create obstacles for Sharpe and Harper.

Even in the end of the novel the tale does not end. Sharpe may have refused to be a part of it any longer, but the frightening possibility of Napoleon's release haunts Sharpe as well as the reader.



Epilogue and Historical Note

Epilogue and Historical Note Summary

Cochrane keeps his promise to Sharpe and has Don Blas brought to Valdivia. He also arranges for Sharpe, Harper, and Don Blas to be transported to Europe. The night before their departure, Cochrane entertains Sharpe and Harper and gives them two chests full of coins.

On the voyage home to Europe, Don Blas is depressed, and Sharpe does his best to comfort his friend. On the way, the captain of the ship asks if Sharpe would like to stop in Saint Helena. Sharpe agrees because he would like to know if Cochrane's plan to rescue Napoleon worked.

When the ship docks in Saint Helena, Sharpe again meets Lieutenant Roland Hardacre, the same young man he met the first time in Saint Helena. Sharpe learns that the O' Higgins did indeed arrive in Saint Helena, at about the same time that Napoleon died. Napoleon Bonaparte had died before Cochrane could rescue him.

In the Historical Note section, the author discusses the real Lord Cochrane, Tenth Earl of Dundonald. The author also expresses gratitude to the author of a biography on Cochrane.

Epilogue and Historical Note Analysis

Finally, at the last opportunity, Sharpe and the reader get resolution. The reader also finally gets to meet for the first time the character whose disappearance launched the adventure. In the discussions between Sharpe and Don Blas, one can see something of the theme of a changing world. Don Blas embodies an older code of honor and chivalry. Cochrane illustrates the newer less defined manner of operation where the ends justify the means. Sharpe is like the reader. He understands both worlds, but he isn't willing to join either without exception.

In the final Historical Note, the author acknowledges a debt of gratitude to another writer who produced a biography of the real-life Thomas Cochrane, a man every bit as colorful as the fictional character named after him.



Characters

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Sharpe

Sharpe is the epitome of the aging and battle-scarred warrior. He is described as tall, dark, and scarred. His name is known to all who have any knowledge of the French Wars, and everywhere he and Harper travel in their search for Don Blas, they encounter people who recognize his name.

Despite having spent the time since he left military service five years previously as a farmer, Sharpe has no difficulty transitioning back into the only life he has ever known: the professional soldier. While one does not learn all the details of Sharpe's past, there are a few details that prove that his life has been anything but ordinary. There are subtle references in the book to Sharpe having come from an impoverished background where crime and violence were common. It is apparent that he didn't get his officer's commission because of class status. He was promoted from the enlisted ranks.

Most of the time Sharpe is calm and diplomatic as the unique situations of his mission demand. But when a situation warrants violence, Sharpe can immediately make the shift to ruthless killer. These violent skills do not indicate a cruel streak in Sharpe, but rather are expected in a person who has been a professional soldier and survived countless battles.

Not all of Sharpe's persona can be described in militaristic terms. Throughout the novel he longs to have this mission completed so he can rejoin his family in Normandy. He misses his family so bad that virtually anything and everything reminds him of home.

Regimental Sergeant Patrick Harper

Harper is larger than life, literally. He was always a big man, but the sedentary years since he left military service have allowed him to achieve obesity of monumental proportions. And while he may fit the stereotype of big and jolly when appropriate, he is also a fierce warrior. With his first introduction, the reader learns that there is no one else in the world that Sharpe would rather have at his side in a fight.

Harper has known Sharpe for many years and was with him all through the French Wars. Everything about Harper can be described as big. The weapons he carries are gigantic, such as his seven-barreled gun. Harper typically has a huge appetite and can eat foods that would make most people wretch. And as Sharpe observes, Harper likely drinks most of the stout beer served in his pub in Dublin.

Aside from his immense size, the most notable quality about Harper is his perennial upbeat sense of humor. Even in the direst of situations, Harper finds humor. Once, while pinned down during an assault on a castle and while facing certain death, Harper joked with Sharpe about the number of candles his wife purchases and how in all the



candles she lights in her religious ceremonies she never thought to light one and ask for Harper to be protected in a fight.

Harper offers the perfect balance to the outwardly appearing rigid Richard Sharpe.

Thomas Cochrane, Tenth Earl of Dundonald

Cochrane, a Scottish nobleman, is the commander of the Chilean Navy. He was once a British naval officer and even a member of parliament, but he was removed from both the navy and Parliament and left England in disgrace. He sells his skills and experience to the Chilean rebels. Despite his command of the rebel navy, Cochrane is certainly no by-the-book officer. In fact, he is more akin to a pirate in his zest for glory, interest in riches, and utter disregard for rules and convention. Cochrane has a brilliant strategic mind, and he puts it to use in finding the most outlandish and unexpected battle plans.

The Spanish troops in Chile believe Cochrane is a devil. They believe he leads a group of demons and that he cannot be killed. Cochrane relishes this attention, and he uses it to his advantage. He believes that many of his daring plans succeed because they are so impossible that the enemy has never bothered to consider them.

Despite his renown and notoriety, Cochrane is not a vain man. Upon first meeting Sharpe, he says that he would prefer to be called Tommy or Cochrane to "My Lord." He seems headstrong and determined not to listen to others at times, but it would be more accurate to say that he has such confidence in himself that he will not be discouraged by doubters.

While Cochrane is guilty of using guile to take advantage of people, he does genuinely like and care about many people. His legendary hatred of lawyers aside, Cochrane seems to like and respect even his enemies.

Thomas Cochrane is such a colorful character that at times he overshadows even the protagonist.

Captain-General Miguel Bautista

Two words best describe this character: narcissism and sadism. Bautista carries out his daily governance of the Spanish colony in front of all of his senior personnel. He holds court because he likes the audience. When he speaks, it is clear that he is in love with his own performance. He demands attention and admiration from his personnel. A favorite way for him to draw attention to himself is at another person's expense. If he can make the soldiers under his command seem inferior, this delights Bautista. The negative aspects of Bautista's character reach an extreme in his obvious sadism. When he brands the two alleged thieves, it is clear that he truly enjoys the event. While everyone else in the room is horrified and sickened, Bautista is aroused.



Bautista has come to his position as supreme commander of the Spanish forces after the disappearance of Don Blas. Many believe that he has had something to do with the Count's absence, perhaps even killing the count himself. Most believe that Bautista is not at all interested in preserving Spanish control of Chile so much as profiting monetarily from the loss of the colony. Bautista is widely feared. The punishment he gives to the Indian guide Ferdinand is the single-most cruel act in all the novel.

Major Miller

Just as Sharpe has a Sergeant Harper, Cochrane has a Major Miller. Miller is the commander of the marine force on Cochrane's naval vessels. Miller is an instantly likable character, very friendly and enthusiastic, much like Sharpe's friend Harper. Miller has such faith and admiration for Cochrane that Miller is absolutely fearless in battle. If Cochrane told Miller to march straight into a wall of fire, Miller would gladly do it, and he would also motivate his marines to fearlessly follow. In addition to being a fearless and fearsome fighter, Miller is a warm and funny man. During the times that Sharpe has a chance to speak with him, Miller has a delightful sense of humor and always sees the bright side of events.

Captain Marquinez

From the very moment that Sharpe first meets this character, Sharpe is suspicious. The character is impeccable in appearance and is always very friendly. Marquinez is the epitome of style, and he has a dazzling smile. But something about Marquinez's smile seems insincere. Early on, it is shown that Marquinez has an extreme fascination with Captain-General Bautista. In fact, Marquinez's interest seems to border on worship. Marquinez plays a pivotal role in several events in both Valdivia and Puerto Crucero. He is the instrument through which Bautista exercises much of his will.

Captain Ardiles

At first Captain Ardiles appears as an angry reclusive man. He avoids all of the passengers on his ship, and when the group meets with Napoleon, Captain Ardiles does nothing to hide his contempt. Ardiles is the only visitor that Napoleon does not present a gift to on his departure. Later, when Sharpe is able to meet Ardiles alone, he sees a military man that cares deeply for his troops and his mission. Ardiles is serious about his mission and the welfare of his troops. He orders constant drills so that the sailors' skills are always at their best. Sharpe sees in Ardiles a man that believes in honor, and Sharpe has a great deal of respect for Captain Ardiles.

Colonel Ruiz

Colonel Ruiz is an artillery officer who Sharpe meets while sailing on the *Espiritu Santo*. Colonel Ruiz is going to Chile to fight the rebels. He foolishly believes that it will be easy



to defeat the rebels once his troops and artillery arrive. During the meeting with Napoleon, most of Napoleon's remarks are directed at Colonel Ruiz because Ruiz is the ranking officer among the Spanish visitors. Ruiz boasts endlessly about how devastating his artillery will be to the Chilean rebels, and Napoleon humors him. But as soon as Ruiz has departed and Napoleon can speak to Sharpe alone, Napoleon says that Ruiz is a fool, and everyone except fools like Ruiz know that the Spanish Empire has collapsed in South America.

Lucille/Vicomtesse de Seliglise

Lucille is Sharpe's companion in Normandy. They have two children together, and they work the farm she owns. She is not married to Sharpe because Sharpe has a wife back in England, and Sharpe is unable to get a divorce. In the brief time that Lucille appears in the novel, one gets a picture of a very practical woman. While Sharpe is hesitating to take Louisa's offer to go find Don Blas, Lucille knows the farm is badly in need of money, so she answers for Sharpe that he will go. It appears that Lucille cares deeply for her husband, and the first comment she makes after saying that Sharpe will take the job is that he must write to Harper immediately.

Louisa Parker/Countess of Mouromorto

This character hires Sharpe to find her husband. She has known Sharpe for a long time. She first met Sharpe when she was known simply as Louisa Parker and was fleeing from war in northern Spain. Later she married the Count of Mouromorto. She continued to be friends with Sharpe, and her husband was Sharpe's friend too. During the wars her husband helped Sharpe, and she hopes that remembering this will help convince Sharpe to go to Chile in search of her missing husband. When Louisa first arrives at Sharpe's home in Normandy, she arrives in an expensive carriage. The Countess of Mouromorto is extremely wealthy.

George Blair

This character is the British Consul in Valdivia. He is an ineffective and corrupt official who is often drunk and abusive to his servants. He has the opportunity to help Sharpe and Harper, but he doesn't want to do anything that might make his job the least bit difficult.

Captain Morillo

This character is a Spanish military officer. He finds out about a plot to kill Sharpe and Harper, and his sense of honor will not allow him to let the plot unfold without trying to prevent it. He tells Sharpe and Harper about the plot and helps them avoid the ambush.



Sergeant Dregara

This character is a Spanish soldier ordered by Bautista to kill Sharpe and Harper. He plans to ambush the two while they travel from Valdivia to Puerto Crucero.

Marcos

This character is a Spanish soldier known only by his first name. After the capture of Puerto Crucero, he tells Sharpe he once saw a prisoner in Valdivia he believes to be Don Blas.

Ferdinand

This character is an Indian guide. He helps Sharpe and Harper avoid the ambush planned by Sergeant Dregara, but this character meets gruesome fate.

Major Suarez

This character is a timid and nervous Spanish military officer in Puerto Crucero. He offers Sharpe and Harper hospitality when they first arrive in Puerto Crucero but quickly helps to apprehend them when Dregara arrives. To this character's credit, he stops Dregara from killing Sharpe and Harper as soon as he finds them.

Balin

This character is a seaman on the Espiritu Santo, and this character is a bully. He makes the fateful and dangerous mistake of starting a fight with Sharpe.

Lieutenant Roland Hardacre

This character appears in the opening and the very end of the novel. He is a British military officer stationed on Saint Helena.

Napoleon Bonaparte

This character is one of the most famous men in history. Since his military defeat at Waterloo five years prior, he has been held in exile on a South Atlantic island called Saint Helena.



Manuel Ferrara

This person is the alcalde, or mayor, of Valdivia. He and many men on horseback ride out to meet Sharpe and Cochrane to beg them to spare Valdivia from violence.

Alexander Selkirk

This character was once shipwrecked on an island far off the coast of Chile. He is the person the fictional character Robinson Crusoe was based upon.

Don Blas Vivar/Count of Mouromorto

The entire adventure revolves around finding this character, but the reader doesn't meet him until the Epilogue. Throughout the entire novel he has been a prisoner on an island far off the western coast of Chile.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles

This character is often mentioned in the novel but never appears. He is a former British military officer fighting for the Chilean rebels, and he is the intended recipient of the portrait Napoleon gives to Sharpe.



Objects/Places

Saint Helena

This island in the South Atlantic is where Napoleon Bonaparte is exiled.

Espiritu Santo/Kitty

This is the name of the sailing vessel, a Spanish frigate, that transports Richard Sharpe away from his home in Normandy. This ship also plays a significant role in battles after it is captured by rebel forces. The ship is renamed the Kitty.

Chile

This is a country on the western coast of South America once ruled by Spain.

Valdivia

This is one of two fortified locations remaining under the control of Spain. Most commanders in the war for Chilean independence see Valdivia as the key to which side controls Chile.

Puerto Crucero

This fortified city is captured by Cochrane and his rebels after Cochrane uses a trick to get past the guns guarding the fort.

Celestial Fort

This is the unofficial name that Spanish troops give to a makeshift wooden fort high in the Chilean hills.

Angel Tower

This tower is at the center of Valdivia's citadel. It has withstood time and earthquakes. Many believe it hasn't been used in a long time, but others believe it holds the answers to some mysteries.



O' Higgins

This is the flagship of the Chilean rebel navy. Cochrane uses both this ship and the Espiritu Santo to defeat the Spanish.

Musket

A musket is single-shot firearm used at the time this novel is set. It must be reloaded after every time it is fired.

Cutlass

This is a sword used by both naval and land forces. Sharpe uses a cutlass after his cavalry sword is stolen.

Cape Horn

The southern tip of South America is noted for its extreme weather. For ocean-going ships, the waters around Cape Horn present some of the world's most treacherous sailing conditions.

Juan Fernandez Islands

These are the group of islands 350 miles off the coast of Chile where Don Blas is confined. These are also the islands where Alexander Selkirk, the real life inspiration for the fictional Robinson Crusoe, was marooned.



Themes

Honor and Convention versus Trickery and Innovation

At the end of the novel, Don Blas says that he would rather not be part of a world where the end justifies the means and no importance is placed on honor if it stands in the way of the end. Much of this novel can be viewed in terms of tradition versus expediency, or honor versus duplicity.

At polar opposites on this issue are the characters Don Blas and Miguel Bautista. To Don Blas, honor is everything. He is honest in all situations, no matter the costs. To Miguel Bautista, honor is a laughable concept. All he cares about are self-interests.

But viewing these two opposites may not be the best way to understand the concept of honor versus expediency. By viewing these two characters as examples, one can oversimplify honor as good and all else as bad or even evil. A better comparison would be honor as practiced by Don Blas and improvisation as seen in the many strategies of Thomas Cochrane.

Cochrane is by no means a "bad man." He understands and even values honor. He feels guilty that he is forced to abduct Don Blas when the man met with him under a flag of truce. It bothers Cochrane that he had to betray the trust of an honorable man, but he chose the action that would further his long-range goal. If asked, Cochrane would surely say that in this case the end justified the means, but it is difficult to imagine that Cochrane would say that the end always justifies the means.

All of the other characters in this novel can be placed along this continuum of honor versus expediency, like all mankind.

Friendship

The theme of friendship is an important element in the novel. This theme is most evident in the example of Richard Sharpe and Patrick Harper, but it is not the only example. Two other notable examples are Thomas Cochrane and Major Miller and the Spanish officers Miguel Bautista and Captain Marquez.

In each of the above examples, the friendship at one time was based on a superior/subordinate dynamic, but in the case of Sharpe and Harper, the friendship has moved well beyond this type of relationship. With Sharpe and Harper there is no boss and no underling. The two men function as trusted equals. Sharpe has a son named Patrick and Harper has a son named Richard. Throughout a large portion of the novel, Sharpe is determined to reclaim a stolen sword mainly because it had been a gift from Harper. And perhaps the clearest indication of Sharpe's feelings toward Harper are demonstrated when the ship comes under fire from the cannons at Valdivia Harbor. Sharpe forgets about everything, including saving himself, until he finds his friend.



The idea of friendship has such significance in this novel, perhaps because so much of the rest of the novel revolves around deception and duplicity. Without the steadfast anchor of friendship, some of the characters might lack any sort of moral ground or boundaries.

People of Action versus People of Words

There is a distinct difference between types of characters in this novel. Unlike other works that divide people according to wealth and social class, in this work, or rather in the characters' ideas on divisions within society, people are separated in terms of action versus inaction. Cochrane says it most vividly when he rants against the lawyers who make a mess of all the good deeds accomplished by men of action, such as Sharpe and himself.

Cochrane's use of the word lawyer should not be misinterpreted as meaning strictly an attorney who operates within a court of law. Cochrane's idea of lawyer, or person of words not deeds, can apply to other characters like George Blair, British Consul. And perhaps Blair is the best example of the ineffectual type of character that the Thomas Cochranes and Napoleon Bonapartes of the world of action despise. As far as some characters, including Sharpe, can see, George Blair accomplishes absolutely nothing. His official responsibility as British Consul is to look after British interests in Chile. He is supposed to help British citizens whenever he can. But Blair's real passion rests in an array of corrupt activities like collecting and spreading gossip and innuendo and staying in a near-constant state of inebriation.

The frustration felt by the characters of action is apparent. What is not so readily apparent is whether Cochrane's binary view is as clear-cut as he presents it. Certainly Cochrane is a man of action, and certainly Blair is an example of the inept parasitic official Cochrane loathes. But not all characters can so easily be classified as one of action or one of inaction. Don Blas is certainly a person of action, but he believes in diplomacy and the rule of law. Sharpe is most often a man of action, but given the choice he would much rather be far from the fray and living peacefully without matters of intrigue and conflict.

Style

Point of View

Sharpe's Devil is narrated in the third person and comes from the perspective of the protagonist Richard Sharpe. The perspective of Sharpe gives the novel its distinct tone and voice. Richard Sharpe is a middle-aged, battle scarred and battle weary man. He has seen every kind of violence early nineteenth century societies could inflict on each other. Sharpe is a man who has been through it all, and he is a man who would rather not be part of the world's tumultuous events any longer. This perspective governs the way Sharpe, the narrator, and the audience understands situations and events.

Because the narrator can access and relay the inner thoughts of Sharpe, his perceptions are that of the reader. And because the reader's perspective is from a middle-aged man who has seen and done everything, this has a dual effect on one's understanding of events. Sharpe has been a life-long professional soldier. When he has to transition from quiet country farmer, he does so with familiarity. And so the reader moves from Normandy to an intrepid adventure on the seas and land, as if one is also a veteran of many years of armed conflict. But this familiarity also gives added impact to the events that surprise Sharpe. When Sharpe is shocked at the ease with which the Spanish forces surrender, the reader also feels relief.

By accessing the inner thoughts of Sharpe but not other characters, the narrator allows one to see the other characters through the discerning and critical eye of a man who has had to rely on his powers of keen observation. In time the point of view allows one to "know" what Richard Sharpe feels, but one can "see" the other characters and their actions.

Setting

The primary setting is determined by the time, and it is this element of the setting that all contemporary readers will find the most unfamiliar. The novel is set two hundred years previous to contemporary early twenty-first century vantage. Because of this, the setting of Sharpe's Devil, like other historical novels that endeavor toward historical accuracy, is of vital importance.

The author uses this element of vital importance in order to draw in the reader. In the opening of the novel, the author does not immediately and explicitly state that the year is 1820. Instead, he gives clues one at a time, slowly teasing the reader's curiosity. First he notes that some men wait for mules. Mules have not been used for transportation in most of the world for a long time. Then the narrator mentions that some warships with sails are moored in a harbor. Again, sailing vessels have not been used for military purposes for many years. Along the way, the narrator mentions specific British military units and specific battles. An astute scholar of history might be able to discern the date



by these clues, but the general reader is left with increasing curiosity. It is not until many pages into the novel that the narrator identifies the name of the island and its most famous resident.

The narrator continues to highlight the differences in time in the novel's different physical settings. The quiet life of a farm in Normandy is vividly detailed and life aboard a sailing vessel in 1820 is also illustrated, as is the scenery of a South American Spanish colony.

Language and Meaning

Despite being set in the early nineteenth century, Sharpe's Devil is presented in contemporary language. This makes the setting and the subject, the adventures of a man two hundred years ago, more accessible to modern readers. And while some may think at first consideration that the use of modern language is inadequate to present a world two hundred years gone, this is not the case with Sharpe's Devil.

In many cases, the names of specific items and practices are kept the same, but in each instance where a modern reader will be unfamiliar with a word or phrase, the author gives an outright definition or enables the reader to understand via context. Few readers besides military historians or fans of historical fiction will know what "heat-shot" is, but the author goes into sufficient detail in describing the practice of heating cannon balls before they are fired at a wooden structure such as a sailing vessel. And the author manages to provide these definitions without intrusive exposition that detracts from progression of the plot.

Perhaps the most striking use of language occurs in the scenes where battles are fought. The narrator makes no effort to conceal the brutal nature of armed conflict. On the contrary, all of the bloody and cruel horrors of violence are vivid and terrifying.

Structure

The structure of Sharpe's Devil is almost entirely linear and chronological. With one exception, the plot moves from beginning to end. The prologue begins and ends on Saint Helena. Part one begins with a backflash to life on Sharpe's Normandy farm and the visit from the countess that brought him and Harper to their present task. The backflash complete and still in the first chapter of part one, the novel picks up with Sharpe and Harper at sea and continues in chronological order all through the Epilogue.

The novel is divided into three parts, named after the principal characters in that section of the novel. In some ways, these characters can also be thought of as Sharpe and Harper's principle obstacles.

Possibly the most notable aspect of the structure is the way the author keeps the action and tension escalating in a nearly unending race to the finish. Time and time again it seems that Sharpe has reached some form of resolution or at least an answer. But in



almost every case, Sharpe discovers that he is far from achieving his goal. Even at the novel's conclusion, the action keeps its breakneck pace. Not until the very last pages, the epilogue, does the reader receive any sort of resolution to the character's lives.

Also important to note in terms of structure is the fact that Sharpe's Devil is a work in a series of novels centering on the adventures of Richard Sharpe. Despite being part of a series and coming later in that series, no knowledge of the earlier novels is required to enjoy and understand Sharpe's Devil.



Quotes

"'You forget,' Cochrane said, 'what the Spaniards say of me. I'm their devil. I work black magic. And in tomorrow's dawn, Sharpe, you'll see how devilish I can be.'" His lordship laughed, and his ship, pumps clattering, limped toward battle." Part 2, Chap. 2, p. 215

"Major Miller smiled confidently at Sharpe. 'A great man, our Tommy, a great man! A hero, Sharpe, like yourself. Cut from the old cloth, poured from an antique mold, sprung from ancient seed, clean hewn from solid oak!'" Part 2, Chap. 3, p. 224

"'You know who crucified our Lord?' he shouted at the Dominican. 'Bloody priests and bloody lawyers! That's who! Not the soldiers! The soldiers were just obeying orders, because that's what soldiers are paid to do, but who gave the orders? Priests and lawyers, that's who! And you're still making your mess on God's earth. Jesus Christ, but I should revenge my Savior by slicing your rancid head off your useless body, you foul poxed son of a whore!'" Part 2, Chap. 4, p. 250

"On board the captured Espiritu Santo the wounded were treated. The surgeon worked on deck, tossing the amputated limbs overboard. A step behind the surgeon was the Espiritu Santo's Chaplain, who gave the final unction to dying seamen. To those who were dying in too much pain the Chaplain gave a quietus with a narrow blade. Once dead, the shriven sailors were sewn into hammocks weighted with roundshot. The last stitch, by custom, was forced through the corpse's nose to make sure they were truly dead." Part 2, Chap. 1, pp. 187-188

"'And I'm Thomas, Tommy, or Cochrane, and not 'my Lord.' I was once a Knight Commander of the Order of Bath till the buggers couldn't stand my company so they turfed me out. I also had the honor of being held in the Fleet prison, and I was once a member of Parliament, and let me tell you, Sharpe, that the company in prison is a damned sight more rewarding than that available in His Fat Majesty's House of Commons which is packed full of farting lawyers.'" Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 189

"He had not seen his friend in over three years and had been shocked when Harper arrived in France with a belly wobbling like a sack of live eels, a face as round as the full moon and legs as thick as howitzer barrels. Sharpe himself, five years after the battle at Waterloo, could still wear his old uniform." Prologue, p. 8

"Vivar brooded. He was a wise man, yet his understanding could not encompass a man who would break his word. 'Is the world changing so much?' he asked Sharpe.

'Yes,' Sharpe said bleakly. 'The war changed it.'

'So that results justify methods?'

'Yes.'

Vivar, cloaked and scarved against the bitter sea wind, paced the brig's small poop.

'Then it's not a world I want a part of.'" Epilogue, p. 353



"'In all history,' he went on, 'can you name one great deed or noble achievement ever done by a lawyer? Can you think of any single thing that any lawyer has ever done to increase human happiness by so much as a smile? Can you think of even one lawyer who could stand with the heroes?'" Part 2, Chap. 4, p. 198

"'If I were in England,' Bautista jiggled the iron in the fire, 'would you think it proper for me to interfere with English justice? This is Chile, Mr. Sharpe, not England. Justice here is what I say it is, and I treat thieves with the certain cure of pan. Exquisite pain!' He pulled the brand free, turned and aimed the bright letter at the second man." Part 1, Chap. 3, p. 108

"They charged. They were men who wanted to revenge a near defeat, and the sound of their vengeance as they scrambled up the shot-mangled steps was bloodcurdling. Somewhere ahead of Sharpe, steel scraped on steel and a man screamed. The top of the stairs was a slaughteryard of broken stone, blood and mangled flesh. A Spanish drummer boy, scarcely ten years old, was curled at the side of the archway, his hands contracting into claws as he died." Part 2, Chap. 3, p. 234

"'You made a bloody fool of me, didn't you?'

Cochrane heard the dangerous bite in Sharpe's voice, and leaned back. 'No, I didn't. I don't think anyone could make a fool of you, Sharpe. I deceived you, yes, but I had to. I've deceived most people here. That doesn't make them fools.'

'And Marcos, the soldier who told the story Vivar being a prisoner in the Angel Tower? You put him up to it?'

Cochrane grinned. 'Yes. Sorry. But it worked! I rather wanted your help during the assault.'" Part 3, Chap. 3, p. 343

"The Rifleman made another grunting noise that might have been translated as sympathy, but was in fact the inadequate sound of a man who never knew how to react properly to such revelations. So many men had died, so many widows still wept and so many children would be forever fatherless that the Rifleman doubted there was a sufficiency of pity for all the war's doings." Prologue, p. 5



Topics for Discussion

Consider the expression "the end justifies the means." Are there characters in the novel who believe this and act accordingly in every situation? Are there other characters who believe that honor and honesty can never be compromised no matter what the situation?

Friendship is an important element to this novel. Sharpe and Harper provide the obvious example, but they are not the only pair of friends. What other pairs of friends are present and how is their relationship similar or different to the relationship between Sharpe and Harper?

Sharpe displays two very different sides. He can be caring and kind in his thoughts of Lucille and his children, and he shows kindness towards Harper. But Sharpe can also be incredibly violent and homicidal. Do any other characters display such radically different traits?

The author places a great deal of importance in presenting accurate historical detail. Where there any specific passages where you learned something about life in the early nineteenth century? Was it a passage where devices like weapons or sailing vessels were described, or was it a passage that detailed the general living conditions?

Many works glorify war and speak more of courage, valor, and glory than carnage and suffering. Can the same be said of Sharpe's Devil? Are there any particular passages that describe war in such a way that make it seem like something horrific and to be avoided at all costs?

Part of the enjoyment in reading a work of fiction comes from getting to know the characters. Pick a specific character besides Sharpe or Cochrane that you would have enjoyed knowing more about. List this character's main traits and mention specific questions regarding this character you would like answered.

Amid all the danger and violence, humor plays an important part in Sharpe's Devil. Pick one specific event where humor was unexpected. Why was this event or words of a character funny? Would it have been as funny if the characters had not been involved in a dangerous or serious situation?