

Skeleton Coast Study Guide

Skeleton Coast by Clive Cussler

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Plot Summary

Skeleton Coast by Clive Cussler is an adventure that combines treasure hunting, ecological fanaticism, kidnapping, terrorism and high tech rescues. Sloane Macintyre is an employee of DeBeer's, and on a mission to recover millions of dollars worth of diamonds from the *Rove* - a ship that sank off the Skeleton Coast in 1896. The diamonds were the property of the Herero king and stolen by H.A. Ryder and his friends. They journey across the Kalahari desert to rendezvous with the *Rove* and make their escape, but while waiting for them, the *Rove* is the victim of an outgoing tide. Stuck, they can do nothing but wait for high tide. Before they can leave, Herero warriors arrive to reclaim their king's property. While they battle, a storm rages outside and the results sink the ship with all aboard.

In her efforts to find the *Rove*, Sloane interviews local fisherman looking for the areas where they have lost or snagged gear. From there, using equipment to detect the ship, she hunts but to no avail. She does however attract the attention of a group of men who would rather she not spend so much time in the waters around Walvis Bay. She is threatened and the next day chased across the ocean in a boat called the *Pinguin*. Luckily for Sloane, a seemingly dilapidated freighter is in the area, and comes to her aid. Rescued, Sloane is confused by what she sees. The freighter, *Oregon*, is not what it seems, and Sloane asks her Captain Juan Cabrillo for answers. Amused and surprised, as she is the first to notice his subterfuge, he agrees to tell her all at a later date. The *Oregon* only looks old and run down. In reality, she is a state of the art vessel with every possible technological advantage at her disposal from power to weaponry. Former CIA employee, Juan formed the Corporation and built the *Oregon* to deal with situations that governments cannot afford to become directly involved in. On a mission to deliver weapons that were bugged for tracking to Congolese rebels, Juan hears about the kidnapping of Geoffrey Merrick. The appearance of Sloane connects the dots between her mission to find the *Rove*, and his mission to rescue Merrick. With ties that all seem to lead to Dan Singer, the *Oregon* and her crew go from one battle to another, trying to undo the damage and upheaval Singer leaves in his wake.

Susan Dunleavy is a scientist whose creation could cause one of the most terrible hurricanes of our time. With roots that include a childhood filled with visions of oil spills and the resulting ecological and economical fallout, she is ripe for manipulation to Dan Singer's cause. Singer believes the world will never learn. He sees the only way to a better future is to cause an ecological disaster as a demonstration that he hopes will wake the general population up. Kidnapping his former partner and holding him hostage, Singer wants Merrick to see first hand what he has planned. Enlisting a rebel faction from the Congo under the leadership of Makambo, Singer has them launch a coordinated attack on several ocean based oil rigs, instructing them to take over and pump the crude into the ocean. Singer, meanwhile, has another agenda. He is using Susan's discovery to seed a hurricane, increasing its strength many fold. In an exciting conclusion, the *Oregon* and her crew sink the freighter Singer is using and stops the storm from completely forming. As a promise to both Sloane and Moses Ndebele who lent his aid and manpower to regain control of the oil rigs, Juan uses his connections to

find the Rove and recover the diamonds aboard. Its location and the fate of its passengers are a surprise to all.



Chapters 1 - 3

Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

Skeleton Coast by Clive Cussler is an adventure that combines treasure hunting, ecological fanaticism, kidnapping, terrorism and high tech rescues. Sloane Macintyre is an employee of DeBeer's, and on a mission to recover millions of dollars worth of diamonds from the Rove, a ship that sank off the Skeleton Coast in 1896. The diamonds were the property of the Herero king and stolen by H.A. Ryder and his friends. They journey across the Kalahari desert to rendezvous with the Rove and make their escape, but while waiting for them, the Rove is the victim of an outgoing tide. Stuck, they can only wait for high tide, but before they can leave, Herero warriors arrive to reclaim their king's property. While they battle, a storm rages outside and the results sink the ship with all aboard.

H.A. Ryder leads Tim and Tom Waterman, Jon Varley, and Peter Smythe from Bechuanaland across the Kalahari desert to the sea. The treacherous journey is made after Peter Smythe betrays his friend and the grandson of Herero king, Samuel Maharero named Assa Maharero. At first, his only plan is to escape the boredom of his teenage life in Bechuanaland and his religious tyrant and missionary father Lucas Smythe. Having confided his escape plans to Assa, they meet frequently to plan. However, during one of these strategy sessions, while Peter waits for Assa in the rondoval he stumbles across the king's secret hiding spot for diamonds that his warriors have pilfered from the miner's camps. Peter promises to keep the secret and after he turns eighteen, he leaves. With little money or resources, he makes his way towards Kimberley, but a night of brandy has him bragging about the diamonds to his traveling companions. Immediately plans change and they make their way back to the royal kraal, stealing as many of his diamonds as they can carry. Chased across the desert, the five men manage to make their way to the sea led by Ryder, and find the boat that waits for them, but in the sand storm, the ship has run aground and before they can get free, they are overtaken by the king's warriors.

In present day Geneva at the laboratories of Merrick/Singer, Susan Donleavy works. Having engineered an organism, she watches it, and then trusting her instincts, retrieves the fresh sea water from the cooler that keeps it at a consistent temperature of 68 degrees. Dr. Geoff Merrick startles her, and she shyly explains the rather unorthodox experiment she is conducting. In true scientific manner, he encourages her and watches as the first of her practical tests brings about a positive result. Delighted when her engineered diatoms bind with the water, he questions her ideas for practical applications, and she admits that her hope is to eventually apply the science to an organic method of settling ponds at mines or stopping oil spills from spreading.

On the Congo River south of Matadi, a seemingly dilapidated freighter named the Oregon nudges its way to the pier to complete a deal with Samuel Makambo's Congolese Army of Revolution that has been in the making for a month. After many



clandestine meetings, the deal is struck to exchange assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades, rocket launchers and ammunition for a quarter pound of uncut diamonds. The diamonds are shorted in weight by eight carats, but Juan is happy just to leave without incident, just as Abala had presumed he would be. As the freighter makes ready to leave, the final double cross unfolds and the rebels attack. Rallying his men, Makambo tries to take his diamonds back but just as his deception is multi-layered, so is the transaction from the Chairman's side. The freighter is the brainchild of the Chairman, equipped with a mission control center that rivals NASA's and weapons able to defend an entire country's assault. Her crew consists of retired CIA and US military personnel, and below the decks of peeling paint is an operation's center that bears resemblance to the Starship Enterprise. The crew takes great care not to reveal their capabilities, even when two attack helicopters and two Swift boats attack. Makambo is not to know he has been deceived, or the weapons tagged with GPS tracking devices will be found before they can lead authorities to their jungle headquarters. The Oregon pulls away from the dock but runs aground in the shoal, and Juan Cabrillo takes the controls assuring the crew they'll be free in thirty minutes.

Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

Peter Smythe is a teenager who is bored and fed up with life in Bechuanaland just on the outskirts of the Herero kraal. He makes his escape at the age of eighteen, and in an effort to impress his new traveling companions, he betrays the trust of his best friend and breaks his oath of secrecy, telling four men about the king's secret stash of diamonds. Then, he does nothing to discourage their plans to steal the diamonds from the king. In fact, he returns and helps them to do so. Although liquor is what loosens his tongue to begin with, nothing stops him afterward from participating in the theft. The getaway is clean but the theft is discovered, and the king's warriors chase them all the way to the sea.

Susan Donleavy feels rather godlike as she observes the organism she engineered. Dr. Geoffrey Merrick joins her in the lab, and watches her conduct her experiment. She has difficulty relaxing. He is not only her boss, but also a wealthy person who intimidates her simply with his presence. She is shy and nervous to the point of clumsy, and uncomfortable with his close proximity. He is delighted with her progress, encouraging her to continue and questions the practical applications for her project. When she tells him her hopes to perhaps have it used to help clean up oil spills or aid in settling mining ponds, he rightly guesses that the Exxon Valdez accident in Prince William Sound when she was in her teens and living in Seward Alaska had an impact on the direction her research has taken. He assures her that she has his support.

The Oregon is a run down wreck of a freighter on the outside, but internally, she is every bit an updated state of the art ship ready for anything. Her crew is on a mission to deliver weapons that will pin point the location of the jungle headquarters of the Congolese Revolutionaries with embedded GPS technology. It is a plan that has taken much time and effort to coordinate, but worth the risk. If they are successful, the revolutionary forces will be brought to their knees. The weapons are delivered and



Makambo initiates the double cross everyone expects. He is more organized than anyone has taken into consideration though. Makambo is ruthless and single minded in his desire to retrieve his diamonds. He expects that with nothing but a bunch of old men and a wreck of a freighter for opposition, he can easily take both the diamonds and the weapons. Juan has to be careful how strongly he responds and with what, or the entire point of their mission will be lost. He could easily remove Makambo and his warriors like they were so many fleas, but to do that would involve revealing that his freighter is much more than it appears. If that knowledge comes to light, Makambo might also realize that there was more to their transaction than a simple exchange of diamonds for weapons. The GPS location devices are hidden, but not beyond casual inspection. If Makambo leaves them behind, they have wasted their time and efforts and risked their lives for nothing. When the Oregon runs aground, Juan takes the helm, making himself responsible for any possible further damage, and unequivocally states that they'll be free in half an hour. His crew knows that he wouldn't say it without being sure, and try to keep dodging the increasingly serious attack.



Chapters 4 - 6

Chapters 4 - 6 Summary

South of Walvis Bay in Namibia, Sloane Macintyre and Tony Reardon take an inflatable into Sandwich Bay on a tip that they can find legendary fisherman Papa Heinrich. They hope to get information that will help them to find the final resting place of the boat they are looking for and its valuable cargo. Tony is pessimistic but they find Heinrich's shack and he agrees to show Sloane the area of seas where great 'metal snakes' live. It takes a little while to translate the concept of a map to Heinrich, but when they do, he points out the area, and they leave, heading back to their rooms at the Swakopmund Hotel to shower and regroup.

Juan sends Eddie Seng and Franklin Linc out in the Zodiac to open the flood gates on the dam a few miles back. The water should float the Oregon, and the plan is that they'll meet again in Boma. They encounter some resistance by Abala's right hand man on the way, but soon find themselves at the dam. They climb the stairs and radio the Chairman they've arrived and then once again as they open the flood gates. On the Oregon, the crew braces and when the wave hits they ride it out of the area while the Rebels are either washed away, dumped into the drink or scrambling for higher ground. Cabrillo maneuvers them out of danger. Just as they are clear, a message is intercepted from a commercial airliner over head. Geoffrey Merrick and an associate have been kidnapped. Juan decides to get his staff working on the details to see if their involvement can be profitable. Eddie and Linc submit their report, each down playing the danger and giving the other credit. Juan gets a report from intelligence officer Linda Ross regarding Merrick's kidnapping. There is enough background to get an understanding for the man and his history, but no clue as to why he was kidnapped, no ransom, and no idea where or what 'Devil's Oasis' is, other than that it is the location that the kidnappers will be taking Susan and Geoff. Juan decides that after picking up Eddie and Linc in Boma, they will head in the direction of Zimbabwe, having established that it is the most likely route based on the kidnapper's triangulated information and their estimated time of arrival. From there, they hope to have more information.

Chapters 4 - 6 Analysis

Tony is as pessimistic as Sloane is optimistic. His attitude brings out levels of disgust in her as they drive through the jungle. His complaining gets on her nerves, but they are in an area where a woman alone could get into trouble. It is much safer with him along. Papa Heinrich is part bushman and not what she expects. His descriptions of metal snakes have Tony thinking he's lost his sanity, but Sloane is sure that he's describing the area she is looking for. She does not know how to fail, or to give up. No matter how difficult the task, Sloane manages to see the prize at the end, and goes forward with enthusiasm until she reaches it. It is the quality that makes her successful.



Eddie and Linc are fully confident that they can accomplish just about any task the Chairman sends them on. They are loyal, and well trained, and Juan's faith in their abilities is not misplaced. They will not cave to pressure or lose their nerve under fire. Both can think on their feet and will accomplish any task they have been assigned. The only thing likely to stop either one is their own death—and that is highly unlikely given their abilities. As such, Juan picks them to be responsible for the ultimate rescue of the entire crew, and arranges to meet them afterward in Boma - knowing they'll make it. His faith in them is not misplaced, and the Oregon is freed just in time, riding the onslaught of water away from the rebel attack. As they are leaving, the message that Geoffrey Merrick and his associate have been taken is intercepted. Under regular circumstances they would go through proper channels, but Juan knows that Merrick has money. In fact, he has lots of money, and that makes the gamble to find and recover him worth the risk involved, and the lack of direct data beforehand. While members of his crew might be comfortable enough with their boss to comment on the irregularity of his actions, none would ever question his judgment.

Eddie and Linc document their mission's completion and each one is modest to a fault. Juan reads their electronic reports, managing to see between the lines. He has had a chance to clean up, and is in the comfort of his tastefully decorated quarters. Juan has rather eclectic tastes, going for a masculine and somewhat impersonal style. He prefers not to display photographs of his former wife, deceased after an accident, and his quarters more reflect his current life. He lives for his job and in fact has no other real life. A look around his quarters reveals a man who is neat, and orderly, but with a slightly sentimental edge shown by the display of the variety of knickknacks from the many places he has been. Other than that, his quarters are comfortably functional, as is the rest of the Oregon. Juan has ensured that no expense was spared in outfitting the Oregon to accommodate his crew's every desire from fitness to food. To ensure their continued comfort, when they sign on, they are each given a budget with which they can 'personalize' their surroundings if they choose to. After each operation, Juan also takes great pleasure in signing bonus checks for all members including technicians and even support and auxiliary personnel. Each job they do benefits each person involved, and as such he enjoys their undivided loyalty despite the dangers they often face.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

Sloane and Tony spend an entire day in a helicopter, chasing down each and every point on her map that local fishermen have pinpointed as being unusually hard on equipment. Using a long metal detector they dangle from the helicopter, they search each area for signs of a ship but come back empty handed. Discouraged, they are returning without enough fuel to check the final location which is the one that Papa Heinrich gave them. Their guide Luka insists that Heinrich is crazy and suffers from the DTs, but Sloane is still anxious to try one more time the following day. While reluctant, Tony will bend to her will. Back in Swakopmund, they unload their gear and go to separate rooms. Sloane cleans up and takes herself out to eat, reviewing the day and its failure to discover the HMS Rove. She is walking towards the hotel, taking a different route when she hears the footsteps behind her. The hotel is several streets over, and she kicks off her shoes and runs. Her attackers follow and a bullet barely misses her, but she luckily nears her hotel before they can catch her. One yells a warning that she should leave Namibia or next time he won't miss.

Geoff listens to Susan scream and forces himself to bear witness to her torture, sure that it is him they want and feeling responsible that she is caught up in this situation with him. They are in an older prison but still so secure that there is no chance of escape. He has yet to see the faces of any of his captors, but distinguishing them by size and eye color, he knows there are three men. Finally the screaming stops and she is returned to her cell. He sees the condition she is in as she passes, and she looks up long enough to tell him that they never even asked her any questions. He assures them he's willing to pay anything, telling them their torture isn't necessary and is determined to fight back when they come for him. What he doesn't count on is the Tazer that renders him unable to do much of anything as they drag him down the hall.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Sloane isn't used to failure. It bothers her that she spent the entire day chasing the elusive HMS Rove and came up empty. In fact, it bothers her so much that she finds herself reviewing her life and her lack of accomplishments to date. She wonders about her decisions to chase these kinds of adventures, and thinks about her sister who is married and has children, and wonders if life is passing her by. Despite a business degree from Columbia, she is spending her time in third world countries and is beginning to wonder if she'll ever manage to make her way up the corporate ladder to success of any kind. She's angry with herself for her decisions, and barely aware of her surroundings. It is a mistake she almost pays for dearly, and gets a good scare as she is chased back to her hotel. One thing the chase accomplishes however is to restore her defiance and her belief that she must be on to something if people were chasing her.



Susan is taken first by the guards, dragged out of her cell by her hair. At first Geoff listens to her screams, feeling responsible, but after a while he can't take it. He covers his ears and hums to drown out the pain and misery they are inflicting on her. He is racked with guilt and a feeling of impotence, knowing there is nothing he can do to help her. When they bring her back and he sees her battered face and bloodied hair, it is almost more than he can bear. He apologizes to her, wishing he could do more, and is stunned to hear that they didn't even question her. He offers money, any amount, to get them to stop, but they don't seem to care. It's as though they have no agenda beyond the immediate infliction of pain and distress. His guilt soon progresses to rage and he promises himself he won't go quietly. He stands there, clenched and ready for a fight, but nothing prepares him for the Tazer that comes next. He is rendered all but unconscious as they drag him out and the pain is so great that he can't get his muscles to respond to anything he wants and all thoughts of fighting back are gone.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Sloane convinces Tony to go with her the next morning to check the position pinpointed by Heinrick, having gotten permission to stay another day. The Captain scans the horizon and shows Sloane a freighter ahead, out of its natural area by four or five hundred miles. She notices no smoke from its funnel. Tony points out a boat coming from behind and Sloane's reaction makes Tony ask what's going on. She confesses the events of the previous evening and Tony is furious she hasn't told him sooner. Sloane heads for the freighter, hoping to reach help before the men behind catch up. She tries to radio the freighter to lower a ladder, but gets no answer. The men chasing intercept her call for help, telling her that they warned her. When she tells them they'll leave, the voice tells her it is too late. On the freighter, Cabrillo ponders the situation. Using sophisticated gear, they can easily see four men with automatic weapons in the chase boat, and Sloane crouching in fear with a shotgun in the Pinguin. Cabrillo has the radio man patch him through to Sloane, and she tells them they are just a fishing charter, but Juan knows she is lying. Juan makes his decision and tells Sloane what to do. At the last moment, as instructed by Juan, the Pinguin turns to circle around the bow of the Oregon, leaving the yacht chasing them with no alternative but to chase them down on the stern side. Calmly, Juan reverses thrusters and with speed and agility no freighter is capable of, he turns the Oregon so that the yacht finds itself heading straight for the Oregon. Without time to avoid, it hits the Oregon broadside. Juan invites the grateful trio aboard, and won't take no for an answer.

Barely maintaining consciousness, Geoffrey tries to gauge his surroundings. The room is overly bright and it takes time till he can see well enough to determine how many others are in the room with him. He tries to move his arms only to find that he is manacled. Eight men and women are sitting at a table, and a computer sits at the foot of the table facing Geoff. An electronic voice informs him that he has been tried and found guilty of crimes against the planet. At first, he thinks he can talk his way out of the situation, but there is no reasoning with this group. At the end of the conversation, the electronic filters were removed from the computer voice, and Geoffrey finally knew who he was dealing with, and knew he was going to die.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

The Captain of the charter Sloane hires recognizes a kindred spirit in Sloane and offers her the controls, ensuring she knows their heading. Last night she was ready to give up, but the chase incident had changed her mind. When they first spot the freighter in the distance, they are curious but unafraid although it is miles from where it should be speculating that it may be a derelict ship. When Tony draws her attention to the yacht following them, her demeanor changes. She confesses the events of the previous evening, and Tony is furious with her lack of disclosure. Sloane makes decisions quickly.



At first, the Oregon doesn't respond to her hails. They listen as the chase yacht tells Sloane that she'd been warned and Juan's curiosity is piqued. He makes a last minute decision to help them, and gives Sloane and the Captain of the Pinguin instructions. No one questions Juan's assertions that they'll be fine and that the Oregon and her crew have dealt with pirates in the past. They are stunned by the maneuvering capabilities of the Oregon as she turns into the 'pirate' yacht. One minute it is parallel to the Oregon and the next minute it is heading straight for it and unable to correct. It is over quickly, and Juan extends his invitation to those on the Pinguin to lunch. Sloane tries to beg off, but Juan assures her that his invitation is mandatory and the alternative is a call to the maritime authorities. The latter is of course a bluff, but Juan wants to know who he saved and the truth behind their predicament before he continues.

Geoffrey comes around slowly, but doesn't want to. He hurts all over, and still can't feel most of his extremities. At first he is confused as to why he is there, but then an electronic voice tells him his fate. Not only has he been convicted of crimes against the planet, but he won't be given a chance to defend himself. Geoff has had this argument many times, and thinks he can at least get Susan freed at first, but that changes when he finally understands who he is dealing with, and grasps that they intend to hold him accountable for the entire planets' problems. In their eyes, his carbon scrubber gave big business carte blanche to operate with impunity under the guise that they were now a 'green' company. As such, they pumped twice as many chemicals into the atmosphere and actually sped up the process of global warming. Geoff realizes he is afraid, and that he is going to die.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

Cabrillo meets the trio from the Pinguin in the topside galley. Like the rest of the Oregon, it is carefully constructed to appear worn out, rusted and on its last legs. They sit at a table in mismatched chairs, Juan placing his company carefully in front of the hidden camera so that they can be remotely monitored. Sloane spins a tale about meeting Tony on line and saving for a treasure hunt to find a ship they believe sank, but Max, monitoring the conversation, sends Juan a message telling him she's lying through her teeth. Juan spins his own yarn selling them as a tramp freighter and just as they get ready to go their separate ways, Sloane asks to speak with him in private. As soon as they're alone, she tells him that she thinks he's a fraud. She points out all of the things that she noticed were a sham and Juan is amazed. No one else had ever noticed the details she has. She offers to be honest with him if he will with her. She even offers to go first. Then she tells him who she really is and what they are doing, and asks for his help. Juan instructs Max to take the Oregon to Cape Town and outfit them for the trip to Devil's Oasis while he goes to Walvis Bay to talk to Papa Heinrick with Sloane.

Merrick calls to Susan every few minutes, and finally gets a week answer finally dispelling his fears that she was already dead. He questions how she is, and rather than focus on her own condition, she asks if he is alright. He tells her that it is his former business partner, Dan Singer who is behind the kidnapping and fears that the man has lost his mind. Geoff believes that this all stems from the fact that he didn't get enough attention from the media when they were partners. Now, attached to environmental fanatics, he is killing people by the hundreds. Merrick apologizes to Susan over and over, but then she stops responding altogether.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

The entire 'public' area of the Oregon is carefully constructed to accomplish an atmosphere of depression, poverty and discomfort. Railings barely hang on, paint is peeling, and floors are lifting - all with careful intention. The combination is intended to make officials and inspectors want nothing more than to finish their business and leave. Even the paintings are gloomy, and the rugs infused with cigarette smoke so heavy that even smokers are uncomfortable. Sloane notices all of the subterfuge and calls him on it when they are in private. She offers an honest exchange of information, and even offers to go first, telling him about the diamond market and how DeBeers controls a monopoly so that the prices are protected. Then she asks for his help to find the HMS Rove, carrying approximately a billion dollars worth of diamonds. Sensing that much more is going on, Juan talks to Max. His instincts are never far from wrong and attracted to another mystery, Juan agrees to help Sloane.



Geoff fights small battles with sand fleas to take his mind off the severity of their situation. He knows now that his former partner has lost his mind, and that he will become just another name on a long list of people that Dan Singer has killed in the name of the environment. He manages to get a response from Susan after calling out to her over and over. He tells her who the kidnapper is, feeling an overwhelming sense of responsibility for not having recognized the depth of madness in his former partner. He wonders if things would have been different had he seen Dan more clearly earlier. He is filled with despair, but more for the fact that Susan is an innocent victim than the position he is in.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Sloane and Juan leave the Oregon in a modified lifeboat stocked with enough supplies to last forty people for a week if necessary. It is after midnight when they approach Swakopmund, and Juan suggests they go to Sandwich Bay and wait until morning to talk to Papa Heinrich again. Sloane agrees and twenty minutes later they are pushing through the reeds to where Heinrich's cabin is. Juan smells smoke, and hurries to find the cabin on fire and the boat half sunk and ablaze as well. The screams have him launching himself off the lifeboat's cabin but before he can get to the small cabin of Heinrich's, a bow runner comes around the isle and begins firing. He manages to avoid them by returning to the water and swimming behind their vessel, coming up to shoot at them. The bow runner makes for the open bay and Juan hurries back to the cabin but it is too late to save Heinrich, who was chained to his bed in the burning building, his face frozen in the scream that was his last. He returns to the aluminum life boat and gives chase, surprising Sloane with the speed and agility of the lifeboat that appears to be in the same rundown condition as the Oregon. Leaving Sloane to pilot, he goes below and arms himself. They catch up with the bow runner and chase it through the reeds that make up the edges of the coastline, but Juan is unable to take the last man alive as he'd planned. Instead, the man commits suicide, running his boat aground full speed. When they go closer to investigate, Sloane recognizes the helicopter pilot, Peter DeWitt. The fact that her presence in Namibia sparked events that caused Papa Heinrich his life brings her to tears. When she has recovered herself, Juan suggests they intercept the Pinguin before it reaches Swakopmund and reveals that they are still alive. He is beginning to think that they may have stumbled into an illegal diamond mining operation.

Dan Singer flies into the Devil's Oasis, and meets with the mercenaries who have been holding Geoff and Sandra. Then he has Geoff brought to the warden's office and shrugs off his offer to sign over all of his money, and the company if it will end things now. Dan has other ideas. The business with Merrick is not the main event, and he explains that the coming demonstration will wake the world up to the devastating effects of global warming. Merrick realizes he is insane. Without warning of his intention, he launches across the desk and hits him. The guards recover and knock him unconscious, apologizing to Singer, but Dan is unfazed. It will be Merrick's last act of freedom.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

Juan recognizes and admires the traits that he and Sloane share like curiosity and tenacity. Sloane watches Juan as well, and has similar feelings, easily able to picture him in another time aboard a Clipper filled with spice and silk. He is a modern day hero, coming to the aid of and rescuing damsels in distress. The more time Juan spends with Sloane, the more he sees a kindred spirit in her, and recognizes her ability to act under



pressure. Sloan is learning that Juan is full of surprises. Nothing about him or the vessels he Captains are what they seem to be. Every time she begins to feel as though they are outmatched in power, or speed or weaponry, Juan uncovers another layer of deception that gives them the upper hand again. It is thrilling and a little frightening at the same time.

When Peter DeWitt kills himself rather than allowing himself to be captured, Juan begins to wonder about the layers involved himself. What appears to be a simple attempt to warn Sloane and Peter off a cargo of diamonds now seems to have complexities that are not so easily explained. It also appears for an instant that perhaps this case and his case with Geoff Merrick might be linked, but his mind won't make the connection he needs.

Dan Singer reveals himself and the depth of his insanity to Geoffrey in a brief meeting at Devil's Oasis. He lets Merrick know that his kidnapping is merely a side show to the upcoming main event, and Geoff knows without doubt then that the man has lost his grasp on reality. His fanaticism runs so deep that he actually believes that by sacrificing hundreds or perhaps thousands of people, he can somehow convince the remainder of the planet of the seriousness of global warming. His uncompromising belief in this exemplifies the depth of his madness.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

Max Henley and Linda Ross go back down to the real bridge of the Oregon as soon as they pull out of Cape Town again and Linda takes the bridge. Their communications officer, Hali Kasim calls with a wire. Benjamin Isaka, their government contact in the Congo that worked with them on the weapons delivery to the rebels has been implicated in a coup and there is no way of knowing whether Isaka told the rebels where to find the radio tags or not. If the tags are disabled, the Oregon has unwittingly armed one of the most dangerous groups of rebels in Africa. The tags have only a short range, but Juan had foreseen the possibility of problems and equipped a few with long range CIA tags. Admiring the boss's foresight, they try to decide how to proceed but are unable to reach Juan by radio or satellite phone - unusual in itself, and must decide whether to go back to track the weapons down and alert the authorities or proceed to the raid of Devil's Oasis for Merrick's rescue. They decide to continue on northward, and keep trying to reach Juan.

Juan and Sloane manage to intercept the Pinguin, and convince Captain Justus Ulenga to go north to fish for a week or two until things are sorted out. Tony is transferred to the lifeboat, and complains ceaselessly. Juan warns him to stop before he is knocked unconscious. They get to Walvis Bay with Tony nursing a sore jaw and put him on a connecting flight to London. Corporation's pilot Tiny Gunderson is idle on the tarmac, already engaged for the Merrick rescue. He and Sloane look for Luca and it doesn't take long to find him, but he is already dead. Juan notices they have company just as three men with weapons come into sight. He draws Sloane backward quietly and they dive headlong out of Luca's window to escape. They take cover behind a truck and blow it up as distraction. Then they make their escape to the dock and a skiff that could take them to where the lifeboat is waiting. Within ten minutes they are back on the lifeboat headed for international waters. Again, Sloane has to ask him who he really is. He promises to tell her once they've checked out Papa Heinrich's claim of metal snakes and suggests she go down below to sleep while she can.

Twelve hours later, they are in the area Heinrich pinpointed, but a storm is interfering with the lifeboat's electronics. Even the GPS is disabled, but they decide to keep looking until dark. Juan spots something in the distance, and with the binoculars he is amazed that an aerial recon of the area by his crew hadn't picked up the sheer size of the object. He is guessing it could be two miles long and defies description just as his eyes register an incoming Israeli made anti tank missile. They have just seconds to react to his yell of incoming.



Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

Max is headed for the gym under Doc Huxley's orders to improve his health when they find out Isaka may have double crossed them. They know Juan won't be happy about it. While the Congo's politics are not really their concern, the fate of the weapons they delivered is and Juan will not be pleased to discover that they have helped to arm a rebel contingent. They debate the logistics of going back to track the weapons versus continuing on to rescue Geoff and Susan. The fact that they can't reach Juan by satellite phone, or by radio worries them. It is a first as he is not one to be out of touch when a mission is in the planning stages.

Juan and Sloan save Tony by intercepting the Pinguin, but he is anything but grateful. Despite the time and effort set out on his behalf, he does nothing but complain. When Juan hits him in the jaw after warning him, he goes below and sulks for the rest of the trip, feeling sore and nursing a bruised ego. They dump him as soon as they can at the airport, and go looking for Luca but Juan is not paying as much attention as he usually does, and is caught off guard by the people watching Luca's apartment. They come in shooting, and Juan has to think quick to get Sloane and himself out of there alive. He manages to do so, but in the process reveals much more about himself, his general knowledge and abilities. Sloan's behavior is revealing as well. Despite how close they come to losing their lives, she is calm under pressure and doesn't lose her cool. He admires her ability to hold it together, and decides that he can probably share a little more of who he is with her. He promises to do so after they've checked out the spot that Heinrich pinpointed on her map.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

Juan grabs Sloane and the satellite phone in its waterproof bag and jumps overboard, swimming as far from the lifeboat as possible before the missile hit. The shock wave sends debris flying and they are left with no option but to head for Papa Heinrich's snake. About a thousand feet long, the structure is actually a flexible pipe thirty feet in diameter. The metal is warm to the touch and as they climb out Sloane sees his prosthesis for the first time. He quietly explains that their situation won't allow him to take prisoners, making sure she understands the implications of what he's saying. He began with the clone of the boat that had chased them earlier, which was tied up to the pipe. In the firefight that follows, Sloane has a bullet graze a two inch trench into her torso and Juan takes a bullet to his prosthetic which turns it into little more than a peg leg. After the five men are dead, Juan finds a laptop that tells him there are forty of these metal snakes in total, and plugging into the access port on the hull, he was able to shut it down. As soon as he did, the satellite phone's signal is restored and he calls the Oregon.

Doc Huxley flew out to meet them, and by the time they are back on the deck of the Oregon, Sloane has an IV started in her and the wound is dressed. Max is ready with a spare prosthesis, and Juan calls a meeting of senior staff. They manage to decrypt files on the laptop and figure out that these generators are producing electricity that is warming the Ocean currents. Located in the middle of the Benguela Current, the warmth radiates outward in two branches - one to the South Atlantic subtropical gyre and one northward along the coast. The result could alter the ocean's currents entirely. They ready themselves to be dropped onto Devil's Oasis to rescue Susan and Geoffrey, and before they leave Juan checks on Sloane. She is awake and positive, asking him once again for information about who he is and he promises he'll tell her over breakfast, and leaves.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

While Sloan jokes with Juan as they swim for the object still a mile away, he is aware that cold is seeping in and can see her falling behind. He takes off his pants and ties the legs together, filling them with air before using his belt to make a version of water wings out of them. Strapped to her back, she is able to swim easier in the currents and again is struck by how much he seems to know about issues like survival, combat and basic 'boyscout.' The warmer currents make it easier as they approach the pipes. Ever the gentleman even now, he warns her that he will have to kill those he encounters, and has her hide while he approaches the boat tied to the metal snake. Sloane worries that the odds are against him, but he is well trained, and feels no sympathy for the men who just tried to kill them. As such, he doesn't second guess his motives or behavior as one by one he eliminates the threats on board. The only casualties are his prosthetic, and a



graze wound from the boss that Juan didn't see until it was too late to get Sloane under cover again. Once again, Sloane handles the pain and shock without losing control, earning his admiration and bringing out protective instincts in him.

The Oregon crew is relieved to hear from him. He has never been without contact so long, and although they were confident that he was alive, they all quietly wondered about his condition. Back on the Oregon, he is briefed on what seems to be a plan to initiate global warming on a scale that is unheard of, and that all seems to tie into the kidnapping they are working on. At the same time as planning to rescue Merrick, Juan can't get the arms he placed in the hands of rebels out of his mind. Despite his cavalier attitude with Sloane, he knows that if innocent people die as a result of the arms he delivered, he will have a difficult time living with that debt just as Sloane feels the weight of the deaths of Papa Heinrick and their former guide Luca. He goes to say goodbye to Sloane before his jump to Devil's Oasis, and kisses her lightly on the cheek before leaving. Both have feelings that increase for each other with every encounter.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

Juan and his team jump from a plane at high altitude with motor bikes tied to them for their getaway. Special chutes allow for the extra weight with a glide ability so they can land with precision. In seconds Juan knows he is in trouble as his main chute becomes tangled. The secondary chute opens, but will drop him miles away from his team. He radios in and puts down after spotting a convoy driving towards the prison. Turning his secondary chute into an outrigger, he uses it to land surf across the desert after them. The crew lands, and watches the routines of the guards just long enough to get in undetected. They find Susan with a guard and rescue her, tying up the guard. She wants to help them find Merrick, but when they reunite the two, Susan tries to shoot him, and the team realizes they made a critical mistake. She is one of the kidnappers but Merrick's chest wound is not their most immediate concern. The noise Susan made wakes the guards and the insertion team has no choice but to surrender. They only have a second to radio their predicament which Linc, who is still on the roof, relays to the Oregon. Though they are to be executed at dawn, Eddie has faith that somehow Juan will find a way to work a miracle.

Juan para-glides after the convoy using the satellite phone to keep in touch with the Oregon. They have tracked him thirty miles, but he knows he'll never make it to the site chosen to rendezvous with the plane. Linc has been forced to leave his teammates behind or be discovered himself. The mercenaries who now hold his teammates reveal their belief that they had come for the African opposition leader, Moses Ndebele. His location until now had been unknown, and the Oregon excitedly relays that freeing Ndebele would be worth millions. Linc heads for the plane and as Juan floats over yet another dune, he discovers a cluster of trucks. One has broken down, and there is no way for him to avoid detection. He tries to dump the air from his chute before making a hard landing, and rolling himself up into a tangled mess inside his own gear while the soldiers from the truck come forward to him. The heavily armed men ask who he is and Juan gambles telling them his name and that he wants to help them rescue Ndebele. Their leader introduces himself as Mafana. It is the right gamble, buying him a chance to save his men in the process. The soldiers plan to wait until Ndebele is being moved and attempt a rescue then, but Juan knows his men don't have that long. He tells them he has a plan.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

Juan is angry with himself that his men will face the mission without him as he cuts away his main chute and concentrates on surviving. He is well enough equipped, but is too far from the plane and his exit plan to get out. Seeing a convoy, he follows intending to survey the situation before deciding his approach, but the decision is taken from him



when he accidentally floats into them using his sail as a para-glider. Knowledge is power, and Juan's knowledge of Ndebele's location saves him from certain death.

Meanwhile, the rescue operation goes sour when Eddie makes the decision to allow Susan to help them find Merrick. She reminds him of his sister who after being raped couldn't live with the fact and killed herself. Susan's claim that she'd been raped by her kidnapper makes him lean towards doing whatever it takes to help her get through it. When they find Merrick, he goes to hug her and realizes her face is just fine. In that split second, they all know that a huge error was made. Susan is one of them. Filled with a hatred that Merrick can hardly believe, she grabs a gun from one of her rescuers and shoots Merrick in the chest. They subdue her, but their cover is blown, and they have just enough time to tell Linc that and ask him to relay it to the Oregon. Linc doesn't want to leave his team but has no choice but to leave quickly or join their fate. Oddly, the kidnappers think they are there to rescue Moses Ndebele, but the team had not been aware of his presence there. It is intelligence that carries a hefty payout if they can free him. Ndebele is to be executed for crimes against the state by Zimbabwe troops and though the UN had tried to intervene, it had accomplished little. Seen as a potential savior of Africa, the ruling regime will do anything to silence him. Angry and frustrated, Linc heads for the extraction plane on his motorcycle. Eddie has faith that Juan will somehow save them and it is not misplaced. Juan manages to come up with a plan under pressure again.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

Dan Singer learns of the attempt to rescue Merrick and his subsequent injury. Nina tells him that the mercenaries want to execute the rescuers at dawn and she doesn't want to be there. Dan makes arrangements to pick her up in a ghost town forty miles away the next day. Mafana lets Juan coordinate the plans for the assault on the prison and he works with the Oregon on the finer points. Then he loads himself with RPG's and straps into the parachute so that one of the trucks can pull him aloft. Once in the air, and within range, he cuts himself free of the truck. Like his men before him, he lands lightly on the roof. He tosses his buck knife lightly to the ground, seating it right behind the middle execution stake. As his men are led out for execution, he uses Morse code on the neck of Ski walking in front of Eddie to let them know his plans. Over a hundred soldiers are eager to see the execution and the commandant makes a speech first. One of the men spots and pockets the knife, but once Juan fires the first RPG, Eddie is able to retrieve it before he is tied to the stake. By then, Juan is firing the second RPG. His plan depends on keeping the men from returning inside to kill Ndebele. Once he fires enough RPG's to completely block the door, it is time to call in the troops.

Juan uses the tactical radio to call Lawrence who is circling with Tiny Gunderson, and tells them not to land yet. He manages to go through a window, and dodging the few guards that reentered the prison, he locates Ndebele. Moses is surprised to see him, and with difficulty Juan helps him out to the airstrip where Tiny is putting the plane down. Juan's team is bringing the wounded soldiers aboard as Juan gets there, and they take off before the mercenaries respond. Instead, they chase the trucks of the soldiers leaving the area down the road. Juan isn't happy about having to leave Merrick behind, unaware that detail has been handled as well. Tiny puts the plane down in the little town where Nina waits with Susan, Merrick and several guards. They rescue Merrick, arrest Susan and leave the remainder to fend for themselves. Two of Juan's men stay behind and drive the remaining mercenaries thirty miles deeper into the desert before dumping them to find their own way. With luck, the men will be back on the Oregon before Juan heads back to find the arms he left in the Congo.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

Singer has a God complex. He truly believes that by waking the world up to the problem of global warming, he is saving tens of thousands of lives. He believes he is a Messiah. Nina is afraid of the mercenaries, and convinces Dan to get her out before the morning's execution. Mafana is relieved that Juan is handling things, admitting that he was never more than a Sergeant and doesn't have the tactical mind that Juan has. Juan is operating on adrenaline, so tired and sore that his body doesn't want to respond, but when his parachute pulls him aloft behind the truck, he feels a surge of energy and actually enjoys the experience.



While the rescue doesn't quite go as planned, between Juan, his team and the soldiers under Mafana, they manage to remove Ndebele, rescue Merrick, arrest Susan and bury most of the soldiers under a sand slide still in their trucks. Ndebele tells Juan that Mafana was told not to rescue him, or even attempt it and Juan has to chuckle, reminded of Max. He confides that he has a friend just like that, but he only ignores the orders that he should ignore. Ndebele is in tough shape, but his attitude is good, and he greets his friend with great joy when they see each other on board the plane. The operation is a resounding success, and Juan is only too aware of how big a part of that is the team that follows him loyally and with great skill and daring. He doesn't have time to think about the operation yet. He still has to return to the Oregon, and get set to recover the weapons he and his team left behind in the Congo.

His men have already arranged most of the details. There is little more to do than get back to the Oregon with the wounded and begin it all again. In a last act of compassion, Juan leaves behind enough water to last Merrick's captors a week in the desert if they ration carefully. Two of his team are left behind in order to drive them far enough out into the desert so that Singer can't find them. He trusts that they will accomplish the task and be ready for pickup by the Oregon before she continues her journey back to the Congo.



Chapters 23 and 24

Chapters 23 and 24 Summary

Juan checks on the condition of Sloane, and the rest of the injured being taken care of by Huxley. Moses has more broken bones in his foot than can be counted. He gets an update from Max, learning that Mark and Eric have yet to find a trace of the weapons left in the Congo. He makes a suggestion that they cross over the river boundary between the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, figuring that the weapons are likely being hidden on the north side. He showers and meets with Linda. The two of them go to interrogate Susan. It is part of Linda's skill set, although it is something she doesn't like to do. It takes little time before she manages to wear Susan down, using a simple technique that involves isolation, fear, threats, and then hope. Without inflicting any trauma beyond emotional, at first it looks as though drugs will be required, but after she and Juan leave the isolation room Susan is being kept in, she decides to talk.

Juan doesn't get much sleep before Max wakes him with news. Singer plans to cause the biggest oil slick in history. After leaving Merrick, he funds environmental groups, until he finds a way to increase the intensity of the storms using scientists to create the underwater heaters. The scientists never know their work is put in motion. Now, Singer can create storms that register above Category Five. By causing an oil slick that is concentrated, he hopes the chemicals including benzene arsenic acid will be released into the air. By creating the storm of the century, he can effectively pollute the planet. Singer hires Samuel Makambo to storm the oil facilities - the same man who is in possession of the shipment of arms Cabrillo delivered to the Congo. Eddie can't think of a way to avert an attack made by anywhere up to a hundred soldiers on each of multiple rigs. Juan has a sudden brainstorm. He asks Sloane how sure she is that the diamonds are aboard the Rove. When she assures him they are, he goes to Ndebele and asks him for a hundred of his men to help save the American continent from poisoning. In return, Juan will give Ndebele the funds he needs to regain his position in government by blackmailing DeBeer's into buying the diamonds from the Rove. Ndebele promises he will ask his men and let them decide, and after hearing everything, Sloane agrees to help him get DeBeer's on board.

Chapters 23 and 24 Analysis

Safely aboard the Oregon, Juan has a few details to attend to before he can sleep. Exhausted, he tackles them one at a time, the last one being the interrogation of Susan Dunleavy. He and Linda do a good cop bad cop impression that has Susan terrified despite her hardened exterior at the beginning. By telling her that she is among a group of people who work outside the constraints of the law, it is easy to convince her that her future is one that should be carefully thought about. It doesn't take long for her to crack. Juan himself never says a word, introduced as Mr. Smith, an expert in the extraction of



information. He strokes her arm lightly and leaves with Linda promising he'll return alone soon. Susan breaks, but not before Linda confesses that she hates this part of her job. She knows its necessary, but hates the feeling of crawling inside someone else to learn their secrets. Her confession makes Juan wonder how many more of his crew harbor parts of their job that they do because they feel they have to, but don't want to.

Juan knows by the shadows on the walls that he hasn't slept for long when Max wakes him. Briefed, he is fully conscious and the news keeps him that way. Now there is no doubt that the weapons deal they brokered for the US and Congolese governments is directly related to the actions of Dan Singer. In fact, it seems that Singer's plan involves Makambo, his men, and the arms that Juan and his troop so thoughtfully provided. Once the details of Singer's plan are coaxed out of Susan, all that remains is a hail mary of some kind to put a stop to it all. Eddie is at a loss but Juan is the Chairman for a reason. When he leaves the meeting without a word, Eddie knows he's come up with something. Sloane has no trouble getting on board with his plan, and though Ndebele is skeptical, he agrees to approach his men. He owes Juan his life, but he can not make this decision for others. All he can do is tell them and let them decide for themselves. The fact that Juan gives Ndebele the diamonds from the purchase of the rifles as a show of good faith doesn't hurt either.



Chapters 25 and 26

Chapters 25 and 26 Summary

Juan and Ndebele's men work at an energetic pace to prep for the upcoming mission. The kitchen staff prepare rations while Huxley preps for incoming casualties. Equipment is checked and altered to accommodate the circumstances as required. Linda tells Juan that she believes Susan has withheld something and offers to take another turn at her. They can't figure out one piece of the puzzle. How can Singer be sure any storm will carry enough strength to have the affect he is looking for? Tiny waits at the Cabinda airport with a hundred soldiers while Singer is at the same time talking to Makambo who waits with 400 of his own men. Abala himself is leading the expedition. Acting as though seeking employment, the soldiers have been in plain sight while waiting for instructions. Dan briefs them on their mission to take control of the rigs and begin dumping the crude oil directly into the sea. For every hour his men continue to dump oil into the sea, Singer will transfer one million dollars to Makambo's Swiss account and if his men can hold off opposing forces for a full forty eight hours, he'll throw in a five million dollar bonus and another five for Makambo personally. While this is done, Singer will fly to Nouakchott, Mauritania and board the tanker he purchased to use as an incubator for the organics that Susan herself created.

Ndebele's men are loaded, but before they can leave, Linda tells Juan that the attacks on the rigs have already begun. The new men are outfitted with arms and supplies. An unmanned aerial vehicle is launched as soon as they are under way, and satellite style photos soon reveal that trees have been felled to slow response teams. Flying over the Petromax terminal reveals men swarming the platform, and fires burning where they shouldn't be. Tony pilots the UAV to the nearest offshore platform and they can see the oil slick from half a mile away. At the second platform, the slick is even larger. On the Oregon, two submersibles are ready for launch. The ride to the platforms seems to take forever, under a sea of ever spreading darkness. The Oregon continues on to the third platform.

Chapters 25 and 26 Analysis

The Oregon is a hive of activity. Linda takes Sloane to the bridge for the first time, and the entrance has her stunned silent for a moment while she takes it all in. The visit to the bridge was supposed to answer some of her questions, and perhaps put things into perspective for her, but instead induces a state of wonder and almost disbelief as she tries to take in everything she sees. Sloane asks Juan if he's in the CIA or something and he roughly explains what he and his men do and what the Corporation's mission is. When Linda asks to talk to him in private, he tells her the ship is hers and leaves in her the bridge, showing her a level of trust never given those that are not already staff. When Linda confesses that Susan may have withheld information and offers to try again, Juan can't help but be proud of her. She offers up even more of her soul for the



sake of the mission, and her loyalty to Juan does not go unnoticed or unappreciated by him.

In Cabinda, while Tiny waits at the airport, Abala is ready to lead the upcoming mission himself because he is being punished for the Congo debacle, and because Makambo suspects that he is skimming stones from him in their diamond trading. Makambo won't be overly upset if for some reason Abala doesn't make it back. Singer told Merrick his plan at the penitentiary and only hopes that Merrick is alive and will know that Dan is responsible for the hurricane that hits the United States. He regrets he won't see Merrick's face to rub in the fact that polluters like him caused it all.

Ndebele's men are loaded aboard the Oregon at the Cabinda pier. Juan is surprised that so many of them are gray haired, but they all look lean and ready to fight. Juan feels a stab of dread when Linda tells him that the attack on the rigs has already begun. With adrenaline coursing through him, he is no longer sore or tired. The UAV launches and shows the devastation already beginning and Juan is filled with revulsion at the mindless and willful waste of life. Juan goes to the hold and listens to Ndebele's speech to his men, and though he can't understand the words, his emotion touches Juan, and he can feel the passion in them. The submersibles seem so slow, but arriving at the platform, Max confirms they are safe to disembark, so they surface and get out. The sight that greets Juan is surreal, and the Oregon in the distance is looking very good to him. Linda is the last one on the platform, already telling Juan the Corporation will owe her some spa time when their mission is complete.



Chapters 27 and 28

Chapters 27 and 28 Summary

On the Oregon, Max uses a Gatling gun to help even the odds while the others launch against their rigs. Cabrillo coordinates the attack, sending Linda to look for the rig staff so they can turn off the pumping oil and transport them to the next rig to do the same if necessary. Hearing the shots outside, the men guarding the oil rig staff begin to kill their captives. The scene inside is chaotic, and all but one terrorist is taken down. He vanishes into the kitchen and when Linda follows, he gets the upper hand on her and takes her hostage. On the second rig, when the rebels realize the kind of attack being waged on them, a great number of them simply throw down their arms and give themselves up to Eddie Seng. He can hear the gunfire still coming from Juan's rig. One moment Juan is hiding behind a container, and the next moment he is aware of, he is hanging forty feet in the air, tangled in safety nets above the bubbling oil, head ringing. Knowing how vulnerable he is, he crawls across the netting. Terrorists still have control of the rig, and Juan is beginning to consider the possibility that he may have to retreat if Linda doesn't show up with re-enforcements soon. He taps his communication and tells Linda he needs her topside, and hearing his voice she overpowers the man holding her and knocks him unconscious. A Texan rig employee introduces himself as Jim Gibson - the tool push. She quickly explains the situation to Jim and to Juan, telling him she is on her way. Together they regain control of the rig, and Jim saves Linda's life in the process.

Having secured the fourth rig, the Oregon returns to cover the assault of the two submersible teams. Max radios Mike Trono, telling him he is coming and instructing him to head for shore. On board the Oregon, Murphy clears the landing zone for Mike. Mike reaches the seawall on the 'Liberty' lifeboat and leads the charge. Four of his sixty man group go down when a gunman suddenly emerges, but it isn't long before Tiny is patched in flying the UAV. State of the art technology allows Mike to see what the UAV sees through a patch on his battle jacket. Now Mike knew where the rebels were before he saw them. They reach and enter the power plant to see a pair of workers guarded by a trio of guards. Gaining control of the room, he gestures for the worker to cut the power. He leaves a radio behind, telling the worker to call if any more rebels arrive and to shoot those on the floor if they are troublesome. The last target to be subdued is the supertanker that had been taking on crude when the attack began. Linc and Ski board and make their way to the roof of the wheelhouse, and await the targeting from Tiny operating the UAV. Looking down, Linc recognizes Abala and they decide not to take him first, wanting to see his reaction instead. Between Mark Murphy on the Gatling, and Linc and Ski on the roof, it takes little time before the rebels lose their courage and drop their weapons. Linc takes great pleasure in reintroducing himself to Abala. When the Angolan forces arrive, they find the oil shut off, 86 corpses and over four hundred men roped and locked inside. Abala, with a bandaged and truncated foot has a sign around his neck introducing himself and his position in Makambo's Army of Revolution, and explaining his relationship to Singer and the terrorist act.



Chapters 27 and 28 Analysis

The coordination of the attack against the rebels on the rigs and on land requires timing and forethought. It is not the style of either the rebels, or Ndebele's men who are working with Juan. As such, Juan and his team are the controlling factors surrounding the attack on the platforms. Ndebele's men would just have likely charged up the platforms and begun shooting, but Juan prefers to limit casualties on both sides, and hopefully save as many of the rig staff as possible in the process. Linda is sent to find the rig staff when they board and she is a bit impatient, preferring to be in on the action herself. It is perhaps that impatience that interferes with her caution and results in her becoming a hostage. For a minute she freezes, forgetting the hours she's spent training, but Juan's voice in her ear on the comm system shakes her out of her state of fear. She overcomes him and quickly earns the respect of the men working with her, and the rig staff she is rescuing. One of them offers to buy her dinner and she accepts. He later saves her life on deck when another error in judgment almost costs her life. All four rigs are secured and control is returned to their source of electricity on land as well.

The last terrorist stronghold is a tanker that was taking on oil when the terrorists began. When Linc notices Abala on deck, he makes certain to keep him alive, although he is shot in the foot to stop him from shooting one of his own men for surrendering. It is fitting that his injury is to his foot in light of the amount of damage done to Ndebele's foot. Once control has been established and the oil turned off, the Oregon and her crew withdraw, but not before leaving a present for the Angolan forces who are next on the scene. They find the hostages tied up, many wounded, and Abala amid them with a note that announces his involvement with Singer and the terrorist plot.



Chapters 29 and 30

Chapters 29 and 30 Summary

Dan Singer is aboard a truly dilapidated tanker named Gulf of Sidra. With a cargo hold that is filled with Susan's invention, getting warmer by the minute, the tanker is headed for a tropical depression that was moving across the Atlantic. Singer already knew that Makambo's troops had been stopped, and there wasn't nearly the amount of oil necessary for the noxious contamination he'd hoped for, but a storm that is already showing Four Four conditions is perfect for the second half of his plan and the Gulf of Sidra is headed for it. Juan Cabrillo oversees the refitting of the Oregon, ensuring the submersibles are recharged and docked, the ammunition is restocked, the guns taken from Makambo's men are tagged and put away, and the oil is washed from the lifeboat. When all is back to normal, he goes to Huxley. She has been working steady to remove a total of thirty one bullets. Juan wants to see Susan's body. By sticking out her tongue and falling forward, she had bitten it off and then simply rolled over onto her back and allowed herself to drown rather than to be questioned again. Juan's only hope now is Merrick and he asks Huxley to wake him up. Against her better judgment she does, and Merrick tells Juan about the Gulf of Sidra with Susan's goo in the hold just before he crashes.

The Oregon locates and heads with all speed to the Gulf of Sidra's location, knowing they are the closest vessel. The storm is picking up in intensity and by tracking Sidra they can see that she is forming a circle around the storm and must already be dumping the gel and generating more heat. If Singer finishes, there will be little they can do. They can't just torpedo it as that will have the same effect. Suddenly inspired by how fast 'Or Death' had sunk when he and Sloane had taken a direct hit, he asks Linc and Eddie to gather all the Hypertherm they have and meet him in the hanger.

Chapters 29 and 30 Analysis

Singer is angry. Not nearly enough oil is in the ocean to fill the storm with the kind of poison he'd hoped for, and despite his careful planning, he didn't have Merrick so that he could rub his face in the second half of his plan either. At least the weather cooperated, and the storm was forming. The captain of the Gulf of Sidra is convinced that the goo in the hold has so weakened his already dilapidated tanker that a storm of the magnitude Singer wants will sink her, but Singer isn't listening. Juan isn't thrilled either. After getting the Oregon back to normal, he goes down to see Susan's body. Her death is something he feels he should have foreseen and been able to prevent. He has no choice now but to get the information he needs from Merrick. Huxley is more than reluctant, assuring Juan that this could kill him, but Juan has no choice and reminds her of the devastation she had witnessed in New Orleans. She does it, and he gets what he needs from Merrick before he crashes.



If Huxley isn't very happy with Juan about his order to chemically wake Merrick to talk to him, she is even less pleased about the pounding her patients are taking as the Oregon heads with as much speed as it dares towards the Gulf of Sidra. Noticing Juan hadn't come to dinner, Sloane takes a tray to his cabin. Finding him asleep, she quietly picks up his clothing to put them neatly on the chair. When his wallet falls out, he doesn't move and while normally not a snoop, her curiosity gets the best of her. She opens it, but finds currency but nothing else. Seeing he is still asleep, she opens a drawer and sees more than one identification, and a box containing his wedding band. She wonders at the foolish woman who would have let him go, but then sees the news clipping about the drunk woman who died in an accident. Thinking about what it would have taken for a man like Juan to marry someone, and the knowledge of how the relationship ended brings tears to her eyes.

When Juan has an inspiration, he tells Eddie to get ready but disappoints Linc by informing him that weight restrictions will keep him back from this mission.



Chapters 31 and 32

Chapters 31 and 32 Summary

George Adams needs all of his skill to get the Robinson helicopter off the deck of the Oregon in the swells of the ever increasing storm but he does it. Max radios them to relay an SOS coming from the Sidra. They have a split in their hull. Juan asks Captain Cassedine to turn due east but the Captain claims damage to the steering gear. To get the Captain and crew off the ship, he tells them he can't come close in the storm, so they will have to abandon ship and be picked up. Juan gets the number in their crew and shortly after tells Cassedine they are ten miles out and he should leave his vessel now. As they approach in the helicopter, Juan can see the lifeboat pulling away. He and Eddie are dropped as carefully as possible on the Sidra to plant charges in a strategic location, and manage to get back onto the helicopter in the nick of time. Combined with the torpedoes fired from the Oregon, she should break in half and sink without discharging too much more of her cargo. Torpedoes are fired before they notice Singer on the deck with the detonator in his hands. Juan drops back onto the deck, and gives chase. Singer slips and falls into the opening made by the storm just as it closes again, severing his legs at the thighs. Juan replaces the detonator, and the explosions and torpedoes hit before he can get back off, but George manages to pick him up before he goes down with the ship.

The team from NUMA has managed to clear the sand from HMS Rove and awaited Sloane's arrival, allowing her to be the first one aboard. Amazed, she finds the remains of H.A. Ryder and what appears to have been a warrior at the table. They had starved to death when the sand had buried them alive in the ship, and the fortune in diamonds still at their feet. Mafana scoops out two handfuls of the largest, and cleanest to give to Juan. Knowing DeBeers will blame Sloane for having to pay fair market value for the stones, and there are millions of dollars worth, Juan offers her a job.

Chapters 31 and 32 Analysis

Flying out to the Sidra, Juan gets the SOS from her Captain and asks her to turn towards them to see who is really in control. He claims there is damage to her and he can't steer, so Juan realizes that he likely has Dan holding a gun to his head. When Juan tells him he'll have to leave his ship for rescue he balks, worried that Juan is interested in salvaging his vessel, so Juan lies and tells him he is a fishing vessel who couldn't tow her if he wanted to. Juan lies to Cassedine, telling him the Oregon is closer than it is to get him and his men off the ship. Cassedine tells them that the ship's owner has decided to stay aboard and 'attempt repairs.' They know Singer is desperate to complete his mission. Singer tries everything he can, but dies aboard the Sidra, knowing he failed. Juan and his team blow the ship in half and he barely gets off. Returning to the Oregon he is greeted with congratulations. The squall blows itself out,



but still has enough power to have rated a name, and the public never knows the reason it is called Tropical Storm Juan.

Moses Ndebele wants to join Cabrillo, Max and Sloane when they leave for the HMS Rove, but it is too soon after surgery on his shattered foot, so he sends Mafana in his stead although his trust in Juan is implicit. Kurt Austin from NUMA is waiting for them, and had come in person to see who had so much influence over Dirk Pitt that he could impress him. They enter, stunned at the scene that meets them. Ryder's journal indicates that the warriors had not killed him because he had once saved the Herero leader from a lion attack. The reprieve is brief, as the storm has already buried them in the sand, making escape for either impossible. Food and water stores last a month before people start dying. Ryder and the warrior leader are the last living and are found facing each other at the table, the diamonds at their feet. Mafana sorts out two handfuls of the largest and clearest to give to Juan who turns them down, but Ndebele had anticipated that. Mafana laughs and gives them to Max to divide amongst the crew. Knowing that DeBeers will not be happy with Sloane for the outcome, he offers her a job, but she can't accept until she gets just a bit of fraternization out of her system so she kisses him first.



Characters

Juan (Chairman) Cabrillo

Juan is the owner of the Corporation that designed and created the vessel with its many modifications and also the Captain that operates the modified tramp freighter, Oregon. He lives for his work, pays his crew well, and treats them better than any normal boss would. For those reasons, he can employ the best, and does.

Juan has eclectic tastes. He was married at one time, but his wife was killed in a drunk driving accident, and he buries the pain it causes him. He's handsome in a rugged way, and gives the impression that he was born in the wrong century, and would be more at home on the bridge of a clipper ship crossing the Pacific with a load of silk and spices. Asked what he would do if not Captaining the Oregon, he claims he would be a paramedic. He has no desire to be the doctor - rather the unsung hero who does the life saving triage first.

He has strong, and well defined features and an easy, commanding manner. His eyes are a clear blue with intensity and depth that seem to take in everything they see with clarity. He's also a loner who makes decisions quickly and without second guessing himself. It is a level of confidence that few people have and even few can back up. He has one leg that is a prosthetic, having lost it in a previous skirmish, but has adapted well to the use of man made alternatives. One thing Juan hates more than anything else is pity. It hit him hardest when Doctor Julia Huxley wheeled him out of the hospital after he lost his leg, and he spent thousands of hours and dollars on regaining his strength, agility and confidence with various prosthesis to ensure he would never see it again.

He speaks Spanish, Arabic, and Russian fluently and had single-handedly carried out some of the agencies most difficult assignments.

His call sign on missions is Beau Geste.

Sloane Macintyre

Working for a security division of DeBeers, Sloane could have been much higher up the corporate ladder some time ago, but chooses to live her life differently. She is part adventurer, part adrenaline junkie and part romantic. Sloane is optimistic. She does not know how to fail, or to give up. No matter how difficult the task, she manages to see the prize at the end and goes forward with enthusiasm until she reaches it. It is the quality that makes her successful. When she occasionally comes up empty handed, she finds herself reviewing her life and her lack of accomplishments. She wonders about her decisions to chase these kinds of adventures and thinks about her sister who is married and has children, and wonders if life is passing her by. Despite a business degree from Columbia, she is spending her time in third world countries and sometimes wonders if she'll ever manage to make her way up the corporate ladder to success of any kind.



She doesn't scare easy, and thrives on adversity. She is honest, and has integrity that comes from a good upbringing. She knows a great deal about boats, having learned from her father, and has an eye for details that most would miss. It is the quality that makes her a better investigator than others.

Sloane has copper hair to her shoulders and her eyes are wide set and gray. She has a confident demeanor, her nose is a bit too long and her mouth is a bit too wide to qualify her as a model kind of beautiful. She has enough weight to give her build curves instead of angles, and has a quick wit and sense of humor. Her body language gives those around her the impression that she is in charge.

Eddie Seng

Eddie joined the Corporation shortly after an early retirement from the CIA, and though he lacked the combat experience of some, he made up for it several times over with his incredible determination. His term with the CIA included many excursions into China where he was able to get in and out without detection. As chief of shore operations and head of the gun dogs which is what Max called their group of SEALs, Force Recon and Special Forces crew, Eddie gets the job done. Eddie is lean and mean. His stature is the result of a lifetime of martial arts training and is simply unable to tolerate failure in himself or a mission.

Eddie had gone into the CIA right after college and spent most of the next fifteen years flying in and out of China cultivating informants. He is a meticulous planner which is part of the reason Juan made him Chief of Shore Operations. He and Franklin Linc are one of few 'dream teams' that work so well together they are an invaluable pairing.

He is a brave man with little in the way of family ties that go beyond the Oregon and aunts, uncles and cousins in New York - none of which who know what he does for a living.

Franklin Lincoln (Linc)

Linc is a well oiled machine, and his body reflects the hours of time spent in the ship's weight room. His muscles bulge and his body is well toned. He has an air of confidence born of previous engagements, and has no idea how to fail. Franklin is the Corporation's expert lock pick. He is the most senior African American on Juan's crew. He and Eddie Seng are considered by Juan to be one of few 'dream team' matches that are so good on missions together that they can almost read each others minds.

His call sign on operations is Lawrence of Arabia.



Max Henley

Oldest member of the crew on board the modified freighter, Max is 64 years old and is the Chief Engineer and First Officer aboard the Oregon. His hair is ginger and only a fringe around his skull remains. His belt line has thickened, but he can still handle himself. He has been with Juan since Juan started the Corporation, and Juan considers him to be a loyal friend and is known to quip that Max 'put the rump in grumpy.'

His call sign is Death Valley Scotty

Geoffrey Merrick

At fifty one years of age, Geoff is divorced and has two children, both of whom are grown. He has a PhD in Chemistry from MIT and received his exactly one day younger than Mark was when he did. He formed a partnership with Daniel Singer forming Merrick/Singer, and a year later they became billionaires when they went public. They have a total of eighty patents over twenty five years and their company has grown to a staff of 160. Their largest patent was for an organic based filter to remove sulfur from coal fired plant emissions. A low key man, he prefers to work in the shadows.

Maurice

Chief Steward aboard the Oregon, Maurice is fastidious and likely best suited to the Victorian Age. His age, never properly determined, is somewhere between 65 and 80 years old. He shaves twice a day, wears custom shirts and expensive dress shoes but is equally at home in those as he is when he plays the illusion of the tramp freighter pigsty.

He is a master chef, and admits that in all the years with Juan, Cabrillo has never truly taxed his skills. He is the only member of the Oregon to call Juan 'Captain'. Formerly, he oversaw high tea for twenty officers off the Falkland Islands.

Mark Murphy

A certified genius, Mark earned his PhD before he was twenty. He is an awkward looking man, with a goatee and a habit of wearing nothing but black clothing. Though he has no military background, he had been recommended by Eric who convinced Juan that they weapons expert would be worth his paycheck. Eric was right. Murphy has been with the Corporation for three years, enjoys punk music, and on down time turns the deck into a skate board park. He isn't much of a sports enthusiast.

Mark is the weapons officer aboard the Oregon.



Doctor Julia Huxley

Senior staff member aboard the Oregon, she is also the ships' Physician. She is competent and capable even under extreme circumstances, and Juan swears by her capabilities citing her treatment post operative when he lost his leg.

Linda Ross

Spearheading the information division for the Corporation, Linda is petite and perky. Described as elfin, she has a background in naval intelligence and is equally at home on the bridge. She is a senior staff member on the Oregon.

Hali Kasim

Communications officer aboard the Oregon, he is Lebanese American.

Tony Reardon

Pessimistic jerk sent with Sloane by DeBeers to investigate her theory that the HMS Rove with her full cache of a billion dollars of diamonds still aboard is located in waters off the coast of Africa. He is a self involved, and self centered individual with little work ethic, and a small mind. He doesn't care whether he completes a job or not, and has no pride in himself or his work. He has a crisp British accent, and is easily unmanned by circumstances that involve him having any degree of bravery.

Mike Trono

Former para rescue jumper with the Air Force, he is now employed aboard the Oregon. Part of Juan's second 'dream team' paired with Ski.

Jerry Pulaski (Ski)

Similar to the pairing of Eddie and Linc, Jerry and Mike are what Juan refers to as a seldom seen 'dream team' when on operations, able to virtually anticipate each other and read each others minds. Prior to his post on the Oregon, he served 15 years as a recon Marine. Good sense of humor and adaptable under pressure.

Tiny Gunderson

Pilot and crewman aboard the Oregon, he is one of the invaluable members of the crew where air support is concerned.



H.A. Ryder

Ryder is an old African hand. He abandoned a failing farm in Sussex during the Kimberley rush in an attempt to make a million in the diamond fields. By the time he arrived in 1868, the Colesberg Kopje was already mostly staked out. He and two native guides took a pair of wagons filled with salt to cure game and began providing meat for the workers. They ranged for thousands of square miles and he learned Matabele, Mashona, Herero and even some of the click language of the San Bushmen in the process. He worked as a safari guide, strung lines for the telegraph company and fought in many skirmishes.

He has a raspy voice, and a demeanor filled with certainty. He is used to leading and making difficult decisions. He is the only one in his group to have previously crossed the wasteland of the Kalahari, and the men defer to his judgment. Ryder picked up several tricks from the San the first time he went through the desert with them, and is confident he can find water for his group. He makes them promises to keep them going forward.

Papa Heinrick

Namibian fisherman, Heinrick is at least part bushman and lives in a cabin isolated at the far side of Sandwich Bay and concealed by an overgrowth of reeds. He is a wizened old man with bandy legs that is so thin that each rib across his chest shows and there are hollows on both sides of his collarbone. Horn earrings pierce his large jug sized ears and he has a flat, broad nose. His eyes are bright though yellow, and his hair is white. His tiny stature is at odds with his self image, and he lays claim to having lost enough fishing line to stretch from his home to Cape Cross Bay and back, eighty miles to the north. He has no use for money, and though reluctant, he shares some of his experience with Sloane.

George Adams

Helicopter pilot who serves aboard the Oregon.

Dan Singer

At six foot seven inches tall, Dan Singer is Geoffrey Merrick's former business partner. A brilliant man, he has gone over the deep end now, with delusions of grandeur and a Messiah complex. He is orchestrating a two pronged plot to destabilize the world in an attempt to bring global warming to their attention.



Susan Donleavy

Susan has worked for Merrick/Singer for two years. She is a researcher in organic chemistry and is working towards her doctorate. She lives alone, without husband or children. She is a spy, who actually works for Geoffrey Merrick's former partner Dan Singer, and is an active part of the plot to kidnap Merrick and try him for crimes against humanity. She has a violent streak, and isn't above using it, shooting Merrick when she realizes Juan's crew is there to rescue him.

Moses Ndebele

Opposition leader in Africa, he is seen by his followers as the hope of the country. Held by Dan Singer and a group of African mercenaries, he is tried for crimes against his country and is sentenced to be put to death. He has been held for two years, and frequently tortured. He is being held with Geoffrey Merrick at Devil's Oasis, and is rescued by Juan and his own second in command and friend Mafana. He is the first leader to unite both the Matabele and the Mashona tribes, and held the rank of General during their war of independence.

Eric Stone

Helmsman aboard the Oregon, and unofficial meteorologist.

Mafana

Pushing the age of fifty, Mafana leads a rebel contingent of thirty men who are loyal to Moses Ndebele and trying to free him. He has tight curls with white hair asserting itself through them and wrinkles lining his forehead. A former guerrilla, he was a Sergeant in the war of independence. He is relieved to relinquish control of the mission to Juan, admitting that he lacks the tactical experience or knowledge.

Nina Visser

Nina is currently working as Dan Singers right hand at the prison located at Devil's Oasis. She has an image of her own self importance that makes her believe that she will one day be a champion of the environment, and sees herself on a par with Greenpeace founders Robert Hunter and Paul Watson. She keeps journals to document her journey as the world's savior, convinced that one day they will be invaluable to document her biography.



Justus Ulenga

Namibian captain of the Pinguin, and hired to shuttle some of Juan's men from shore to international waters where the Oregon waited.

Langston Overholt

Juan's CIA contact.



Objects/Places

Kalahari Desert

African desert crossed by H.A. Ryder and his four companions after the theft of the Herero king's diamonds.

Swakopmund

Town in Namibia that Sloane and Tony stay in while looking for the HMS Rove.

Kraal

African enclosure belonging to a group or tribe.

Assegais

Spears made by the native tribes in Africa

Rondoval

Hut used by Herero natives to store hay.

Skeleton Coast

Coast off African continent.

Corporation

Started by the Chairman, Juan, it is the company that owns the modified tramp freighter.

Devil's Oasis

Namibian prison now defunct that Dan Singer has his mercenaries take Merrick to.

Penguin

Charter vessel hired by Sloan to check out Heinrich's lead.



HMS Rove

Vessel begin sought by Sloane and Tony that was sunk in a freak storm that changed the coastline of Africa. Storm was so intense that the ship, sank in water but was then buried by the changing coastline, and now lies inland 8 miles under a sea of sand.

Oregon

Name of the modified freighter operated by Juan Cabrillo.

Walvis Bay

Area where the small Sandwich Bay and Heinrick's cabin is located.

Echelon

NSA's cyber snooper that is capable of real time eaves dropping using specific search parameters to monitor and record and relevant conversations.

Saffir-Simpson Scale

Scientific scales used to measure force and intensity of storms.

Cabinda, Angola

City where Juan tracks the first few weapons to, and place where Singer waits.

Gulf of Sidra

Libyan tanker Singer purchased for incubation of organics.

CAR

Congolese Army of Revolution.

Nomad and Discovery

Names of two submersibles launched from the Oregon to fight Makambo and his men.

CroonerCo.

Newly incorporated company Dan Singer uses to purchase Gulf of Sidra. Veiled reference to his last name noted by Murphy.



Themes

Fanaticism vs Activists

Juan Cabrillo formed the Corporation with the knowledge of the new threats that the world faced today. While in the beginning days of activists, those involved would lead peaceful protests, chain themselves to vehicles or buildings to get attention, religion spawned a different kind of activist that rapidly became a fanatic. Of course, religion always had a leading edge on fanaticism, but the devout were not alone. Racial fanatics like those involved in the KKK or the Nazi movement were a prime example of the beginning of a new age of fanatic. The days when protests were done with voice and placard were coming to a swift and unfortunately violent end. Knowing all of this, Juan began the Corporation, and construction of the Oregon to sail into the very divide created.

He had long been able to see that the polarity of opinion had sharpened. Societal niceties were no longer the norm, and respect and restraint no longer applied. It seemed that more and more, regardless of issue, violence was becoming the tool used to combat extreme differences of opinion. The world no longer feared nuclear holocaust between the Soviets and the United States. He could see that regardless of the side, be it East, West, Muslim, Christian, Socialist or Capitalist, Rich or Destitute - violence was the new currency for conversation. Sadly, Juan understood that the Corporation, and tools like the Oregon were likely to be employed much more than not. The future was disheartening.

Lawful Action vs Necessary Force

Since laws were first enacted to keep the peace and to establish boundaries of behavior for human kind not only towards each other but towards the world itself, a police force capable of enforcing those laws was necessary. In simpler times, this force was as limited as a local constabulary and a local jailhouse. If a person broke the law, he or she would find themselves in front of a local magistrate and likely spending time in the township jail. As we 'advanced' and became a more 'educated' population, those who felt they were above the law, or were looking for an easy score would subvert the law to their own end. The more complicated our society became, the more convoluted our laws were required to be. The regulations that governed us as a society became the next target. A criminal who was caught could then look for a legal loophole with which to avoid prosecution for a crime despite obviously having committed it.

As a result, even more rules and regulations came into play. Court systems became multi-layered systems of justice where an accused person could appeal their conviction, and the police force had to become more versatile to keep up. Detectives were added to the police force to investigate crimes; the CIA was created to deal with issues of Central Intelligence and the FBI was formed to oversee the issues that involved Federal



regulation needs. Still, criminals found ways to subvert the law. As we grew worldwide as a populous, other issues came into sharper focus. Land had always been fought over in civil wars and even world wars, but a new kind of criminal emerged. The terrorist is a breed of malcontent all to itself. This form of criminal has no allegiance to anything beyond their beliefs - whether they are political, religious, or territorial.

The terrorist required a new attitude from law enforcement as well. First a form of 'black ops' was established where government agencies would send out sanctioned members of their staff in secret to deal with a threat against the nation in ways that might not necessarily fall within the laws of society as they are written. As the behavior of the average terrorist worsened and became more drastic, so did the responses from clandestine operations to deal with them. The public sat blissfully unaware for the most part between the two. With the advent of closer monitoring of all facets of government and those employed by it, it became harder and harder to run a black operation without some repercussions. In Clive Cussler's *Skeleton Coast*, Juan Cabrillo is a former CIA member who forms a Corporation to deal with situations that the government cannot cope with. Issues that involved crossing the line to a large degree in order to accomplish the capture or rescue of a person; clandestine operations that prevented or helped to overthrow existing governments; and the kinds of operations that required global freedom and reasonable force used if necessary were the kinds of situations that the Corporation took on. Most often acting with full government sanctions of one agency or another, they were employed to deal with the kinds of situations that regular channels simply couldn't cope with. One has to wonder what the next link in the chain will be. The fact that this kind of 'Corporation' is actually a viable necessity in current times is a sad example of how 'advanced' we truly are.

Technology

The technology of this day and age has both its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are plain to see. We create cars that run cleaner and use less fuel; we find ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the planet by using solar and wind power where we can; and we try to minimize our impact on the dwindling resources while doing as much as we can for the species on our planet who are nearing extinction. While a great many people on the planet are still oblivious to the precarious position we are in, and go about their daily lives as though nothing will ever change - there are almost as many who are working towards a solution. We may not find one that makes enough of a difference to turn the tables back in our favor, but we are trying.

Sadly, there are also those who would use their considerable intelligence, and financial resources against the rest of humanity. Nuclear power could be one of the greatest and cleanest sources of power ever invented, but there will always be a small faction of idealists who will use that kind of resource in a weapons capacity instead. In an effort to own more land, or glean more power from the rest, they will wield these remarkable resources and employ them as a fulcrum to bend the will of the majority to suit the desires of the minority. Terrorists and fanatics will rail against human kind for whichever cause is dearest to them, and often create a situation that benefits no one in the

process. The advent of 9/11 is a classic example of that mentality. Money and time went into training that could have been much better served had it been applied to education rather than brainwashing. The planet will always find a way to heal itself. Just one century ago, London was blanketed in fog so thick that the sun was never seen, all because the industrial pollution overwhelmed nature. Then someone improved the technology and the problem was resolved. The air improved. The solutions can't be found in demonstrations that squander millions. Instead of propaganda and press releases, concrete solutions need to be found and employed.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of *Skeleton Coast* is written in the third person narrative witness. The author authentically describes the actions of each character, with concentration on the main characters, Juan Cabrillo and Sloane Macintyre. While there is a little attention paid to the thoughts of the main characters, they are referred without depth of emotion. The protagonist, Juan Cabrillo is well described and outlined in detail, as is the antagonist, Dan Singer.

The story is told in an exposition style with scattered dialogue throughout. This method helps to keep the characters organized as the author alternates between Cabrillo, Singer, Sloane and the supporting characters that round out the adventure. Any other type of narrative would have likely created more confusion between the characters, but the descriptive narratives bring the characters and their environments to life. The reader is not given insight to the most private thoughts of the characters, but the omission in no way detracts from the story and the way the characters are represented.

Setting

Skeleton Coast takes place primarily off the coast of Africa, where the reader's journey begins in 1896 after the Chief of the Herero tribe is robbed of his stash of uncut diamonds. The thieves race across the Kalahari desert to a waiting ship called the *Rove*, but she is caught as the tide goes out and is unable to sail to freedom. The storm of the century rages, and ensures they never do. For a brief chapter, the reader is taken to present day inside the laboratories at Merrick/Singer in Geneva, Switzerland where Susan Dunleavy has discovered a formula to turn a liquid into gel (although it seems to generate heat).

From there, still present day, a trip to Mauritania where her invention is loaded into a dilapidated freighter to percolate. Dan Singer hopes to use it to create the storm of all storms. Next, the freighter, *Oregon*, is introduced which regularly hires out for specialized and dangerous assignments - the current one taking place in the Congo where a stash of bugged weapons is delivered to jungle rebels. At the same time, in Swakopmund, Namibia, Sloane Macintyre who is employed by DeBeers, questions the local fishermen in an effort to locate the final resting place of the *Rove*. The freighter *Oregon* is headed for a new mission to rescue Geoff Merrick from Devil's Oasis when they encounter Sloane and her group in the vessel *Pinguin*, being chased by Singer's men who believe so strongly in his cause that they would rather die than give up.

After an unscheduled rescue, Juan Cabrillo (Chairman of the Corporation which owns and operates the *Oregon*) and Sloane uncover a plot that takes them to Cabinda where Dan Singer has unleashed Makambo and his rebels to begin the first of a two stage plot



to throw the world into environmental chaos. Much oil is released and blood is spilled before over four hundred rebels are arrested. All that remains now is to hunt down Dan Singer and foil his plot to unleash the storm of the century.

Language and Meaning

Written well in modern day English, *Skeleton Coast* is an easy to comprehend novel. Clive Cussler uses a moderate amount of nautical terms as a good deal of the story takes place on the water, and it is interspersed with an even larger amount of technical and scientific language. Terms that describe advanced scientific tools and military gear lend credence to a story that would not be believable without it. The freighter called the *Oregon* is run by the Corporation, whose chairman - Juan Cabrillo is a former CIA operative. Seeing the course of the future, he creates a freighter that from the outside appears to be on its last days.

Inside, below the rusted decks and dilapidated topside is a state of the art, computer driven, technological marvel, with all of the most current advances in military and nautical sciences. Hidden beneath false fronts are the most fearsome collection of weaponry, UAV's and helicopter, submersibles and the most advanced lifeboat ever created. All of this looks harmless at first glance, but is fast, maneuverable and versatile. Language including sciences such as nanofibers, magnetohydrodynamics, NSA's Echelon program (satellite eavesdropping), transdermal locaters, and wave-driven generators all lend to the authenticity of the story, and the enjoyment by the reader. At the same time, nautical terms such as transom, port, starboard and stern directives, knots and other maritime phrases and descriptions make the story aboard the *Oregon* come to life.

Structure

Skeleton Coast by Clive Cussler is divided into 32 chapters which vary from four to twenty pages in length. While the novel begins in 1896, it is only there for long enough to set the stage for the disappearance of *The Rove* and to introduce the reader to her considerable wealth. From there, current day events unfold in alternating chapters throughout most of the novel. For the first even numbered chapters up until approximately the half way mark, Sloane Macintyre is determined to find *The Rove* for her company DeBeers and return to them the diamonds on board. Alternating chapters introduce us to Juan Cabrillo and his team aboard the very special but seemingly dilapidated freighter, the *Oregon*. Juan is tasked with delivering a cache of weapons to a group of Congolese rebels. Tagged, they are supposed to lead the Congolese government back to the jungle hideout of the rebels. It is of the missions he routinely takes on, operating with varying government sanctions but without the restrictions they face. As independents, the *Oregon* and her crew rescue kidnap victims, stop madmen and foil their plots to wreck the world as we know it, and help to stabilize world wide governments. All in all altruistic were it not for the large sums of money they receive for

their services. Juan and Sloane discover that their separate agendas have common factors and work together to solve them.

Quotes

"They'll follow us to the gates of hell for what we did to them." Chp 1, Pg 2
H.A. Ryder to Jon Varley when Jon asks if Ryder is sure that the Herero king's men are still chasing them.

"You know what they say - 'diamonds are a mercenary's best friend.'" Chp 3, Pg 32
Max Hanley to Juan after docking to meet with the mercenaries.

"I assume we're talking about the same Geoffrey Merrick who runs Merrick/Singer.....The billionaire whose inventions in the field of clean coal have opened up a world of possibilities for the industry and made him one of the most hated men on the planet by environmental groups because they still think coal's too dirty." Chp 5, Pg 72-3
Juan to Hali and senior staff after hearing about the abduction.

"Leave Namibia or the next time I won't miss." Chp 7, Pg 88
Shout from two men chasing Sloane after they failed to catch or shoot her - this time.

"The power companies hold your scrubbers as proof of their environmental concern when sulfur is only one small component of the filth they produce." Chp 10, Pg 108
Electronic voice of kidnapper through computer explaining to Merrick why he was kidnapped, charged and found guilty in absentia.

"Teach a man to fish and he eats for a day, give him an assault rifle and some sharks and he can feed his crew for a lifetime." Chp 13, Pg 139
Comment made by Juan to Max when Max questioned his need to outfit his modified lifeboat with a Belgian FN-FAL assault rifle.

"Are you always prepared for World War Three or did I catch you at a particularly paranoid moment?" Chp 13, Pg 140
Sloane to Juan when he reveals just a bit of his true capabilities.

"I just saw the body of a man who was horribly tortured before being murdered and I was shot at about fifty times." Chp 16, Pg 162
Juan to Tony by way of explanation after he gives him the ultimatum to either shut up or get he'd get knocked unconscious.

"Once we check out the area where Papa Heinrick saw his metal snakes and determine for ourselves what's going on, I'll tell you my whole life story." Chp 16, Pg 170
Juan's promise to Sloane when she questions who he is after their escape from the men at Luca's apartment.

"That particular corporate culture is why no one saw 9/11 or Iraq's initial invasion of Kuwait or the sophistication of India and Pakistan's nuclear program, and part of the reason I left." Chp 18, Pg 194



Juan to Max as they discuss the CIA's policy to sweep their incompetence under the rug so that no one is accountable for failures that have massive consequences. He is referring to the fact that the CIA made the arms deal with a political figure planning a coup.

"What do you know of our baba, our father, Moses Ndebele?" Chp 20, Pg 224
Mafana questioning Juan after his less than graceful entrance and landing near where Mafana's troops were in the desert.

"I told him when they first imprisoned me not to try something like this, but I should have known he wouldn't listen." Chp 22, Pg 247
Moses Ndebele to Juan when Juan arrives to get him out of Devil's Oasis.

"You hired me because I have a certain background, and skills that no one in the crew possesses. Just because I hate my job doesn't mean I don't have to do it." Chp 23, Pg 267

Linda to Juan just before she goes in to find out everything Susan Dunleavy knows about Dan Singer's plans.

"I told them (my people) that to fight at your side is to fight at mine... that you and I are now brothers because of what you did for me." Chp 26, Pg 293
Moses Ndebele to Cabrillo as they prepare their men to fight Singer and Makambo's men.

"Little lady, I don't know who you are or where in all get all you came from, but —, darlin', am I glad to see you." Chp 28, Pg 315
Jim Gibson to Linda Ross as she and two others free him and the other rig employees on the rig she and Juan had boarded.

"My idea is that if he spreads it in a circle just as the hurricane begins to revolve he will be able to dictate where and when the eye will form - and most important, how big it will be." Chp 30, Pg 346

Eric to Juan as the group brainstorms the possible ways Singer could be intending the deployment of Susan's gel for maximum impact.

"Then you should have spent your millions on inventing it (a solution to make the internal combustion engine obsolete) sooner rather than squandering it on a demonstration that can't possibly change anything." Chp 31, Pg 362
Juan's last conversation with Singer as he tells him his problem is that he is all about propaganda and press releases instead of concrete solutions.



Topics for Discussion

Two groups of people are concealing the truth about their identity and their intentions. Who are they? What are they hiding? How and why?

Geoffrey Merrick is charged and convicted of a crime by his 'peers.' What is it and why is he convicted?

What does Papa Heinrich tell Sloane that convinces her she should investigate further?

What three things does Juan claim diamonds are for? What two of them does Sloane say are correct?

Where did the precious cargo aboard the HMS Rove originate? How did it find its way on board the ship from its original site? Who was involved in moving it each leg of the journey?

Describe the differences between an activist and a fanatic. Discuss the many ways that fanaticism has blossomed in today's society, and project the effect this could have on the world. Use religion, money, politics and land in varying examples.

What does Juan discover in the ocean with Sloane? What does he learn about Sloane's situation vs his rescue mission?

Who else do they find in the prison at Devil's Oasis? Why is this hostage so important? Who is behind the hostage taking and why?

Why isn't Juan able to land with his group? How does Juan manage to help his team despite how far away he lands?

Who almost foils Merrick's rescue, and why is it such a surprise to the rescue team?

Why does Juan's arms deal with the Congolese not work the way it is supposed to? Who double crosses him and why? How does he still manage to track the weapons?

Who's aid does Dan Singer enlist? To what end?

What is Singer hoping to accomplish and why? What is the second half of his plan?

How does Juan manage to gather the troops he needs to counter the assault in progress by the Army of Revolution?

How does Susan avoid further interrogation?

What does Sloane discover in Juan's cabin that makes her cry?