

Tai-Pan Study Guide

Tai-Pan by James Clavell

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Plot Summary

"The island was Hong Kong. Thirty square miles of mountainous stone on the north lip of the huge Pearl River in South China. A thousand yards off the mainland. Inhospitable. Unfertile. Uninhabited except for a tiny fishing village on the south side. Squarely in the path of the monstrous storms that yearly exploded from the Pacific. Bordered on the east and on the west by dangerous shoals and reefs. Useless to the mandarin - the name given to any official of the Chinese Emperor - in whose province it lay." (Chap. 1, p. 3)

The book, which involves many subplots, follows the adventures of Dirk and The Noble House. The Noble House faces financial ruin due to a run on its London bank. Dirk risks his life in an effort to save his empire from financial ruin. His son arrives and is being trained to be Tai-Pan when he falls in love with the daughter of his arch-rival, Tyler Brock, giving the story a Romeo and Juliet feel. Dirk and Tyler continue their rivalry to the end of the book. There is the story of Dirk's Chinese mistress and the family he has by her as he frantically tries to save her from dying of malaria. There is Dirk's illegitimate half-Chinese son, Gordon Chen, who becomes a wealthy Hong Kong businessman and is the leader of the Hong Kong Triads, a secret society dedicated to the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty. This is also the era of pirates on the high seas and Dirk has to deal with them. There are debts and favors to be repaid that add to the intrigue of the novel.

Most of the action of the novel centers around the two rivals, Dirk Struan and Tyler Brock, the owners of two rival trading houses. Brock's son Gorth hates Dirk and Culum and tries to ruin them harder than his father does, which provides most of the action for the second half of the novel.

This well written novel tells a story that is full of suspense and intrigue. The clash of two cultures is evident throughout the novel, and Clavell does an excellent job of illustrating this clash. The book is hard to put down once the reader begins. Like most of Clavell's novels, Tai-Pan is an historical novel, which means that it is based on historical events surrounding the Orient at the time. The novel is well worth the reader's time.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The novel begins with the British taking possession of the island of Hong Kong. This is the era of the European and British traders and how they began to penetrate the Chinese mainland. The main character of the novel, Dirk Struan, is the well-known and well-respected Tai-Pan of The Noble House. This is the largest of the trading companies, and its leader has dreams of making Hong Kong a strong British concern and base of operations for the traders: "The island was Hong Kong. Thirty square miles of mountainous stone on the north lip of the huge Pearl River in South China. A thousand yards off the mainland. Inhospitable. Unfertile. Uninhabited except for a tiny fishing village on the south side. Squarely in the path of the monstrous storms that yearly exploded from the Pacific. Bordered on the east and on the west by dangerous shoals and reefs. Useless to the mandarin - the name given to any official of the Chinese Emperor - in whose province it lay." (Chap. 1, p. 3).

The book opens on January 26, 1841, with Dirk Struan walking up the quarterdeck of the H.M.S. Vengeance, which is a part of an expeditionary force in China. The war against China had ended victoriously, as Dirk had predicted. England's prize for winning the war was Hong Kong, a small island of thirty square miles, located on the Pearl River. The only inhabitants of the island live in a small fishing village. It was useless to the Chinese province which had held it, but its magnificent harbor made it valuable to the English. Struan also viewed it as a way into China.

Others are not as excited at the acquisition of the island, as Struan was. The traders and officers of the expeditionary force, who were there for the ceremony, viewed it as a barren island and felt that England could have done much better. Wilf Tillman tells the group that whether they are happy with the island or not, it holds the future of trade with China. His partner, Jeff Cooper, says it has a good harbor and they can build their homes on the island and live there without interference from China. Tyler Brock, another trader, isn't happy at the prospect since he feels nothing will grow there.

Struan and Company is the biggest trading company in Asia and is well known. The Chinese traders call it The Noble House. Brock's plan to overcome both Struan and Company and the Americans becomes known right at the beginning. Struan and Brock had been business rivals for many years. Brock had watched as Struan built his empire from one small lorcha, while his company remained second.

The war resulted from the Chinese emperor trying to put an end to the lucrative British opium trade. It began in Canton, where the traders were held hostage in exchange for all of their opium. The released hostages fled to Macao. The expeditionary forces appeared and followed a plan formulated by Dirk Struan. They took Cushman and then blockaded the Yangtse and the Pei Ho River, which threatened Peking. Two weeks later, the Chinese emperor negotiated the peace agreement which gave Hong Kong to the



British. Brock felt the British should have taken Cushman instead of Hong Kong, and feels that there will be another war for the lands that they should have taken.

As the men discuss the history of the situation, it becomes obvious that none of them likes the other. Cooper-Tillman has a deal with Struan where they act as agents for The Noble House. Brock is unaware of the deal. The war with England did not bar the Americans from trading with the Chinese. They carried goods to Spain which went on to England during the war, with Struan paying off the officials with opium. The British Navigation Acts prohibited foreign ships from carrying goods to England, which is why they acted as an agent for Struan.

The men watch as Dirk Struan arrives for the ceremony. This is Dirk's first time on the island since he had refused to go on the island until it was possessed by the British. His people had surveyed the island so he was knowledgeable about it. While Dirk was building his trading company, when trade was idle he spent his time capturing pirates and was paid in silver by the government for turning them in.

The rivalry between Struan and Brock goes back a long way to the days when they worked on the Vagrant Star. Struan was a twelve-year-old cabin boy and Brock was the eighteen-year-old third mate. They hated each other from the beginning. The East India Company controlled all trade at the time and they had a deficit from the goods that England imported that was offset by the opium trade that their merchants dealt in. Struan had owned his first ship at the age of twenty and was active in the opium trade. He and his rival, Brock, were the leading traders. They were called China traders.

The China traders were barred from the legitimate and lucrative trade in other goods, so they began to agitate in Parliament to break the monopoly of the British East India Company. The Company retaliated by revoking the opium licenses of Brock and Struan. Several years later, the Parliament limited the power of the Company and Struan and Brock open rival trading companies. Both are prosperous.

The ceremony is to be conducted by Captain Glessing. When it is obvious that the onset is late because he is waiting for the arrival of Dirk Struan, Brock complains. Glessing isn't happy with the situation and does not like Dirk Struan, although he likes Robb. He disagrees with the strategy that ended the war. Aristotle Quance is an artist who is painting the scene from the beach. He also does not favor the acquisition of Hong Kong. Quance, like many of the people attending the ceremony, lives in Macao. Some, like the Reverend Mauss, say they will move to Hong Kong. Others, like Aristotle Quance, say they won't and will remain in Macao.

Gordon Chen, the illegitimate son of the Tai-Pan, is also at the ceremony. He is active in the opium trade and thinks that he will become very rich in Hong Kong. He discusses the situation with Reverend Horatio Sinclair when the Struans reach shore and are greeted by Brock and Glessing. They also discuss the opium trade. The ceremony then begins, with Glessing reading the proclamation. After the ceremony, Dirk learns that there is an attempt in progress to outlaw the opium trade. The order is to be issued that afternoon but not to be enforced for a week, so the traders have time to dispose of their



opium. The Struans discuss the fact that they will be ruined without the opium trade. Dirk tells Robb to use all of their money to buy opium. There will be a panic when the order is announced and the order will be canceled at the end of the week. He already has a copy of the proclamation canceling the order. They will make a fortune that week.

Dirk Struan plans to run for Parliament where he can protect the interests of The Noble House. He tells Robb that he will be Tai-Pan in six months time. Unlike Robb, his wife and children live in Scotland and he wants to be with them. Dirk only sees them for a month every few years when he returns to Scotland. He now has the wealth of The Noble House and plans to fight the Earl of Struan for some of the family holdings that they lost years ago. His son Culum will join Robb. Robb isn't happy and feels that he will not be successful as Tai-Pan.

Dirk meets Gordon Chen after the ceremony and talks with him. Chen says he hopes to be of service to The Noble House in the future. Gordon doesn't tell Dirk that he is a member of the secret Chinese society the Hung Mun Tong, which is dedicated to overthrowing the Manchu dynasty. Now his Hung Mun would have a base of operation in Hong Kong.

Dirk had had advance knowledge of the Chinese government's hostage holding incident that he obtained from Mary Sinclair, sister of the reverend, who asks if Mary can return to Macao on his ship. He consents. A few minutes later, he negotiates a deal with Jeff Cooper. They both know that the new treaty will open up Canton to trade. Glessing is also at the reception. He again toys with the idea of proposing to Mary. Her brother is slightly indignant at the thought of Glessing being associated with his sister.

Brock was watching the socializing on shore from his boat. One of his crew tells him of the rumor of an order to stop the opium trade and that it is to be issued that afternoon. Brock's wife and daughters are aboard with him, and appear at this time. Brock tells the crew to move their opium up the coast and to keep paying their informant aboard Struan's ship.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The island of Hong-Kong is acquired by the English as a result of the war with China. Not all are happy with the acquisition. Dirk Struan views the island as valuable because of its harbor. Others view the island as a barren piece of rock. Tyler Brock, the head the British shipping company, has plans to crush his American opposition, which is owned by Jeff Cooper and Wilf Tillman. The animosity between Brock and the two Americans is evident in their discussion before the office ceremony that hands Hong Kong over to the British. Brock's plan is revealed, in that he views Struan and Company as his greatest threat and needs the support of the two Americans against Struan.

Struan also has his plans. He plans to sit in Parliament and fight the Earl of Struan for the family lands and title. He plans to return to Scotland in the next few months leaving



his brother, Robb, as Tai-Pan, and says he will send his son Culum to help Robb and that the two younger sons will go to sea.

Another plot is revealed, that of Gordon Chen, who belongs to the secret Chinese society, Hung Mun Tong. The group is working to overthrow the Manchu dynasty and now will have a base of operation in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong they would be free from the Chinese mandarins. He plans to use his position with The Noble House to help his cause.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Robb is in the main cabin having tea with Captain Isaac Perry. He is surprised when his nephew, Culum, enters the cabin. He tells them of the plague epidemic that occurred in Scotland and that his mother, brothers, and various family members are dead. His cousin, Roddy, Robb's son, is safe. They go ashore to tell Dirk. When Dirk learns of the events, he sends Chen Sheng to Macao to buy herbs and other remedies attributed to helping ease the after-effects of the plague. They sail to the flagship. During the ride, Dirk reads the dispatches and learns of the missing ship and a year of lost profits. Other financial news, such as a run on their bank, is not good. They learn that they are broke.

Dirk also reads the news of the industrial revolution and all of the changes in England. Culum tells him of his ride on a train. They reach the flagship and Culum is introduced to William Longstaff of the Navy. While waiting for Longstaff to finish his meeting, Culum tells Dirk of the conditions in England. There is a lot of unemployment and talk of revolution from a group called the Chartists.

From Longstaff they learn that there will be a land sale in the near future. Both governments still have to approve the treaty. Struan feels that they should begin building in Hong Kong as soon as possible and wants the land sale to begin the following month. Longstaff offers Culum a job with the new government as head of police, but he refuses. At Dirk's suggestion, Culum will work as a deputy for six months to assist with the new government. Dirk also learns that Cushman Island is to be evacuated at the request of the Chinese. He tells Longstaff that the Chinese will interpret the move as a sign of weakness but that it is done now. Dirk tries to control his anger when he learns that the Chinese are going to appoint a mandarin for Hong Kong.

Culum asks what is wrong with having a Chinese mandarin and Dirk explains the Chinese way of thinking. He explains the Eight Regulations that govern trade and relations with foreigners. For example, they could only stay in the Canton settlement for certain months and all trade had to take place through the Co-hong, a group of ten Chinese merchants. The Eight Regulations were designed to favor the Chinese and to keep the foreigners at a distance. By allowing a mandarin in Hong Kong, they basically allow the whole system that the traders have been trying to circumvent. He tells Longstaff to cancel the agreement with Ti-Sen, the Chinese government official that allowed a mandarin in Hong Kong.

When the Struans return to their ship, they find it is being searched. Dirk had been told of the navy looking for a deserter and already knew about the search. Dirk fires Captain Perry and orders him off the ship by sundown because he didn't stand up for his men against the navy. Since he didn't act in the best interest of the ship or his men, Dirk no longer trusts him.



Dirk learns from Sarah that she and the children are leaving the Orient for good. Robb tells Dirk that he followed Dirk's orders and bought opium. He then tells Dirk that he is leaving with Sarah. He doesn't want to be a tai-pan and tells Dirk that he can buy him out. Dirk says he can't because they are bankrupt because of the run on the bank. He wants Robb to stay for a few months. Culum doesn't tell them that he too plans on returning to England.

Chapter 2 Analysis

More details about the agreement ending the war are revealed in this chapter. Longstaff allowed for the appointment of a mandarin in Hong Kong. Dirk is livid when he learns this because it basically transports the whole Chinese system of the Eight Regulations to Hong Kong. Dirk tells Longstaff that the agreement regarding the mandarin must be canceled or the whole future of Hong Kong is endangered, since the system of squeeze and holding foreigners at a distance will apply to the island. This chapter explains the Eight Regulations that govern trade and relations with foreigners in China. This is what the traders are trying to circumvent and don't want transported to Hong Kong.

The Struan family problems are also revealed. They are bankrupt because of events in England. Robb's family is returning to England and Robb wants to go with them. Dirk wants him to stay for several months while they try to save the business. Culum also plans to return to England but decides not to tell his father just yet.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Dirk does not get a good night's sleep. The next morning he is told that Brock is on his way to see him. Brock offers his condolences about the deaths in the Struan family. Brock also lets it be known, as they eat, that he knows The Noble House has financial problems. Brock had an account at the same bank that the Struans did. He also tells Dirk that he holds some of the drafts that Struan and Company has outstanding. Dirk says that the drafts aren't due for another thirty days.

Brock tells Dirk that he didn't orchestrate the run of the bank, but his son Morgan did. Dirk tells Brock that he will wreck his company in the end. Brock tells Dirk to buy himself a coffin and throws some money at him and departs. When Brock leaves, he learns that his staffer, McKay, followed his orders and turned away all visitors. McKay tells him that Culum wants to see him. Culum tells Dirk that he doesn't want to remain in the Orient. Dirk tells him to give it some time and then tells him of his discussion with Brock.

Culum says that The Noble House is finished, but his father reminds him that they still have twenty-nine days. They discuss their family's financial position. Dirk knows that the only man that can help him is Ti-sen. Dirk tells him that he wants Culum to come with him the next day to Canton. Their first priority is to save The Noble House.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The rivalry and tactics of Tyler Brock and Dirk Struan become more obvious during their meal. Brock's son orchestrated the run on the bank and Brock holds some of the drafts of Struan and Company. Dirk tells Brock that the money isn't due for thirty days yet. Their hatred for each other comes through as each vow to ruin the other.

Culum's plans to return to England are put on hold as Dirk tells him they are sailing to Canton the next day. They have to make whatever arrangement they can to save their business. If they can't, they will lose their top position to Brock. Even if they start over again, they will never be able to catch up with Brock, who will reign supreme in Hong Kong. Their first priority is to save The Noble House.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Dirk and Culum travel to Canton and stay at the settlement where Dirk had purchased the three-story building once owned by the East India Company. He is dining alone in the dining room looking out on the Pearl River. The lower floor consists of offices and warehouses. The upper floors are the living quarters. The English Garden at the mansion is the only place where the traders can have some peace since the Chinese peddlers can't gain entrance unless they work at the mansion as servants. Brock is the only other trader that owns a building in the Canton settlement; the rest rent space from the East India Company. The settlement is located about one-fourth of a mile from the walled city of Canton.

Dirk sees Brock talking with Cooper and Tillman in the garden. Dirk has been trying to see Jin-qua for twenty days. Culum, who came with him, is called back by Longstaff on the eleventh day to work on the land sale. Robb sends a letter saying that news of the bankruptcy of The Noble House has spread. The other traders are waiting for the thirtieth day, and some of their creditors are demanding money.

A servant approaches them with a boat woman who speaks pidgin. Dirk recognizes her as May-may. Dirk had bought May-may many years ago and was fond of her. She offers her condolences on the death of Dirk's family. She reminds Dirk that there is still a price on his head, just as there is for all foreigners in China. They eat, play backgammon, and then sleep together. He is awakened by the servant Ah Gip telling him that Cooper and Mauss are there to see him. They tell him that trouble is brewing and that two thousand Manchu soldiers arrived in Canton the previous evening and that Jin-Qua is still out of town, according to his son. There has been an edict by the emperor halting all trade with the foreigners.

They tell Dirk that given the situation, they had better leave the settlement. Dirk wants to have breakfast first. They knew of the rumor that May-may, Dirk's mistress, had arrived the previous evening. They discuss the situation as they eat and are soon joined by Brock and his son Gorth. Brock reminds them that most of the settlement people will be leaving the next day for the land sale. He sees no need for an immediate evacuation and thinks they can defend the settlement if it is attacked. Cooper tells Dirk that they have an extra thirty days on their deal so he isn't trying to put the squeeze on The Noble House. Struan sends Mauss to find out what he can from the Co-hong.

Other traders at the settlement hold a meeting with Brock and Dirk regarding the situation in Canton. They decide not to evacuate and to stay in their factories. If there is an attack, they will all go to Dirk's factory. They send one of their group to Hong Kong with the news. May-may is gone when he returns to his quarters.



Chapter 4 Analysis

Dirk is trying to save The Noble House and is waiting for Jin-qua in Canton. On the twenty-second day they receive word that the emperor has issued a edict forbidding trade with the English and that two thousand troops, many of them bannerman fighting troops, have arrived in Canton. The traders meet to discuss the situation. They agree to stay in their factories and not to retreat. If they are attacked, they will all go to Struan's factory. They send one of the traders to Hong Kong with news of the events at Canton. The group feels that they know the Chinese well enough to feel safe in their settlement.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

After the meeting and their arrangement for guards, Dirk goes out into the garden around midnight. He is worrying about May-may when a Chinese man jumps over the wall. He has come with a message for Dirk. The man tells Dirk that Jin-qua wants to see him right away. Dirk, who is alone and aware of the price on his head, says he will see Jin-qua the next day. He studies the chop on the note and recognizes it as Jin-qua's and agrees to go with the man. They travel by sedan chairs being borne by very frightened and nervous Chinese. When they reach their destination, the coolies are paid and Dirk and the man make the rest of the way on foot. Jin-qua greets him when they arrive.

Jin-qua and Dirk eat and have tea. Jin-qua confirms the halt to trading and the presence of the troops in Canton. Apparently, Longstaff wrote a letter that angered Ti-sen. Jin-qua says they can get around the edict and still trade. He also offers Dirk the equivalent of a million pounds as a loan to help him out. Dirk knows that Jin-qua has taken a great risk in amassing the money for him. They make a deal for tea and opium at prices lower than the market, but Dirk knows he will still profit: "If Jin-qua did not want the mandarin, Straun said a silent prayer that a mandarin was not part of the deal. But he knew that if there was no mandarin on Hong Kong there could be no Co-hong. And if there was no Co-hong and no monopoly, Jin-qua and all the other merchants would be out of business. They had to have the system too" (Chap. 5, pp. 132-133). They continue to negotiate. The deal binds Straun's purchases to Jin-qua or his son for a period of years. They negotiate the length and the percent of profit. Jin-qua tells him that there has to be one mandarin in Hong Kong. This comes from Ti-sen.

When Dirk refuses to include a mandarin in the deal, he finds that the money comes from Ti-sen and is contingent on a mandarin in Hong Kong. They continue to negotiate and finally reach an agreement. Jin-qua's men will deliver the bullion to Dirk's factory in two days. A servant barges in and tells them that the settlement is gone.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Dirk realizes the danger of being alone when a messenger from Jin-Qua arrives. He only agrees to go with the man when he recognizes Jin-Qua's chop. He finds the old man sitting in a house with the equivalent of one million pounds to loan to Dirk. The money is from Ti-sen and dependent on Dirk's acceptance of a mandarin in Hong Kong. After hard negotiations, Dirk agrees to the terms. They are discussing the delivery of the bullion when a servant tells them that the settlement is gone.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Dirk leaves Jin-qua traveling in the sedan chair, having worked out a way to send the bullion to Hong Kong. It would be left in a lorch with one painted red eye at the settlement wharf for transport to Hong Kong. During the ride, he analyzes his discussion with Jin-qua. The chair is attacked by three spearmen, but Dirk jumps out before being injured. Dirk attacks them with his knife and wounds them. He makes it back to the settlement and finds Brock there. Dirk's wound is treated by Brock.

Brock tells Dirk that the servants had left the settlement an hour before. This was the sign they were looking for as indicative of an attack. Brock suggests that they leave the settlement, but Dirk, who has to await the arrival of the bullion, says that he doesn't think it is necessary just yet. Brock disagrees. He says that the settlement is surrounded and they plan to leave at noon the next day. Dirk knows that Brock, if he knows about the bullion, will try to prevent Dirk from receiving it. Dirk says they should stay a few more days and that he will relieve Brock in an hour.

Dirk finds May-may in his quarters with Ah Gip. She tells him of the latest rumors that all foreigners will be killed and that Ti-sen has been disgraced and sentenced to be killed for the treaty. She heard the rumors at the hairdressers when she went to have her hair done.

The next day the traders have another meeting. Dirk's views prevail and they decide to wait another day. That afternoon, a mob storms into the square.

Chapter 6 Analysis

On the ride back in the sedan chairs, Dirk analyzes the situation and wonders why Jin-qua is doing what he did. He survives an attack by three spearmen and makes it back to the settlement safely, only to be slammed in the stomach by Brock when he arrives.

The seriousness of the situation is revealed by May-may, who heard rumors at the hairdresser. Ti-sen is in trouble with the emperor over the treaty and is to be killed by public torture. The foreigners in the settlement are also to be killed. Dirk is too preoccupied with the bullion to accept the possibility of there being any truth to these rumors. At the meeting of traders the next day, he talks them into staying.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Gorth lets Dirk know that he is unhappy about the situation at the settlement. His father, Brock, had warned them and suggested they leave, but Dirk wouldn't hear of it. Now the Chinese have crowded into the square waving banners and lanterns and shouting. They estimate that there are two to three thousand people in the square calling for the death of the foreigners. Mauss wants to go and talk to the crowd but Dirk won't allow it. As more of the traders arrive, they find that no one knows what is happening. Dirk tells them not to fire into the crowd because, in spite of the gathering, the Chinese aren't harming them.

The men discuss the situation. Some agree with Gorth and want to fight; others agree with Dirk and caution restraint. They'll fight if they have to and Brock has a cannon on his lorch that they can use. They see Ti-sen being led into the square in chains, surrounded by bannermen and the Co-hongs. Jin-qua is not among them. The imperial Hoppo, Hi'pai-kho, enters the square in a sedan chair. He reads an edict and Mauss translates the Chinese for the group. Ti-sen is considered a traitor for signing the Treaty of Chuenpi and is sentenced to death. The emperor also orders the foreigners out of China or they will be killed.

Brock says that the situation is leading to another war and blames Dirk. Dirk says that Hong Kong is necessary if there is another war. Brock still favors Chushan. After the discussion with Brock, Dirk thinks about Ti-sen. He feels sorry for the man and knows that they are all trapped. The British will move against Canton and then in summer will move up the Pei Ho River, forcing the emperor to honor the peace agreement. The Chinese would eventually open their country and ports to the British and trade will prosper.

After Ti-sen receives one hundred lashes, they drag him out. Dirk tells the men to be prepared for trouble, in case any arises. The Hoppo tells them that they will send a delegation to his palace in the morning to receive the document he read. They tell him they will receive it that evening at the settlement. The Hoppo tells them the edict will be delivered and that the foreigners are to leave by the afternoon. They negotiate the time. Dirk wants to receive the bullion before he leaves but does not tell Brock and the others that.

That night the edict is delivered. The Co-hong are again present with Jin-qua. His son, How-qua, is there. The merchants are extremely nervous. The bannermen have How-qua hand the edict to Dirk. Gorth and the others light off firecrackers. Mauss explains to the bannermen that this is the British custom for important occasions.

May-may is inside with Ah Gip. He tells her of the order to leave by three and asks how someone would stay. She tells him to hide. She cannot tell Dirk that she is Jin-qua's



granddaughter or she and her children will be cast out of the family forever. She knows about the bullion and tells Dirk that if he tries to bribe the Hoppo they will have him killed. She send Ah Gip to find them a place to hide.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The men watch the crowded square and see Ti-sen in chains, surrounded by the bannermen and the Co-hong, minus Jin-qua. One of the rumors reported by May-may is true, but Dirk, who desperately needed the bullion, doesn't acknowledge that he endangered all of their lives by remaining at the settlement.

The prospect of another war has Dirk thinking. They are all trapped, especially Ti-sen, but eventually, the British will take Canton and move into the Pei Ho River, forcing the emperor to recognize the peace. Gradually, China will open up to the British. Dirk sees this as a good thing for the Chinese people.

Dirk again endangers the lives of the others because of the bullion. He does not consider that the bullion may have been part of the trap. When the Hoppo orders them out by that day, he demands more time. Dirk knows that the Chinese lost faith when they were forced to deliver the edict at a ceremony.

The traders will be leaving that afternoon and Dirk has to stay to receive the bullion. He knows that he is endangering his own life and those of Ah Gip and May-may.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

While the traders are loading the lorchas and preparing to leave, Dirk is writing a dispatch to Robb. He tells Robb to buy as much land as possible at the land sale, and to particularly buy the knoll, because he knows that Brock wants it. His chief clerk, Manoel de Vargas, tells him that all of their items have been packed and loaded and that there are rumors that they will be intercepted and killed along the way. Other rumors are that they will be allowed to return to the settlement within a month. There is also a rumor of bullion in Canton that is a gift to appease the emperor. Dirk tells him that the rumors are nonsense. He gives his chief clerk the letter to Robb and tells him to hire workmen and have them in Hong Kong in two weeks.

Vargas tells him he will follow his directions, even though he is thinking that everyone knows that The Noble House is finished. Dirk tells him that if he can't pay their wages, he is sure that Brock will. He walks them to the wharf where Mauss tells him of a rumor of fifty lacs of silver bullion being seized from Ti-sen's house. Struan brushes off the comment. Cooper sneaks in to say good-bye. The Americans aren't being forced out of the settlement.

Brock, once his lorcha is sailing, notices that the Struan lorcha hasn't departed yet and that the clerks are on the wharf. He is suspicious about Dirk's behavior because Brock knows that Dirk wouldn't leave before his staff. What he doesn't know is that Dirk is hiding in a sampan. Dirk had given Mauss directions to have the China Cloud sent with specific directions as to how. Dirk would be on the lorcha with the bullion and would rendezvous with the China Cloud at the Marble Pagoda. The China Cloud must not be seen by Brock or the others. When the lorcha leaves, Dirk returns to his building. May-may and Ah Gip are waiting. At midnight he notices that the square is empty. All of the bannermen have left. He will not allow himself to sleep.

Dirk thinks of the deal with Jin-qua and figures that the old man predicted the end of the Co-hong system and secured a deal for himself and his son. He doesn't understand why he wants his son to be educated in the West. He awakens May-may and eleven and they go downstairs to await the arrival of the lorcha, which finally arrives. They make their way to the wharf and board the lorcha. They cast off and Dirk checks the cargo to make sure that it is bullion. He disarms the men and searches the ship as it makes its way past Canton and on to the Marble Pagoda.

They meet Brock on the river and he grapples the lorcha. Dirk tells him that the grapples are an act of piracy. Brock asks for and receives permission to come aboard. Dirk orders his crew to chop the grapples and is within his rights under the law of the sea. Brock says he wants to know what's going on since he saw Dirk hide in a sampan the day before. Dirk tells him that it's none of his business. Brock has heard the rumors about Ti-sen's bullion. Brock returns to his own ship and tells Gorth it would be a pity if



something rammed the lorcha. Dirk knows that it is possible that they can be sunk by Brock and is worried: "He could see no way out of the trap. Dawn would come in two or three hours, and he would be lost. Somehow he had to escape in darkness and hide, and then slip down to his rendezvous. But how?" (Chap. 8, p. 180). Dirk shows the crew how to make weapons out of arrows and oil and orders them to shoot them at Brock's sails if they have to. Struan pilots the lorcha himself, trying to evade Brock's ship, which is piloted by Gorth. When the ship is close enough, they shoot the flaming arrows, setting the ship on fire. However, he cannot prevent the ship from ramming his lorcha.

The impact has shifted the cargo and scattered the bullion bars in the hold. The ship is taking on water. Dirk and the men seal the gash in the ship and rearrange the cargo and continue on with their journey. After things settle down, they are attacked by the crew. They had overtaken May-may and taken her gun. Dirk handles the situation and several men are killed or maimed. The rest jump overboard. Dirk is now sailing the lorcha and has about two to three hours to the rendezvous point. Dirk and May-may talk for awhile and then May-may falls asleep. When she awakes, the Marble Pagoda and China Cloud are within sight.

Chapter 8 Analysis

As they are packing the lorchas before their departure, some of Dirk's staff and friends seem to sense something about the bullion. They tell him of the rumors they have heard about the bullion being seized, but he doesn't let on that it means anything to him. He hides out with May-may and Ah Gip until the lorcha with the bullion arrives that night. They board the ship and sail. Dirk is worried about a trap and searches the men and the ship.

They find Brock waiting for them. Dirk correctly assumes that Brock and Gorth plan to try to ram the lorcha. When they do, Dirk uses flaming arrows to set Brock's ship on fire but can't prevent the lorcha from being rammed. Dirk and the crew repair the damage. What Dirk didn't expect was the attack by the lorcha's crew. Dirk kills and maims the men and the rest escape by jumping overboard. By sunrise, they have the Marble Pagoda and the China Cloud in sight.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

The China Cloud arrives safely in Hong Kong. Ah Gip had died from the injuries she sustained in the attack by the crew. They return her to her parents in Macao and now have her younger sister Ah-Sam as a servant. Dirk has the bullion on board the ship and doesn't trust anyone with the amount of money involved. England is at war again with China over the incident at the settlement.

Robb and Culum arrive at the ship. Dirk finds out that the land sale has been delayed. He takes them into the hold and shows them the bullion. He tells them about the incident with Brock and says that it is their private business and not to be reported to Longstaff. Culum is very impressed with his father's handling of the situation. He had watched everybody gloating about the end of The Noble House and is happy that his father has saved the company. Dirk makes it clear that he personally is responsible for repaying Jin-qua, not The Noble House.

Dirk tells Robb and Culum his conditions, if either of them becomes tai-pan. The Noble House is to be permanently headquartered in Hong Kong and they are to support Hong Kong and China trade. He goes on to say that only a Christian can become tai-pan of The Noble House and that Jin-qua must be repaid. He wants them to agree to his terms without telling them all of Jin-qua's conditions. Dirk tells Robb again that he will be Tai-pan in five months and will remain Tai-pan for at least a year. Dirk plans on taking one million in bullion with him when he leaves and he will receive twenty percent profit from The Noble House. He will work to protect them in Parliament.

Robb tells Dirk that he is leaving for Scotland on the next boat. Dirk tells Culum that he wants him there for the next five years. He will help Culum all that he can but his son will have to prove himself. Robb says that Dirk is being corrupted by the power of the bullion. If Robb stays as Tai-pan for five years, Culum can return to England. Robb takes the oath on the Bible to stay for one year, agreeing to Dirk's conditions. Dirk then tells him Jin-qua's conditions, omitting the part about the money for Gordon Chen, which he considers to be his private business. He also shows them the four half coins he received from Jin-qua.

When they return to the office, they read the dispatches and find that Winifred, Dirk's daughter, has recovered from the plague. There is other news of their relatives and they are happy with the news. Dirk learns that there are political problems from the Chartists. There are riots and strikes.

Dirk apologizes for his tactics, but he had to have things a certain way for his plans to be effective. They then discuss hygiene and sanitation and Dirk demands that Culum begin to bathe regularly. He tells them that many of the Chinese ways prevent disease. They also decide to hold a ball.



They are summoned to the deck. There is an approaching fleet of war junks. The crew of the China Cloud is already preparing for battle. They quickly set sail. They finally identify the flag as the Silver Lotus, which is the flag of the sadistic pirate Wu Fang Choi. Since his base was supposed to be in Formosa, they are surprised to see him in the waters around Hong Kong. A cannon shot from the pirate flagship scatters the junks. One junk keeps coming toward the China Cloud, flying a white flag. They allow a Captain Scragger to come aboard, and he tells Dirk that Wu Fang Choi wants to talk to him. His oldest son is on the ship, not he himself. As Dirk is telling Scragger to leave, he pulls out one of the half-coins from Jin-qua.

Chapter 9 Analysis

When Dirk meets with his brother and son in Hong Kong he gives them some hard choices. He relates his conditions that must be agreed to and won't tell them all of Jin-qua's conditions. He basically sets his son against his brother to get what he wants to ensure the success of The Noble House. Robb finally agrees to Dirk's conditions to stay for one year. Dirk later apologizes for his tactics. Culum realizes that his father was right about many things: "Now Culum knew that to be rich was no longer to be poor. He knew that his father was right - it wasn't money that was important. Only the lack of it" (Chap. 9, p. 223).

Dirk also finds out the meaning of the four half coins from Jin-qua. The pirate Wu Fang Choi's emissary arrives and tells them that Wu Fang Choi wants to meet with Dirk. The emissary pulls out one of the half-coins from Jin-qua.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Struan has to honor the agreement with Jin-qua and the half coins. He makes his way to the pirate's flagship after leaving instructions with his own crew if the pirate ship tries to sail with him aboard. Dirk boards the flagship and meets with Wu Kwok, Wu Fang Choi's middle-aged son. He finds that the pirate speaks good English and Wu Kwok finds that Struan can use chopsticks. Wu Kwok tells him that he knows that the China Cloud is carrying quite a bit of bullion. One fourth of the money came from his father, Wu Fang Choi. He wants Dirk to put one man on each of his ships and to train them to be officers for a period of a year, at which time they will return to Wu Fang Choi. Then he wants a ship like the China Cloud. He wants three of their young to be educated in England at the best schools all the way through the university. If Dirk doesn't agree, they will take the bullion. Dirk does a little negotiation and agrees to Wu Kwok's requests. Dirk will select the men to be trained and will personally deliver the ship to Wu Fang Choi or Wu Kwok only. Wu Fang Choi sends a gift to Dirk—the flag and log book of the Scarlet Cloud, which had been lost at sea. Wu Kwok also demands money for the safe passage of the ships of The Noble House.

Chapter 10 Analysis

In spite of the danger, Dirk must board the pirate ship to meet with Wu Kwok. He has to honor his deal with Jin-qua and Captain Scragger had produced a half coin. He did take some safety precautions by telling them to fire if the pirate ship set sail or if he didn't return within an hour.

Dirk listens to the terms of the pirate. He can train the men as requested for one year, but he wants to select them. He will also have a clipper built for Wu Fang Choi but he will only deliver it personally to him or his son. He also agrees to arrange for the education in England of the three youngsters. He also learns that Wu Fang Choi contributed one fourth of the bullion for the loan by Jin-qua, whom he didn't know was a partner of the pirate. He receives as a gift from Wu Fang Choi the flag and log book of the missing Scarlet Cloud as Wu Kwok demands protection money for the ships of The Noble House.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Once Dirk returns to the China Cloud, the ship sets sail for Hong Kong's main harbor. The Struans are dining and Dirk tells them the details of what happened with Wu Kwok. They wonder who holds the other three half coins. Robb says that it is a dangerous situation to train the pirate's men and give them a good ship. Culum claims that Jin-qua cheated them. Dirk responds that he was outsmarted by Jin-qua, not cheated. He didn't have any choice but to agree to Jin-qua's terms, given their dire financial situation at the time.

Dirk doesn't view the situation in the same way as Robb and Culum do. They see it as leading to the ruin of The Noble House and Asian trade. They talk of destroying the clipper once it is delivered to Wu Fang Choi. Dirk says he will kill Wu Kwok to teach him the value of an oath. They discuss the three toffs, or young men they are to arrange an English education for. They assume that they are the sons or nephews of Wu Kwok.

The ship reaches Hong Kong harbor at dusk. They find the harbor full of merchant ships and the British fleet. Tents have been pitched on the beach, harboring the troops. There are also hundreds of sampans. The arriving Chinese are being confined to a hillside and are causing a lot of crime on the island. Dirk confines his crew to the ship with orders not to allow anyone to board the ship. His presence on the ship is not to be revealed and they are not to mention their cargo of bullion.

The land sale is the next day at three o'clock. They have a list of lots and plan to buy the knoll. Robb feels that Brock will bid the price up and try to break them. Culum says he won't because he knows that they have the bullion. Robb says that the hatred between Dirk and Brock will destroy them both in the end if it doesn't stop.

When Dirk awakes, Captain Orlov tells him who wants to see him. He gives the captain a draft for one thousand guineas, saying that he earned the bonus. Orlov tells him to keep an eye on Culum, that there is trouble ahead for him. He will have blood on his hands when he becomes tai-pan. Dirk relates this news to Culum and tells him that Orlov is a good man and he shouldn't fire him. He and Culum talk about the Chinese custom of having a mistress. Culum is appalled at his father's suggestion of using a sheath for protection. They debate it on religious grounds, but Dirk is more concerned about disease. He also cautions Culum about whorehouses. Dirk wants to buy a woman for Culum according to the Chinese custom but Culum won't hear of it and objects on religious grounds.

Dirk tells Culum the amount of his salary and that it will be raised in five months time. They talk about building warehouses and houses, including one for Culum.



After his discussion with Culum, Struan is told that Brock has arrived. Dirk hands over a bank draft for the money that The Noble House owes Brock. Brock tells him Gorth will be at the land sale and mentions the prime lots. He asks Dirk which ones he wants. Brock says if they decide ahead of time, they won't bid against each other. Dirk tells him which of the lots he's interested in. Brock tells them that the fleet sails the next day to fight the war in the north. Brock tells them that he knows they have bullion on board and he is bitter at being beaten again by The Noble House. Dirk tells him the knoll will belong to The Noble House and not to Brock after the land sale.

After Brock leaves, Robb tells Dirk to bid the price up on the knoll and then stop bidding suddenly, leaving Brock with an astronomical bill. Robb wants to do to Brock what he knows Brock plans on doing to them. Both Culum and Robb consider the knoll to be worthless.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Dirk, Robb, and Culum discuss the meeting with Wu Kwok and the implications of the deal with Jin-qua. Dirk is honest enough to say that he was outsmarted by Jin-qua, not cheated. He had no option given their financial situation, but he did not correctly foresee the implications of the four half coins. They wonder who holds the other three.

Robb and Culum discuss the situation regarding the hatred between Dirk and Brock. It seems to affect many of their decisions and actions. Robb says the hatred will destroy both Dirk and Brock in the end. Culum feels frightened at the whole situation.

Dirk talks to Culum about buying him a mistress. He warns him about whorehouses and the possibility of disease. Culum objects to the mistress on religious grounds. He wishes he had a wife but does not tell his father that. Dirk wants his son to know the ways of the Orient and wants him to know of the possibility of disease.

Brock's discussion over the land sale begins pleasantly enough, but quickly becomes angry. Robb and Culum do not understand the animosity between Dirk and Brock. They feel that the knoll is worthless and that Dirk should bid up the price and then stop bidding, leaving Brock with a high purchase price. They both feel that this is what Brock plans on doing to Dirk.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

As Struan is standing onshore watching the crew unload barrels, he is greeted by Mary Sinclair. They walk over to the site of the land sale. Mary also knows about the forty lacs of bullion. Dirk asks if she knows who holds the other three half coins, and she tells him that Jin-qua holds two. She also tells him that there are four thousand bannermen in Canton and an armada of fire ships that plan to attack the British fleet. Mary also reveals that the Chinese emperor has offered Wu Fang Choi and Wu Kwok mandarines if they attack Hong Kong harbor. There is no definite date for the attack as they are still in negotiations. There is a higher price on Dirk's head and now one on Culum's head and on others, even if they are kidnapped alive. Mary made sure that May-may and her children were safe in Chen Sheng's house. Chen Sheng, according to Mary, provided a small part of the bullion to Jin-qua as did the other Co-hong merchants.

Dirk immediately tells Mauss to have Orlov send the China Cloud to Macao and pick up May-may and her two children, Duncan and Kate, and bring them to Hong Kong. Both Mauss and Mary tell Dirk that he can't openly have his mistress and their children in Hong Kong, but he is more concerned about their safety. Dirk tells Mary he owes her a favor. It seems that Mary's unknown Aunt Wilhelmina died in Amsterdam the day before and that Mary will be coming into some money.

Dirk also talks to Gordon Chen. Chen knows about the bullion but doesn't acknowledge it. He knew of how Dirk escaped from the settlement with the money. Dirk offers Gordon credit of one lac of silver. They negotiate the sharing of the profit and become partners. Gordon is to appear on Resting Cloud later that evening to complete the paperwork and the rest of the details. Dirk introduces Gordon to Culum as his son. The two men shake hands and talk. Gordon is accepted by Culum as a half-brother. Culum had learned of Gordon Chen from Glessing.

Dirk meets Robb and makes sure that they are ready to retrieve their outstanding notes and does so as they meet the people that hold them. When they arrive at the tent, the men collapse the tent, revealing the silver bricks. Dirk announces that The Noble House is paying in cash and burns the drafts. Brock panics because he now has the debt repaid in silver and has to find a way to protect himself and the silver and move it to his ship. There are no bank vaults for the bullion.

The Struans talk to Aristotle Quance, the artist. Dirk tells him of the ball and the contest for the best-dressed woman. He offers the job to the artist, who jumps at the offer. He also meets Longstaff and schedules a meeting with him for the next day. Longstaff is conducting the land sale at which the auctions are for rent on 990 year leases. He explains the terms of the sales. Dirk notices that Gordon Chen is absent from the sale. Both Brock and Dirk buy the lots they had agreed upon earlier that morning. When it



comes time for the knoll, they find that it has already been purchased by Culum for a church for all of the people of Hong Kong. Dirk is livid and publicly confronts his son, and then walks out in anger. Brock laughs. Mary and Horatio Sinclair are happy about the knoll being for a church. Dirk tells Robb to have Culum meet him on the knoll.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Dirk is prepared to buck the English society rules in openly bringing May-may and their two children to Hong Kong. He is worried about the information he receives from Mary Sinclair, but is more concerned about the safety of his mistress and two children.

When Mary refuses to accept a gift of money from Dirk, he tells Mary of her phony Aunt Wilhelmina who died the previous day and left Mary a large amount of money. He tells her she will be hearing from the solicitor in Amsterdam. This is his way of rewarding her for the information and making sure that she is provided for.

Dirk gets even with Brock in a way when he repays the debt of The Noble House in silver bars. The bars are hidden in a tent until just before the land sale. Dirk's men pull the tent off, revealing the silver bars for all to see and leaving a panicked Brock who has to protect himself, Gorth, and the silver while moving it to his boat.

The land sale has a surprise ending. Both Brock and Dirk buy the lots that they had wanted. The sale ends without the knoll being auctioned. They find out that Culum bought the land for a church. Dirk is angry at his son's double cross, while Brock laughs.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

The weather indicates the beginning of the monsoon season. Brock can't sleep as he is worrying about the bullion. His wife Liza announces that she is sailing for Macao the next day to order the ball gowns and other items that she and her daughter need for the Struan's ball. He does not take it well when Liza tells him that they should start considering a mate for Tess, their sixteen-year-old daughter. Liza silently thinks of the available bachelors and who would be a good match for Tess.

She also mentions that land sale and asks if Brock knows what happened between Dirk and Culum. "For a moment fear swarmed through Liza. Fear for her man. Fear of the violence between him and Struan. Enmity that would end only in the death of one. Or both. Dear Lord above, she prayed for the millionth time, let there be peace between them" (Chap. 11, p. 293).

They talk of the building to come in Hong Kong. Liza suggests that Brock build a playhouse. She doesn't tell Brock that she is considering Culum or Dirk as possible matches for their daughter. What they don't know is that Nagrek Thumb, an officer on their boat, is interested in Tess. He sneaks into her cabin that night and tells her that he wants to marry her. While he is in her cabin, the ship is being tossed around in the rough sea. He leaves and runs to the deck with Brock, too concerned about the ship to pay attention to his daughter's open cabin door, right behind him.

Brock's ship, the White Witch, is grounded and surrounded by pirates. The crew fights the pirates as they board. Scragger and other pirates jump overboard as the pirates are beaten back. Gorth is injured in the battle. Brock tends to Gorth and the other injured men. The crew haul the ship to safety. He later learns from Liza that Nygrek had been with Tess. The injured Gorth and Brock confront Nygrek. Brock kills him by cutting off his manhood and leaving him to bleed to death.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Brock is having problems sleeping as he is worrying about the bullion. Dirk basically put Brock in the same position that he was in, having to worry about being robbed or having his ship sunk. His wife Liza wants to talk. She mentions that their daughter Tess is reaching marriage age. Brock can't accept that and thinks that she is too young. Tess seems to be thinking silently that Culum or even Dirk would be a good match for Tess, but she doesn't mention it to her husband. She does worry about the bad blood between Dirk and Brock and feels that it will end in the death of one or both of them if it doesn't end.

The White Witch is grounded and attacked by pirates, one of whom is Captain Scragger. The crew fights them off. Afterward, Brock learns that his officer Nygrek

Thumb had been in his daughter's cabin when the attack began. He kills the man for touching his daughter.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Culum goes to the knoll the next morning to meet his father. Dirk tells Culum of the pirate attack on Brock's ship. Dirk had gone to see Brock after the attack and was told that he lost seven men and the captain. Nygrek Thumb is listed among the casualties. Culum, in an outburst, twists the meaning of Dirk's comment about the knoll, and says if Dirk kills him he will hang for murder. In response to Dirk's asking if Culum thinks he would kill him, he replies he thinks he would if he got in Dirk's way. Culum says his opinion of Dirk has changed in the last month since he has been in the Orient.

Dirk wants Culum to go to the top of the mountain with him, and Culum follows. The view from the top is magnificent. Culum and Dirk have a picnic meal on top of the mountain. Culum is tied up in knots over the incident of the knoll. He tells Dirk that Brock would have destroyed him over the knoll. Dirk tells him Culum that he is proud of him for what he did and that it was the only sensible solution to the problem. Culum, who has lost two nights sleep over the incident, is angry at Dirk, who basically manipulated him into the move.

Dirk tells Culum that he gained great stature for his guts in his decision about the knoll. He proved himself to everyone and that he has what it takes to be tai-pan. Dirk tells him that they will play it out for the public and act hostile to one another. Culum at first refuses, then sees the wisdom in what his father says. Dirk goes on to tell him of his mistress May-may and their two children who will be arriving in Hong Kong. He tells them of the price on all of their heads, including Culum's. Dirk also says that he is going to sail with the expeditionary force and won't return until the day before the ball. Culum and Robb are to begin the building on their property and he wants it completed in less than a month. Culum is also to handle all of the arrangement for the ball.

While on the mountain, they see a steam powered battleship.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Culum's feelings for his father surface during their meeting. He is coming to fear and detest Dirk. He tells Dirk that he thinks Dirk will kill him if he gets in his way. The incident with the knoll is a learning experience for Culum. He ended up doing exactly what his father wanted him to do. He saved The Noble House from ruin over fighting for the knoll. He comes to respect his father for his plan.

As Dirk relates his plans to Culum and gives him directions on what to do while he is away, Dirk responds to him by calling him Tai-pan. This indicates a change in their relationship that came about from Culum's handling of the knoll sale. Dirk also realizes that their relationship has changed, but he knows it has to be if his son is to become tai-pan.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

The war is not difficult for the English with their superior fire power. The junks are no match for the British frigates in spite of the heavily fortified Bogue. Struan is on the flagship, with Longstaff following behind the two frigates. The China Cloud is also in the area with May-may and the two children.

Longstaff is still mad at Culum over the knoll incident, thinking that he incurred the wrath of the Tai-pan. He is tired of all the problems with Hong Kong and thinks he deserves to be knighted for his service there. Longstaff is now involved in the war with China. Within a week of the fleet's arrival, they retook the Canton settlement after refusing to negotiate or to even receive a representative of the Co-hong. All of the servants were waiting when the traders arrived. Longstaff made his headquarters at the building of The Noble House in the settlement.

Jin-qua comes to see Dirk. Dirk lets the old man know that he is not happy about the situation with Wu Fang Choi. Jin-qua knew what had happened on Wu Kwok's ship but he did not let Dirk know. Jin-qua thought that the war scheme and the treaty had been ingenious: all they lost was Hong Kong which they began to retrieve as soon as the coolies began to arrive there. They did not plan on the treaty being rejected by the emperor. Now they had to start all over again.

Jin-qua and Dirk discuss the prices on the heads of Dirk and his family, including May-may and the kids. The Hoppo, Ching-so will talk with Longstaff the next day and the Co-hong the day after. Jin-qua knows of the plan of the Chinese. They would begin trade again and wait until the last ship is loaded. Then they would take the settlement and attack the ships with fire ships. The British would head north toward Beijing and the emperor would sue for peace. Jin-qua does not tell Dirk of this plan.

When Jin-qua leaves Dirk, he returns to his home. Later that evening he attends a meeting. He is not only a member of the Hung Mun Tong in South China, but the Supreme Leader, or Tai Shan Chu. He makes Gordon Chen the leader of the Hong Kong branch. He also has May-may and the children's name replaced on the list. This he does tell to Dirk, who is angry at the thought of another woman and her children being added in place of his mistress and children.

Trade begins again and the fleet returns to Hong Kong, not knowing of the Chinese plan. Both Dirk and Brock fill their ships with their own loads instead of acting as agent for others. They both know that there is a lot of money to be made when the ships reach England. Longstaff thinks he had done a good job in negotiating with Ching-so and is proud of how easy the Chinese were to deal with. The negotiations do not conclude as Longstaff had predicted. The affair is not over and Dirk knows that it will end at Peking, not Canton. What is vital to the traders is to get their cargoes to England and to recoup



the profits they had lost due to the suspension of trading. The first ship to leave is Brock's Grey Witch, with Dirk's Blue Cloud following a day and a half later.

Brock is in the process of establishing himself with a steamship line. He knows that the steamers would put the clippers out of business, and feels that Dirk would try to stick with the clippers as long as possible.

Dirk tells May-may that she and the children will live in his house in Hong Kong. She is pleased with this. She does not approve of his "fight" with Culum and he does not tell her that it is all for show. He says she will meet Culum in Hong Kong. She wants to go to Macao but he tells her it is too dangerous. She wants to get her new ball gown but doesn't tell him that. She also doesn't tell him that she is pregnant.

Dirk is talking with Vargas about their cargoes. It seems the silk, tea, and opium deal with Jin-qua is taking too long. Dirk doesn't explain why the prices are above the market price on what they buy and below the market on what they sell. He is worried that May-may hasn't returned from Macao yet. Horatio Sinclair comes to talk with him and thanks him for buying Mary the ball gown. He tells of their meeting with Culum who is doing what his father wanted and pretending that they aren't speaking.

They all attend a meeting with Longstaff, including Brock. Longstaff called them for advice on the situation in Hong Kong where there are anarchists called Tong. The group wants to overthrow the emperor and is known by many names. They demand protection money and squeeze and are supposed to be violent. Ching-so wants to send the bannermen to Hong Kong but Longstaff says no. The men discuss the situation and possible solutions. They decide to call the group the Triads and will post a proclamation saying that they are outlawed in Hong Kong and the penalty for overt activity will be hanging.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Dirk is with Longstaff and the British fleet at Whampoa. He has May-may and the children safely aboard the China Cloud. Longstaff relies on Dirk for advice and refuses to negotiate or receive a delegation from the Co-hong. The settlement is re-taken and opened again.

Jin-qua and Dirk do not have a pleasant meal together. Jin-qua does not provide Dirk with the information he has about the plan of the Chinese to begin trade, and when the ships are loaded, to attack the settlement and the ships in the river. He also does not tell Dirk that he is the Supreme Leader of the Hung Mun Tong in Southern China. Nor does he tell him that Gordon Chen is the leader in Hong Kong.

May-may has plans that she doesn't tell Dirk about. She wants Dirk to marry her when they are in Hong Kong. She also doesn't tell him that she is pregnant.

At a meeting with Longstaff, Dirk and the others learn of the presence of anarchists known as the Hung Mun Tong in Hong Kong. They discuss the problems and decide to

issue a proclamation calling them the Triads and declaring them illegal. If any of them are found guilty of any kind of covert activity, the penalty will be hanging.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Dirk is waiting at the village of Aberdeen for the arrival of Wu Kwok and the men. China Cloud is off the coast on full alert for any trouble. They have orders to come ashore, armed, if Dirk's lanterns are extinguished. He also has men on the beach. He had returned to Hong Kong and is pleased at all that Robb and Culum have accomplished. The house in Happy Valley had been built and May-may and the two children are living there safely in quarters that are separate from Dirk's. The news of May-may's presence makes the rounds of the Europeans. They hadn't seen May-may but they know that she and the children are in Dirk's house.

Dirk knows that the season's trade will make him and the other traders very wealthy and that it doesn't matter which ship reaches England first. He considers Shevaun as a match for Culum or himself. She would be an asset when it came to entertaining, but he knows that Jeff Cooper is in love with her. He couldn't have May-may as a wife in English society. Dirk decides he will think about this issue later.

Dirk sees the arrival of Captain Scragger and the others. Wu Kwok does not appear. Dirk selects the men from those assembled. The selected men have to accept an indenture agreement for a period of five years. The terms are read to them. Then the three toffs are brought to Dirk. One is a grandchild of Wu Fang Choi and the other two are Scragger's sons. Dirk has papers regarding the guardianship of the three boys that Scragger signs.

Scragger has also told Dirk that Wu Kwok will be at a festival in Quemoy at Midsummer Night. He will be easy to trap there. When Scragger and Dirk first met, Scragger gave Dirk his oath based on something that Wu Kwok said that later turned out to be a lie. Scragger has not forgiven Wu Kwok for that.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Dirk's house is built by the time he returns to Hong Kong. It is the first on the island to be completed and he has May-may and the two children living in separate quarters in his house. The rumors sweep the European community but they say nothing to Dirk. The men would want to have their own mistresses on the island at some point, since many of them follow the Chinese custom about mistresses.

Scragger arrives with the men and Dirk makes his selection. Dirk and Scragger talk and Scragger tells him that Wu Kwok will be at a festival in Quemoy at Midsummer Night where he can be trapped. Scragger had given Dirk his oath when they first met and then learned that Wu Kwok had lied to him. Scragger holds that against Wu Kwok.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Dirk is up early the day of the ball since he has much to do before the ball begins. May-may complains about all the noise from the building. She feels that something is bad about the house and questions whether the feng shui is correct. Dirk had not consulted a feng shui expert and this amazes May-may. To appease her he tells her to bring one in and that he had better not find any dragons under the house.

May-may tells him that Mary Sinclair has arrived in Hong Kong and asks if she can invite her over that day. Dirk tells her that he will send word to Mary, inviting her to the house to visit May-may. Their conversation is interrupted when he is told that there are visitors. He finds Shevaun and Wilf Tillman waiting for him. They have come to wish him well in his new home. Wilf is aware of his niece's interest in Dirk. On the way over he was thinking of the ramifications of a match between the two and decides even though there would be financial advantages, it would probably mean the end of Cooper-Tillman.

Shevaun delivers her housewarming gifts and the men talk business. Dirk says he will be returning to the Canton settlement in a few days. After they leave, May-may is angry about Shevaun. She knows that Shevaun wants to marry Dirk and she tells Dirk that. She is very jealous.

Dirk walks around the island looking at all of the building that is taking place. He meets his brother Robb and they talk business. Everything is much more expensive than they had figured on because of the speed of the building and the theft. Robb tells Dirk they will be in financial trouble if the Blue Cloud does not reach London. Dirk tells him not to worry.

Robb is unhappy and they talk about it. His wife Sarah is still returning to England after the baby's birth and he is unhappy with that fact. He is also troubled about the rift between Culum and Dirk. Dirk tells him not to worry about it and then the two men begin to talk about the events at Aberdeen the night before. The toffs will travel to England on the Thunder Cloud, which is due to leave in a few days. The men are on the China Cloud learning English for three months before being assigned to the various clippers. They are interrupted by the lookout's announcement of the arrival of the mail packet. The lookout on the knoll had been Culum's idea and it allows them to receive their mail before the others do.

There is three months of mail to go through. There is information about prices in London where their cargo will be sold. Problems by the Chartists in England affect prices and Dirk alters the plans and cargoes of some of his ships in response to the news. Further news reveals that a Russian grand duke is traveling in Asia and that Aristotle Quance's wife Maureen has returned. They know that Aristotle will vanish when he finds out about Maureen so they decide to keep them separated until that evening.



Gordon Chen tells Dirk that he has negotiated a price with the King of the Beggars to keep the ball guests from being bothered and to keep The Noble House from being bothered for a month. Dirk is angry but agrees to the deal for a month. Gordon doesn't tell him that he requested the King of the Beggars from Jin-qua since it is a good cover for the Hung Mun Tong. Dirk asks Gordon if he knows anything about the Triads. He tells Gordon to listen for any information and to report to him about it. Dirk also tells Gordon to help teach English to his new recruits, the men from Wu Kwok. These men Gordon knows are Triads, but he doesn't tell that to Dirk. He also doesn't tell him that all of the servants are Triads and are under the control of Gordon Chen.

Gordon asks for and receives permission to visit May-may the next day. He also reports to Dirk of the profits from their partnership, based on the ten thousand dollars he had given Gordon. He is amazed at the amount of money they made in one month. Gordon didn't buy land in the land sale but he bought land in other parts of the island. Their meeting is interrupted as Dirk is summoned to the flagship by Longstaff.

Chapter 17 Analysis

May-may is Chinese and believes in Feng Shui and other Chinese customs. She has a bad feeling about the new house in Happy Valley and wants a Feng Shui consultant. Dirk tells her to bring one in if it will make her happy, but to tell him not to find any sleeping dragons under the new house.

Shevaun Tillman is interested in Dirk Struan. Wilf thinks about the ramifications of a match between them and knows there would be good and bad points. There would be the financial advantages of The Noble House, but since Jeff Cooper wants to marry her, it would probably be the end of their trading company. Without the profits from the trading company, Shevaun's father, the senator, would face financial problems. In addition, Dirk is highly critical of the American way of life. Wilf decides that Shevaun has to marry Jeff Cooper.

Shevaun doesn't see it that way. "You're quite a man, she thought; you may not know it, Dirk Struan, but I'm going to marry you. I wonder what your Oriental mistress is like; I feel her presence in the house. Mistress or not, I'm the girl for you. And when I'm your wife you won't need to stray for a long time. A very long time" (Chap. 17, p. 356). May-may senses this and is very jealous.

Gordon Chen is the leader of the Hung Mun Tong, or Triads, in Hong Kong, but Dirk does not know this. The men from Wu Kwok are Triads, as are all of the servants for the foreigners. Gordon is building a good base of operation in Hong Kong where they are free from the Chinese mandarins.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Longstaff tells him of the arrival of the Russian archduke Alexi Zergeyev. Dirk doesn't let on that he already knows about the archduke, but he learns that a member of Longstaff's staff has been assigned to escort the archduke. Longstaff tells him of the peace in the Middle East and that Turkey has opened up the Ottoman Empire to trade. Dirk says that this is the best news he's had in a long time.

The men discuss the issue of the Russian archduke. Longstaff tells Dirk that the Zergeyev family is important in Russia. They discuss the political situation in Europe. There is always the possibility of trouble. They feel that the Russian archduke is in Hong Kong looking for information. They have it make it clear that Hong Kong is under the control of the British and not open to the interference of Russia. They are interrupted by the arrival of the archduke.

Longstaff's father knew the archduke's father in Russia. Dirk is introduced and finds that he and The Noble House are known in St. Petersburg. The men talk over lunch. Zergeyev's ship will be arriving soon and he promises to send them caviar. He will be leaving when the ship arrives, and he is invited to stay on Dirk's ship until that time.

After they leave, Longstaff thinks about their discussion and sees the solution to Britain's trade imbalance problem. They should destroy the tea monopoly by stealing or buying seeds and planting them in India. Longstaff believes that he is the only one that can accomplish this and that he will be rewarded by the Crown for doing so.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The news from Longstaff is good for Dirk and The Noble House. The Ottoman Empire is now open to trade. This is something that Dirk and Robb had been preparing for for years. Huge markets will be available for them now.

They are curious about the archduke. They find that he is on his way to Alaska and had stopped in Singapore and is now waiting for his ship. Dirk also discerns that Zergeyev is a seaman, although he seems to try to hide that fact.

While resting, Longstaff comes up with the idea of destroying the Chinese monopoly in tea by acquiring a ton of seeds and planting them in India. The revenues from the tea sales in India will cure the bullion imbalance problem and negate any need for the opium trade.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The prizefight between fighters from the Army and the Navy is part of the day's festivities that concludes with the ball in the evening. It is a well-attended social event for the men and is heavily bet on. The fight goes on for so long that there is talk of stopping it before one or both of the fighters dies. Dirk enters into a bet with Zergeyev. The terms are that the winner can ask either of them a question on anything. Zergeyev bets on the Navy and Dirk bets on the Army. The fight ends.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Even though the prizefight is a social event, the two fighters are from the Army and the Navy. The honor of the services is at stake for them.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

May-may and Ah-Sam watch the comings and goings on the water with binoculars. They see the approach of Dirk's boat and that he looks very angry. May-May tells Ah-Sam to run a bath for Dirk as she hides her ball gown.

During the fight, Dirk has Orlov search the archduke's quarters and baggage. There are no papers. Dirk also visits the toffs and tells them he would take them to Canton the next day and put them on a board for England. Scragger's son gives him a kerchief with items in it, at his father's request. Inside the kerchief are precious gems and gold and jewelry. The pirate's booty are his inheritance to his son.

Dirk is angry with the contents of the kerchief and wonders what to do with it. He hides it in his strongbox with his papers and takes his bath to prepare for the ball. May-may joins him for tea and wants to know what time the dress judging is. She wants to Dirk to come home before then. The feng shui expert said the house was on a dragon's eyeball and that they had to move. Dirk says no. She doesn't tell him about the ball gown.

The Brocks are also getting ready for the ball. Liza has a new red brocade ball gown and helps her husband dress. She also purchased new clothes for him for the ball without telling him. After he sees himself in the new clothes, he is impressed, but tries to hide it from Liza. She then tells him that they are taking their daughter Tess to the ball. Liza goes to get Tess for Brock's approval.

Chapter 20 Analysis

May-may still hasn't told Dirk about the ball gown, just that she wants him to come home thirty minutes before the dress judging.

Tess Brock is attending the ball, which her father finds out about right before they are to leave. Liza and Brock talk briefly about Nagrek and how the last month has been such a strain on all of them.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Culum gives the signal for the beginning of the evening's festivities. At the sound of the cannon, servants hastily lit lanterns. The servants, under the supervision of Gordon Chen, had prepared marine lot number eight for the ball. Firecrackers and other fireworks are set off.

Quance is kept busy all afternoon, painting portraits of Robb's children. He changes and is ready to leave for the ball with Robb. Sarah and Robb have words before Robb leaves. Sarah is two weeks overdue to deliver her baby and can't attend the ball. She wants to know if he has made her travel arrangements yet. He says no. Robb says that he cannot return to England at this time and that he is thinking of her, the children, and their children when he made that decision.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Shevaun Tillman and Mary Sinclair are preparing for the ball. Aristotle Quance has spent the afternoon painting portraits of Robb's children, so he knows nothing of the arrival of Maureen. Robb's wife Sarah can't attend the ball because of being pregnant, and she and Robb have some bitter words before Robb leaves for the ball. Sarah is bitter about the events in the Struan family and is still planning on returning to England with the children. Robb says that he will not go with her and that he is thinking of their families' future.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Culum is in the receiving line at the ball, receiving guests with his father and uncle. He feels jealous when he sees Mary Sinclair talking with Glessing. The army and the navy provided the two bands for the evening. Robb is introduced to Tess Brock and it is love at first sight for him. Liza is pleased at the reaction and Dirk is thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of a match between the two.

Dirk and Quance are looking over the ladies and their ball gowns. There is no chance of Maureen Quance meeting Aristotle since she is on one of Dirk's boats without any means of transportation to land. Dirk introduces the archduke to Tess and asks them to lead the first dance. Shevaun and her uncle arrive at that moment and are also introduced to the Russian. The dancing begins with a Viennese waltz. There are various petty jealousies over who is dancing with whom, with Culum watching from the sidelines.

Mary Sinclair is talking with the others, even though she is spending much of her time with Glessing. She knows that she is pregnant with a Chinese child and any hope of a match with Dirk or Glessing is gone. She decides to talk to May-may. After dancing the Kankana, dinner is served. After the meal, the ladies go off to rest in a large tent and the men gather to drink port and talk. They all express their opinions of the ball gowns and who Aristotle should select as the winner.

Members of Longstaff's staff take him aside and tell him of a pirate attack. The offenders were captured. They discuss whether the incident is a civil or military matter. They can't hand them over to the Chinese authorities because the event took place in British waters. They decide to discuss the matter the next day.

Dirk and the archduke walk off to talk. The archduke invites Dirk to Russia for six months. He tells them that the Russian markets are large and tea and silk and other goods would be well received. He could arrange for Dirk's company to have a monopoly on trade in tea in Russia. He says he wants friendship in exchange for the trade deals. Friendship means future favors. Dirk says he will think about it.

Glessing brings Horatio a document that Longstaff wants translated into Chinese. They cannot figure out why he wants fifty pounds of mulberry seeds, not knowing that Longstaff will substitute the Chinese character for tea in place of mulberries. While they are talking, Glessing tells Horatio that he wants to marry his sister, Mary. Horatio says he approves but cautions Glessing to wait.

Gorth and Brock also talk. Gorth has heard a rumor that the Tai-pan plans on returning to England for good. They can devour Culum, Gorth tells his father. If there is a match between Culum and Tess, then Gorth would be head of the empire. Brock does not like



the thought of retiring and wants to know how Gorth can be sure that it would be he, not Culum, who would be tai-pan. "He hardened his heart, loathing Gorth for making him feel old. Knowing that even so he must settle the TaiPan. For Gorth against Culum with Struan alive was no contest" (Chap. 22, p. 424).

Dirk leaves at eleven-thirty to see May-may, as he had promised.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The ball begins, with Culum, Dirk and Robb in the receiving line, greeting guests. The deception of hostility between Dirk and Robb continues, with Culum finding it easier to play the role. He knows that his relationship with his father has changed. He respects his father now, but he doesn't idolize him as before.

The introduction of Culum to Tess Brock is not unnoticed by their parents. Liza, who has her heart set on Culum as a husband for Tess, is pleased at the situation. Dirk, who notices the reaction of the two youngsters, is considered the advantages and disadvantages at a match between them.

When Dirk introduces the archduke to Tess Brock and asks them to lead the first dance, the room is abuzz with talk of a possible truce between the two. This sets the traders to all talking about whether there is a peace between Dirk and Brock and who would and wouldn't benefit.

As the dancing begins, so do the petty jealousies. Culum is sullen because Tess is dancing with the archduke, which arouses the curiosity of Tyler Brock and Gorth. Jeff Cooper isn't happy about Shevaun dancing with Dirk. Wilf wants him to hurry and propose to Shevaun so he can stop playing watchdog. Mary Sinclair hides her feelings about Shevaun.

Gorth talks to Culum about putting aside the battle between their fathers. Gorth says that China is big enough for both of them. Culum is surprised at the offer of friendship from Gorth. Gorth tells Culum that it was Tess who prompted him to talk to Culum about the situation between their fathers. They shake on their friendship. Is it a trap?

Dirk and Zergeyev talk about the possibility of trade between Russia and England. The archduke says he can be very influential in obtaining a monopoly for The Noble House in exchange for friendship. By friendship he means that the Russians will want favors in the future. Dirk says he will think about it. He is already beholden by the four half coins.

Horatio tells Mary of Glessing's plan to propose to her. It seems that Mary and her brother had an incestuous relationship. She tells Horatio she will marry Glessing if she wants and will be happy to be away from Horatio.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Dirk returns home as he promised May-may. He thinks of his conversation with Zergeyev. If he gets the Russian monopoly he will be almost untouchable and can ignore convention. He can marry May-may. As he is thinking about this, May-may appears in her ball gown. Her hair is in ringlets. Dirk thinks she looks ridiculous. At his reaction, May-may pales and runs to her quarters, locking the door behind her. He kicks down the door when she won't open it. He tells her that he was just surprised and that they are going to the ball. She tears the dress to shreds and Dirk knows that nothing will ever be the same between them. She is screaming in Chinese, and Dirk finally silences her by slapping her. She loses consciousness. When she regains consciousness, he tells her to dress in her usual clothes and that he wants her to meet his friends at the ball. She finally falls asleep and Dirk leaves the room.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Dirk is startled at May-may's appearance. He should have anticipated that May-may would want to attend the ball. He knows that nothing will ever be the same between them.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Dirk returns to the ball where they are waiting on the ball gown contest. Culum tells him that Sarah has gone into labor and there are problems. Robb had left with Liza Brock who went to see if she could help. Dirk has a brandy to settle himself. Just as the ball gown contest is to take place, Maureen Quance walks in. She confronts her husband, Aristotle, and leaves with him. The Russian volunteers to judge the contest for them. He selects Tess Brock.

Chapter 24 Analysis

All of the Struans' plans to keep Maureen Quance from finding her husband fail when she walks into the ball and leads him out. Zergeyev volunteers to judge the ball gown contest. He tries to find out who Dirk favors, thinking it is best for him to select who Dirk wants, but Dirk tells him it is up to him. He selects Tess.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

May-may is sitting in the living room, waiting for Dirk when he returns home. He tells her to go to bed, but she wants to talk. She says she can't stay there anymore and asks him to sell her. He tells her that is impossible and to go to bed. She keeps telling him to sell this slave, meaning herself. He finally tells her that he should sell her into the worst whorehouse. He flogs her to restore her dignity, missing her as much as possible. She tells him that she is pregnant. He allows her to serve him food. He tells her that she is forgiven and she cries herself to sleep in his arms.

Chapter 25 Analysis

A very upset May-may greets Dirk. She wants to be sold. He cannot stop her from saying sell this slave until he uses reverse psychology. He says he was cheated at what he paid for her and he ought to sell her into the worst whorehouse. He is trying to restore her face and dignity and the only way to do so is with a flogging.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Summer is always a bad time for the Europeans who come down with many illnesses, many due to the lack of sanitation and their own misunderstanding of what causes various diseases. Hong Kong continues to be developed and many Europeans are living there now. Since British law do not use torture, many Chinese criminals come from the mainland and the other islands. The town of Queens Town has a fever epidemic, which Robb tells Culum is malaria. Culum and Dirk are at the Canton settlement where they learn that Robb's daughter, Karen, is sick with the disease.

Culum and Dirk discuss the situation. Dirk makes an appointment with Jin-qua and he and the archduke are invited to dinner. Culum and Dirk argue about moving their operations out of Happy Valley. Dirk says they have too much invested. Culum is in favor of expelling the coolies from the island, since that is where the fever began.

Culum tells Dirk that the Brock family will be moving their family and operations to Macao for the summer. Dirk says that he is returning to Queens Town and he wants Culum there, but he can take a week or two and spend it in Macao. They argue more about Gorth and Tess. Dirk tells Culum that Gorth and the Brocks will try to destroy him. Culum feels that the two houses can be merged if he and Tess marry and that he and Gorth can each be Tai-Pan. Dirk tells him it doesn't work like that. There can only be one Tai-Pan. Dirk says that he has considered the possibility of Culum marrying Tess and that the disadvantages and dangers far outweigh the advantages of such a match. Dirk asks if Culum is willing to wait five years for Tess to come of age and he answers that he is willing to wait. Dirk says he will talk to Brock. He also reminds Culum of the coffin money that Brock gave to Dirk.

Dirk meets with Brock that night. They talk about Aristotle Quance and some of the events at the ball and of the fever. Jin-qua had told Dirk that they had never had the illness in Kwangtung. The conversation changes to Tess and Culum. Dirk tells Brock that he is against the match, that he doesn't trust Tyler or Gorth. Tyler says he will accept the match if Culum asks and Dirk says he will see them in hell first. They agree to let Culum and Tess decide their own fate.

A clerk interrupts them and tells them all of the servants have disappeared. This is always a danger sign. They prepare to arm and meet at Dirk's factory. All the traders are there within an hour. There are also fifty armed soldiers in the garden. Dirk says his instincts are to evacuate as fast as possible. The shipping season is over so there is no need for them to stay. Longstaff says that he doesn't see any reason.

The men assign guards to the various positions so they can react quickly to trouble. Dirk tells Culum to empty the safe and board the lorch. He offers space to others if they need it. Culum returns and again questions Dirk about his meeting with Brock. He tells



him that they can marry next year. Just then shots are fired and the Chinese storm the square. The foreigners, including the Americans, board the lorchas as the others cover their retreat. The mob begins to set fire to the factories as the lorchas sail from the wharf.

In all of the confusion, Gorth aims at Dirk, thinking that he can kill him in the confusion. His aim is off and he hits the archduke instead. Brock knocks Gorth away and fires at the mob to give Dirk time to carry the Russian to Dirk's boat. The Russian has a musket wound. Dirk asks if anyone had seen the Chinese with muskets and says to offer a reward for information.

Chapter 26 Analysis

There is a fever epidemic plaguing the island of Hong Kong. Culum and Dirk, at the Canton settlement, are discussing the situation. Culum wants all of the coolies expelled from the island since the fever began with them. Dirk says that isn't a viable option. He suggests they move all of their operations from Happy Valley, but Dirk says they have too much of an investment in the area. Dirk knows that Culum is worried about Tess and that his feelings are clouding her actions. He is also leery of Culum's relationship with Gorth and cautions Culum about the relationship.

Dirk talks to Brock that night. They are blunt with each other, with Dirk saying Gorth will not take The Noble House through Culum's marriage to Tess. They agree to let Tess and Culum make up their own minds.

The disappearance of the servants from the settlement indicates trouble. The Chinese mob storms the square and sets fire to the building in the settlement as the trades flee to their lorchas and sail. This is the plan that Jin-qua knew of but did not tell Dirk about. As they are standing on the wharf, Gorth aims his musket and fires. The Russian is hit. Dirk suspects foul play since the archduke has a musket wound. He tells his people to offer a reward for information.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Dirk returns to Queens Town. On the way to his office, he looks at all the building that is taking place. He notices that there are few coolies working today and that the weather is hot and humid. He goes upstairs to the living quarters and finds Sarah. She tells him that her daughter Karen is dead. The new baby, Lochlin, is still alive. He tells her that the Chinese burned the Canton settlement just as he received Robb's letter. Dirk goes into Robb's room and finds him lying in bed, dead. Sarah tells Dirk that his last message to Dirk was that he never wanted to be Tai-Pan.

Dirk makes the arrangement for the funerals. As he walks to his house, he remembers Robb's first day in the Orient. He finds May-may in the garden and finds that May-may sent the children to her sister in Macao when the fever epidemic began. He tells her of the deaths of Karen and Robb and of the attack of the Canton settlement. The British will now attack Canton and Peking.

May-may wants to arrange a Chinese funeral for Robb but Dirk tells her no, that it is not their custom. He is too preoccupied with the problem of whether or not to stay in Hong Kong to listen to her.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Dirk thinks of leaving Hong Kong, especially since May-may does not want to stay there. If he left it would be the end of Hong Kong, since all of the others would leave. If he stayed, many would die of the fever. He does not know what to do.

When he tells May-may of the attack on the Canton settlement, she asks what will happen next. He tells her that the British will attack Canton and Peking. May-may knows she must pass the information to her grandfather, Jin-qua. He and the Co-hong must have time to find the ransom that will be demanded.

The clash of their two cultures is still obvious in their discussion of the feng shui report and her plans to adhere to Chinese customs for Robb's funeral.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Wolfgang Mauss says the funeral service for Robb three days later as Robb is laid to rest next to Karen. Longstaff isn't there since the fleet had already sailed for Canton. Wilf Tillman is sick with the fever, but all of the others are in attendance. A simultaneous Chinese funeral possession is also taking place. The Chinese procession was arranged by Gordon Chen and he and Tai-Pan gain great face from honoring the Chinese gods. Gordon is already one of the biggest landowners and businessmen in Hong Kong and this greatly enhances his stature in the eyes of the Chinese people. He is also well respected and obeyed in the Triads. He is now known as the Tai-Pan of Tai Ping Shan.

After the funeral, Dirk sends Karen back to the clipper and finds Culum talking with the Brocks. Culum had asked Brock for Tess's hand in marriage and it had been accepted. Culum and Dirk walk away from the group. They greet Mary Sinclair and Glessing. Glessing was sent back to represent the navy at Robb's funeral and will be returning to Canton later that day. As they walk on, Mary tells Glessing that she accepts his proposal of marriage. Horatio is angry at their plans to marry and walks away.

Dirk and Culum are talking at their offices. Dirk tells Culum that he can't leave now, even though Culum says that he can manage the business. Gorth had predicted this last night and told him that none of their ideas would be accepted as long as their fathers were alive. Culum presses Dirk for when he will be Tai-Pan, feeling that his father is proving Gorth to be correct in his predictions. Dirk tells him that maybe in two or three years, when he has enough experience. When Culum says they are thinking of announcing the engagement at Midsummer Night, Dirk remembers his conversation with Scragger and that Wu Kwok will be an easy target for an ambush. The Midsummer Night is in nine days.

Culum also tells him that he and Tess have decided what they want as a wedding gift from Dirk and hands Dirk a piece of paper. It is a contract to forget the past. They want their parents to be friends. Dirk refuses to sign and says he doubts that Tyler will, in spite of what Gorth says. Culum slams the door on his way out.

Dirk is thinking of the events of the day, as May-may lay sleeping next to him. Sarah plans to leave on the next ship and is angry that Dirk will control and manage Robb's share of the company. She plans to have her lawyers look into the terms of the will. He thinks of Wu Kwok at the festival and sends word to the military through Horatio. He also learns from the army doctors that the fever epidemic was malaria. May-may awakes. She too is thinking of the events of the day. Mary Sinclair needs help arranging an abortion. Mary will take the herbs in Macao so she has time to recover.

May-may and Dirk talk about Culum and the marriage to Tess. May-may says they should marry as soon as possible, then Tess will be removed from the Brock household



and the influence of Tyler and Gorth. Culum will spend less time with Gorth if he and Tess are married and Tyler will oppose a quick marriage which will cause Tess to turn against him. May-may also decides that the solution to the problem of how to save The Noble House is to have Gorth killed, but not in a way that implicates her Tai-Pan. She is up most of the night thinking of a plan.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Shevaun's plans for marrying Dirk have been changed due to Robb's death. She had planned on marrying him quickly, introducing him in Washington DC and then going on to London. Now she knew that he wouldn't be able to leave Hong Kong until Culum is ready to be Tai-Pan.

Gordon Chen has become one of the biggest landlords and businessmen in Hong Kong. He is now known as the Tai-Pan of Tai Ping Shan among the Chinese. He is well respected and obeyed not only because of his wealth and power but also because of his position in the Triads. He and Dirk gained a great deal of face among the Chinese because of the Chinese funeral.

Mary Sinclair accepts Glessing's proposal. Her brother Horatio is very angry and Glessing is surprised at the bitterness between them. He doesn't know of their incestuous relationship or that Mary is pregnant with a Chinese baby. Mary plans to have the pregnancy terminated.

It is obvious that Gorth Brock is trying to drive a wedge between Culum and his father. Dirk is trying to look out for the best interests of his son. He knows if he leaves the Orient that Culum will be devoured by Tyler and Gorth Brock. He also worries about Wu Kwok, thinking if they ambush and kill him, there will be one less danger for Culum.

May-may's devotion to Dirk is evident in her advice regarding Culum. A fast marriage will be opposed by Brock and cause trouble in the Brock household. It will also result in Culum spending less time with Gorth. May-may's personality is revealed in her devising a plan to have Gorth killed, without telling Dirk. She is trying to protect her man and her own position with The Noble House.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

The malaria epidemic in Happy Valley has become worse by the time of the Midsummer Night. The coolies won't enter the area unless it is bright sunlight and it is only the Happy Valley area that is affected. They believe the disease was caused by poisonous gases. The only way to escape is to move.

Longstaff returns from Canton. The ransom of six million taels had been paid in one day. The plan to attack in the north is in progress and troops are on their way from India. The war would continue until the treaty was ratified. He is proud of himself for thinking of the tea seeds, which he obtained very easily through Horatio.

Dirk meets with Longstaff and they discuss the events in Canton. Longstaff says he thinks that Ching-so knew they were going to demand the ransom and had it ready for them. One of the Triads has been caught by Ching-so and they promised Longstaff a list of names when they obtain the information. Longstaff also tells Dirk that the frigates plan to attack Wu Kwok that night at the festival in Quemoy.

Their conversation turns to the Happy Valley malaria epidemic situation. Dirk wants Longstaff to order an immediate evacuation of Happy Valley and Queens Town. Longstaff opposes the idea, since it basically means abandoning Hong Kong. Dirk says the Crown must reimburse people for their losses and have them move to another settlement in order to save Hong Kong. The reimbursement will actually be paid by the Chinese through their war losses and Hong Kong is needed as a base for the attack on the north. They will hold a land sale for the new lots to be offered. Dirk explains the plan and feels that it will make Longstaff look good before the British government. Longstaff views the plan as flawless and a way to advance his career.

Longstaff agrees with Dirk's plan and says he will announce it the next day. He does not tell Dirk about the tea seeds, even though he wants to, and how they fit in with the plan. The new town site will be near Glessing's Point. They are interrupted by the arrival of Maureen and Aristotle Quance. Aristotle is in tears since Maureen destroyed his paints and brushes. She is trying to find him a steady job. Dirk offers him a job with lodging for a year and Maureen accepts for her husband. Aristotle begins the next day.

Dirk stops at the whorehouse where he talks with the proprietor and then goes home. He tells May-may to pack to move onto Resting Cloud. They are moving from the house with the bad Feng Shui. They pack and begin moving out at dusk. May-may is bit by a mosquito but doesn't notice.

Dirk pays a visit to the Brocks on the White Witch. He tells them that Longstaff is ordering an evacuation with reimbursement. He attributes the idea for the plan as Longstaff's, yet they all know that he was behind it and that he saved them all again. As



they sit down to dinner, Dirk gives Tess and Culum his gift of land and a house near Glessing's Point, where the new settlement will be. Brock had planned on giving them a house in Macao where they would be away from Dirk's influence.

Dirk also tells them that he favors a quick marriage and sees no reason for them to delay. Gorth and Tyler object, as Dirk had predicted. Brock has to cancel their plans to leave because of the land sale. After the women leave, the men sit down to drink their port. They discuss the shooting incident that injured the archduke at the Canton settlement. Culum presses for a fast marriage as does Dirk. Brock says he will think about it.

Dirk returns to Resting Cloud. He finds a watercolor picture that May-may says Ah Sam got. She doesn't tell him that there is a secret encoded message in the scroll. It was a thank you message from Jin-qua regarding May-may's information about the amount of the ransom for Canton.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Longstaff has obtained the tea seeds he wanted through Horatio. They have told no one of the plan to grow tea in India. Longstaff is proud of himself for thinking of the plan—he even outsmarted the Tai-Pan in this.

Longstaff and Dirk discuss the epidemic situation in Hong Kong. Reimbursing people for moving out of Happy Valley will restore the trader's faith in Hong Kong and in the Crown. Dirk feels that the plan he proposes will win Longstaff permanent honors from the government. They decide the new settlement will be at Glessing's Point. Dirk knows how to handle Longstaff.

Dirk followed May-may's advice on pushing for a fast marriage and buying Tess and Culum a house. This interferes with Brock's plan to give them a house in Macao where they would be away from Dirk's influence. It all puts pressure on the Brock's and causes some tension in the Brock family.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Sarah is traveling home to England on the Calcutta Maharajah, a ship owned by the East India Company. Dirk visits her before her departure. He gives her a draft for five thousand guineas with the promise that she will receive that amount every other month. He also made the arrangement for the trust fund, as Robb had instructed. They part after having bitter words.

Back at the office, Dirk sends for Aristotle Quance. He tells him to go aboard the Calcutta Maharajah and make a scene as it sails. A sampan will be waiting for him with a change of clothing so he can be disguised as a coolie and hide at the whorehouse for two months. Dirk made all of the arrangements and including a loan.

Gordon Chen brings May-May a jade bracelet. She reads the inscription and gives it back to him and he throws it out of the pothole window. They have tea and talk guardedly. Gordon knew that May-may passed useful information to Jin-qua and the old man, his superior in the Triads, had ordered him to do whatever May-may requested. He at first thinks she wants Tai-Pan killed and he is frantic at the thought. She points out the White Witch in the harbor, utterly abhorred by the realization that Gordon Chen at first thought she wanted the Tai-Pan dead. In a roundabout way, she indicates that it is Gorth who is to be killed in Macao. Gordon thinks that the plan is the Tai-Pan's and wonders if he knows about the Triads and Jin-qua's and Gordon's involvement.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Sarah's anger and bitterness toward Dirk are evident in their meeting. She says she wants nothing of Dirk's, not the offer of his house in Scotland nor any advice as to how to manage her money or life. He tells her that her bitterness is because she married Robb and not Dirk and she made Robb's life miserable because of that. After he leaves, she agrees.

May-may meets with Gordon Chen to arrange the death of Gorth Brock in Macao. Gordon thinks that Dirk is behind the plot. He doesn't know that it is all May-may's idea.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

China Cloud sails that afternoon. They sail for four days and then return to Hong Kong. As they enter the harbor Dirk sees a sign from Resting Cloud that he is to come there immediately. The harbor is packed with ships, including one flying the Russian flag. When he reaches the Resting Cloud, he finds the signal was ordered by Culum, who is ashore. Culum arrives. Since it is the day of the land sale, they look over a map of the lots and Culum tells him which ones he and Brock had decided on. Culum explains whom he consulted with and why he made the selections that he made. Culum says he talked over his selections with Tess. Dirk says that he put Tess to a test and they will know by which lots the Brocks bid on if she talked or not.

Culum goes on to tell Dirk that he signed for the reimbursement of their losses in Happy Valley and that an Englishman, Roger Blore, wants to see him. He arrived on Zergeyev's ship. The Brock family, less Tyler, is leaving for Macao the next day, and Culum would like to go with them if Brock approves of the early wedding date. They are to meet that night. He also tells Dirk that the frigates sunk many pirate ships around Quemoy and they may have killed Wu Kwok. Other news includes the illness of Mary Sinclair in Macao. There is also the news that an inquiry found the shooting of Zergeyev to be an accident.

Dirk meets with Roger Blore and the meeting begins strangely. First, Blore knows Dirk's middle name, and secondly Dirk has to prove that half his foot was shot off. As it turns out, Blore is not the man's real name. His name is Richard Crosse, the son of Sir Charles Crosse, a member of Parliament. He hands Dirk an envelope and explains how he made the trip so quickly. In addition to asking Dirk to keep his son who is in trouble in England, the letter contains disturbing news.

The British government is unhappy with Longstaff for disobeying orders. Instead of capturing five or six Chinese ports, he obtained the island of Hong Kong. The government rejects the treaty and is sending Sir Clyde Whalen as Longstaff's replacement. Hong Kong is basically a dead issue with the current government. The only hope for Hong Kong is a new government. Sir Charles cautions Dirk to extricate himself from Hong Kong financially and tells him that the run on his bank was orchestrated by Morgan Brock. The Brocks are associated with some European bankers and are trying to duplicate the structure of The Noble House for themselves.

Dirk wonders what to do about the news. He has the coffin money from Brock, three outstanding half coins, and other debts and favors to repay. And now Hong Kong is considered a dead issue in England. He wonders what to do about the land sale. He offers Blore the job of Secretary of the Jockey Club. He is to find the horses and design the racetrack and run the club. Blore accepts and they agree to begin the races on Saturday with borrowed horses from the army.



Dirk returns home and finds that May-may wants money to buy land and to start a business. He agrees and decides not to attend the land auction. He sends word to Culum to handle the auction and to buy a small lot on Queens Road. That will be for May-may and her business, but he does not tell this to Culum. Culum buys the lots that he wanted at the land sale. He feels that they prove that Tess could be trusted because the Brocks did not bid against him.

That night Brock tells Dirk and Culum that Tess can marry in three months, on her seventeenth birthday. Dirk says he prefers the next month and that there is little difference between one month and three, but agrees that three it is. After the Struan's leave, Gorth tells Tyler that it was a mistake not to bid on the hill and the lots. Tyler tells him that if they had, the Struans would have known that Tess talked.

Tyler Brock tells the Struans that Tess can marry in three months on her seventeenth birthday. When the Struans leave, Tyler and Gorth have words. Gorth does not tell Tyler of his plan to use Culum in Macao to get his revenge against Dirk. Gorth does tell him that Tyler is using Tess and that the Struans will use her against them after the marriage.

The Brock ship sails for Macao the next day without Tyler. Culum is on board.

Chapter 31 Analysis

Brock is still training his son. Culum was frantic at his father's disappearance. He handled some things and he waited on others. Dirk tells him if he ever disappears again, to wait forty days. If he doesn't come back, it means he is not coming back or is dead. Culum also indicates to his father that he knows that Dirk is trying to help him. He tells him that he wants to be Tai-Pa but not at the expense of Dirk's death.

A friend in Parliament, Sir Charles Crosse, sends Dirk disturbing news. The issue of Hong Kong is dead and Longstaff is being replaced. This leaves Dirk with a decision of what to do about Hong Kong.

Tyler and Gorth Brock talk after the departure of the Struans. Brock dislikes himself for using Tess to obtain information about the Struans. He is also distrustful of Gorth because he knows that Gorth is right. Tess will be used against them after the marriage. Tess is Tyler's weakness, Gorth tells him.



Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

The first horse race is held five days later. Building is already taking place in the new town. Wages are bid up due to the speed that everyone wants things built in and this caused a labor shortage. The Noble House employs three thousand workers alone. The day of the race marks two weeks since May-May and Dirk moved out of the Happy Valley house. May-May is not feeling well and follows Dirk's advice to stay in bed.

Dirk goes to the racetrack. He is worried that he has not yet received a letter from Culum. He meets Zergeyev and they talk with Shevaun, Brock, and others. Dirk is only half paying attention to the conversation as he is worrying about May-May. The archduke has the honor of starting the first race and leaves with Blore. Dirk sees some soldiers hauling a coolie-outfitted Aristotle Quance out of tent and tells the soldiers that the man is a friend of his. Aristotle says he couldn't stay in hiding and miss the races. Dirk tells him that he'd better leave since Maureen is at the races. She will be leaving the next week. Aristotle tells Dirk about Gorth's behavior in the brothel and how the poor girl is near death. He wants to stay for one race. Dirk asks Glessing to keep Aristotle and his wife apart and to escort him home after the first race.

Dirk returns home early because of his concern for May-May. Gordon Chen arrives with the Chinese doctor. May-May points to parts of a statue and then Ah-Sam takes the statue to the doctor and repeats what May-May has said. The doctor asks to see May-May and is led into the room. The doctor tells them that May-May has malaria. There is a medicine for malaria but there is none in Hong Kong, Macao, or Canton. Dirk offers him twenty thousand taels of silver if he cures May-May. Gordon and the doctor leave. He tells May-May that the men went to find the medicine for her illness.

Dirk checks with the naval doctor about the cure for malaria. He tells him about cinchona bark and that it is an old wives tale. The naval doctor says he can get the bark in Peru. The only treatment is the usual calomel purgative. The army doctor tells him the same thing. In the meantime, Gordon Chen spreads the word around the Triads that the cinchona bark is needed and that there is a big reward. The mandarins also hear of the reward for the bark and are looking for some as a way of trapping the Triads.

Dirk goes to see Wilf Tillman, who is recovering from malaria. He tells him that the answer is no, thinking he is asking to marry Shevaun. Dirk says that's not why he came to see him. They end up fighting about slavery, since the Americans transport slaves in their ships. Jeff and Shevaun come in and Wilf tells them that Jeff has asked to marry Shevaun and that Wilf has approved the marriage. Shevaun objects and appeals to Dirk, who tells her that she is underage and must do what her father and family want. Shevaun complains that it is a business deal.



Dirk leaves and returns to May-may's side. He wants to go to Macao to find out about Culum but doesn't want to leave May-may. Morley Skinner, the journalist, arrives at midnight. He wants to check an item before he prints it and Dirk secretly owns the paper. The story concerns the rejection of the Treaty of Chuenpi and Hong Kong. The story contains all of the details that Dirk had told Blore to leak to Skinner. Dirk's reaction isn't what Skinner had expected and he wonders if Dirk knew of the events and sent Blore to him. "Skinner was as strong for Hong Kong as Struan was. Without Hong Kong there was no Noble House. And without The Noble House there was no weekly Oriental Times and no job" (Chap. 32, p. 560). He does not understand Dirk's reaction. He finds that Dirk thinks there will be a change in government in the next year. Skinner disagrees and tells him how bad the economic conditions are in England. He tells him to support Whalen and the Whigs to help Hong Kong. They work out a deal and Skinner says he will consult Dirk before publishing the article.

Dirk returns to a sick and shivering May-may.

Chapter 32 Analysis

Dirk's concern for May-may is justified. She has malaria. The Chinese doctor tells them that there is a medicine for malaria but there is none in Canton, Hong Kong, or Macao. Dirk tells him he will give him twenty thousand taels of silver if he cures May-may. Gordon Chen puts the word out through the Triads and everyone, Triad and non-Triad, including government agents trying to trap the Triads, is looking for the cinchona bark.

Dirk has Blore leak the contents of the letter from Sir Charles Crosse to Skinner, the newspaperman, about the rejection of the Treaty of Chuenpi. Dirk figures that Skinner will print the story and the other traders will rally to save Hong Kong. Skinner gives Dirk his appraisal of the situation in England and what he thinks Dirk should do. They discuss the situation and Skinner says he will consult with Dirk before publishing the article.



Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

Dirk tends to a sick May-may. After several hours of chills and delirium, the fever disappears. When she wakes six hours later, she asks if she has the fever. He tells her yes but that they are finding the medicine for her. He also tells her not to worry and she tells him that she is more worried about him than herself. After she eats, she sends him off to sleep in his quarters.

He sleeps badly and meets with Gordon Chen, who tells him they can't find the bark. He wonders where to find the bark, also known as Jesuit's bark. Two hours later he is sailing out of the harbor aboard the China Cloud. He directs the course of the ship as she sails. Captain Orlov is happy to have his ship back. They are headed to Macao and all hands are confined to the ship when they arrive. The captain wonders about the girl Dirk has carried aboard.

The China Cloud reaches Macao by sunrise. He makes his way to shore and then to the bishop's palace, near the Great Wall. The bishop appears a half hour later. Both men despise what the other stands for. After breakfast, the two men talk while enjoying Havana cigars. Dirk asks if he knows about cinchona bark. The bishop responds that the bark cured his malaria many years ago when he was a missionary in Brazil. Dirk says he will pay any price and meet any conditions. The bishop says he will check with his sources and let Dirk know the results.

Chapter 33 Analysis

When Gordon Chen says the bark cannot be found, Dirk wonders what to do. He figures if the bark is called Jesuit's bark, then he might find some in Macao through the bishop. He bundles May-may aboard the China Cloud and goes to Macao to the bishop's palace. The bishop had had his malaria cured with the bark when he was a missionary in Brazil. He tells Dirk he will check and let him know. Dirk is willing to pay any price, even to convert to Catholicism, to save May-may.



Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

After leaving the bishop's palace, Dirk goes to the company residence. The staff already knew he was in Macao and has a bath ready for him. He asks Lo Chum, his servant, to wake Culum and finds that he isn't there. He has only been there one or two nights. Chen Sheng arrives at nine and is admitted by Lo Chum. They discuss the Tai-Pan's trip to the bishop's palace but neither knows why. They know that May-may is aboard the China Cloud. Lo Chum indicates that he has some special information and Chen Sheng says he was thinking of him and the gifts he wanted to send him. He tells Chen Sheng that May-may is very sick with malaria and that Dirk is looking for medicine and is willing to pay a high price for it. Gordon Chen is also looking for the medicine.

Chen Sheng is shown into Dirk's study. Chen Sheng is also a leader of the Triads in Macao. He is personally charged by Jin-qua for the safety of May-may and her children. He is one of the few people that know that May-may is Jin-qua's granddaughter. Her information is invaluable to the Triads. It is worth it to the Triads to find the drug to cure her malaria, but he doesn't tell any of this to Dirk except that he slips and lets it be known that he knows that May-may has malaria and that Dirk is looking for medicine. Chen Sheng also promises to look for the bark.

Chen Sheng sends a boat to pick-up May-may. They move her to a house with a Chinese doctor in attendance. May-may's children are there. Dirk sees May-may settled into the house and then leaves.

After finding that Culum has still not returned to the residence, Dirk goes to the Brock residence. They don't know where Culum is. Gorth says they went gaming the night before, but that Gorth left early. Dirk reminds Gorth that there are laws about murder, even the murder of a prostitute. Gorth panics and becomes defensive. Dirk baits Gorth enough to get him hooked as he threatens the Tai-Pan.

He returns to his residence. There is still no word of the Jesuit bark and no Culum. Dirk has Lo Chum arrange for people to look for his son. He then goes to visit Mary Sinclair. He talks to her doctor and wants to move her, but the doctor says no. He asks if they have cinchona bark and is told no. He finds out that Mary has taken herbs to cause an abortion. Mary won't tell Dirk who the father is.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Chen Sheng is told that May-may has malaria. As the Macao leader of the Triads, this worries him. The information that May-may provides is invaluable to them and it would be worth it to them to find the drug to keep her alive. They move May-may to her house where her children are. Chen Sheng says he will look for the drug and let Dirk know if he finds any.



Dirk is concerned about Culum. At the Brock residence he lets Gorth know that he knows about the incident with the prostitute in Hong Kong and that there are laws about murder. He send Lo Chum to search for Culum.

He visits Mary Sinclair at the hospital and finds that she has had an abortion. He wants to bring her home but the doctor says no.



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

There is still no word from Culum at sunset. He had been invited to a ball at the governor's palace that evening but he said he didn't know if he could attend. Dirk finds that Culum had been drinking heavily at the gaming club. He is mad at his son for his stupid behavior. A sedan chair is deposited in front of his house by two coolies, who disappear. A drunken, unconscious Culum is in the chair. Dirk carries him into the house. Culum had been robbed. They bathe him and put him to bed. Dirk leaves him in the care of Lo Chum with orders to send word when Culum awakes. He goes to May-may's.

The next morning he finds that Culum still has not awakened. He notifies the Brock family that Culum has been found and tries to concentrate on work. He is not happy with the rising costs in Hong Kong. He decides to order a new clipper for the coming shipping season. He spends some time socializing at the English Club but he doesn't enjoy any of the activities. He tries reading some of the last mail's newspapers. He reads about the economic and political situation in England and Europe. There is talk of war in various parts of the world. He decides all of the news is bad, no matter what he reads.

His comment about the whole world being mad draws comments from some of the other men and they begin to talk about the world situation. After the discussion, he goes to the barber shop and the masseur. His massage is interrupted by the arrival of Lo Chum, who tells him that the bishop wants to see him. Dirk follows the messenger to the cathedral and learns that they may be some cinchona at the Jesuit mission at Lo Ting. The bishop has already sent a courier. The journey may take seven days and Dirk doesn't think May-may can last that long.

The bishop wants to talk about other things. He is concerned about Mary Sinclair and says he will do his best to help her spiritually. The second thing that the bishop wants to talk about is the Russian archduke. The bishop has a briefcase of documents that he has been asked to give to Dirk.

When Dirk returns to the residence he finds that Culum is awake. Dirk asks Culum to tell him what happened. Culum remembers playing cards and drinking. The last thing he remembers is putting the winnings in his pocket. He doesn't remember what warehouse he was at, but Dirk tells him that he was at one and was drugged. Dirk sends Lo Chum to Chen Sheng's house for a Chinese doctor who says he will send the proper medicines. He explains to Culum that he is afraid that someone who hates Culum put him with a diseased woman. The Chinese medicines will help cure the disease before it settles.



Dirk tells him that they will tell Tess and the others that he was robbed on his way home. He tells Culum to act normally around people and to tell no one. They have a week of hell before they know if he has the pox disease or not. He secretly blames Gorth but doesn't tell Culum and swears to kill Gorth if Culum has the pox.

Chapter 35 Analysis

Dirk is very worried about Culum. Culum is delivered unconscious in a sedan chair. Dirk and the servants bathe Culum and put him to bed. He doesn't awake by the next morning. When he does, he can't give Dirk much information. Dirk thinks that Culum has been put with a diseased woman and orders medicines from a Chinese doctor. Dirk doesn't tell Culum that he blames Brock. The animosity between Dirk and Gorth is increasing and becoming more open. Gorth mentioned earlier that he had a plan of revenge on The Noble House but he didn't tell Brock about it.

The bishop notifies Dirk that there may be cinchona at the Jesuit mission at Lo Ting and that he has already sent a courier. He also presents Dirk with a briefcase full of documents that he was asked to give him. Many of the documents have diplomatic seals on them.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

Dirk reads the documents at May-may's house. When he finishes the documents, May-may wants to talk but Dirk asks for few minutes to think. They had previously talked about Mary Sinclair, Culum, and the cinchona bark. May-may says that Mary's engagement with Glessing is over after what has happened no matter what, but Dirk disagrees. There is no reason for Horatio or Glessing to know about the abortion. May-may decides to send her Elder Sister to talk to Mary.

Dirk is concerned about the briefcase documents that he has just read. There is a secret report that was prepared for the Russian Tsar and maps of Russia and China. It concerns world domination by Russia with the key being Asia. Russia can expand through Alaska into North America. They can continue their domination through their usual way of massive immigration. The document cautions Russia to maintain friendly relations with both Britain and America while this process is in progress. The process should take ten years to complete, at which time the immigrants will overcome the Anglo-Saxons.

The document goes on to say that Asia is more important than America and that China is the key to Asia. Since Russia has a five thousand mile border with China, Russia must control China for reasons of safety. England is the country that is standing between Russia and Asia and world domination. If England's only interest in China is trade, then the Russians can take control of the land routes as they have control of the land routes to British India. In five years, then, the Russians will be in a position to take over Peking and partition China. The British must be confined to the ports of mainland China and not allowed inland, so Russia should support England's trade. Once Russia controls the land, they can take over the sea.

A Portuguese document states that the Russians do not think the Monroe Doctrine will be invoked against them since the method will be immigration. The only problem for the Russians will be if England persuades the US to use the Monroe Doctrine. Crucial to stopping Russia's plan is that England must dominate in China, since Portugal is not strong enough to. The English must have inland fortresses to halt the Russians.

The Portuguese had obtained the Russian document and added their own analysis to it. The bishop was asked to give the information to the Tai-Pan of The Noble House who, they felt, would pass the information along to the appropriate people. Dirk is wondering what to do when May-may interrupts and says that she is cold.

Chapter 36 Analysis

Dirk reads the briefcase documents that were prepared for the Tsar of Russia. The documents contain the plans for Russia's world domination. Dirk wonders about



Zergeyev's role in this plan. "Zergeyev could easily be a key to the plan, Struan thought. Is he the man sent to find out our strength in China? To settle 'trade relations with selected firms'? Is part of his mission to report, at first hand, on American attitudes to Russian Alaska? Is he the man sent to prepare Russian Alaska for the hordes? Remember he said to you, 'Ours is the land, yours the sea!'" (Chap. 365, p. 601).

Portugal obtained the document and wrote their own analysis to be given to Dirk. They recognize the danger in the situation and the necessity for a strong English presence in Asia and China.



Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

May-may's second attack is worse than the first. He finds that she eavesdropped on his conversation with the Chinese doctor and Gordon Chen and knows about the twenty thousand tael reward for the bark. May-may bought Dirk a beautiful Chinese girl, Yin-hsi, as a birthday present. Dirk tells her that people just don't buy men girls for birthday presents. May-may doesn't see why not and if Yin-hsi is away she will have to hang herself because of the loss of face. He says they will keep the girl and find her a good husband.

Culum arrives with a letter that was sent to Dirk. Dirk tells Culum that May-may has already lost the baby. The letter is from Skinner, who was waiting for Dirk's return before publishing the story on the rejection of the treaty, but a frigate arrived from England and Skinner is sure they know about Longstaff's replacement. He asks for Dirk's immediate return.

Dirk feels that May-may will not survive another fever attack and may be dead by the next day. Dirk feels that he must save Hong Kong and then begins to wonder why. Why doesn't he just go home, taking May-may with him if she survives? They have enough money for a good life even if Culum doesn't want to stay on as Tai-Pan. Then he thinks of Gorth and Brock and knows why he can't leave Asia. Dirk decides to send Culum to Hong Kong with a letter for Skinner. Culum thanks his father for taking care of him when he arrived in Macao. Dirk plants the idea of Culum and Tess eloping before the end of the three month period.

That night, Liza appears at Dirk's residence and says that she is worried because Tess and Culum haven't arrived yet. Dirk tells her that Culum sailed at noon on the China Cloud and that Tess is probably visiting friends.

Chapter 37 Analysis

The clash of the cultures again involved Dirk in a situation. May-may has bought him a girl for his birthday present. Dirk says he can't keep her until May-may tells her if the girl is sent away she will suffer such a huge loss of face that she will have to hang herself. Dirk agrees she can stay until they find her a good husband. His relationship with May-may always results in a clash of Occidental and Oriental cultures.

Dirk is questioning his role and presence in the Orient more and more. He thinks of leaving and wonders why he stays. Even if Culum decided not to stay they would still have enough money and power. He remembers the Brocks and knows why he has to stay. He still has a score to settle.



Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Summary

Gorth goes to the English Club looking for Dirk. He accuses Dirk of arranging Tess's disappearance and slashes Dirk's face with a cat's claw whip. Gorth is ranting about how Tess can't marry Culum and Dirk knows that it is Gorth who set up Culum. Dirk challenges Gorth to a duel and tells Gorth to choose his weapon now. Gorth screams that Culum is poxed. Dirk tells him that the Club is not the place to fight but there is nothing he can do to stop Gorth and asks Horatio to be his second. Masterson agrees to be the other second. Dirk chooses fighting irons as weapons. He tells the men to arrange for a junk at sunup for the duel. He vows his vengeance on Gorth. He won't kill him but will maim him so he'll never walk or feed himself.

News quickly spreads of the impending duel and the betting begins. Dirk does not tell May-may of the duel but goes to his own residence so that he can sleep soundly. He wants to be well-rested. Liza Brock is waiting at his residence. She wants to know if Culum is diseased and he tells her no. After she leaves, the monk arrives from the hospital where Mary Sinclair is. He tells Dirk that they have cinchona bark. Dirk dresses as the monk tells him they don't know how to use the bark. They only know to use it to make tea. The only information they have is from the bishop who said the tea was very bitter and he drank it for four days.

As he and the monk are walking to May-may's house, someone begins to shoot at them. Dirk says that the attack is from highwaymen and he has a shoulder injury. They make it safely to May-may's house. Dirk makes the monk swear an oath of secrecy to never reveal what happens in May-may's house. They begin to prepare the tea which must brew for one hour and the second batch to brew for two hours and then go to May-may. The monk, who is a doctor, examines the girl. They begin to feed her a cup of tea every hour, forcing her to drink it until she is able to keep it in her stomach without vomiting. This continues all night. There is, however, some improvement in May-may's condition except that the fever doesn't appear.

Horatio arrives and asks if he should postpone the duel. Dirk says no. The monk tells Dirk that even though May-may is very weak, she is cured of malaria. He asks the monk to remain with May-may until he returns.

Chapter 38 Analysis

Tess's disappearance causes Gorth to rage. He attacks Dirk at the Club and challenges him to a duel. The duel is to be on a junk at sunup. Dirk's hatred and yearn for revenge is obvious. He doesn't intend to kill Gorth but wants to maim him so he will lose the use of his arms and legs.



Dirk had wanted to get a good night's sleep before the duel but that was not to be. Liza Brock is waiting for him when he arrives home, concerned about the rumor that Culum is poked. After she leaves, a monk appears with the cinchona bark. On the way to May-may's house, they are attacked by highwaymen, with Dirk being injured. Then he is up all night helping administer the tea to May-may. Dirk tells Horatio not to postpone the duel.



Chapter 39

Chapter 39 Summary

When Dirk arrives at the dock he is greeted by a Portuguese officer, who tells him that duels are outlawed in Macao. Dirk responds that he is aware of the law and that he won't be breaking it. They have to wait for Gorth, who hasn't yet arrived.

Gorth's mutilated body is found in an alley near Chinatown. A Portuguese patrol had heard screaming and arrived to find three Chinamen spearing Gorth. They vanished when the patrol arrived. After viewing the body, Dirk walks up on the hill and sits on a bench, thanking God for saving him. After being up all night, he would probably have lost the battle with Gorth. Dirk walks from the hill to the bishop's palace. He thanks him for the cinchona and tells him that it appears to be successful. Dirk tells the bishop he wants to send the monk, Fr. Sebastian, to Peru for a load of bark and the directions on how to use it properly. He wants the monk to write and publish a paper in *Lancet* telling how to use the bark to cure malaria. The bishop tells him he will allow Fr. Sebastian to go and that Dirk owes him and the church nothing for the bark.

Chapter 39 Analysis

Dirk, who didn't know of May-may's order to have Gorth killed in Macao, appears at the dock and awaits the arrival of Gorth. Gorth does not arrive. Instead, they find that Gorth is dead. A Portuguese patrol heard screaming in an alley near Chinatown and arrived to find three Chinese men spearing Gorth's body. The Chinamen escaped leaving another injured assassin, who was turned over to the Chinese authorities. Dirk thanks God for saving him. After being injured and up all night, he was in no condition to win a duel with Gorth if it had taken place.

Dirk goes to the bishop and tells him of the success of the cinchona bark. He asks to send Fr. Sebastian to Peru for a load of bark and to learn how to use it properly. He wants the monk to write and publish a medical paper in *Lancet*. Dirk finds that the bishop wants nothing in return for the bark. Dirk, who is used to wheeling and dealing all the time, cannot understand this.



Chapter 40

Chapter 40 Summary

Dirk returns to May-may's house to attend to her. They continue to feed her the tea every hour. May-may senses the presence of Dirk and the others and knows that she will live. She thinks about becoming a Christian but decides against it. Yin-hsi comes in to tend to May-may. She tells her that Dirk, who is sleeping in the chair, has been there for an hour. May-may feels better after bathing and changing into fresh clothes. Ah-Sam quietly tells May-may of the events that have occurred since Dirk arrived in Macao, beginning with Culum and ending with the death of Gorth.

Dirk awakens and is happy to see that May-may is better. He tells May-may that she has to continue to take the cinchona tea for four more days, even though she feels better. Dirk tells May-may that Gorth is dead. He has to return to Hong Kong, he tells her. She says if he doesn't take her with, she won't drink the cinchona tea. If he takes her with, she will drink the tea as required. He agrees to delay their departure for a day.

Chapter 40 Analysis

May-may is told of the events of the past several days by Ah-Sam. They told her about Culum being set up and rolled, about the scheduled duel, and about Gorth being found dead. May-may is happy that she talked to Gordon Chen when she did.



Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Summary

When China Cloud returns to Macao, Culum and Tess are married. Liza appears to ask Dirk if she could sail with them, taking Gorth's body back to Hong Kong. Culum appears and tells Liza that it was his idea that he and Tess elope and that he ordered Captain Orlov to perform the ceremony. They go below so Liza can talk to Tess.

Dirk tells Culum of the trouble with Gorth and what has happened. It was Gorth who set Culum up. Culum is upset at the information and gives Dirk letters from Skinner and Gordon Chen. Culum won't let Liza take Tess home because Tess is his wife now. They were legally married, even if it was without her father's permission. Culum tells them that he and Tess will stay at the English Hotel. When the newlyweds leave, Liza tells Dirk that she knows the elopement was his idea and that he and Tyler will kill one another one day.

Culum comes to see Dirk at the office. Dirk is feeling apprehensive but doesn't know why. Everything seems to be going well but he senses danger. Dirk will be sailing for Hong Kong with May-may and Culum says he and Tess will go with Liza. Culum accuses Dirk of using him as a puppet with planning the elopement to provoke Gorth. Dirk finally admits that he had taken a calculated gamble. He will go home in a few months and return with the Lotus Cloud, the clipper he had promised to Wu Fang Choi. He will deal with the pirates. Everything else will be Culum's problem.

Culum tells him he will join The Noble House with Brock and Sons and let Brock be the Tai-Pan. Dirk protests and says no. Culum says he doesn't want to be Tai-Pan.

A Portuguese officer arrives and tells Dirk that the live assassin was turned over to the Chinese authorities. He is a member of the Hong Kong Triads and their leader in Hong Kong is Gordon Chen. The man died before they could confirm this and get more information out of him. The prostitute that Gorth beat in Hong Kong died. Dirk thanks the officer for the information and asks him to keep it quiet.

Culum, hearing the conversation, accuses Dirk of using Gordon Chen to have Gorth killed. Dirk tells him it isn't true and wants a promise that he will never join Brock. Culum says when he is Tai-Pan, he will do what he wants. They agree to have dinner at the Club later that evening.

Chapter 41 Analysis

When the China Cloud returns to Macao, Culum and Tess are already married. Liza is upset and wants her daughter to come home with her. Culum says they will stay at the English Hotel and that they plan to sail for Hong Kong to tell Tyler. They learn of Gorth's



death. Liza blames Dirk, who says he had nothing to do with the death of Gorth. He tells them the story of the duel that was scheduled.

Culum says he feels that he was used when he asks his father if he knew he would take Tess on the China Cloud. He tells his father that he put the idea of eloping in his head and put Orlov at his command. He feels his father did it in order to provoke Gorth. Dirk relates the facts to him and doesn't say he did it to provoke Gorth. Culum feels that he will always be a puppet of his father's. He says he will never be Tai-Pan of The Noble House and that he doesn't want to be.

Culum also accuses his father of using Gordon Chen to have Gorth killed, after he hears the report of the Portuguese officer. Dirk denies it. He wants a promise from Culum that he will never join Brock. Culum refuses to promise and says he will do what he wants when he is Tai-Pan.



Chapter 42

Chapter 42 Summary

The China Cloud sails at dawn with Dirk and Mary-may aboard. The wind increases several times, but Captain Orlov and Dirk can't find signs of a storm. They both have a bad feeling but the ship makes it safely to Hong Kong. Dirk and the captain decided that maybe they are just getting old. They talk and Dirk offers him the job as head of the fleet. Orlov states his conditions for accepting the desk job and Dirk agrees. He leaves Orlov in charge of moving May-may and the rest of the party to Resting Cloud.

Longstaff is upset about the article in the Oriental Times. The treaty has been repudiated and Longstaff is to be replaced. Dirk doesn't admit that he knew of the information earlier. The article will do what Dirk hoped it would and arouse the traders. Longstaff tells Dirk of the reactions of the various traders and Dirk tells Longstaff that he can fight Cunningham when he is back in England. Brock barges in, wanting confirmation of the facts that Tess and Culum are married and that Gorth was murdered. He says he will talk with Dirk after talking with his family.

After Brock leaves, Dirk tells Longstaff that there is nothing to worry about with Cunningham. He tells Longstaff about the documents he received from the bishop. He doesn't tell him everything but just enough to gain his interest. He will win the confrontation with Cunningham. They then talk about the Triads and the fact that Gorth was killed by a member of the Hong Kong Triads. Talking to Dirk helps Longstaff and he feels much better.

Aboard Resting Cloud May-may looks much better. She tells Dirk she is taking the medicine in mango juice. Dirk takes a copy of the documents from the briefcase and goes to see Jeff Cooper. He learns that Wilf has died. They discuss the situation with Longstaff and Dirk shows Jeff the cinchona bark and tells him that it cures malaria. Dirk tells him the bark is available in Florida and the Louisiana Purchase territory. He proposes that he and Jeff form a company that deals in the bark and that Jeff can run. He accepts the offer. Jeff will handle America and Dirk will handle Britain. Dirk also learns that Shevaun has accepted Jeff's proposal and he suggests that Jeff send her home for a year via Zergeyev's ship. He gives Jeff the copy of the documents he received in Macao and thinks of the possibility of Jeff Cooper as a partner for Culum.

After reading the documents, Jeff sees what Dirk's plan is. Shevaun introduces Zergeyev around Washington and to her father, who talks to him about the Monroe Doctrine and such things. The next problem is how to get the information to the senator. They can send it through Shevaun. Jeff says he wants to think about it.

Dirk goes to his own company's temporary office to get the latest news. Brock's ship is three days ahead of his, on the way to England. Building costs are much higher than had been expected. The economic news from England is not good. There is also news



of pirates, with the captured ones hung. Maureen Quance did not leave as expected after hearing a rumor that Aristotle was still on the island. He also receives the latest news of Blore and the Jockey Club and the others. He sends for Gordon Chen and wants to visit later that evening.

Dirk also receives a letter from Scragger asking Dirk to meet him at the same place in Aberdeen.

Chapter 42 Analysis

Longstaff is incensed at the newspaper article and even more incensed that Skinner received the information of a secret dispatch before Longstaff did. Dirk isn't happy with the way the beginning of the article is written, implying that all that had to do with Hong Kong was rejected. He has written a scathing review of Lord Cunnington and the government, which went further than he and Dirk had agreed upon. Dirk approves of the angle of the article but doesn't tell Longstaff. It is sure to arouse the traders.

Dirk tells Longstaff that he will win the showdown with Cunnington, and mentions the documents he received from the bishop without telling him where they came from.

Their conversation then turns to the Triads, and he tells Longstaff that the Hong Kong lodge murdered Gorth and that Gordon Chen was supposed to be a member of the Triads. Longstaff laughs at the idea of Gordon Chen being a member of the Triads. Longstaff feels better about the situation after Dirk's departure.

Dirk and Jeff Cooper go into the cinchona business as partners. Dirk leaves Jeff with a copy of the papers from Macao and thinks about Jeff as a partner for Culum. The two men plot their plans after Jeff reads the documents that Dirk brought for him. Dirk wants the Americans to have the plans and to help in the fight against Cunnington.



Chapter 43

Chapter 43 Summary

The weather that evening is hot and humid and the feeling is that it will be raining by noon the next day. He talks with May-may until Gordon Chen arrives. Gordon is there not only at the Tai-Pan's request, but also at Jin-qua's request to find out about the information from England. Dirk asks him right out if he is the head of the Hong Kong Triads. Gordon tells him that the story is a lie. Dirk asks why the Triads murdered Gorth. He replies that he doesn't know. Gordon is trying to maintain his composure in front of the Tai-Pan while he is livid that the assassin talked. Gordon agrees that he must have enemies trying to destroy him and Dirk. Dirk tells Gordon to form a spy system to find out who the Triads are. He should be able to find out who the leaders are within three months. They decide on six months. Gordon thinks he will have to produce a list of phony leaders to be killed. They will be brought in with a false initiation ceremony and not into the real lodge but into a sub-lodge. Dirk tells Gordon he is going to destroy the Triads and Gordon vows to help him.

Gordon changes the subject to the future of Hong Kong. Like others, he knows of the editorial. Dirk tells him that there will be a change in government in England and that Hong Kong is permanent. Gordon is relieved to hear this. Dirk sends him below deck to see May-may.

Dirk goes to see Skinner and reads the next day's editorial. It urges the traders to fight to discredit Cunningham. Dirk asks about the codicil in the agreement and Skinner tells him about the seeds, including tea seeds. Neither of them can figure out the reason for the seeds. They talk of Mary Sinclair, Brock, and other things. Dirk suggests the name "Victoria" for the new town and Skinner says he will work on Whalen and plant the suggestion. Skinner is told that he will own the paper the day Hong Kong is acknowledged and both governments accept the treaty. He tells Skinner how cinchona cures malaria and how he and Cooper have formed a new company to deal in cinchona.

His next stop is the whorehouse to see Aristotle Quance. He finds that Gorth paid the proprietor, Mrs. Fortheringill, to keep the beating incident quiet. He also learns that Aristotle has a bill there that has not been paid. Dirk discusses the bill with Aristotle. The three of them have a discussion about the bill and Aristotle claims the charges are false. Dirk tells Aristotle he will pay the bill but it will be the last time.

Chapter 43 Analysis

Dirk drills his son, Gordon Chen, about his relationship with the Triads. Gordon denies any involvement with the secret society. Dirk tells him to organize a spy system and he should be able to ascertain who the leaders are within three months. Gordon says six months while thinking of a plan to produce phony leaders. He will have to rely on Jin-

qua to select the right people. Dirk is not sure if Gordon is or is not with the Triads. He decides he will have to watch him carefully.

Dirk is working to discredit Cunningham through Skinner and his paper. If they are successful with Hong Kong being accepted and the treaty ratified by both governments, Dirk will give the paper to Skinner. It is in Skinner's best interests to help Dirk. Skinner thinks of the money he will make and how he can retire in England.



Chapter 44

Chapter 44 Summary

Dirk sails the lorch to Aberdeen to keep his midnight appointment with Scragger. Fong, one of the men he is training, goes with him. They find a sack which they cut open. Inside is Scragger's limbless body. Wu Kwok appears. He is angry about the frigate attack at Quemoy. Shooting begins as both crews start firing. Wu Kwok calls out that his pirates will be attacking Dirk's ships. Both men say they will kill each other as they return to their ships.

Dirk, sickened by what happened to Scragger, has trouble trying to sleep. He knew of the torture technique favored by Fu Fang Chi and Wu Kwok and how it is orchestrated.

May-may is awaiting Dirk's arrival and thinking of her conversation with Gordon Chen. The assassin had named Gordon as a leader of the Triads. May-may is mad because the man was paid to be quiet. Dirk returns and is tired and leaves orders that he is not to be disturbed unless it is an emergency. May-may tells Yin-hsi to join Dirk in his bed. When Dirk awakes and finds Yin-hsi, he tells her to go but she won't. He decides he will marry May-may.

Chapter 44 Analysis

At Aberdeen they find out that Scragger is dead for his part in the Quemoy attack. Wu Kwok says that his pirates will attack the ships of The Noble House and both Dirk and Wu Kwok vow to kill each other. Dirk now has a battle on another front.

Dirk has custody of Scragger's sons, who are on their way to England under the name of MacStruan.



Chapter 45

Chapter 45 Summary

The White Witch arrives in Hong Kong damaged. They had been caught in a squall. Culum tries to talk with Brock but he tells him to get off of the ship. Culum follows him below and goes to Tess, while Brock is confronting Liza about the marriage. She tells him that Gorth brought on the challenge of the duel with the Tai-Pan. He had attacked Dirk and also Liza, who show Brock her bruises. She begs Brock to accept Culum as Tess's husband.

Tyler tells Tess to say goodbye to her mother and that she and Culum are out of their lives. Brock tells Culum that his agreement for safe harbor only applied if they abided by the agreement to the three month period. He asks if Dirk put the idea in Culum's head to drive Gorth to his angry outburst. Culum says his father did. Brock says he will give them safe harbor but that he is out to ruin Dirk and The Noble House. The only place that Culum can now go is to Brock and Sons. He sends a member of his crew to tell Dirk to meet him at the knoll.

Dirk awakens, with Yin-hsi still asleep in his bed. He dresses and has breakfast with May-may. He asks May-may if she would like to be Tai-tai. Dirk wants to return to England and marry May-may on the journey in a few months. He asks how May-May found Yin-hsi and she tells him that she heard of her through Jin-qua's tai-tai. Since she was pregnant, she didn't want Dirk going to a whorehouse. They are interrupted by a servant telling Dirk that a member of Brock's crew wants to see him.

Chapter 45 Analysis

The newlyweds have an angry confrontation with Brock. When Culum admits that his father planned the elopement, Brock tells Culum that he and Tess have safe harbor from him but that he is now out to ruin Dirk and The Noble House. He tells Culum that the only place he can work now is at Brock and Sons. Culum brought this on by not covering up for his father's actions, knowing that Gorth was provoked into a duel. Culum is not smart enough to think ahead and anticipate Brock's actions.

Dirk finally asks May-may to marry him. He is amused by her antics in sending Yin-hsi to his bed. They will leave for England in several months and marry on the journey.



Chapter 46

Chapter 46 Summary

Brock watches as Dirk walks up the knoll for their meeting. Brock asks if Dirk planned the elopement and the duel. Dirk admits that he did and that he is sorry that he didn't get the chance to kill Gorth. He tells him that Tess is poked and that their doctor was bribed to say that Culum was clean. The two men draw weapons and begin to circle one another. Dirk eggs Brock on by telling him that Gorth is the reason why Tess is poked. It was Gorth who planned it all with the drugging and taking Culum to a whorehouse when he was put with a poked whore. As Brock's anger increases, Dirk tells him that neither Tess nor Culum is poked. He only told Brock that so he would understand his feelings.

The two men, feeling that they have to kill one another, change the subject to the weather. They agree that a typhoon is coming. Brock apologizes for Gorth and his calling Dirk to the knoll. They agree they will choose the day when they fight. He says he will have nothing to do with Culum and Tess until his company is The Noble House and Brock is tai-pan. Both men leave the knoll with a truce, of sorts.

Chapter 46 Analysis

Brock calls Dirk to the knoll with the intention of fighting to the death. Dirk provokes him, telling him what Gorth did. Then he tells him that both Tess and Culum are healthy and that he wanted Brock to understand how he, Dirk, felt at what Gorth had done. Both men remain enemies even though Brock apologizes for Gorth and for calling Dirk to the knoll. Their battle to destroy each other personally and business-wise will continue, even though they have a temporary truce.



Chapter 47

Chapter 47 Summary

Weather conditions continue to worsen during the day as the settlements prepare for the storm. Since the wind is from the north, there are discussions as to whether or not the storm is a typhoon. Dirk is inclined to agree with them since the barometer doesn't fall. Dirk moves May-may and the others to the third floor of the factory in Happy Valley because the buildings are stronger and better able to withstand the storm.

The Brock family is staying on the White Witch. Tyler isn't feeling well and wants to get drunk but knows that he can't because of the danger of the storm. It rains all night but none of the ships are threatened by the sea. Dirk also awakens and checks the weather. He goes to the Harbor Master's office to check on Culum and Tess. They are at church when he arrives. Dirk and Glessing discuss the weather while waiting for Culum and Tess. They talk about Mary Sinclair and Dirk again says that she had a stomach disorder. He does not know how Mary cannot tell Glessing as time goes on. Glessing is angry at Longstaff because Longstaff suggested that Glessing be sent home to England.

Tess and Culum arrive. They refuse the offer of staying at Happy Valley with Dirk. Their new house will be ready in three weeks. Dirk tells his son and daughter-in-law that they are a part of The Noble House no matter what Brock says. He suggests that Culum spend more time with Jeff Cooper and that they might make good partners. As Dirk is leaving, they notice the rapid fall in the barometric pressure. Dirk runs to the lorch for the trip to the Happy Valley quarters.

Chapter 47 Analysis

Brock's captain, Pennyworth, notices the change in Brock since the day before. He thinks Brock has aged and acts like he is dying.

Dirk's talk with Glessing reveals that Glessing will try to persuade Whalen to fight Cunnington. Glessing is angry at Longstaff for wanting to send him back to England. This is what Dirk needs in his battle to save Hong Kong.

Culum and Tess are assured that they are both a part of The Noble House no matter what Brock says. Dirk suggests that Culum get to know Jeff Cooper better. They might make good business partners.



Chapter 48

Chapter 48 Summary

Dirk reaches the lorch and makes it to Happy Valley. One of the sailors is killed when he falls off of the lorch. He runs to the factory, telling his crew and others to follow him. All of them run to the factory for safety. Dirk is surprised to find Horatio there. He came on the boat with Monsey at Whalen's orders. Dirk assigns quarters to the men and goes to see May-may. He makes sure they are all right and tells them they have people staying in the factory. He returns to his guests, including naval personnel.

Chapter 48 Analysis

The weather continues to worsen and the barometric pressure is rapidly falling, indicating a typhoon. Dirk brings the crew and naval personnel into his Happy Valley factory for safety during the storm. He learns that Whalen has arrived in Macao and sent Monsey to Hong Kong to tell Longstaff to depart. Protocol requires that the old plenipotentiary must be gone before the new one arrives. They were ordered to sail in spite of the weather. The information Whalen had was the same as the information that was published in the Oriental Times.



Chapter 49

Chapter 49 Summary

Mauss is on Resting Cloud during the storm. The ship is set adrift by the storm and Mauss is knocked unconscious. The ship collides with Jeff Cooper's The Boston Princess. The sampans and junks are hit by the drifting boat, causing hundreds of Chinese to drown. Resting Cloud grounds heavily on shore. Jeff checks his ship and tells Shevaun that they are safe as long as the moorings hold.

On shore, Glessing has his arm cut off from a falling flagpole that went through the building. Tess's dress is set on fire and she is burned and unconscious. Culum tends to the injured Glessing. He cleans the wound and cauterizes it with burning coals.

The White Witch is also damaged by the winds. The new settlement is also heavily damaged by the winds and Aristotle Quance is trapped in the rubble at the warehouse. Gordon Chen had thought to build an underground cellar in his house. He, all of his papers and wealth, and his concubine were safe.

Dirk and his group are safe in the Happy Valley factory. It is standing up well to the winds and the storm. Dirk is watching the falling barometric pressure since the center of the storm will be over them when the pressure stops falling. May-may does not want to stay in Happy Valley because of the possibility of malaria. Dirk goes to check on the others and finds Horatio ranting about Mary's abortion. Now she won't marry Glessing and she will be Horatio's again. The storm becomes more violent so he returns to May-may. Then the storm stops and there is silence.

Dirk looks out the window and surveys the damage in the harbor. He sees that Resting Cloud is grounded but that China Cloud is safe. The White Witch is damaged. The vortex of the storm is passing over them now, which is the same information that Brock gave to his family and crew. Dirk calls from shore to tell Orlov to turn the China Cloud since the winds will come from the south when the storm begins again. Horatio runs out saying he is going to Glessing to end the talk of marriage to Mary. Dirk and the others go back inside the factory. The storm begins again, blowing out the windows on the lower level and killing three seamen.

Zergeyev is on his ship cursing everything that has to do with Hong Kong except for Shevaun. But he is proud of Russia and the emigration plan. He feels that the Russians now have the key to Asia since the British government rejects the treaty and Hong Kong. He decides to make a trade deal with Dirk or Brock and then head for Alaska to make the arrangement for the emigration of the tribes.

The force of the storm grounds The Boston Princess. While this is happening, the factory in Happy Valley is being battered by the storm. May-may says she didn't take her cinchona tea and Dirk tells her not to worry. The storm will end in three or four



hours. They talk of marrying in a few months. Then the roof of the factory is blown off and the storm hits the factory.

Chapter 49 Analysis

This chapter tells of the events during the typhoon, of who stayed where, and what happened. It also reveals the thinking of the Russian archduke Zergeyev, who spends the typhoon on his ship. He repudiates everything to do with Hong Kong except for Shevaun, and wonders if she will become his mistress. He is proud of his county and their plans for emigration to America and Russia's plan for world domination.



Chapter 50

Chapter 50 Summary

When the storm ends, Culum finds Dirk and May-may dead in the Happy Valley residence. This is the first time he has ever seen May-may. He does not think she is beautiful and wonders how Dirk could have loved her so much. Tess is outside waiting for him and she begins to cry at the news of Dirk's death.

There is a great deal of activity and people are surveying the damage and clearing wreckage. There is very little looting, and repairs and rebuilding is already taking place. Vendors and shops are doing business. They meet Skinner and Culum tells him that the Tai-Pan is dead. Skinner has lost his printing equipment in the storm and decides to print the next edition using a hand press and then go see Culum for money.

Blore and Skinner discuss the situation concerning the Tai-Pan's death. Blore tells him that Hong Kong is dead now. Skinner disagrees. He suggests that Blore begin to plan the construction of the Jockey Club. Whalen, he feels, will see the future in Hong Kong.

Culum wants Tess to go to the White Witch. He wants to be alone for a while to think. Culum is summoned aboard the flagship by Longstaff. Longstaff offers his condolences on the death of his father. He tells Culum that Whalen is in Macao and that he, Longstaff, will be leaving the next day. He asks Culum to find the documents that Dirk said he had for Longstaff. These are papers that Longstaff claims he gave Dirk for safekeeping. He tells Culum to find them, under the threat of treason, since Culum is still a deputy colonial secretary.

Culum goes to Resting Cloud and tells them of his father's death. He asks the servant Lim Din where Dirk kept important papers and is shown the safe. Culum doesn't have the key. He begins to panic, thinking about the funeral arrangements, May-may, and whether or not Dirk has children with May-may and where would they be. Just then Brock walks into the cabin and sees the panic on Culum's face. He offers his condolences and tells Culum that he will do everything he can to help him. Brock says that he will handle the funeral arrangements.

Brock tells him that they should join their houses and call the new entity Brock and Struan. He will have the papers drawn and he will be Tai-Pan with Culum following him. He tells Culum to come to the White Witch at sundown.

Culum has to find the key. On his way to the residence, he meets Cooper and Shevaun. They offer their condolences and assistance, but Culum is in a hurry. He doesn't know that Jeff has the papers for the new cinchona business. Jeff thinks of joining his company with The Noble House and calling it Struan and Cooper. He doesn't tell any of this to Culum but does tell Shevaun that he has decided that she should return to America for a year. She can take the year to decide if she wants to marry him. He won't



buy out the Tillman interests in the company so her father will continue to receive his share. Shevaun is happy at the news. She has her sights set on the Russian archduke.

Gordon Chen weeps for Dirk and May-may. He views The Noble House as dead since Culum is too weak to run the company. He feels that Brock will take over and he cannot work with Brock. Gordon decides that he is rich and will become richer. He will help Hong Kong grow. He will continue his business with Culum, who will receive half of the profits, just as the Tai-Pan did. Gordon will raise May-may's children as his own and begin his own dynasty.

At sundown, Culum still has not found the key. He is sitting on the knoll when Aristotle Quance arrives with Vargas and Gordon Chen. Aristotle asks for a loan. He addressed Culum as Tai-Pan. Culum remembers what his father said. "About the joy and the hurt of being Tai-Pan; about being a man; about standing alone; about life and the battle thereof. His loneliness vanished. He looked at the three men below. His anxiety returned. Simple enough for Aristotle to say 'Tai-Pan,' he thought. But what about them? You've got to win them to your side. How? What was it Father said? 'You rule men by your brain and by magic.'" (Chap. 50, p. 731).

Culum tells the staff to tell Longstaff to wait because he is busy. He tells Vargas to arrange for the funerals of Dirk and May-may who are to be buried side by side. He tells Gordon that he wants to talk to him after he attends to business. He sends Orlov to bring his wife back from the White Witch and to give Brock his coffin money.

Culum is now Tai-Pan.

Chapter 50 Analysis

Skinner's only worry at the news of the death of the Tai-Pan is that he doesn't have any money to rebuild and restock his newspaper building. He decides he will talk to Culum about money after he prints the next edition using hand presses.

Longstaff sends for Culum to offer his condolences and to tell him that he is leaving Hong Kong the next day. Longstaff wants the documents that Dirk was given in Macao and he wants Culum to find and deliver them before Longstaff leaves Hong Kong.

Gordon Chen decides that The Noble House is dead but he will continue his business with Culum. He will raise May-may's children as his own and begin a dynasty.

Culum doesn't realize that he is Tai-Pan now and that people are reacting to him as such. He is too panicked by Longstaff's threats about the documents to think of anything else and he doesn't know how to deal with the situations he has inherited. He comes to his senses when Aristotle Quance addresses him as Tai-Pan. He tells Aristotle that he will never forget him.



Characters

Dirk Struan

Dirk Struan is a seaman of legendary proportions. He is forty-three. He runs Struan and Company, which is the biggest trading company in Asia. It is so big and powerful that the Chinese traders call it The Noble House. Dirk is known as the Tai-Pan. Struan began his career at sea working as a cabin-boy at the age of twelve. He owned his first ship at the age of twenty and was active in the opium trade. His chief rival was Tyler Brock. Dirk is married to Ronalda, who lives in Scotland with their children, Culum, Ian, Lechie, and Winifred. Dirk also has an illegitimate son, Gordon Chen, who he acknowledges as his son when he introduces him to Culum. He also has a mistress, May-may, and two small children, Duncan and Kate, with her. When his son Culum arrives in Hong Kong, he learns that most of the family died in the plague. He wants Culum to remain with him to help him save his company, which is bankrupt as a result of a run on their English bank. The run was orchestrated by Brock's son. Dirk risks his life to obtain the money he needs to save The Noble House and uses very forceful tactics to get Robb and Culum to agree to his terms. As head of The Noble House, Dirk is well known in foreign diplomatic circles and is given documents through the Portuguese showing Russia's plan for world domination with Asia and China being the key. Dirk dies with his mistress, May-may, in the typhoon.

Gordon Chen

Gordon Chen is the illegitimate son of Dirk Struan. Struan gave his mother a house in Macao and made sure Gordon was well educated. He considers himself very lucky with the way his life turned out. He wasn't happy as a child when he learned the truth about his birth from Reverend Mauss at school, but his mother explained it to him in a way that he could understand. The Tai-Pan had provided for her and Gordon by giving her land and selling her to Chen Sheng as third-wife. Years later, he appreciates the Tai-Pan. Gordon is a member of the Hung Mun Tong, a secret society dedicated to overthrowing the Manchu dynasty. When Dirk receives the bullion, he extends credit to Gordon for a share of the profits and they become business partners. He becomes one of the biggest landowners and businessmen in Hong Kong and is called the Tai-Pan of Tai Ping Shan. He is also the head of the Hong Kong Triads.

Tyler Brock

Brock is a fifty-year-old trader from Liverpool, England. He is the head of Brock and Sons, a merchant shipping company, and lives in Macao. He and Dirk Struan have been bitter rivals since their teen years when they worked on the same ship. Brock and his son Gorth try to sink Dirk's lorch when he is sailing with the bullion. Dirk sets their ship on fire. When Tess and Culum become engaged, Tyler uses Tess to obtain information



on the Struans, which Dirk suspects. When the two youngsters elope, he says they are disowned until Culum tells him that Dirk put the idea in his head. When he hears of Dirk's death, he tries to take over The Noble House as Tai-Pan, but he doesn't count on Culum taking over on his own.

May-may

May-may is the Chinese mistress of Dirk. According to custom, he purchased her. She lives in Macao with their two children until a price is put on their heads, at which time Dirk has her and the children picked up by the Silver Cloud. She is aboard the ship near Whampoa when the war with China is taking place. May-may is a good source of information for Dirk but never tells him that she is Jin-qua's granddaughter. She is loyal to Dirk and helps him hide and receive the bullion shipment. She also helps in the fight against Brock when he tried to sink their ship. She moves into Dirk's house in Happy Valley when it is built. She has dreams of marrying Dirk. May-may contracts malaria during the epidemic and is moved to Macao by Dirk, who is trying to find cinchona bark for her treatment. May-may loses the baby she is carrying while she is sick with malaria. May-may is cured by the cinchona tea and Dirk asks her to marry him when they sail for England in several months. Dirk never finds out that it was May-may who arranged for the killing of Gorth. She, along with the Tai-pan, dies in the typhoon.

Aristotle Quance

Quance is an artist that appears on and off throughout the book. He is half English and half Irish and is fifty-eight years old and has lived in Macao for more than thirty years. He is present at the ceremony of Hong Kong being given to the British and paints the scene. He is also present at the land sale and is chosen by Dirk to judge the contest for the best dressed woman at the ball. When his wife Maureen appears, she destroys Aristotle's paints and brushes and arranges for a job for him. Dirk helps Aristotle escape by making it appear that he left on a ship while he hides out at the whorehouse. It is Aristotle who first addresses Culum as Tai-Pan and brings him to his senses of who he is and what his responsibilities are.

Robb Struan

Robb is the half-brother of Dirk Struan. Robb is thirty-three as the book opens, and his brother Dirk considers him to be the brains of the operation. He handled the purchasing and financing for the company. Robb is married to Sarah, who is in the Orient with him and their children. When Sarah wants to return to England, Robb wants to return with her but finally agrees to stay when Dirk obtains the money needed to save The Noble House. Robb agrees to stay for one year. Robb dies in Hong Kong during the fever epidemic.



Culum Straun

Culum is the son of Dirk. He had been living in England and attending school when he and their family contracted the plague. Culum survived; many other family members didn't. He travels to Hong Kong to tell his father. Dirk makes him a partner and has him stay to help try to save the bankrupt Noble House. After Dirk obtains the money to save the company, Culum also stays to help out and learn the business. When he becomes engaged to Brock's daughter Tess, Gorth feigns friendship with him to try to ruin The Noble House. Culum elopes with Tess and marries on the China Cloud when it is at sea. When Dirk dies, Culum takes over as Tai-Pan of The Noble House.

Gorth Brock

Gorth is the son of Tyler Brock. He is a vile and sadistic man who likes to beat up prostitutes. He cultivates Culum's friendship as a way of causing trouble for Dirk and sets Culum up with a poxed woman in Macao. After attacking Dirk at the Club, he is challenged to a duel but is killed by three Chinese before the duel can take place. May-may had requested that Gorth be killed through Gordon Chen, and Gorth is killed in Macao, right before he is to duel Dirk.

Jin-qua

Jin-qua is a wealthy Chinese merchant. His real name is Chen-tse Jin Arn and he received his nickname of Jin-qua from Dirk Straun, the Tai-Pan. He is the uncle of the step-father of Gordon Chen. Dirk turns to Jin-qua when he is bankrupt. Jin-qua has the equivalent of one million pounds to loan Dirk. The money is from Ti-sen and contingent on Dirk's acceptance of a mandarin in Hong Kong and other conditions, including money for Gordon Chen. Jin-qua is also the leader of the Triads in South China.

Mary Sinclair

Mary Sinclair is the sister of Horatio and runs the Sinclair household in Macao. She has lived her whole life in the Orient and has never been to England. She speaks two Chinese dialects and is a source of information for Dirk. Mary is not wealthy so Dirk helps her out at times. He tells her of her unknown Aunt Wilhelmina who died in Holland and left her money as a way of seeing she had money for a ball gown and other things for the information she provided him with. She is trusted by May-may. Mary and her brother Horatio have had an incestuous relationship in the past. Mary is pregnant with a Chinese baby when she agrees to marry Glessing. Mary takes Chinese herbs to cause an abortion and is hospitalized in Macao.



Captain Glessing

Captain Glessing is twenty-six-year-old captain in the British navy. He is in charge of the ceremony where he reads the proclamation making Hong Kong a British possession. He had been active in the war against China and did not agree with Longstaff on the conclusion of the war. He thought they should have gone through to Peking. A section of the island is named Glessing's Point in honor of him. Glessing proposes to Mary Sinclair, not knowing that she has had an incestuous relationship with her brother Horatio and is pregnant with a Chinese baby. Glessing is injured during the typhoon as loses his arm.

William Longstaff

Longstaff is the British plenipotentiary in Hong Kong and in that area. He represents the British government as the Captain Superintendent of Trade in that part of Asia. He negotiated the treaty with Ti-sen that ended the war and transferred the island of Hong Kong to the British. He is involved in any of the negotiations with the Chinese that take place throughout the book. He usually consults the major traders on the issues and relies heavily on Dirk Struan for advice. He is relieved of his duties for negotiating the treaty against the orders of the government. Longstaff is referred to as "Odious Penis" by the Chinese.

Ti-sen

Ti-sen is a Chinese government official who deals with the Co-hong and the traders. He is the one who Longstaff angered when he sent a letter canceling the mandarin in Hong Kong. Ti-sen knows of Dirk's financial problems and provides Jin-qua with the equivalent of one million pounds to loan to Dirk, contingent on the acceptance of a mandarin in Hong-Kong. Ti-sen is branded a traitor by the emperor and is sentenced to death.

Wu Fang Choi

Wu Fang Choi is a well known and feared sadistic pirate, based in Formosa. He is also a partner of Jin-qua. He puts up one third of the money that was loaned to Dirk by Jin-qua. He holds one of the half coins that Dirk received from Jin-qua, which means that Dirk must honor his request. Wu Fang Choi wants nineteen men trained as officers for one year on the ships of The Noble House. He also wants a clipper like the China Cloud to be built for him and wants three children to receive the best English education.



Wolfgang Mauss

Mauss is an Austrian reverend who is a good friend of Dirk Struan. The reverend had been married three times and has been in the Orient for more than twenty years. He reads and writes Chinese and is able to communicate with the Chinese in their own language and functions as an interpreter for Dirk. He is trusted by Dirk and is active in his opium trade. He is at the settlement when Dirk hides to await the arrival of the lorch with the bullion.

Horatio Sinclair

Horatio Sinclair was an aide to William Longstaff. He could read and write Chinese. His and Mary's father had been one of the first English missionaries in the Orient and had settled in Macao. Horatio was educated in England and then returned to the Orient. He has had an incestuous relationship with his sister Mary and is very angry and bitter when she accepts Glessing's proposal of marriage. Horatio is killed during the typhoon.

Shevaun Tillman

Shevaun is twenty and one of the eligible ladies in Hong Kong. She is the niece of Wilf Tillman, the American trader. Her father is a senator from Alabama. She is nineteen at the beginning of the book. Her family wants her to marry Jeff Cooper, but Shevaun is interested in Dirk Struan once they learn his wife has died. Even though Shevaun is engaged to Cooper, he sends her back to America to think it over for a year. She has her eyes on the Russian archduke.

Captain Orlov

Captain Orlov is the captain of the China Cloud. He speaks English, French, Russian, Finish, and Norwegian. He was trusted completely by Dirk. Dirk offers him the position as director of the fleet, a desk job, which Orlov accepts.

Wu Kwok

Wu Kwok is the son of Wu Fang Choi. It is Wu Kwok who meets with Dirk and delivers the demands from his father. The English frigates attempt to kill Wu Kwok at Quemoy but are not successful. He tortures the informer, Scragger, to death.

Tess Brock

Tess is the oldest daughter of Tyler Brock. She attends the Struan ball and meets Culum Struan, who she eventually marries. She is used as a pawn by her father and by Dirk in their battles with each other.



Jeff Cooper

Cooper is a trader from Boston. His partner in Cooper-Tillman is Wilf Tillman. Cooper goes into the cinchona business with Dirk after the bark cures May-may. When Dirk dies, Culum inherits part of the business.

Wilf Tillman

Tillman is an American trader from Alabama and is a partner with Jeff Cooper in the American trading company Cooper-Tillman. He is the uncle of Shevaun Tillman who was sent to the Orient to marry Cooper. Wilf dies of malaria.

Chen Sheng

Chen Sheng works for The Noble House as compradore. He acted as the Chinese agent for them in their buying and selling. He is the nephew of Jin-qua and the head of the Triads in Macao.

Archduke Zergeyev

The Russian archduke arrives in Hong Kong to survey the situation for Russia's long range plan for world domination, not knowing that the documents have been smuggled out of Russia by the Portuguese.

How-qua

How-qua is the son of Jin-qua and is one of the Co-hong. He is present at the Canton settlement when the Hoppo delivers the edict.

Morley Skinner

Skinner is a journalist and the proprietor of the Oriental Times. This is the most important English paper in the Orient.

Liza Brock

Liza is the wife of Tyler Brock and the mother of Tess. Gorth is not her son.



Objects/Places

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an island of thirty square miles located on the Pearl River. It is claimed by England at the end of the war with China.

Macao

Macao is a settlement on the mainland about forty miles from Hong Kong. It is run by the Portuguese.

Canton

Canton is a walled city on the Chinese mainland where foreigners are not allowed.

Canton Settlement

Canton Settlement is in China, about one-fourth mile from the walled city of Canton, and the only place where foreigners are allowed. There is a walled-in settlement where they can stay during the winter shipping months. Dirk owns a building there that was once owned by the East Indian Company.

Whampoa

Whampoa is an island near Canton. It is where the British fleet was headquartered during the war with China.

Kwangtung

Kwangtung is a province in China.

Lo Ting

Lo Ting is located about one hundred fifty miles inland on mainland China. It is the site of a Jesuit mission where there may be cinchona.

Quemoy

Quemoy is where Wu Kwok is attacked while attending a family festival.



China Cloud

The China Cloud is one of the ships in the fleet of The Noble House. It is the ship where the bullion was transferred to from the lorcha at the Canton settlement.

White Witch

The White Witch is the main ship in Brock's fleet and is their home while they are in Hong Kong.



Themes

Value of a Dream

Dirk has a dream for himself and for Hong Kong which is the most prevalent theme throughout the book. He wants Hong Kong to be a base of operation for the traders and a base for the British navy. They need the protection of the navy when they deal with the Chinese traders on the mainland and Hong Kong has a good safe harbor.

Dirk also has a dream of returning to England and being active in Parliament. He wants to be able to work to guarantee the future of Hong Kong. He wants Hong Kong to be accepted by the British as well as the Treaty of Chuenpi. He is willing to help work for a new government in England in order to achieve this goal. Dirk pushed the British plenipotentiary to negotiate the treaty for Hong Kong instead of for the six mainland ports that the government had wanted.

Dirk knows that The Noble House and its power are necessary for the survival of Hong Kong. When his company was in trouble due to a run on his bank in England, Dirk risked his life to save the company and Hong Kong. Because of this, he has favors to pay that are passed on to his son when he dies. Dirk fought for what he believed in and dreamed of.

Power

The desire for power is also an underlying theme of the book. Both of the main characters desire power, both political and economic. Dirk, as head of The Noble House, has more power than his rival, Tyler Brock. Brock's company, Brock and Sons, is second in size and wealth in the Orient; however, Brock wants to be Tai-Pan and have all of the power that Dirk has.

Dirk is very influential with the British plenipotentiary, Longstaff. Longstaff consults with Dirk before making any major decision. It was Dirk's idea and desire to negotiate the Treaty of Chuenpi for the island of Hong Kong. He foresaw the future of the island and its importance to England and free trade. It was free of the rule of the Chinese mandarins.

Dirk is also given the secret Russian documents by the bishop in Macao. The Portuguese knew that Dirk would see that the documents arrived in the right hands.

The struggle between Brock and Dirk continues throughout the entire book. Brock wants the power and the prestige that Dirk has as head of The Noble House and both are willing to kill for that power.



Hatred

A third theme of the book is hatred. The most intense hatred is evident in the relationship between Dirk and the Brocks, both Tyler and Gorth. Tyler gave Dirk his coffin money and told him outright what the coins were for. Tyler's wife is afraid that they will kill each other one day and says so several times during the book.

Gorth's hatred is also obvious in the plot that he unleashes on Culum. He sets Culum up with a diseased woman at a whorehouse in Macao, trying to get his revenge on the Struans. He wants to stop the marriage of Tess and Culum and hurt Dirk. Dirk sets up the scheme for Tess and Culum to elope to provoke Gorth into challenging him to a duel, not knowing that May-may had arranged for the murder of Gorth, which takes place before the duel.

Many times during the book, Dirk and Tyler threaten to kill each other. When they fight after Gorth's death, the truce is based on the fact that they will select another day to fight. In the end, they don't because fate intervenes in the form of a typhoon.



Style

Point of View

The book is written in the third person point of view with plenty of dialogue between the characters. Clavell fills in with details when there is no dialogue, which is one of the advantages of using the third person. Brock and Gorth are clearly presented as the villains in the book, but there is no way of saying that Clavell favors Dirk over Brock. It is just in the way that the characters are portrayed.

The novel portrays the story in the historical setting of the nineteenth century Orient. The characters tell the story without too much prompting by Clavell. The use of dialogue allows the feeling of the characters to come through, even though there are times when these are described by the author.

The use of the third person avoids the restrictions of using the first person. If the story is told from the first person point of view, the action is limited to scenes involving that character. The use of the third person allows each character to contribute to the story and allows for the telling of events that do not involve the narrator.

Setting

The setting for the novel is the Orient. Most of the action of the novel takes place in Hong Kong. There are different settlements on the island. The original settlements were built at Queens Town and Happy Valley, but these settlements were scrapped due to malaria. The new town that was being built was leveled by the typhoon, but rebuilding began immediately.

The Canton settlement is the walled in area on the mainland of China where the traders are allowed to stay during the shipping season. This settlement is eventually burned by the Chinese. Most of the traders lived in Macao before building on Hong Kong, and some of the action takes place there.

The various ships, like the Silver Cloud and the White Witch, are also scenes for much of the action of the novel. Many of the traders live on their ships until they build permanent quarters.

Language and Meaning

For the most part, Tai-Pan is fast reading. Much of the book is written in clear and easy to understand English, although the reader may want to look up some of the words that are used. The reader will read these sections quickly with very little to slow him down.



However, many of the characters in the novel are Scottish or Chinese. This means that much of the novel involves the use of Scottish brogue and Chinese pidgin. Both are rather difficult to understand, especially in the beginning. The reader is slowed down and sometimes has to reread sections to understand the meaning of the passage, which the reader may find irritating at times.

Even though the use of Scottish brogue and Chinese pidgin slows the reader down, they add realism to the characters and the novel that Queen's English from a Chinese coolie wouldn't have. The reader becomes accustomed to the brogue and pidgin after a while, but still has to slow down to read and understand them.

Structure

The novel is structured into six books and fifty chapters. Some chapters are three or four pages long; other chapters are sixty and seventy pages long. There are no titles to the chapters and there is no Table of Contents so there is no way to know how long a chapter is before beginning unless the reader flips through the pages.

The division of the novel into the different books doesn't make much sense. There is no title for the book divisions either. The books don't detract from the action of the novel, but they don't really divide the action of the novel either. The division into books could have been skipped and would make absolutely no difference to the reader since the chapter divisions suffice for this purpose.

Most of the story is chronological and well told so the reader doesn't have to flip through the pages looking for characters or events. The characters are mentioned frequently enough that the reader doesn't forget the lesser characters and has to resort to looking them up. A list of character might have helped and might have been necessary if the reader takes too much time reading the novel.



Quotes

"Since antiquity the Chinese had had rigid laws excluding Europeans from their country. The inflexibility of these laws, the lack of freedom for Europeans to go where they pleased and trade as they pleased, had caused the war." Chap. 1, p. 12

"Well, these were the terms under which the Emperor of China agreed to trade with 'barbarians' a hundred and fifty years ago. The Regulations confined all 'barbarian' trade to the single port of Canton. All tea and silk had to be paid for in silver, nae credit whatsoever allowed, and smuggling was forbidden. 'Barbarians' were allowed to build warehouses and factories on a plot of land half a mile by two hundred yards at Canton: 'barbarians' were totally confined to this walled-in area - the Canton Settlement - and could stay only for the winter shipping season - September until March - when they must leave and go to Macao. Nae 'barbarian' families were allowed in the Settlement under any circumstances and all women forbidden. Nae arms whatsoever in the Settlement. Learning Chinese, boating for pleasure, sedan chairs, and mixing with Chinese were forbidden; 'barbarian' warships were forbidden in the Pearl River estuary. All 'barbarian' merchant ships were to anchor at Whampoa, thirteen miles downstream, where cargoes were to be transshipped and export customs tax paid in silver. All 'barbarian' business was to be conducted solely through a monopoly, a guild, of ten Chinese merchants which we call the Co-hong. The Co-hong were also the sole suppliers of food, the sole licenser of a set number of servants and boatsmen and compradores. And finally, the one regulation that nailed us to the Cross - and the treaty cancels - specified that the Co-hong were the only recipients of all 'barbarian' petitions, requests and complaints, which would then, and solely by them, be forwarded to the mandarins." Chap. 2, pp. 91-92

"Once more Struan was awed by the subtlety and diabolic cunning of a Chinese mind. The majesty of it. The ruthlessness of it. But then, Straun told himself, they were both gambling for huge stakes. Both gambling on each other's fairness, for there was nothing to guarantee that the favors would be granted. Except that you will grant them and must grant them because a deal is a deal." Chap. 5, p. 135

"And if there's war, where's the base for the fleet, eh? Macao's as useless as it always has been - it's part of the mainland and the Chinese can fall on that at whim. But na our island, by God. Na, with the fleet protecting it. I'll agree that wi'out Hong Kond we're finished. That wi'out it we cana launch a campaign north again. Never. Nor protect whatever mainland ports or settlements we get in the future. You hear, Tyler? Hong Kong's the key to China. Hong Kong's got you by the short and curlies." Chap. 7, p. 149

"He partially understood Jin-qua's motives now. Ti-sen's disgrace had clarified them. Obviously there would be war. Obviously trade would begin again. But never under the Eight Regulations. So the Co-hong would lose its monopoly and it would be every man for himself. Hence the thirty-year trade span: Jin-qua simply had been cementing his



business relationship for the next three decades. That was the Chinese way, he thought: na to worry about immediate profit, but profit over years and years." Chap. 8, p. 169

"The south side of the river was shoal-ridden and hazardous. Tacking so far to windward left Struan dangerously open. Brock's lorch was waiting to pounce. But Struan wanted him to attack now. It was time. He long ago had learned a basic law of survival. Bring your enemy to battle only on your terms, never on his." (Chap. 8, p. 184

""God help us, we're saved," Robb said, his voice weak. 'Now all the international money plans will go through. We'll be the richest company in the Orient. Bless you, Dirk. You're incredible.' Now the future's assured, Robb inwardly exulted. Now there'll be enough for even Sarah's extravagant tastes. Now I can go home immediately. Perhaps Dirk will change his mind and never leave, will never go home, will forget Parliament. No more worries. Now I can buy a castle and live like a laird in peace. The children will marry and live well and there'll be enough for their children's children. Roddy can finish university and go into banking and never worry about the Orient. 'Bless you, Dirk.'" Chap. 9, p. 207

"No. Outsmarted me, yes, but even that's na correct. I was na smart enough. Me, lad! Na him. When you sit down at a table to make a deal, each side is obligated to make the best deal possible. It's very simple. Aye. I was weaker than he, that's all. But even if I'd thought that the coins would be split among other men - I still must make the deal as he wanted it. We'd nae option, nae option at all." Chap. 10, p. 249

"He would certainly turn Shevaun against us, Tillamn thought. He'd force the issue through her. Jeff would be furious over losing her and he'd probably break up Cooper-Tillman. Nothing I could do to stop that. If the company goes on the rocks, there's no money for brother John to entertain so lavishly in Washington. Politics is expensive, and without political pull life for the family will be very hard, and we need every bit of help against the blasted Northern states. No, by Heaven, Shevaun's going to marry Jeff and not the Tai-pan, and that's that." Chap. 17, p. 354

"The idea was so simple: Destroy China's tea monopoly. Buy or beg or steal - in great secrecy - a ton of the seeds of the tea plant. Transport the seeds surreptitiously to India. There must be dozens of areas in which tea could flourish. Dozens. And in my lifetime plantations could be flourishing - growing our own teas on our own soil. With our own tea, we'll no longer need bullion or opium to pay for China teas. Profit on Indian tea sales will soon equal, double, triple the sale of opium, so that's not a problem. We'll grow the teas of the world and we'll sell to the world. The Crown will gain in fantastically increased tea revenues, for of course we will grow it cheaper and better and the price will be below China teas. British brains and all that! And we'll gain in moral grandeur for ceasing opium trading. The cursed opium smugglers are put out of business, for without the lever of opium they serve no useful function, so we can outlaw opium. India gains hugely. China gains, for there'll be no more opium smuggling, and she consumers her own tea anyway." Chap. 18, p. 380



"The fighters were beautifully matched and everyone knew that much was at stake. The admiral and the general had personally approved the selection of the fighters, and had exhorted them to win. The honor of the whole Service was on their shoulders, the wealth of the savings of their mates. The future would be sweet for the victor. For the vanquished there would be no future." Chap. 19, p. 381

"'I did na recognize little Tess, did you?' Struan was saying to Robb. He too had noticed the exchange between his son and the Brock girl, and his mind was churning with the advantages and dangers inherent in a Culum-Tess match. Good Sweet Christ!" Chap. 22, p. 405

"Aye, he exulted to himself. May-may's a marvelous gamble. Together we can do it. For all time. With joss, the whole of London will be at her feet." Chap. 23, p. 427

"Struan coldly appraised his son. For weeks now he had come to know that Culum's hostility was increasingly real. But he did not mind that. He knew that the more Culum learned, the more he would seek to put his own ideas into effect and the more he would crave power. That's fair, he thought, and was greatly satisfied with Culum's development. At the same time he was worried for Culum's safety. Culum was spending too much time in Gorth's company, his mind dangerously open." Chap. 26, pp. 445-446

"Struan was glad that the problem was out in the open. "Nay. Because Gorth will eat you up when you're Tai-Pan. He'll take all we have and destroy you - to become The Noble House." Chap. 26, p. 448

"You hold a land sale immediately. The bidding will be furious for the new lots. Where does the money go? Back into your government treasury. You gain all was. The land you're selling costs you nothing. You know how desperately you need money for all the problems of government - salaries, police, the governor's palace, roads, law courts, harbor vessels and a thousand other things, and you certainly cana use the ransom money as such. I'd say that it would be a statesmanlike masterstroke. You have to make the decision now because it's impossible for you to wait six months for a dispatch to go to England and the obvious approval to arrive back here. You save Hong Kong at no cost. But most of all you show Zergeyev very bluntly that England plans to stay in Asia permanently. I'd say. Will your astuteness would impress the entire Cabinet. And certainly her Majesty, the Queen. And permanent honors go with such approval." Chap. 29, pp. 492-493

"Culum was awed by the beauty of the arrangement. He saw clearly that though his father had never implied that he had influenced Longstaff's decision, he must have been instrumental in arranging it so delicately. He remembered his first meeting with Longstaff and how his father had manipulated the man like a puppet. Culum's faith in himself was shaken. He realized that what Gorth had said was not completely true, that he could never dominate Longstaff as his father had done - to save them again." Chap. 29, p. 499



"Struan overcame the shock of the news and forced himself to think. The Foreign Secretary's a brilliant man. He would not repudiate Hong Kong lightly. There must be a reason. What can it be? And how am I to control Whalen? How to fit a 'soldier and no administrator' into the future." Chap. 31, p. 533

"'I'm na accusing you, Gorth,' Struan said. He was sorely tempted to provoke the inevitable fight now. But he knew that he would have to wait for Gorth to make the first mistake, to insult him unforgivably in public. Only then could he openly and freely send seconds with a formal challenge and kill him before an audience. Only that way could he avoid a breach of the Culum-Tess match and avoid giving Brock a means to destroy him in the courts of law. For May-may had been right - everyone in Asia knew that he was spoiling to slaughter Gorth." Chap. 34, p. 579

"You think Liza and Brock's allow you to marry Tess if they find out you're so immature and stupid that you'll go whoring in Macao drunk - and to an unknown whorehouse and get filled with love potions and rolled? If I was Brock I'd say you had na enough sense to be my son-in-law." Chap. 34, p. 594

"If she dies you must save Hong Kong. If she lives you must save Hong Kong. But why? Why na leave that cursed island as it was before? You may be wrong - Hong Kong may na be necessary to Britain. What do you prove by your mad crusade to open up China and bring her into the world on your terms, in your way? Leave China to her own joss and go home. With May-may if she lives. Let Culum find his own level as Tai-Pan. Once day you'll die and then The Noble House will find its own level. That's law - God's law, nature's law, and the law of joss." Chap. 37, p. 608

"Struan turned his back on the corpse and slowly walked away. He broke out of the alley and climbed the hill to the ancient fort. Once on the crest, surrounded by sea and sky, he sat on a bench and thanked the Infinite for the blessing of the night and the blessing of the day." Chap. 39, p. 625

"Thank you, but we've decided it's best. We think we should go back to Hong Kong immediately and see Mr. Brock and ask his forgiveness. Please, Mrs. Brock, let's be friends. Father told me about what happened to Gorth. It wasn't of his choosing." Chap. 41, p. 635

"Culum suddenly saw his father clearly - as a man. He saw the size and strength and the hard, weathered face, the red-gold hair and the startling green of the eyes. And he knew that he would always be this man's tool. He knew he could never battle with him, or persuade him that the only way he could survive alone as Tai-Pan would be to join Brock and gamble that Brock would leave him and Tess in peace. 'I can never be the Tai-Pan of The Noble House. I'm not like you,' he said with calm finality. 'I don't want to be, and I never will.'" Chap. 41, p. 638



"Struan related what the Portuguese officer had told him about the Triads. And about Gordon Chen. He knew that he had to give Longstaff this information, else it would seem as if he were trying to protect his son when it came out officially. If Gordon was involved with them, this would flush him out. If he was not, than nae harm done." Chap. 42, p. 654

"That afternoon Gorth's coffin had been put into a cutter. Liza and Brock had gone into deep water and Brock had said the funeral service. When he finished, he had cursed his son and cast the coffin into the deep. They had returned to the White Witch and Brock had gone into his sea cabin and bolted the door, and he had wept for his son and for his daughter. He wept for the first time as a man, and the joy of life had gone out of him." Chap. 47, p. 696

"What happens in a typhoon?

The Supreme Winds come out of the gale against you.

What're they?

Gusts. Squalls. Sometimes they're called the Devil Winds." Chap. 48, p. 707

"Culum found his father in the havoc of the residence. Struan was crumpled in a corner of the north suite, and in his arms was a small, gaunt Chinese girl. Culum wondered how his father could have loved her, for to him she was not beautiful. But they were not made obscene by death. Their faces were calm, as if they were asleep." Chap. 50, p. 720

"Thank God the Tai-Pan lived to give me the papers. I wonder if he ha a premonition. No, surely not. What about Culum? What's he going to do? He's as helpless as a babe. Perhaps I could watch over him - I owe that to the Tai-Pan, and more. We've the cinchona business together now. We'll cancel the other two directors, so it'll be just Culum and me. Why not join forces.? Totally merge the companies? The new Noble House—Cooper-Struan. No! Struan-Cooper. You'll be fair with Culum. He'll be next." Chap. 50, p. 727

Topics for Discussion

What were the differing views regarding the acquisition of Hong Kong?

What are the Eight Regulations and what is their significance for the traders?

Why did The Noble House face financial difficulties? How did Dirk plan on solving them?

What was the significance of the four half coins that Jin-qua gave Dirk?

Why is the opium trade necessary for England? What is the problem of the imbalance?

What are the implications for The Noble House of Culum Struan marrying Tess Brock?

What are the Triads? How do they enter into the action of the novel?

What is the significance of the information in the documents that the bishop gave to Dirk?