

# Treasure Study Guide

## Treasure by Clive Cussler

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## Plot Summary

In the Fourth Century A.D., Junius Venator and a group of Romans placed the last of a huge cache of artifacts into a man-dug cavern, lit a blasting charge and sealed the entrance. Venator was saving the items from destruction in Rome and had sailed across the ocean to make it happen. In 1991, Dirk Pitt and his crew were searching for a downed Russian submarine off the coast of Greenland when a charter jet crashed just a mile away. A team of archaeologists were also working nearby and all converged on the crash site to discover that an attempt on the life of a UN leader, Egyptian Hala Kamil, had failed though virtually everyone else on the plane had perished. While conducting underwater searches, Dirk's team located items that indicated a Fourth Century Roman presence. The archaeologists also located a Fourth Century Roman coin among the native village findings. They use the equipment at Dirk's disposal to search the surrounding ocean floor and find a partially sunken ship from Fourth Century Rome. Among the parchments that were located, they discover a crude map and notes that indicate that the ship had been among the fleet that delivered the Roman artifacts for burial. Dirk immediately begins his search for the site.

Their quest leads Dirk first to Colorado where he happens on another attempt on Hala's life. Dirk, archaeologist Lily Sharp and Guirdino are involved in a wild car chase in Dirk's newly-restored classic car. The car is no match for the Mercedes in pursuit so Dirk heads up a mountain and then plunges down a ski slope in order to escape.

Soon after, Hala joins the presidents of Egypt and Mexico on a yacht that is being hijacked by the joint efforts of brothers who hope to take over Mexico and Egypt. Dirk's father, an important US Senator, is also on board. Dirk leads the charge in search of the yacht and is eventually among those who execute a daring rescue against impossible odds. Through a series of small discoveries, Dirk decides that the treasure must be buried in a Texas town called Roma, just on the US side of the Rio Grande.

As a subplot, there are two brothers - members of a past drug cartel - who are planning to overtake Egypt and Mexico. Disguised as natives of those countries, each is whipping their fellow countrymen into frenzies in an effort to take over their respective countries. Dirk foils their plans by rescuing the hostages on the yacht and later puts down an uprising in Mexico, effectively ending the brothers' quests for power.



# Prologue

## Prologue Summary

On July 15, A.D. 391, Junius Venator and a group of Roman military men are just about to seal the cave that holds a vast array of treasures rescued from the destructive hands of Emperor Theodosius. They seal the entrance but barbarians attack, killing almost everyone in a ferocious battle that rages for hours. Venator is saved from the barbarians by the soldiers, and he makes his way into the water. There is a single ship sailing away but those on board do not return to his rescue. It will later be revealed that the captain feared for the life of his daughter who was on board. Venator does not immediately die but is taken in by villagers who accepted him as a prophet and sage. He later returns to the site of the battle to bury the bones and to leave a message regarding the location of the treasure.

## Prologue Analysis

One ship escapes, and Venator isn't killed by the barbarians, escaping instead to a nearby village. Centuries later, a team led by Dirk Pitt discovers the single ship that escaped, hundreds of miles north off the coast of Greenland, complete with a map of the burial site.



# Chapters 1 through 10

## Chapters 1 through 10 Summary

On October 12, 1991, Suleiman Aziz Ammar, posing as an airline Captain Dale Lemke, boards an VIP plane carrying a group of UN and World Bank officials. Lemke takes the plane off course and drops their flying altitude. He informs the crew that he's not to be disturbed then appears to stumble, injecting his flight crew with a poison called sarin which results in almost instant death. He then opens a door in the plane's underbelly and parachutes out, near where his crew are waiting. He has set the plane for a collision course and waits for it to crash into the ocean. As Ammar and his team watch, the plane doesn't crash as expected but Ammar says that he's considered every contingency and that the plane - with UN Egyptian official Hala Kamil on board - will crash and that no one has a chance of survival.

Gary Rubin, a flight attendant on the charter plane, hears a strange noise, discovers they are over land when they should be over the ocean, and decides to investigate. He calls the cockpit and gets no answer, finally kicking his way through the door. He discovers the two murdered crew members and that the captain is missing. Rubin tries to take control of the plane, though he's battling the autopilot. With the controls all smashed and no communications available, Rubin takes a seat and tries to figure out how to land the plane. He is joined by a former airplane mechanic, a Mexican named Eduardo Ybarra, who knows little but is able to help. Rubin sees a ship, the Polar Explorer, but has no way to communicate. He simply heads for the polar fjord and plans for a crash landing.

Dr. Lilly Sharp, Dr. Hiram Gronquist, Mike Graham and Mr. Hoskins are working on a remote archeology dig in Greenland. They are excavating a native village when Lily discovers a coin that Graham identifies as Fourth Century Roman. They talk at length about how it could have come to be part of the village when the Romans didn't travel this distance until hundreds of years later. They offer theories but are not at all certain how a coin from the Byzantine Empire could have arrived in the remote village hundreds of years before the first documented Roman voyage to the area.

Dirk Pitt and his crew are aboard an exploration ship called the Polar Express. Dirk is a Major in the Air Force but is listed as being "on loan" to the National Underwater and Marine Agency - NUMA. Dirk and his friend and colleague, Al Giordino, have worked on every sea together. They are currently searching for a downed Russian submarine and locate it just off the coast of Greenland, a few miles from the archeology dig and near the site where the charter jet is about to crash. Dirk and Giordino find the submarine near a meteor crater. Dirk has concocted an elaborate scheme to convince the Russians - watching from a nearby trawler - that they haven't found anything. Just after their discovery, Dirk finds a terra-cotta amphora - an ancient urn - on the ocean floor. He soon sees others along with broken shards. Dirk takes only seconds to say that he



believes the trail will lead to an "ancient shipwreck the history books say isn't supposed to be here."

Dirk's plans are interrupted when the charter plane flies over, almost clipping the ship's radar tower. Dirk insists that he be allowed to launch a rescue for any survivors, and Captain Knight agrees. On board the plane, Rubin is excited to see the ship, though he can't signal for help. He does have at least some hope now of rescue.

When the archaeologists realize that the plane has crashed on the fjord, they quickly gather supplies and head in that direction on a pair of snowmobiles. Lily and Gronquist are on one snowmobile pulling a trailer while Hoskins and Graham are on another. They have little light, and the terrain is rough. Gronquist doesn't see the plane's wing until he's almost on top of it and, as he swerves to miss it, he jackknives the trailer, causing them to wreck. Gronquist is knocked out, and Lily's legs are pinned. Hoskins and Graham are ahead, and they crash into the gouges cut into the ice by the heavy plane. They're all injured at least slightly, but then hear the chopper. Lily is still laying on the ice, drifting in and out of consciousness when Dirk Pitt walks up to her, introduces himself and asks if she's free for dinner later.

Lily says, "I may not be up to it," in response to Dirk's dinner date proposal as he checks for broken bones. Dirk also determines that Gronquist isn't badly injured and tells the four to go back to their base and to be prepared for radio contact. Meanwhile, Rubin is weighted down by snow and ice that ripped through the cockpit windshield. He's also in water up to his legs though he fears it might be his own blood. He realizes that the Mexican delegate is dead and fully expects that he's about to die, as well.

Dirk and his team discover that the plane is a charter for VIPs, and Dirk immediately sees Hala Kamil through a window of the plane, but doesn't recognize her. The rescue crew break open the door, introduce artificial heat into the plane and enter. Dirk is the first one inside and finds that the cabin is filled with dead passengers.

The people of the cabin are dead, but not from the crash or from hypothermia. They are all seated, strapped in with no expressions of agony. Dirk and Doc Gale quickly deduce that the passengers must have been poisoned and urge the rescue team to touch nothing unless it's necessary. Dirk goes to the rear of the plane where he discovers two women locked in a restroom. He breaks through the door to find the two are afraid that he's come to kill them. He convinces them of his good intentions and first carries the stewardess out. While he's gone, Hala wipes her face to make herself more presentable, and Dirk recognizes her upon his return.

In the cockpit, a rescuer named Simon finds Rubin but Rubin first asks if Simon is God. Rubin, Hala and the flight attendant are taken to the helicopter and flown back to the Polar Explorer while Dirk and Simon remain on the ground at the crash site waiting for authorities. They speculate briefly on what might have happened. Dirk is of the opinion that the Mexican delegate who died in the cockpit was the person who poisoned the crew, because "the killer in the best murder-mystery tradition is always the least obvious suspect."



## Chapters 1 through 10 Analysis

Ammar is saddled with a "watchdog" named Ismail. Ammar prides himself on being an intelligent, efficient killer but scorns Ismail and his sloppy tactics. While Ammar spent weeks in the planning stages for executing his current event, Ismail simply kills. Ammar will later find that he didn't kill Hala Kamil, and his pride will be hurt when Ismail is sent to finish the job.

Lily is excited about her find, though she's puzzled. She knows that everything they've found points to a Fourth Century village. The fact that the coin is among the items recovered is a mystery that will be solved when Dirk arrives on the scene with his additional information and extensive search equipment that will help locate the Roman ship.

Dirk, Giordino and the Polar Explorer Captain Knight are fully aware that the Russians are watching their attempts to locate the submarine. Dirk has decided that the ship will continue to follow their search grid, acting as though the search is still active. He also plans to alert Washington officials that they are having equipment issues and plans to hand over the news of their discovery only in person. It's noteworthy that Dirk knows his history and immediately recognizes the urn for what it is and for what it indicates - that there is a nearby shipwreck that has never been discovered.

His flirtation with beautiful women is an undeniable part of Dirk's personality. He is drawn to them, and they tend to fall under his charm without fail. In this story, Dirk will later seduce Lily, and Hala Kamil will then seduce Dirk. Both will be in danger of falling in love with Dirk, but both will resist. It's Lily who will later say that Dirk is an incredible lover but not the kind of man to marry.

It's noteworthy that Giordino notes that Dirk has a certain look in his eyes the moment he realizes that they've located the submarine that was the subject of their search. Giordino says that Dirk always needs a challenge and that he's bored as soon as one is complete until he can find the next. The plane crash seems to be Dirk's next challenge as he overrides the captain's objections and forms a rescue party. It's also Dirk who stays at the site until the investigation teams arrive.

Dirk takes talks with both the flight attendant and Hala as he's convincing them that he's not going to hurt them. He asks each out on a date, just as he asked Lily. His teasing manner is a great part of his personality. The flight attendant asks if her husband can come along, and Dirk says that he's certainly welcome - as long as he'll pay. Hala is conscious of her appearance and takes time to wipe her face with paper towels while awaiting Dirk's return. When he calls her by name, she says she wasn't aware that he recognized her. He says that he only did after she wiped her face.



# Chapters 11 through 13

## Chapters 11 through 13 Summary

Julius Schiller, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, is playing poker with four men. Soviet Deputy Chief of Mission Aleksey Korolenko, Special Assistant to the President Dale Nichols, Senator George Pitt and Soviet Embassy's Special Advisor on American Affairs Dale Vyhousky are on Schiller's yacht when Schiller is called to the phone. He returns with the news that the plane with the VIPs, including Hala Kamil, has gone down. The five talk about the state of affairs in Mexico and Egypt, and what would happen if Hala Kamil were among those killed in the crash. It's Nichols who says that the United States will not interfere with a Middle Eastern situation for the sake of oil, but will do home exploration and look to Mexico.

Guy Rivas speaks Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, and it's that skill that lands him the assignment to meet with the Mexican messiah, Topiltzin, at the ancient Aztec ruins of Tula. Topiltzin tells Rivas that his plan is to create a new society. He demands the return of California, Arizona, Texas and New Mexico to the Mexican people, says that only natives will be allowed to remain within the country and that he plans to sacrifice corrupt officials, government and army leaders. When Rivas says the President will never agree to such "absurd demands," he's sacrificed on an alter in the ruins.

Meanwhile in Greenland, officials arrive to investigate the plane wreck and take away the bodies. Dirk makes a hike to the Archaeologists' village, almost becoming lost in a sudden snow storm. He finds Lily working on the dig and abruptly asks if they've found anything out of the ordinary. She hedges but eventually admits that they've found a Roman coin, then he tells her about the amphoras he's seen scattered along the ocean's bottom near the fjord. Lily says that it's strange that there are no stories of the Romans making such a trip. Dirk says that could be as they never made it home.

## Chapters 11 through 13 Analysis

The men who play poker together seem to be more than acquaintances though "friends" might be a stretch. All are involved in American or Soviet politics, and their relationship includes poker but also includes sharing of information regarding policy. It seems that the information that the US won't interfere with Middle Eastern affairs is "leaked" on purpose. It is likely the US President initiated the sharing of that information.

The subplot is introduced here with the mention of the US dependence on foreign oil producers. There will be a rush throughout the story for the US to stay in good graces with the various political leaders who control the world's oil supply. The US officials will carefully watch the two men who are trying to overtake the Mexican and Egyptian governments. The men will later be identified as brothers with their families pulling the strings on their quest for power.





Topiltzin is one of those men. He is working the people of his own nation into a frenzy, promising a better life if they follow him. It's noteworthy that his followers are not the rich, the elite or the politically connected who are usually sought by those on a quest for power. Instead, he's calling out for those who are poor, defeated and hungry. His promises are enough to keep them loyal for the moment.

The reader has the advantage of knowing that Dirk's supposition is correct with regard to the Romans who never made it home to tell their tale. It's unclear at this point whether Dirk simply wants the archaeologists to make this important historical connection or if he's so taken with Lily that he's willing to share information that he probably should keep to himself. As it will later turn out, Dirk simply wants to be embroiled in the next challenge. He sees the possibility of an undiscovered shipwreck as that challenge.



# Chapters 14 through 19

## Chapters 14 through 19 Summary

The next chapters are in the second section of the book, entitled *The Serapis*. A delivery man with a Spanish accent enters the Executive Office Building, leaving a package for the US President. X-rays reveal that the package is a briefcase but the guard is unsure of its contents. He calls for a bomb dog, Sweetpea. Sweetpea doesn't indicate an explosive but growls. When a higher ranking security official, James Gerhart, is called, he decides to open the package and discovers that it's the flayed skin of Guy Rivas who had met with Topiltzin.

In the White House, Dale Nichols is studying Topiltzin and his movements in Mexico. The reports indicate that the self-proclaimed leader was born in a "cardboard shack" at the edge of a garbage dump, admits to no schooling and offers a philosophy that's a blend of political and religious zeal. The President asks Nichols if he's heard from Rivas and is concerned that the Mexican President might find out that the US has made contact with the man seeking to take over the country's leadership. Gerhart then contacts Nichols and tells him to go to the lab at the George Washington University Hospital. When Nichols arrives, he identifies Rivas' skin and vows to avenge the murder.

Ammar arrives in Alexandria, Egypt, and goes immediately to Yazid's home. Yazid doesn't allow him to enter the front door and keeps him waiting for an hour. Ammar allows Yazid the show of power, because he simply doesn't care. He only wants to be paid for killing Hala and to find out what his next job is to be. It's only then that Ammar discovers that Hala was one of three survivors on the plane.

Dirk and Lily have joined their teams to search for the shipwreck Dirk believes to be just off the fjord. They track the pottery strewn about to the bow of a ship protruding from the ice when Captain Knight says that they've been ordered to pull out. Dirk asks for more time. The Captain says he'll ask if Dirk can prove the significance of the ship. Dirk makes a dive to the ship, only submerged in about four meters of water. There are actually dry areas on the ship, and Dirk decides that the people on board died of carbon monoxide. There are several adults, a little girl and a dog, and writing tables that have been preserved over the centuries by the sheer cold. Upon analyzing the tablets, they discover that the ship's captain was part of a fleet that rescued artifacts from destruction in Rome in the Fourth Century, and that the ship was the only one to escape a barbarian attack at the burial site. The ship was frozen in at the fjord and traded with local tribes - explaining the Roman coin found at Lily's dig site.

A conversation between two White House officials - Nichols and Schiller - indicates that Hala is at Senator Pitt's Colorado home under tight security. Three men in a van across the street from Schiller's home pick up the conversation and immediately plan to sell it to Yazid. The President soon learns that Yazid has met with an important Egyptian



official, Defense Minister Abu Hamid, who won't throw his support behind Yazid. US intelligence indicates that Yazid could have been behind the charter plane crash and that they believe Ammar was involved. The President is also concerned about Topiltzin, who he equates with a terrorist. An official named Brogan meets with Navy official Elmer Shaw, who reports that Dirk's crew found the submarine and that the discovery of the ancient shipwreck can be used to explain their presence in the area, making the Russians believe the Americans had not found their submarine.

## Chapters 14 through 19 Analysis

Rivas' fate reveals the type of person Topiltzin really is. While he is a brilliant orator and can hold the attention of his audience, his motives are cruel and selfish. It will soon be revealed that Topiltzin and Yazid are brothers and that they are part of a family dynasty set to take control of two of the world's Third World countries with a younger brother being groomed for a third. It's interesting to note that both Topiltzin and Yazid inspire loyalty from their followers. Ammar is the exception. He is devastated by the news that he failed in his mission but cares more for the loss of the money than for Yazid's anger. Ammar has become rich from his exploits. He is picked up by a "taxi" that is actually fitted with an extensive communications system and is bullet-proof.

Ammar is only interested in the money, and he is already aware that he's being watched. Ismail was sent to Greenland to pick up Ammar from the plane. Ammar knows that Ismail was also supposed to report on Ammar's actions. As Ammar is leaving the plane, he discovers that there was likely a second person involved - someone he didn't know about. Later, Ammar will find that he's to be killed by Mexican mercenaries, erasing any doubt that Yazid values Ammar and his talents.

Dirk breaks a piece of wood from the hull of the ancient shipwreck and goes inside. He fully expects to find ruins but finds a galley that looks as if someone had just stepped out and would soon return. He also finds a crew, frozen in place and covered with ice. He misses seeing the little girl and her dog, but will later discover them. It seems to Dirk that the fumes from an oil-burner in the middle of the room were probably the death of the group. The captain is in the middle of writing. Death apparently came easy for them.



# Chapters 20 through 23

## Chapters 20 through 23 Summary

Dr. Mel Redfern joins Dirk and the others at the site of the shipwreck. It's Redfern who's been translating the tablets from the wrecked ship, Serapis, and who says that the ship might be the key to the "greatest collection of art and literary treasures the world has ever known." Redfern offers some history. He says that an ancient Egyptian ruler, Ptolemy, had a collection of artifacts including the gold-and-crystal coffin containing the body of the late Alexander the Great. Then, Emperor Theodosius and the patriarch of Egypt, Theophilus, decided that everything not related to Christianity was pagan and should be destroyed. Redfern says that one of the tablets recovered from the shipwreck indicates that a merchant named Junius Venator of Alexandria hired a fleet of ships to haul the treasures to a secret place where caverns were dug. The treasures were buried. That ancient captain, Cuccius Rufinus, writes that soldiers have ordered that he not record details of the voyage but that he is free to write eleven months later after the Venator and the soldiers were killed by the barbarians. The Serapis was the only ship to escape. The crew were on alert as the captain perceived danger to his daughter, Hypatia, and pushed off at the first sign of trouble.

Rufinus writes that navigation was difficult, because the stars were in different locations. They were driven to the north, and the weather turned cold. Jars were thrown overboard to lighten the ship and make it more stable. The ship becomes ice bound but nearby natives trade for food. They learn to heat using the oil "from a monstrous fish," and Rufinus writes that he believes they will survive.

Lily and Redfern are immediately interested in the clues to the treasure's location, and Dirk says that he can find it in twenty days. He's awakened the next morning with orders to return to Washington, accompanied by Lily and Giordino. He almost immediately turns over all the shipwreck data to Yeager, a technician for NUMA who begins searching for a place that would match the map and descriptions. They are met by Admiral James Sandecker who tells Dirk that salvaging the Russian submarine will be put on hold and that the job is being turned over to others. Sandecker says that the treasure could prompt a political upheaval and that Dirk, Giordino and Lily are going to Colorado on a "working vacation."

When Dirk meets with his father, an important US Senator, he's told that the libraries expected to be part of the treasure could hold clues to mineral deposits, and that the information could be important political bargaining chips. Senator Pitt says that Dirk is going to Colorado to meet Dr. Bartram Rothberg, a professor who has studied the artifacts expected to be among the treasure. Senator Pitt says it's important for Dirk to go to Colorado to make it clear that he's working only on the treasure hunt and to distance himself from any connection to a search and recovery of the Russian submarine.



Dirk goes "home" to an apparently abandoned hangar on one corner of Washington's International Airport. Inside, the building is a comfortable home with space for Dirk's "toys," including classic automobiles and an airplane. Lily arrives a short time later with an elaborate picnic. Dirk immediately takes her off to bed.

## Chapters 20 through 23 Analysis

There are clues as to the whereabouts of the burial site, including a map, but the team is basically baffled. The "barbarians" were dark skinned, the ships sailed up a river and was buried "near the hills of Rome." Dirk will later discover that the burial site is near Roma, Texas, with a landscape that resembles the hills of Rome.

Rufinus writes in detail about the voyage to deliver the treasures and of his own escape. He says that he doesn't think he was supposed to escape, that all were to be killed so that no one could reveal the location of the treasure. He says that he saw Venator swimming away from the slaughter of the Roman army but that he didn't dare return for the man for fear that his daughter would be killed. The girl's presence moves the team that discovers the shipwreck, and it's noted the Giordino "almost cried" as he described her.

Dirk's involvement in the Russian submarine search is complete though he'd hoped to be in charge of the underwater recovery. He seems content to go off on the treasure hunt. Dirk's home is an extension of his personality. He has "classic and milestone" automobiles stored in an abandoned hangar with his living quarters also in the building. It's noted that the most unusual of his collection of "toys" stored at the hangar is an antique bathtub with an outboard motor. There's no additional reference to the item and no explanation, but it seems odd enough to add to Dirk's mystique.



# Chapters 24 through 29

## Chapters 24 through 29 Summary

Yazid meets with a group of his advisors and followers and reveals that he has plans to kidnap the presidents of Mexico and Egypt. The majority of those gathered are skeptical but Yazid assures them that both men will be on board a yacht in Uruguay and that he has a plan that will work - that the Lady Flamborough, her crew and passengers will all disappear.

Schiller visits Hala while she is in Colorado. Hala is due to address the UN in just a few days. Schiller asks her to include the information that the US is on the verge of discovering the treasure, which could have information on Egyptian mineral deposits. Hala declines, saying she'll be giving her people false hope that there's an end to the poverty in sight. However, she then agrees if the US can make progress toward finding the treasure before her address. Unknown to anyone, Ismail watches Schiller's limousine leave the grounds and plans to attack the house at daybreak the following morning to kill Hala.

Dirk, Giordino and Lily arrive at a repair shop in Colorado where Dirk is to pick up a newly-restored 1930 L-29 Cord town car. The vehicle has an open front for the chauffeur, and Dirk proudly takes the front seat with Lily and Giordino in the enclosed rear. They drive to a Breckenridge ski resort where they meet with Dr. Rothberg. Rothberg tells them the "great art and literature of the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Romans, the sacred writings of the Jews." The first books devoted to mathematics, the first encyclopedias and works by the early masters were included in the library which now seems to be part of the treasure Dirk seeks. Rothberg says the library was originally known as the "Place of the Muses." Rothberg doesn't have a clue as to where Venator would have hidden the treasure but says it would not have been left to chance.

The following morning, Hala is preparing breakfast as the guards make their rounds and trade places. Ismail's attack is poorly timed. He winds up hiding among the pines for long moments awaiting the time when guards will be exposed. They attack, shooting wildly but hitting several of the agents. Ismail's men blow up the surveillance van, killing those inside. Hala remains inside, though the house is on fire, and only two guards remain. As the local sheriff's deputies arrive, Ismail's men are briefly distracted. The two guards run with Hala toward the road but they encounter Ismail, and his men and the two guards also die. Hala runs into the road just as Dirk drives up in the Cord.

Dirk's father had ordered him to stay away from their Colorado lodge but Dirk ignores the warning and heads there to pick up his skiing gear. He barely stops before hitting Hala, and they quickly recognize each other. Hala joins Lily in the back, and Ismail's team give chase in two high-powered Mercedes. Dirk knows he can't outrun them on the open road. Giordino throws a wrench at the lead car, breaking the windshield and slowing them briefly. Dirk turns off the main road and up a mountain. The Cord is



overheating, has been shot and has a flat, but continues up the road with the two cars close behind. Dirk then turns the Cord down a ski slope and causes the two cars to wreck along the way. Dirk has little control but manages to miss all the skiers along the way, crashing into the restaurant which has been evacuated with the exception of the pianist.

## Chapters 24 through 29 Analysis

Yazid doesn't yet reveal his plan regarding the yacht, but Ammar's talents will again be put to use. Ammar will pose as the captain, take the ship out of port in the dead of night, paint her to resemble another ship, and then cover her in ice to hide her among the icebergs of southern Chile. Yazid has apparently thought of everything, except Dirk's presence.

Hala wants to believe that Egypt has some hope of finding oil as it would alleviate at least some of the economic suffering of her people. She also wants to believe the treasure will provide the clues to make that happen but isn't willing to lie to her people. The US wants Hala to make the announcement. It will earn the current Egyptian president some favor among the people, making Yazid just a little less likely to take over the government.

Ismail's followers fear they'll be killed but Ismail says that Hala's death is worth anything, including their own lives. The attempt on her life does go badly, ending the lives of most of the terrorist group and all those guarding Hala. It's notable that Dirk just happens to show up at the exact time a beautiful woman needs to be saved. Both Dirk and Giordino are quick with the wit, despite the desperate situation. Giordino suggests that he could hang out of the car and make faces but Dirk says that will only make them madder. Dirk continually points out that they're now going to "plan one," then "plan two," and so on. Giordino points out the flaws in each plan. It's a typical Dirk quip when they come to a stop in the restaurant, and he asks the pianist to play "Fly Me to the Moon."



# Chapters 30 through 35

## Chapters 30 through 35 Summary

The next chapters are in the section entitled The Lady Flamborough. Topiltzin uses lights and special effects to hold the attention of his audience at the ancient Mayan city of Uxmal, located on the Yucatan peninsula. He touts better times and the will of the gods, then retires to his lavish quarters inside a semitrailer. He uses an extensive communications equipment cubicle and begins talking to another man who is not identified.

Hala is taken by helicopter from Colorado with government officials. She says that she's grateful to the men who gave their lives to protect her's and that she will make the announcement about the treasure even though it hasn't been located. Hala says that she then plans to travel to Uruguay. She offers a brilliant speech, promising that she won't be chased away from her office by attempts on her life. She then heads for Uruguay. Meanwhile, Senator Pitt has been asked to go to Uruguay, as well. He's told to inform Egyptian President Hasan that he has US support if he decided to remove Yazid. Though the Senator thinks it's a bad move, he agrees to take the message.

Captain Oliver Collins arrives with the Lady Flamborough in the Punta del Este harbor with a full crew and no passengers, expecting the arrival of both the Mexican and Egyptian presidents. Customs arrives and meets the captain in his cabin. There were five in uniform and one in a jumpsuit. That one turns out to be Ammar, and he wears a captain's uniform under the jumpsuit. He announces to Collin that he's taking control of the ship. When the real customs officers arrive, Ammar convinces them he's Collins and passes inspection. He then calls on two members of the crew, and they don't realize that he's not Collins. However, they note that he does call one of them by his first name, which Collins has never done. Ammar, posing as Collins, alerts the crew that a shipment will be loaded shortly. One of the men notes that it seems to be rolls of plastic and barrels of paint. Ammar replaces two of the ship's officers with his own men and prepares to greet the incoming dignitaries.

Egyptian and Mexican security agents arrive first, conduct a cursory inspection and are followed by the presidents. They are soon joined by Hala and then Senator Pitt. When darkness falls, Ammar and his close friend, Ibn begin their plans. Ammar alerts the harbor patrol that they are having generator problems and will have no lights until the problem is corrected. Ammar's men then kill the Mexican and Egyptian security forces and prepare to leave the harbor.

Back in Washington, Keith Farquar has presented Nichols with a profile of Yazid. The file indicates that he was born in "squalid poverty" near the garbage dumps of Cairo, that he had only religious schooling and was able to captivate his audience. Nichols reads carefully and notes that there's something familiar with Yazid's story. His discovery is "simple" and "shocking" — he quickly calls Margin Brogan with his theory.





## Chapters 30 through 35 Analysis

While talking to the unidentified man who will later be revealed as Yazid, Topiltzin's brother, Topiltzin talks of the fact that he's made arrangements, paid out the necessary bribes and sacrificed those who did their jobs to guarantee their silence and as a warning. It will later be learned that the arrangements are for the capture of the Lady Flamborough in Mexico.

It's by chance that Hala is onboard when Ammar takes the Lady Flamborough hostage. Senator Pitt is also an added bonus, having arrived on board after the passengers and crew were herded into a dining room and just before they are leaving the harbor. Ammar doesn't believe it's luck but seems to think it's actually Allah's intervention that put Hala under his control yet again.

Though Nichols theory isn't yet revealed, the reader will likely catch the similarities between Yazid's story and that of Topiltzin. Both were born near garbage dumps, lived in squalor with no formal education and were captivating speakers. It will soon be revealed that they are brothers, part of a former drug cartel seeking to take control of two of the Third World countries, and that there is a younger brother being groomed for a similar position in a third country.



# Chapters 36 through 43

## Chapters 36 through 43 Summary

Dirk and his team continue to work through data and clues hoping to narrow their search for the treasure. Meanwhile, Captain Collins takes the Lady Flamborough out of the harbor under cover of darkness, running down a smaller yacht in the process. Ammar refuses to warn the boat of their approach or to radio for help for the survivors. Luiz Chavez and his son, returning to the harbor from fishing, discover the wreck. However, the sharks arrive first, and there are no survivors. It's soon learned that the yacht belonged to a dignitary and that there were other VIPs on board. The wreck of the smaller yacht prompts a search for all boats in the harbor, and it's discovered that the Lady Flamborough is missing. Dirk is notified along with the information that the US government won't officially be involved other than by sending Special Operative Forces. Dirk requests the use of the NUMA equipment in the area and heads to Uruguay to find his father.

When Dirk arrives in Uruguay, he looks over satellite images that show the Lady Flamborough along with two other ships in the area. At daylight, search planes were sent out but find no trace of the yacht. The next set of satellite images shows that she's simply gone. Dirk and Giordino plan to go on the NUMA deep-water research ship the Sounder to look for wreckage along the way. Using the search equipment, Dirk finds a wrecked ship and makes a dive to investigate. He finds that it's one of the two other boats that had been seen on the satellite image photos - the General Bravo.

The Lady Flamborough has been retrofitted by the ship's passengers and crew to look like the General Bravo, including paint and fake rust marks. The crew from the General Bravo are Mexicans under the command of Machado, who is loyal to Topiltzin. Machado quickly makes it known that he knows Ammar's true identity, and Ammar knows that Yazid has sold him out. The passengers are alive but have been worked hard and are now headed into the colder waters of the Antarctic, making their light clothing unsatisfactorily cold.

## Chapters 36 through 43 Analysis

It's predictable that the security forces do only a cursory check of the Lady Flamborough and her crew. They fully expect that everything is okay and haven't given any thought to the potential for a problem. The entire security forces for both presidents are summarily executed, though the hostages are not yet harmed. They're actually to be used as workers in the plan to "hide" the Lady Flamborough. The Uruguay police forces are stretched to the limit and simply don't have the manpower to deal with the tide of people.



When Nichols hears that the Egyptian president has been kidnapped, his first statement is that the US will have to write off Egypt as a potential oil supply and will be forced to look toward Mexico instead. He's asked if he really believes oil will flow over the Rio Grande.

It's also predictable that Dirk is ready to go to his father's rescue and that he's ready to take command of a NUMA ship in order to do so. In typical fashion, the government stands behind his plan, giving him whatever authority is needed to carry out his mission. When the yacht apparently disappears, many believe the kidnappers sank it. Dirk is convinced his father isn't dead, but follows the clues to search for wreckage near the place where the yacht was last sighted.



# Chapters 44 through 49

## Chapters 44 through 49 Summary

Dirk discovers a roll of the plastic sheeting when he finds the General Bravo at the bottom of the ocean. He quickly figures out that the yacht was made to look like the General Bravo, allowing Ammar to get away while the search crews are looking for a sunken wreck. Dirk also soon decides that the plastic sheeting is being used to cover the yacht so that it can be camouflaged as an iceberg, effectively hiding her from aerial photography.

At the State Department in Washington, the President learns that the situation in Egypt is rapidly deteriorating. He asks if it's possible to assassinate Yazid and is told that it is, but that he'll be better off not knowing how. It's then that the President is told that Yazid and Topiltzin are brothers, and that their real names are Robert and Paul Capesterre. Brogan offers a brief family history, that they made a legitimate fortune on a banana plantation and then made more by growing marijuana under the shade of the banana trees. They sold only in Europe and the Far East, bribed and strong-armed their way into governmental favor and have a vast worldwide enterprise. Nichols wants to expose the two for the criminals they are but there is no solid proof of those activities. It now seems clear that the brothers are cooperating on the hijacking of the Lady Flamborough and that they hope the two governments will collapse without their leaders. They decide to wait for the Special Forces teams to find the ship before taking any official action.

Colonel Morton Hollis is leading the Special Forces team. His second in command is Major John Dillinger. They, along with Washington teams, discover that his yacht has again disappeared. They haven't yet caught up with Dirk and don't know that he has an idea of how the ship is being hidden and where. When the Special Forces teams land, Dirk meets them and reveals the ship's new location.

Hala, Senator Pitt and the presidents of Egypt and Mexico are very cold and are huddling in every piece of clothing and using every blanket available. Senator Pitt uses a diamond ring to cut a hold in the window of the cabin and then uses a Swiss army knife to cut through the covering in an effort to find out where they are. He discovers that they're beside a huge glacier and that the wall of ice could break free and crush the ship.

## Chapters 44 through 49 Analysis

The two presidents are no longer "pampered heads of state" but issue invitations to each other for visits once they are free. The invitations are likely proffered with each expecting that they'll never live to see the end of their ordeal.

Dirk has never stopped believing that his father is alive and well, or if he has he hasn't revealed any of that concern. He's slept when he had time, apparently saving his energy



for when it will be most needed. Dirk continues to be the only one who can match wits with Ammar. It's Dirk who immediately makes the connection that Ammar sank the Mexican ship and disguised the yacht, and Dirk who discovered that covering the ship with plastic sheeting would serve as a base for ice to form, making the ship seem an iceberg.

There's an instant animosity between Hollis and Dirk. Dirk does things his own way and doesn't want to share his methods with Hollis - only his results. Hollis is accustomed to being in control and doesn't like that Dirk doesn't bow to that command. Hollis will eventually come to respect Dirk but only after he proves himself in combat.



# Chapters 50 through 61

## Chapters 50 through 61 Summary

Lieutenant Colonel James Slade pilots the Casper as the plane's surveillance equipment photographs the area. He can see little and entertains himself with a video game during the flight. The photos are delivered to Dirk and the others as soon as he lands. The crew analyze photos, including infrared, but find nothing. Dirk suggests that the ship doubled back, heading up the Chile border rather than into Antarctica. There, they could survive without heat, therefore would not show up on the infrared images. Dirk also suggests that they'll be next to a glacier, and the ship is quickly spotted on the photos. The Special Forces team prepares to move out. Pitt has to threaten his way into being allowed along, though Dirk's crew will be dropped about two miles from the site and will hike in. They are quickly joined by a geologist, Clayton Findley, who knows the area.

Collins asks Suleiman to provide warm drinks for the hostages, but he refuses. When Suleiman goes to the communications room, powered by a generator, he learns that Ibn has picked up several news stories, including a report that Yazid has pledged that the hostages live and that he is in a position to negotiate their release. He says that he is willing to exchange his own life for that of Senator Pitt. Suleiman recognizes that Yazid plans to have the Mexicans kill Suleiman and his men.

Clayton Findley creates a diorama out of mud, showing the landscape around the ship. The rescue plan is to drop several men by parachute onto the glacier while the rest approach by rubber rafts. They assume there will be ample fog for cover and that they'll have the element of surprise. There are questions and discussions regarding the plans with the special forces officers taking the lead. Giordino offers a typical wisecrack, "Let's win one for the Gipper," and Pitt covers for him by saying that his friend had said it was a pleasure to be part of the elite fighting group. Hollis ends by telling the special forces team to shoot any member of NUMA who tries to enter the boat before the rescue is complete.

On board the ship, Ammar promises the Mexican Machado that he will hand over the command of the mission by noon, unless their leaders say otherwise. Meanwhile, Ammar has secretly moved all his men along with the two presidents, Senator Pitt and Hala to land. By the time Machado discovers that no one is at the radio controls, the rescue party are landing on the glacier.

Dirk, Findley, Gunn and Guirdino are dropped just short of the abandoned mine and are walking in that direction when they smell roasting lamb. They discover what they believe to be a group of terrorists manning a land base, take control of seven that are in the building with the getaway helicopter, and take stock of their new situation. It's then that Pitt believes something has gone wrong with the Special Forces' assault on the ship.



Hollis is leading the sea attack team. He's immediately in trouble with strong currents and winds and a malfunctioning boat motor. Dillinger and his crew face heavy winds on their landing from the air and misjudge their location. They have farther to go than expected, and two of the men are too badly injured to be of help on the assault. The two teams are also unable to communicate until the air team is past the ice wall. Dillinger's team also find the string of explosives set by Ammar's men. They disarm all but one which Ibn sets off to no effect.

Dirk and Gunn steal the industrial-sized train, put it in gear, tie the whistle cord to full blast and send it down the tracks to a pier near the ship. They then join the others in the building with the helicopter and prepare for a siege. Ammar and Ibn are nearer the shore and haven't been aware of Dirk's presence in the camp. They are planning how to make the glacier fall using the helicopter when they hear the train. They run for the camp, bringing the presidents, Hala and Senator Pitt.

On board the ship, Machado and his men have just discovered the Egyptians' absence when Dillinger kills Machado then the first of his men. It's then that the Special Forces team hears the whistle of the train, and Dillinger suspects that the NUMA team are trying to tell him something. The team soon finds the four important passengers are missing. They also learn that the engine room has been trashed, there is no power and that the iceberg is on the verge of collapse, which would sink the ship. The NUMA ship Sounder arrives in the nick of time, offering a tow. As the yacht clears the iceberg, the passengers cheer, and the iceberg breaks apart.

Dirk and the others face an attack by the Egyptians. While they are fighting them off, Gunn tells Dirk that his father, a woman and two additional hostages are nearby. They agree that Gunn has the best chance of leaving their current building and taking out the two guards overseeing the hostages. Gunn, dressed in gear from a dead Egyptian, calmly walks up to the hostage group and guns down the two guards. On board the yacht, Hollis knows that Dirk and his team are fighting the Egyptians and races to get his men back to shore using the small helicopters.

Ammar knows that he can't shoot his way into the building for fear of damaging the helicopter - their only way out of the frozen land. He calls for a talk with Dirk, and the men meet in the compound. Dirk refuses to surrender and calmly walks back toward the building when Ammar shoots him the back. With two state-of-the-art bullet-proof vests as protection, Dirk doesn't even fall and quickly aims his own gun at Ammar, shooting him in the shoulder and the face, before retreating inside from the gunfire of Ammar's men. As Ammar is apparently dying, he asks Ibn to kill Yazid. Dirk, Giordino and Findley are ruthlessly attacked until all are seriously injured. Giordino even resorts to throwing rocks before the Special Forces teams begin to arrive. Hollis and Dillinger expect the worst, yet find the three men bloodied and injured, but alive.



## Chapters 50 through 61 Analysis

Yazid's plan is to have the hostages returned unharmed. If the kidnappers are all dead, no one can ever reveal that Yazid and Topiltzin were behind the kidnapping. Yazid will be touted as a hero and will gain in popularity, putting him in a position to win the presidency. Dirk and the Special Forces crew soon put the plot together along with the idea that the plan is to kill the hostages and/or the kidnappers.

There's a definite clash between Dirk's crew and the special forces officers. The Special Forces people believe they are dealing with civilians and refuse to give Dirk any credit even after he explains that he is military on loan to NUMA. Dirk and Giordino hold their own in a minor skirmish with the officers and earn the right to go along on the mission, but are ordered to stay away from the fighting. Dirk tells Captain Frank Stuart to take the Sounder in that direction and that they'll plan to meet at the yacht's location the next day.

Ammar has nothing but contempt for Machado, who wants to simply kill all the hostages and go home. Machado does seem to have some savvy and asks how he can be certain he and his men won't be sacrificed for the greater good. Ammar, studying the Koran, doesn't have an answer but says that he's certain Yazid and Allah will provide for them. Ammar knows he's been betrayed by Yazid but says that he is more angered by the loss of the payment for this particular job than that betrayal. Later, when Ammar realizes that the Special Forces teams have likely invaded his camp and that his team is in real danger, he vows to survive, "if for no other reason than to kill Yazid."

Dirk wants to tell his friends how much he appreciates their loyalty. Even the newest member of this circle - Findley - has taken on the challenges with humor and a staunch spirit. Dirk knows that the men don't need that kind of reassurance. The men seem somewhat reluctant for Gunn to leave, and he seems to feel that he's abandoning them rather than acting as if he's headed into an extremely dangerous situation.

When Ammar reaches the camp, he immediately asks for a report. One of his guards tells him that thirty or forty men have assaulted them and are now holed up in the building with the helicopter. Ammar realizes the man is lying and demands the truth. He can't believe there are only "four or more" who have created this much damage to the trained Egyptian military camp. Again, Ammar is much taken with his own abilities and believes that others are simply incompetent.

Dirk and his friends are fighting incredible odds but simply refuse to give up. Though all three are injured, they continue to fight. Giordino is throwing rocks, and Findley is using his rifle as a club by the time the battle is done. In typical Dirk fashion, he calmly says to Hollis and Dillinger, "About time you showed up. We were running out of things to do." Officials will later learn that Ammar is not among the dead and seems to have escaped.





# Chapters 62 through 78

## Chapters 62 through 78 Summary

The next chapters are in Part Four, entitled Sam's Roman Circus. The US President learns that the hostages have been released but that the Egyptian government seems on the verge of collapsing into Yazid's control. They agree to question the terrorists that were captured in Chile to prove a connection to Yazid. Predicting that his followers won't approve of his tactics, they believe he'll be "benched for the season." There continues to be concern over the possibility of a mass movement of people from Mexico under Topiltzin's control.

Findley and the others are transported to a hospital, and Dirk recovers on board the Lady Flamborough. Hala and Senator Pitt are among those who visit his bedside. Dirk is asked to identify each of the terrorists killed or captured and confirms that Ammar is not among them. As the others leave, Hala undresses and slips into bed with Dirk.

Meanwhile, Ammar and Ibn are hiding in a cave. Ammar cannot see or speak and wishes only to die, but finds it in himself to decide that he will live long enough to seek revenge by killing Yazid and Dirk. Ammar goes to Egypt where he pretends to be Yazid's uncle. Once he's near Yazid, he takes out a knife and kills the young leader before his guards can react. Ammar is then killed, himself.

Once back in the United States, Hala kisses Dirk goodbye and asks him not to forget her. She says that she's on the verge of falling in love with him but that she can't reconcile her love of her country with a life with this man, and chooses her country. Dirk refuses to go to the hospital, instead going to NUMA headquarters where Lily tells him that Yeagar has discovered the location of the treasure burial - Roma, Texas. Dirk and Lily travel to Roma where they're met by geologist Herb Garza. Garza takes them to meet "Crazy Sam" of "Sam's Roman Circus."

Sam owns land in the area and has discovered Roman artifacts. He's been written off as crazy, and his finds have been labeled a hoax by area archaeologists. Garza himself is skeptical but Dirk and Lily recognize the swords, armor and other finds as genuine and as proof of Venator's presence in the area. Then, Sam shows them his stone. The inscription describes Venator's role in saving the treasure and his subsequent life with natives. It's dated 398.

Sandecker arrives in Washington the next morning and is greeted by the President who tells him that the NUMA team is to be removed from the excavation project. The goal is to keep it secret but Sandecker points out a newspaper article already giving information, quoting a government official as the source. They fear that Topiltzin will decide that the treasure is his, because he claims the land of Texas for the Mexican people.



Sam, Dirk and Lilly are working out a grid pattern on the side of a hill, testing their equipment, when they hear that they're to be removed from the project. Dirk has Sandecker call on Senator Pitt for help, and they're allowed to remain at the site as consultants. Dirk and Lily are soon ordered not to be on the site though they bluff their way through it with the help of their new friends in the Special Forces and dig a huge cavern that is soon rumored to hold the treasure.

Topiltzin and Yazid, minus their traditional attire and as brothers Paul and Robert, meet for lunch to discuss their plans to date. Topiltzin says that he'll urge his people to cross the river and take the treasure. He can hold it long enough to have the scrolls transcribed to locate the mineral deposits. True to his word, thousands begin arriving on the banks of the Rio Grande just across from Roma, Texas, the following day. The soldiers are battle-ready but unwilling to consider shooting into crowds of women and children. Officials remain unsure what they'll do if those people push their way into the US.

When that time comes, a few are drowned in the crush but the military leaders decline to open fire. Dirk confronts Topiltzin, and the two men go into the cave that Topiltzin believes holds the treasure. There's actually only a single coffin inside with the body of Yazid. Dirk and Topiltzin struggle, and Dirk cuts off the man's hand as he raises his gun. Before Dirk can escape, Ibn arrives to avenge Ammar's death. Dirk eventually kills Ibn and runs for the entrance, barely escaping before the charge is blown.

The story ends with the US President visiting the true cavern. Dirk apologizes for not letting anyone else in on his knowledge about the location of the true cavern. The President takes a long tour of the many items being carefully cataloged and packaged for transportation to a permanent location for study. The site has been disguised as a gravel pit, and the items are being moved in trucks that look like they're hauling gravel. After he leaves, Lily and Dirk take a walk on the hillside and make love on the grass. Lily points out that they could be over the spot where Venator buried the bones of the Roman soldiers centuries earlier.

## Chapters 62 through 78 Analysis

Dirk's slight of hand is evident again. He, Lily and Sam grid off a section of a hill opposite where they expect the cavern to be. It's an exercise to test their equipment before they go to the main task. Yet, when they discover that they're to be pulled off the project, they simply go on as though they fully expect to find the cavern in that location. Dirk later goes to the spot and digs a cavern himself, calling on the Special Forces to help him rig it with explosives. Though his plan is not yet revealed, he intends to lure Topiltzin into the cavern and then cave it in on him. There seem to be flaws in his plan. Dirk and the government officials worry that there will be a riot if Topiltzin is summarily executed, but Dirk seems to think the people will quietly leave if their leader disappears into a cave that then explodes. In the end, he's correct in his assumption, and the revolt ends as peacefully as it possibly could.



The Presidential visit offers the opportunity to make some final explanations. Dirk apologizes for not taking time to explain himself to the President, who feared that the blast would truly cave in the treasure cavern. The President also explains that Hala has agreed to marry Egyptian Defense Minister Abu Hamid, which would give the Egyptian political standing some much-needed support. As always, the story ends with the hero - Dirk - and the girl.

The deaths of Topiltzin and Yazid likely didn't end the family's quest for power, because it had already been noted that there was a third brother, already being groomed for a similar position.



# Characters

## Dirk Pitt

Dirk is a self-assured military man cum ocean explorer cum spy, who always happens to be in the right place at the right time. He is immune to the fears of a normal person. He and his sidekicks always have time to offer up a wisecrack regardless of whatever danger they're currently facing. In James Bond-fashion, Dirk always gets the girl and is not at all opposed to a one-night stand. As one young woman puts it, Dirk is a fabulous lover but not the kind of man to marry. He does, however, have complete loyalty for his friends. They apparently feel the same and willingly follow him into one dangerous situation after another, facing death without backing away from Dirk's side. He has an insatiable appetite for adventure. When the story opens, Dirk and his team are searching for a downed Russian submarine. The moment they find it, one of his team recognizes a look in Dirk's eyes - he's made this discovery and is anxious for the next challenge.

When the plane goes down, he pushes his way past the objections of the ship's captain and rushes to the scene. He quickly sums up what happened - that the passengers all died from poisoning - and remains on the scene until the investigation crews take over. Dirk is the son of a well-respected and important senator and isn't above using that connection to achieve his goals. When his father is kidnapped, Dirk rushes to the rescue, though he seems totally unconcerned for his father's well-being. He claims a connection and that he would know if his father were dead, putting him at ease to face the unbelievable odds of fighting off the terrorist group that is holding the senator, a UN diplomat and two presidents hostage. At the end of the story, all are safe and accounted for, Dirk finds the location of an ancient treasure and single-handedly puts down an uprising at the US/Mexican border.

## Suleiman Aziz Ammar

Ammar is an assassin, basically for sale to the highest bidder. He is typically a sociopath with no morals or scruples about who he kills, as long as he's being paid for it. He seems to have little loyalty to others, unlike most of the terrorists in this novel who are vehemently loyal to their leaders. Ammar is kept waiting by Yazid in a bare room. Ammar considers it an affront but allows it, because he's to be paid for a job. When Ammar discovers that Yazid has arranged for the Mexicans to kill Ammar and his men, he's betrayed but is more angry about the loss of the money he was to be paid than for the loss of Yazid's loyalty.

Ammar considers himself an artist and believes he is far superior to other assassins, a view shared by US officials investigating him. It's said that many of his hits appear to be accidents and that he may take weeks in the planning. That's the case when he pretends to be an airline pilot. He's taken time to study Captain Lemke so that no one



realizes that he's an impostor. He uses makeup and even puts lifts in his shoes in an effort to perfectly match the man's appearance. When he's imitating the ship's captain, Ammar has had no time to learn the captain's mannerisms and almost gives himself away by calling a man by his first name - the real captain never gave up the formality of a title. Though it wasn't enough to alert the crew to the true actions going on, it was noticed. When Ammar is shot in the face and shoulder by Dirk, he wants only to die. He is actually searching for something with which to end his life when his desire for revenge takes hold. He vows to live long enough to kill Yazid and exacts a promise from his good friend Ibn to kill Dirk. It's interesting that Ibn seems to be the only friend Ammar has and that his loyalty is sufficient to have him save Ammar and then to give his life seeking revenge for his friend.

## **Al Giordino**

Dirk's right-hand man, sidekick and best friend. The two have traveled the world together, searching the depths of the oceans for mysteries. It's Giordino who throws a wrench at the terrorists who are chasing them, earning enough time to put a bit of distance between them and their pursuers. Giordino is loyal to a fault and is beside Dirk as he fights the terrorists holding Senator Pitt. Giordino often has a wisecrack ready, and he and Dirk frequently banter as only best friends can.

## **Paul Capesterre, also known as Yazid**

Paul is the brother of Robert Capesterre and the son of a former drug cartel family. He was schooled to act and look like an Egyptian national and is planning to take over the Egyptian government. He claims to have the ear of Allah and to have regular messages from on high that direct his path. He is killed by Ammar after Ammar discovers that Paul sold him out.

## **Robert Capesterre, also known as Topiltzin**

A member of a former drug cartel, Robert was schooled to look and act like a Mexican national. He is attempting to take over the Mexican government and is preaching a mixture of ancient religion and politics with promises of a better future thrown in. He appeals only to the poor masses and is planning to win the government by popular acclaim. He is killed by Dirk Pitt and is the brother of Paul Capesterre.

## **Senator Pitt**

A well-respected US Senator who has the ear of the President, Senator Pitt is Dirk's father and among those kidnapped aboard the Lady Flamborough.



## **Dr. Lily Sharp**

Lily is an archaeologist studying a village in Greenland when the charter plane crashes on the fjord. Lily and her team arrive but have a snowmobile wreck on the way, making them among the injured rather than able to help. Dirk asks her on a date on first sight and later walks through a snowstorm to have dinner with her. Lily works with Dirk on the quest for the treasure and carefully seduces him early in their relationship. At the end of the story, she says that she enjoys the affair but realizes that Dirk is not the kind of man to marry.

## **Hala Kamil**

Hala is an Egyptian UN director and target of several assassination attempts. Hala first meets Dirk when her plane crashes near his ship on the Greenland fjord. Hala is locked in the restroom when Dirk arrives and demands his identity to be certain he's not another terrorist. She is self-assured and refuses to be pushed out of office by the attempts on her life. She's later the target of another assassination attempt and is then kidnapped. Dirk comes to her rescue on both occasions. She slips into bed with him aboard the Lady Flamborough after the final rescue. She admits that she could fall in love with Dirk, but resists, later marrying an Egyptian political figure.

## **Guy Rivas**

Rivas is the man serving as representative of the President of the United States, sent to talk to the Mexican messiah at Tula. Rivas doesn't return to the White House on time. It's later discovered that he's been brutally murdered by Topiltzin, who has Rivas skinned - literally. The skin is then shipped to the US President along with Rivas' identification.

## **Crazy Sam**

Sam owns the land in Roma, Texas, where the treasure is buried. Sam has discovered Roman artifacts over the years but his finds have been written off as hoaxes until Lily and Dirk appear on the scene. Sam offers to give the government his land but is paid ten million dollars.

## **Junius Venator**

Venator was a Fourth Century merchant who rescued art and literature from destruction and transported it all to a man-made cavern in Roma, Texas.



# Objects/Places

## Greenland's fjord

Greenland's fjord is the place where Dr. Lily Sharp and her team are studying an archaeological dig when the charter jet crashes. Dirk Pitt and his team are searching for a submarine just off the coast, as well. It turns out to be the site of a Fourth Century shipwreck that led to the discovery of the treasure burial site.

## South Island

Just opposite Alexandria Virginia on the Potomac River, South Island is where Julius Schiller's yacht is moored and where he has been playing weekly poker with friends since 1986.

## Tula

Tula is a Toltec city in Mexico consisting of ruins and a reconstructed pyramid. This is where Rivas meets the Mexican messiah named Topiltzin.

## The Lady Flamborough

The Lady Flamborough is a cruise ship where the presidents of Mexico and Egypt plan to hold a meeting. The ship is hijacked with both men, Senator Pitt and Hala Kamil aboard.

## Punta Arenas

Punta Arenas is a Chilean city where Dirk meets with members of the Special Forces to launch the rescue efforts for the Lady Flamborough.

## Southern Chile

Southern Chile is where the Lady Flamborough is recaptured by the Special Forces teams.

## Roma

Roma is a Texas town on the Rio Grande, where Yaeger believes the Roman artifacts were buried.



## **Breckenridge**

Breckenridge is a Colorado resort city where Dirk goes to meet a researcher who knows about the lost library. Dirk's family has a lodge there, and Dirk ends up saving Hala from the terrorists there, once again.

## **The Polar Explorer**

The Polar Explorer is the NUMA ship that is being used to search for the Russian submarine. The ship has state of the art equipment and is able to break through ice to reach the site of the airplane crash.

## **The Sounder**

The Sounder is another NUMA ship, this one located near Chile and commandeered by Dirk to search for the Lady Flamborough. The Sounder is also the boat that tugs the yacht from the iceberg just before it collapses into the sea.



# Themes

## The Need for Adventure

The need for adventure is the key theme with regard to the hero, Dirk Pitt, and is second in this novel only the quest for power. When it comes to Dirk, he simply must be involved in the next exciting event. As he is searching for the downed Russian Submarine, Dirk is all business and is completely focused on the task. It's his best friend Giordino who notes that Dirk loses interest in the project the moment he locates the submarine. Though he remains on-task, figuring out ways to put the Russians off their trail and already thinking ahead to the salvage operation, his fire for this particular project has burned out the moment the search was complete. It's that fire for an adventure that takes Dirk into the world of archeology and onto the trail of the long-lost treasure hidden by Venator in the Fourth Century.

From the moment Dirk notes the urns on the ocean floor, he's convinced there's something to be discovered. Once he has a hunch that it's an ancient shipwreck, he's once again completely excited and absorbed. He doesn't even seem terribly upset when he discovers that he won't be part of the recovery team working on the Russian submarine, all because he has a new adventure on the horizon. It's also this quest for adventure that puts him immediately in the thick of any action. When Dirk and his party happen upon the land camp of the terrorists in southern Chile, it never occurs to him that he might back out of the situation and wait for the Special Forces team to handle it. Instead, he plows in and looks for a way to warn the Special Forces unit of the presence of additional terrorists.

There are others who also seek out adventure, with Giordino at the top of that list. He is totally loyal to Dirk, to the point that he throws the only thing handy - a wrench - at armed terrorists. The Special Forces team, members of the NUMA team and others of the military are also looking for adventure throughout the story. Finally, the original adventure-seekers are Venator and his Roman soldiers. Though they had an ulterior motive, they were willing to face the unknown in order to save what they considered to be priceless artifacts.

## Greed

Topiltzan and Yazid are the two characters who are most obviously greedy, though there are others who fall into that category. The US government, terrorists and other also have their minds only on the money. The Capesterre family has always been hungry for power and wealth. The family made a legal fortune with their banana plantation but couldn't stop there and raised another fortune by growing marijuana under the cover of the banana leaves. They have amassed billions of dollars but are still not content and next work at installing their sons as leaders of Third World countries. In addition to Paul and Robert, they have a third son who is being groomed for leadership of another



country. Both Topiltzan and Yazid are greedy for power as well, but it seems that is merely a means to more money.

Ammar is another who is obviously greedy. He has no scruples when it comes to killing and will willingly murder anyone if he's to be paid for it. When Ammar is betrayed by Yazid, he is most angry as it's a loss of money.

The US government is also greedy, though for different purposes. The government is looking at oil consumption and possible alternatives from the current Middle Eastern companies providing the bulk of the country's supply. The US government is frantic to find the treasure but not because of the historic and literary value. They want only to translate the ancient texts regarding mineral deposits in Egypt in the hope that it will lead to oil strikes. Their goal is twofold - to prop up the current Egyptian leader who will cooperate with the US and to find a new source of oil. Their greed is prompted by slightly different goals, but it is greed just the same.

Dirk has no apparent need of the money but seems to be greedy in a completely different way. In his case, he wants desperately to be involved with everything and is greedy for that opportunity.

## Self-Sacrifice

The self-sacrifice of several people play deeply in the role of this storyline from the very beginning. In the Fourth Century, the Roman soldiers stand against an army of barbarians in an effort to protect their employer, Venator. As the Romans are being cut down, they gallantly fight on and never once break away to leave Venator. Venator does escape and lives for seven years among a village, all because the soldiers were willing to sacrifice themselves to save him.

That same type of self-sacrifice is seen among the agents who are guarding Hala in Breckenridge. When Ismail and his followers attack the house, several of the agents are killed immediately. Those who remain are seeking only a way to save Hala. They run from the house first, then realizing that they are still cut off from escape, the final remaining agent runs at the terrorists. Hala does make it to the road and is picked up by Dirk. Hala realizes the sacrifice of the men who saved her and makes a point to be certain their families are to be cared for.

Dirk is not exactly the epitome of self-sacrifice, though he does tend to think of the mission and of his friends before himself. When Dirk and his three followers are at the mining camp in Chile, he puts himself at the front entrance so that he's the first line of defense - and is also the first to be attacked. It's a move that almost costs him his life, but he survives. That tendency to put himself on the front lines of fighting is not all selfless, but is also to salve Dirk's need for action and adventure.

# Style

## Point of View

The book is written in third person from an omniscient point of view. The main character is Dirk Pitt, and the reader knows his thoughts and actions throughout the book. However, it's necessary for the reader to know the thoughts and actions of other characters as well, including those who aren't with Dirk at any given time. That makes the omniscient point of view vital to adequate understanding of the story line. The point of view seems reliable and straight forward in that the author doesn't deliberately mislead the reader.

For example, Topiltzan is in his elaborate trailer following one of his early speeches, making it clear to the reader that he isn't who he claims to be. He's talking to a man who isn't immediately identified, but it seems likely that it is Yazid. That type of "clue" is handed out to the reader throughout the book because of the omniscient point of view selected by this author. Because the book is written by timeline rather than event, it's vital for the reader to have access to the happenings in the lives of various characters at a given time, making the omniscient point of view even more effective.

## Setting

The book is divided into two time periods - the Fourth Century A.D. and 1991 - though the early action serves only to prompt the 1991 events. In the Fourth Century, a wealthy merchant has hired soldiers and ships to transport a treasure trove of arts and literature to land that would eventually become Texas. They encountered barbarians on the land, and all ships were lost, save one. The Serapis escaped, making it's way along the coast to Greenland where it was frozen, and where it remained until 1991 when Dirk Pitt and his team discovered the wreckage.

From Greenland, Dirk's crew moves to Washington, D.C., where they are caught up in the political arena due largely to the fact that Dirk's father is an important US Senator. They then travel to the ski slopes of Breckenridge, Colorado, and later to southern Chile where Dirk leads a rescue of his father and other dignitaries. Dirk then heads to Roma, Texas, where he leads the team to the discovery of the treasure buried centuries earlier. Meanwhile, events occur in Mexico and Egypt that play into the sub-plot of the story. The places exist, including Roma, Texas, making the story more believable. The treasure of art and literature also existed in the Fourth Century and was ordered destroyed. Though there are stories that suggest it was hidden away, there is no proof of that point.



## Language and Meaning

The book is written in English in an easy style that makes for fairly light reading. There are passages of description of places and events, but they are not extensive and do not tend to slow the storyline. The language is open and fast-paced, reminiscent in places of the older spy novels. Dirk Pitt and his sidekick, Al Giordino, are quick with the wisecracks and one-liners. For example, when terrorists are chasing the two men who happen to be driving a fully restored 1930 Cord, Giordino suggests that he hang out the window and make faces at their pursuers. Dirk replies that action would only make them madder. When they crash into a restaurant that has been cleared with the exception of the pianist, Dirk makes a request.

Those quips happen fairly regularly within the story, though not so often that the reader gets bogged down in a flippant style. The action is well-described, taking the reader for wild crashes, rides and spins, and the hero - Dirk - always gets the girl. He makes love with two during the course of the story, but neither are expecting anything other than a brief affair. Dirk's flirtatious nature, Giordino's absolute loyalty and the fanaticism of the Capesterre brothers is evident and easily accepted through the straight-forward writing style.

## Structure

The book is divided into seventy-eight chapters of various lengths. Those chapters are further divided into sections with each focused on a particular event or happening at a particular time. The story roughly flows chronologically which is effective but can be somewhat annoying. For example, the reader may be caught up in the impending crash of the charter plane on the Greenland fjord when the author switches to explain what Dirk Pitt's crew is doing at the moment the plane flies over them. The reader is then left hanging as to the fate of the plane until the story switches back to that event. Despite that mild annoyance, the book flows well and the changes are to be expected with this particular writing style. The reader is assured that the events will be completed and knowing the actions of others at a given moment is typically necessary to the full understanding of the story line.

The story is divided into five sections with the first a very brief prologue entitled "The Precursors." That section describes the hiding of the treasure and the subsequent battle but withholds important details - the location and the fate of the single ship that escapes the barbarians. "Part I, Nebula Flight 106" is generally the crash of the charter plane and the rescue of the three survivors. Dirk, Lily, Hala, Ammar and their teams are introduced along with their roles. "Part II, the Serapis" details how the shipwreck was located and the beginning of the search for the treasure. "Part III, The Lady Flamborough" is the story of the search for the kidnapped yacht and the rescue of those onboard. "Part IV, Sam's Roman Circus," outlines Dirk's meeting with Sam who has the Roman artifacts, the Mexican rebellion and the location of the treasure trove.



## Quotes

"The soldiers still on the bluff countered everything that was thrown at them. The barbarians dodge and chanted defiance while probing for a weak spot in the Roman defenses. Four times they grouped in mass formation and charged and four times they were hurled back, but not before whittling down a few more of the exhausted legionaries. The square became a small knot as the few survivors closed ranks and fought shoulder to shoulder. Bloody heaps of dead and dying carpeted the summit, their blood flowing down the slopes. And still the Romans resisted."

Prologue, Page 25

"He will soon learn the great majority of Mexican people are finished with being doormats for the ruling class and wealthy. They are sick of political fraud and corruption. They are tired of digging garbage in the slums. They will suffer no more."

- Topiltzin, Chapter 12, Page 105

"He was reminded of a deflated balloon. That was the only way he could describe it. An incision had been made from the back of the head down to the ankles, and the skin peeled away from the body like a pelt from an animal. There was a long vertical slit in the chest that had been crudely sewn. The eyes were missing, but the entire dermis was there, including both shriveled hands and feet."

- Description of Rivas remains, Chapter 15, Page 126

"'Inform Commander Knight his worst fear is confirmed,' Pitt answered. 'The antique status of the ship is genuine. And by the way,' he added in a monotonous, laconic voice, 'you might also mention that if he needs witnesses, I can produce the crew.'"

- Dirk upon finding the Serapis, Chapter 17, Page 146

"Ismail was the worst kind of killer. He was utterly incapable of remorse. He would have celebrated after bowing up a maternity ward. First-class hit men recorded their kills and studied ways to improve their craft. He never bothered to reexamine or count the bodies. His planning was sloppy and on two occasions he had wiped out the wrong quarry, which made a fanatic like Ismail all the more dangerous."

Chapter 28, Page 219

"Ammar motioned toward a large brass chronometer above Captain Collins's desk. 'We shove off in thirty-seven minutes. Collect all passengers and crew members, except the ship's engineers. See that the engine-room crew is prepared to get underway when I give the command. Assemble the rest in the main dining salon. It's time to reveal ourselves and deliver our commands.'"

- Ammar, Chapter 35, Page 263



"From what I recall, the Capesterres are a tradition-bound criminal family that began almost eighty years ago when the grandfather emigrated from France to the Caribbean and launched a smuggling business, moving stolen goods and bootleg booze to the U.S. during Prohibition. At first he operated out of Pot of Spain, Trinidad, but as he prospered he bought a nearby island and set up business there. Roland took over when the old man died, along with his wife, Josephine - some claim she's the brain behind the throne - lost no time in expanding into drug traffic. First they built their island into a legitimate banana plantation, making a nice, honest profit. Next they turned inventive and make a real killing by harvesting two crops. The second, marijuana, was cultivated under the banana trees to avoid detection." - Brogan, explaining the Capesterre family dynasty.

Chapter 45, Page 321

"The two Presidents solemnly shook hands on it - no longer pampered heads of state but two men whose lives shared a fate they could not control and were determined to end with dignity."

Chapter 49, Page 346

"Pitt stared at the small narrow-gauge locomotive, which was coupled to a coal tender and five ore cars. It was a type used around plantations, industrial plants and mining operations. Quaint, stout and sturdy, with a tall stovepipe smokestack and round porthole windows in the cab, it looked like the Little Engine That Could, standing there puffing wisps of steam around its running gear."

Chapter 56, Page 395

"Gun found himself half under the floor in the passage before he could protest. He took one last look at Pitt, the incredibly durable, indestructible Dirk Pitt, who gave him a jaunty wave. Peered at Giordino, old steady and reliable, whose concern was masked by a lighthearted expression. And finally, Findley, who flashed a sparkling smile and held up both thumbs. They were all part of him and he was heartsick at leaving, not knowing if he would see any of them alive again."

Chapter 58, Page 415

"I'd be more interested in hearing what he learned from President De Lorenzo on the crisis south of our border. Egypt is of secondary important compared to Mexico. We can safely assume Akhmad Yazid has been benched for the rest of the season, but Topiltzin is a far worse threat. Concentrate on him, gentlemen. God help us if we can't stabilize the upheaval in Mexico."

- US President, Chapter 62, Page 441

"Why is it, he wondered, men plan more covert schemes than an intelligence agency to



seduce women, only to have them turn on under crazy circumstances when you least expect it? He was more convinced than ever that James Bond really didn't have it all that great." - Dirk as Hala joins him in bed.

Chapter 63, Page 446

"This stone marks the way to where I ordered buried the works from the great Hall of the Muses. I escaped the slaughter of our fleet by the barbarians and made my way south, where I was accepted by a primitive pyramid people as a sage and a prophet. I have taught them what I know of the stars and science, but they put little of my teachings to practical use. They prefer to worship pagan gods and follow ignorant priests' demands for human sacrifice. Seven years have passed since my arrival. My return here is filled with sorrow at the sight of the bones of my former comrades. I have seen to their burial. My ship is ready and I shall soon set sail for Rome. If Theodosius still lives I shall be executed but accept the risk gladly to see my family one last time. To those who read this, should I perish, the entrance of the storage chamber is buried under the hill. Stand north and look straight south to the river cliff."

- Junius Venator, 10 August 398, from a stone at Sam's, Chapter 66, Page 462

"With the right semantics I think I can twist Muslim law and the words of the Koran into a rallying cry that will crack Hasan's government." - Paul Capesterre,

Chapter 69, Page 479

## Topics for Discussion

Describe what Venator is doing in the land that will eventually become Texas. How did he come to be there? What is his fate?

What is Dirk doing off the coast of Greenland when the private charter jet goes down? What is Lily Sharp doing in the region? What role do these two play in the rescue of the crash survivors?

Describe the two young men who are taking over Mexico and Egypt. How did they come to be in their positions? Are they successful? Are they sincere?

What is the treasure Dirk begins seeking? What is its value? Who wants it?

How does the Fourth Century ship come to be off the coast of Greenland? How do Dirk and Lily learn the facts of the ship's voyage? What do they find on board the vessel?

Where is the treasure? How does Dirk go about locating the position? Who helps him along the way?

What is the Lady Flamborough? How does she "disappear?" Who figures out her location?

Why are the presidents of Egypt and Mexico kidnapped? Is the plan successful? Who collaborated the attack?

Who is Ammar? What role does he play in the attack on Hala Kamil's airplane? When does Ammar next encounter Hala? How does it turn out?