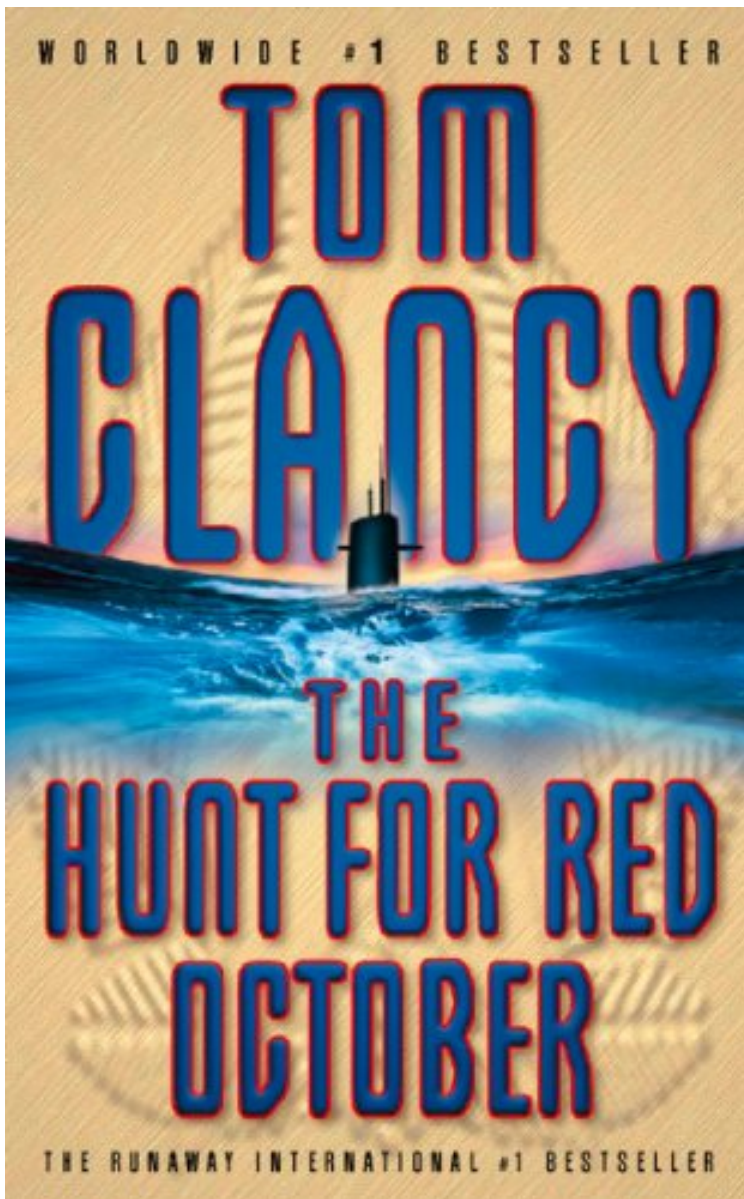


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# The Hunt for Red October



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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe runaway international No 1 bestseller that launched Tom Clancys spectacular career and introduced his acclaimed hero, Jack Ryan, in the ultimate submarine adventure.Silently, beneath the chill Atlantic waters, Russias ultra-secret missile submarine, the Red October, is heading west. The Americans want her. The Russians want her back. With all-out war only seconds away, the superpowers race across the ocean on the most desperate mission of a lifetime. The most incredible chase in history is on The Hunt for Red October the classic story of a spellbinding battle of nerves, above and below the waves, unrivalled in its authenticity and breath-stopping suspense..comSomewhere under the Atlantic, a Soviet sub

commander has just made a fateful decision: the Red October is heading west. The Americans want her. The Russians want her back. And the most incredible chase in history is on.... The Hunt for Red October is the runaway bestseller that launched Tom Clancy's phenomenal career. A military thriller so accurate and convincing that the author was rumored to have been debriefed by the White House. Its theme: the greatest espionage coup in history. Its story: the chase for a runaway top secret Russian missile sub.

ExtraitBreathlessly exciting.THE WASHINGTON POSTHere is the runaway bestseller that launched Tom Clancys phenomenal career. A military thriller so gripping in its action and so convincing in its accuracy that the author was rumored to have been debriefed by the White House.THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBERSomewhere under the Atlantic, a Soviet sub commander has just made a fateful decision. The Red October is heading west. The Americans want her.The Russians want her back. And the most incredible chase in history is onGripping narrativeNavy buffs and thriller adepts have been mesmerized.TimeRemarkableintricate and nerve tingling.Clive CusslerNOVELS BY TOM CLANCYThe Hunt for Red OctoberRed Storm RisingPatriot GamesThe Cardinal of the KremlinClear and Present DangerThe Sum of All FearsWithout RemorseDebt of HonorExecutive OrdersRainbow SixThe Bear and the DragonRed RabbitThe Teeth of the TigerSSN: Strategies of Submarine WarfareNONFICTIONSUBMARINE: A Guided Tour Inside a Nuclear WarshipArmored Cav: A Guided Tour of an Armored Cavalry RegimentFighter Wing: A Guided Tour of an Air Force Combat WingMarine: A Guided Tour of a Marine Expeditionary UnitAirborne: A Guided Tour of an Airborne Task ForceCarrier: A Guided Tour of an Aircraft CarrierSpecial Forces: A Guided Tour of U.S. Army Special ForcesInto the Storm: A Study in Command(written with General Fred Franks, Jr., Ret., and Tony Koltz)Every Man a Tiger(written with General Charles Horner, Ret., and Tony Koltz)Shadow Warriors: Inside the Special Forces(written with General Carl Stiner, Ret., and Tony Koltz)Battle Ready(written with General Tony Zinni, Ret., and Tony Koltz)CREATED BY TOM CLANCYTom Clancys EndWarTom Clancys Splinter CellSplinter Celloperation BarracudaCheckmateFalloutCREATED BY TOM CLANCY AND STEVE PIECZENIKTom Clancys Op-CenterOp-CenterMirror ImageGames of StateActs of WarBalance of PowerState of SiegeDivide and ConquerLine of ControlMission of HonorSea of FireCall to TreasonWar of EaglesTom Clancys Net ForceNet ForceHidden AgendasNight MovesBreaking PointPoint of ImpactCyberNationState of WarChanging of the GuardSpringboardThe Archimedes EffectCREATED BY TOM CLANCY AND MARTIN GREENBERGTom Clancys Power PlaysPolitikaruthless.comShadow WatchBio-StrikeCold WarCutting EdgeZero HourWild CardTom ClancyTHE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBERBERKLEY BOOKS,NEW YORKACKNOWLEDGMENTSTHE FIRST DAYTHE SECOND DAYTHE THIRD DAYTHE FOURTH DAYTHE FIFTH DAYTHE SIXTH DAYTHE SEVENTH DAYTHE EIGHTH DAYTHE NINTH DAYTHE TENTH DAYTHE ELEVENTH DAYTHE TWELFTH DAYTHE THIRTEENTH DAYTHE FOURTEENTH DAYTHE FIFTEENTH DAYTHE SIXTEENTH DAYTHE SEVENTEENTH DAYTHE EIGHTEENTH DAYAcknowledgmentsFor technical information and advice I am especially indebted to Michael Shelton, former naval aviator; Larry Bond, whose naval wargame, Harpoon, was adopted for the training of NROTC cadets; Drs. Gerry Sterner and Craig Jeschke; and Lieutenant Commander Gregory Young, USN.THE FIRST DAYFRIDAY, 3 DECEMBERThe Red OctoberCaptain First Rank Marko Ramius of the Soviet Navy was dressed for the Arctic conditions normal to the Northern Fleet submarine base at Polyarnyy. Five layers of wool and oilskin enclosed him. A dirty harbor tug pushed his submarines bow around to the north, facing down the channel. The dock that had held his Red October for two interminable months was now a water-filled concrete box, one of the many specially built to shelter strategic missile submarines from the harsh elements. On its edge a collection of sailors and dockyard workers watched his ship sail in stolid Russian fashion, without a wave or a cheer.Engines ahead slow, Kamarov, he ordered. The tug slid out of the way, and Ramius glanced aft to see the water stirring from the force of the twin bronze propellers. The tugs commander waved. Ramius returned the gesture. The tug had done a simple job, but done it quickly and well. The Red October, a Typhoon-class sub, moved under her own power towards the main ship channel of the Kola Fjord.Theres Purga, Captain. Gregoryi Kamarov pointed to the icebreaker that would escort them to sea. Ramius nodded. The two hours required to transit the channel would tax not his seamanship but his endurance. There was a cold north wind blowing, the only sort of north wind in this part of the world. Late autumn had been surprisingly mild, and scarcely any snow had fallen in an area that measures it in meters; then a week before a major winter storm had savaged the Murmansk coast, breaking pieces off the Arctic icepack. The icebreaker was no formality. The Purga would butt aside any ice that might have drifted overnight into the channel. It would not do at all

for the Soviet Navys newest missile submarine to be damaged by an errant chunk of frozen water. The water in the fjord was choppy, driven by the brisk wind. It began to lap over the Octobers spherical bow, rolling back down the flat missile deck which lay before the towering black sail. The water was coated with the bilge oil of numberless ships, filth that would not evaporate in the low temperatures and that left a black ring on the rocky walls of the fjord as though from the bath of a slovenly giant. An altogether apt simile, Ramius thought. The Soviet giant cared little for the dirt it left on the face of the earth, he grumbled to himself. He had learned his seamanship as a boy on inshore fishing boats, and knew what it was to be in harmony with nature. Increase speed to one-third, he said. Kamarov repeated his captains order over the bridge telephone. The water stirred more as the October moved astern of the Purga. Captain Lieutenant Kamarov was the ships navigator, his last duty station having been harbor pilot for the large combatant vessels based on both sides of the wide inlet. The two officers kept a weather eye on the armed icebreaker three hundred meters ahead. The Purgas after deck had a handful of crewmen stomping about in the cold, one wearing the white apron of a ships cook. They wanted to witness the Red Octobers first operational cruise, and besides, sailors will do almost anything to break the monotony of their duties. Ordinarily it would have irritated Ramius to have his ship escorted out the channel here was wide and deep but not today. The ice was something to worry about.

And so, for Ramius, was a great deal else. So, my Captain, again we go to sea to serve and protect the Rodina! Captain Second Rank Ivan Yurievich Putin poked his head through the hatch without permission, as usual and clambered up the ladder with the awkwardness of a landsman. The tiny control station was already crowded enough with the captain, the navigator, and a mute lookout. Putin was the ships zampolit (political officer). Everything he did was to serve the Rodina (Motherland), a word that had mystical connotations to a

Russian and, along with V. I. Lenin, was the Communist partys substitute for a godhead. Indeed, Ivan, Ramius replied with more good cheer than he felt. Two weeks at sea. It is good to leave the dock. A seaman belongs at sea, not tied alongside, overrun with bureaucrats and workmen with dirty boots. And we will be warm. You find this cold? Putin asked incredulously. For the hundredth time Ramius told himself that Putin was the perfect political officer. His voice was always too loud, his humor too affected. He never allowed a person to forget what he was. The perfect political officer, Putin was an easy man to fear. I have been in submarines too long, my friend. I grow accustomed to moderate temperatures and a stable deck under my feet. Putin did not notice the veiled insult. He had been assigned to submarines after his first tour on destroyers

had been cut short by chronic seasickness and perhaps because he did not resent the close confinement aboard submarines, something that many men cannot tolerate. Ah, Marko Aleksandrovich, in Gorkiy on a day like this, flowers bloom! And what sort of flowers might those be, Comrade Political Officer? Ramius surveyed the fjord through his binoculars. At noon the sun was barely over the southeast horizon, casting orange light and purple shadows along the rocky walls. Why, snow flowers, of course, Putin said, laughing loudly. On a day like this the faces of the children and the women glow pink, your breath trails behind you like a cloud, and the vodka tastes especially fine. Ah, to be in Gorkiy on a day like this! The bastard ought to work for Intourist, Ramius told himself, except that Gorkiy is a city closed to foreigners. He had been there twice. It had struck him as a typical Soviet city, full of ramshackle buildings, dirty streets, and ill-clad citizens. As it was in most Russian cities, winter was Gorkiys best season. The snow hid all the dirt. Ramius, half Lithuanian, had childhood memories of a better place, a coastal village whose Hanseatic origin had left rows of presentable buildings. It was unusual for anyone other than a Great Russian to be aboard much less command a Soviet naval vessel. Markos father, Aleksandr Ramius, had been a hero of the Party, a dedicated, believing Communist who had served Stalin faithfully and well. When the Soviets first occupied Lithuania in 1940, the elder Ramius was instrumental in rounding up political dissidents, shop owners, priests, and anyone else who might have been troublesome to the new regime. All were shipped off to fates that now even Moscow could only guess at. When the Germans invaded a year later, Aleksandr fought heroically as a political commissar, and was later to distinguish himself in the Battle of Leningrad. In 1944 he returned to his native land with the spearhead of the Eleventh Guards Army to wreak bloody vengeance on those who had collaborated with the Germans or been suspected of such. Markos father had been a true Soviet hero and Marko was deeply ashamed to be his son. His mothers health had been broken during the endless siege of Leningrad. She died giving birth to him, and he was raised by his paternal grandmother in Lithuania while his father strutted through the Party Central Committee in Vilnius, awaiting his promotion to Moscow. He got that, too, and was a candidate member of the Politburo when his life was cut short by a heart attack. Markos shame was not total. His fathers prominence had made his current goal a possibility, and Marko planned to wreak his own vengeance on the Soviet Union, enough, perhaps, to satisfy the thousands

of his countrymen who had died before he was even born. Where we are going, Ivan Yurievich, it will be colder still. Putin clapped his captain's shoulder. Was his affection feigned or real? Marko wondered. Probably real. Ramius was an honest man, and he recognized that this short, loud oaf did have some human feelings. Why is it, Comrade Captain, that you always seem glad to leave the Rodina and go to sea? Ramius smiled behind his binoculars. A seaman has one country, Ivan Yurievich, but two wives. You never understand that. Now I go to my other wife, the cold, heartless one that owns my soul. Ramius paused. The smile vanished. My only wife, now. Putin was quiet for once, Marko noted. The political officer had been there, had cried real tears as the coffin of polished pine rolled into the cremation chamber. For Putin the death of Natalia Bogdanova Ramius had been a cause of grief, but beyond that the act of an uncaring God whose existence he regularly denied. For Ramius it had been a crime committed not by God but the State. An unnecessary, monstrous crime, one that demanded punishment. Ice. The lookout pointed. Loose-pack ice, starboard side of the channel, or perhaps something calved off the east-side glacier. Well pass well clear, Kamarov said. Captain! The bridge speaker had a metallic voice. Message from fleet headquarters. Read it. Exercise area clear. No enemy vessels in vicinity. Proceed as per orders. Signed, Korov, Fleet Commander. Acknowledged, Ramius said. The speaker clicked off. So, no Amerikantsi about? You doubt the fleet commander? Putin inquired. I hope he is correct, Ramius replied, more sincerely than his political officer would appreciate. But you remember our briefings. Putin shifted on his feet. Perhaps he was feeling the cold. Those American 688-class submarines, Ivan, the Los Angeleses. Remember what one of their officers told our spy? That they could sneak up on a whale and bugger it before it knew they were there? I wonder how the KGB got that bit of information. A beautiful Soviet agent, trained in the ways of the decadent West, too skinny, the way the imperialists like their women, blond hair. The captain grunted amusement. Probably the American officer was a boastful boy, trying to find a way to do something similar to our agent, no? And feeling his liquor, like most sailors. Still. The American Los Angeles class, and the new British Trafalgars, those we must guard against. They are a threat to us. The Americans are good technicians, Comrade Captain, Putin said, but they are not giants. Their technology is not so awesome. Nasha lutchka, he concluded. Ours is better. Ramius nodded thoughtfully, thinking to himself that zampoliti really ought to know something about the ships they supervised, as mandated by Party doctrine. Ivan, didn't the farmers around Gorkiy tell you it is the wolf you do not see that you must fear? But don't be overly concerned. With this ship we will teach them a lesson, I think. As I told the Main Political Administration, Putin clapped Ramius' shoulder again, Red October is in the best of hands! Ramius and Kamarov both smiled at that. You son of a bitch! the captain thought, saying in front of my men that you must pass on my fitness to command! A man who could not command a rubber raft on a calm day! A pity you will not live to eat those words, Comrade Political Officer, and spend the rest of your life in the gulag for that misjudgment. It would almost be worth leaving you alive. A few minutes later the chop began to pick up, making the submarine roll. The movement was accentuated by their height above the deck, and Putin made excuses to go below. Still a weak-legged sailor. Ramius shared the observation silently with Kamarov, who smiled agreement. Their unspoken contempt for the zampolit was a most un-Soviet thought. The next hour passed quickly. The water grew rougher as they approached the open sea, and their icebreaker escort began to wallow on the swells. Ramius watched her with interest. He had never been on an icebreaker, his entire career having been in submarines. They were more comfortable, but also more dangerous. He was accustomed to the danger, though, and the years of experience would stand him in good stead now. Sea buoy in sight, Captain. Kamarov pointed. The red lighted buoy was riding actively on the waves. Control room, what is the sounding? Ramius asked over the bridge telephone. One hundred meters below the keel, Comrade Captain. Increase speed to two-thirds, come left ten degrees. Ramius looked at Kamarov. Signal our course change to Purga, and hope he doesn't turn the wrong way. Kamarov reached for the small blinker light stowed under the bridge coaming. The Red October began to accelerate slowly, her 30,000-ton bulk resisting the power of her engines. Presently the bow wave grew to a three-meter standing arc of water; man-made combers rolled down the missile deck, splitting against the front of the sail. The Purga altered course to starboard, allowing the submarine to pass well clear. Ramius looked aft at the bluffs of the Kola Fjord. They had been carved to this shape millennia before by the remorseless pressure of towering glaciers. How many times in his twenty years of service with the Red Banner Northern Fleet had he looked at the wide, flat U-shape? This would be the last. One way or another, he'd never go back. Which way would it turn out? Ramius admitted to himself that he didn't much care. Perhaps the stories his grandmother had taught him were true, about God and the reward for a good life. He hoped so it would be good if Natalia were not truly

dead. In any case, there was no turning back. He had left a letter in the last mailbag taken off before sailing. There was no going back after that. Kamarov, signal to Purga: Diving at, he checked his watch, 1320 hours. Exercise OCTOBER FROST begins as scheduled. You are released to other assigned duties. We will return as scheduled. Kamarov worked the trigger on the blinker light to transmit the message. The Purga responded at once, and Ramius read the flashing signal unaided: IF THE WHALES DONT EAT YOU. GOOD LUCK TO RED OCTOBER! Ramius lifted the phone again, pushing the button for the subs radio room. He had the same message transmitted to fleet headquarters, Severomorsk. Next he addressed the control room. Depth under the keel? One hundred forty meters, Comrade Captain. Prepare to dive. He turned to the lookout and ordered him below. The boy moved towards the hatch. He was probably glad to return to the warmth below, but took the time for one last look at the cloudy sky and receding cliffs. Going to sea on a submarine was always exciting, and always a little sad. Clear the bridge. Take the conn when you get below, Gregoriy. Kamarov nodded and dropped down the hatch, leaving the captain alone. Ramius made one last careful scan of the horizon. The sun was barely visible aft, the sky leaden, the sea black except for the splash of whitecaps. He wondered if he were saying goodbye to the world. If so, he would have preferred a more cheerful view of it. Before sliding down he inspected the hatch seat, pulling it shut with a chain and making sure the automatic mechanism functioned properly. Next he dropped eight meters down the inside of the sail to the pressure hull, then two more into the control room. A michman (warrant officer) shut the second hatch and with a powerful spin turned the locking wheel as far as it would go. Gregoriy? Ramius asked. Straight board shut, the navigator said crisply, pointing to the diving board. All hull-opening indicator lights showed green, safe. All systems aligned and checked for dive. The compensation is entered. We are rigged for dive. The captain made his own visual inspection of mechanical, electrical, and hydraulic indicators. He nodded, and the michman of the watch unlocked the vent controls. Dive, Ramius ordered, moving to the periscope to relieve Vasily Borodin, his starpom (executive officer). Kamarov pulled the diving alarm, and the hull reverberated with the racket of a loud buzzer. Flood the main ballast tanks. Rig out the diving planes. Ten degrees down-angle on the planes, Kamarov ordered, his eyes alert to see that every crewman did his job exactly. Ramius listened carefully but did not look. Kamarov was the best young seaman he had ever commanded, and had long since earned his captains trust. The Red Octobers hull was filled with the noise of rushing air as vents at the top of the ballast tanks were opened and water entering from the tank floods at the bottom chased the buoying air out. It was a lengthy process, for the submarine had many such tanks, each carefully subdivided by numerous cellular baffles. Ramius adjusted the periscope lens to look down and saw the black water change briefly to foam. The Red October was the largest and finest command Ramius had ever had, but the sub had one major flaw. She had plenty of engine power and a new drive system that he hoped would befuddle American and Soviet submarines alike, but she was so big that she changed depth like a crippled whale. Slow going up, even slower going down. Scope under. Ramius stepped away from the instrument after what seemed a long wait. Down periscope. Passing forty meters, Kamarov said. Level off at one hundred meters. Ramius watched his crewmen now. The first dive could make experienced men shudder, and half his crew were farmboys straight from training camp. The hull popped and creaked under the pressure of the surrounding water, something that took getting used to. A few of the younger men went pale but stood rigidly upright. Kamarov began the procedure for leveling off at the proper depth. Ramius watched with a pride he might have felt for his own son as the lieutenant gave the necessary orders with precision. He was the first officer Ramius had recruited. The control room crew snapped to his command. Five minutes later the submarine slowed her descent at ninety meters and settled the next ten to a perfect stop at one hundred. Well done, Comrade Lieutenant. You have the conn. Slow to one-third speed. Have the sonarmen listen on all passive systems. Ramius turned to leave the control room, motioning Putin to follow him. And so it began. Ramius and Putin went aft to the submarines wardroom. The captain held the door open for the political officer, then closed and locked it behind himself. The Red Octobers wardroom was a spacious affair for a submarine, located immediately forward of the galley, aft of the officer accommodations. Its walls were soundproofed, and the door had a lock because her designers had known that not everything the officers had to say was necessarily for the ears of the enlisted men. It was large enough for all of the Octobers officers to eat as a group though at least three of them would always be on duty. The safe containing the ships orders was here, not in the captains stateroom where a man might use his solitude to try opening it by himself. It had two dials. Ramius had one combination, Putin the other. Which was hardly necessary, since Putin undoubtedly knew their mission orders already. So did Ramius, but not all the particulars. Putin poured tea as the captain checked his watch against the chronometer mounted on the

bulkhead. Fifteen minutes until he could open the safe. Putins courtesy made him uneasy. Two more weeks of confinement, the zampolit said, stirring his tea. The Americans do this for two months, Ivan. Of course, their submarines are far more comfortable. Despite her huge bulk, the Octobers crew accommodations would have shamed a gulag jailer. The crew consisted of fifteen officers, housed in fairly decent cabins aft, and a hundred enlisted men whose bunks were stuffed into corners and racks throughout the bow, forward of the missile room. The Octobers size was deceptive. The interior of her double hull was crammed with missiles, torpedoes, a nuclear reactor and its support equipment, a huge backup diesel power plant, and bank of nickle-cadmium batteries outside the pressure hull, which was ten times the size of its American counterparts. Running and maintaining the ship was a huge job for so small a crew, even though extensive use of automation made her the most modern of Soviet naval vessels. Perhaps the men didnt need proper bunks. They would only have four or six hours a day to make use of them. This would work to Ramius advantage. Half of his crew were draftees on their first operational cruise, and even the more experienced men knew little enough. The strength of his enlisted crew, unlike that of Western crews, resided much more in his eleven michmany (warrant officers) than in his glavnyy starshini (senior petty officers). All of them were men who would dowere specifically trained to do exactly what their officers told them. And Ramius had picked the officers. You want to cruise for two months? Putin asked. I have done it on diesel submarines. A submarine belongs at sea, Ivan. Our mission is to strike fear into the hearts of the imperialists. We do not accomplish this tied up in our barn at Polyarnyy most of the time, but we cannot stay at sea any longer because any period over two weeks and the crew loses efficiency. In two weeks this collection of children will be a mob of numbed robots. Ramius was counting on that. And we could solve this by having capitalist luxuries? Putin sneered. A true Marxist is objective, Comrade Political Officer, Ramius chided, savoring this last argument with Putin. Objectively, that which aids us in carrying out our mission is good, that which hinders us is bad. Adversity is supposed to hone ones spirit and skill, not dull them. Just being aboard a submarine is hardship enough, is it not? Not for you, Marko. Putin grinned over his tea. I am a seaman. Our crewmen are not, most never will be. They are a mob of farmers sons and boys who yearn to be factory workers. We must adjust to the times, Ivan. These youngsters are not the same as we were. That is true enough, Putin agreed. You are never satisfied, Comrade Captain. I suppose it is men like you who force progress upon us all. Both men knew exactly why Soviet missile submarines spent so little of their time barely fifteen percent of it at sea, and it had nothing to do with creature comforts. The Red October carried twenty-six SS-N-20 Seahawk missiles, each with eight 500-kiloton multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles MIRVs enough to destroy two hundred cities. Land-based bombers could only fly a few hours at a time, then had to return to their bases. Land-based missiles arrayed along the main East-West Soviet rail network were always where paramilitary troops of the KGB could get at them lest some missile regiment commander suddenly came to realize the power at his fingertips. But missile submarines were by definition beyond any control from land. Their entire mission was to disappear. Given that fact, Marko was surprised that his government had them at all. The crew of such vessels had to be trusted. And so they sailed less often than their Western counterparts, and when they did it was with a political officer aboard to stand next to the commanding officer, a second captain always ready to pass approval on every action. Do you think you could do it, Marko, cruise for two months with these farmboys? I prefer half-trained boys, as you know. They have less to unlearn. Then I can train them to be seamen the right way, my way. My personality cult? Putin laughed as he lit a cigarette. That observation has been made in the past, Marko. But you are our best teacher and your reliability is well known. This was very true. Ramius had sent hundreds of officers and seamen on to other submarines whose commanders were glad to have them. It was another paradox that a man could engender trust within a society that scarcely recognized the concept. Of course, Ramius was a loyal Party member, the son of a Party hero who had been carried to his grave by three Politburo members. Putin waggled his finger. You should be commanding one of our higher naval schools, Comrade Captain. Your talents would better serve the state there. It is a seaman I am, Ivan Yurievich. Only a seaman, not a schoolmaster despite what they say about me. A wise man knows his limitations. And a bold one seizes opportunities. Every officer aboard had served with Ramius before, except for three junior lieutenants, who would obey their orders as readily as any wet-nosed matros (seaman), and the doctor, who was useless. The chronometer chimed four bells. Ramius stood and dialed in his three-element combination. Putin did the same, and the captain flipped the lever to open the safes circular door. Inside was a manila envelope plus four books of cipher keys and missile-targeting coordinates. Ramius removed the envelope, then closed the door, spinning both dials before sitting down again. So, Ivan, what do you suppose our orders tell us to do?

Ramius asked theatrically. Our duty, Comrade Captain. Putin smiled. Indeed. Ramius broke the wax seal on the envelope and extracted the four-page operation order. He read it quickly. It was not complicated. So, we are to proceed to grid square 54-90 and rendezvous with our attack submarine V. K. Konovalov that's Captain Tupolev's new command. You know Viktor Tupolev? No? Viktor will guard us from imperialist intruders, and we will conduct a four-day acquisition and tracking drill, with him hunting us if he can. Ramius chuckled. The boys in the attack submarine directorate still have not figured how to track our new drive system. Well, neither will the Americans. We are to confine our operations to grid square 54-90 and the immediately surrounding squares. That ought to make Viktor's task a bit easier. But you will not let him find us? Certainly not, Ramius snorted. Let? Viktor was once my pupil. You give nothing to an enemy, Ivan, even in a drill. The imperialists certainly won't! In trying to find us, he also practices finding their missile submarines. He will have a fair chance of locating us, I think. The exercise is confined to nine squares, forty thousand square kilometers. We shall see what he has learned since he served with us, that's right, you weren't with me then. That's when I had the Suslov. Do I see disappointment? No, not really. The four-day drill with Konovalov will be interesting diversion. Bastard, he said to himself, you knew beforehand exactly what our orders were and you do know Viktor Tupolev, liar. It was time. Putin finished his cigarette and his tea before standing. So, again I am permitted to watch the master captain at work befuddling a poor boy. He turned towards the door. I think Ramius kicked Putin's feet out from under him just as he was stepping away from the table. Putin fell backwards while Ramius sprang to his feet and grasped the political officer's head in his strong fisherman's hands. The captain drove his neck downward to the sharp, metal-edged corner of the wardroom table. It struck the point. In the same instant Ramius pushed down on the man's chest. An unnecessary gesture with the sickening crackle of bones Ivan Putin's neck broke, his spine severed at the level of the second cervical vertebra, a perfect hangman's fracture. The political officer had no time to react. The nerves to his body below the neck were instantly cut off from the organs and muscles they controlled. Putin tried to shout, to say something, but his mouth flapped open and shut without a sound except for the exhalation of his last lungful of air. He tried to gulp air down like a landed fish, and this did not work. Then his eyes went up to Ramius, wide in shock there was no pain, and no emotion but surprise. The captain laid him gently on the tile deck. Ramius saw the face flash with recognition, then darken. He reached down to take Putin's pulse. It was nearly two minutes before the heart stopped completely. When Ramius was sure that his political officer was dead, he took the teapot from the table and poured two cups worth on the deck, careful to drip some on the man's shoes. Next he lifted the body to the wardroom table and threw open the door. Dr. Petrov to the wardroom at once! The ship's medical office was only a few steps aft. Petrov was there in seconds, along with Vasily Borodin, who had hurried aft from the control room. He slipped on the deck where I spilled my tea, Ramius gasped, performing closed heart massage on Putin's chest. I tried to keep him from falling, but he hit his head on the table. Petrov shoved the captain aside, moved the body around, and leapt on the table to kneel astride it. He tore the shirt open, then checked Putin's eyes. Both pupils were wide and fixed. The doctor felt around the man's head, his hands working downward to the neck. They stopped there, probing. The doctor shook his head slowly. Comrade Putin is dead. His neck is broken. The doctor's hands came loose, and he closed the man's eyes. No! Ramius shouted. He was alive only a minute ago! The commanding officer was sobbing. It's my fault. I tried to catch him, but I failed. My fault! He collapsed into a chair and buried his face in his hands. My fault, he cried, shaking his head in rage, struggling visibly to regain his composure. An altogether excellent performance. Petrov placed his hand on the captain's shoulder. It was an accident, Comrade Captain. These things happen, even to experienced men. It was not your fault. Truly, Comrade. Ramius swore under his breath, regaining control of himself. There is nothing you can do? Petrov shook his head. Even in the finest clinic in the Soviet Union nothing could be done. Once the spinal cord is severed, there is no hope. Death is virtually instantaneous but also it is quite painless, the doctor added consolingly. Ramius drew himself up as he took a long breath, his face set. Comrade Putin was a good shipmate, a loyal Party member, and a fine officer. Out the corner of his eye he noticed Borodin's mouth twitch. Comrades, we will continue our mission! Dr. Petrov, you will carry our comrade's body to the freezer. This is gruesome, I know, but he deserves and will get an honorable military funeral, with his shipmates in attendance, as it should be, when we return to port. Will this be reported to fleet headquarters? Petrov asked. We cannot. Our orders are to maintain strict radio silence. Ramius handed the doctor a set of operations orders from his pocket. Not those taken from the safe. Page three, Comrade Doctor. Petrov's eyes went wide reading the operational directive. I would prefer to report this, but our orders are explicit: Once we dive, no transmissions of any kind, for any reason. Petrov handed the papers back. Too bad, our comrade

would have looked forward to this. But orders are orders. And we shall carry them out. Putin would have it no other way, Petrov agreed. Borodin, observe: I take the comrade political officers missile control key from his neck, as per regulations, Ramius said, pocketing the key and chain. I note this, and will so enter it in the log, the executive officer said gravely. Petrov brought in his medical corpsman. Together they took the body aft to the medical office, where it was zippered into a body bag. The corpsman and a pair of sailors then took it forward, through the control room, into the missile compartment. The entrance to the freezer was on the lower missile deck, and the men carried the body through the door. While two cooks removed food to make room for it, the body was set reverently down in the corner. Aft, the doctor and the executive officer made the necessary inventory of personal effects, one copy for the ship's medical file, another for the ship's log, and a third for a box that was sealed and locked up in the medical office. Forward, Ramius took the conn in a subdued control room. He ordered the submarine to a course of two-nine-zero degrees, west-northwest. Grid square 54-90 was to the east.

THE SECOND DAY SATURDAY, 4 DECEMBER

The Red October

It was the custom in the Soviet Navy for the commanding officer to announce his ship's operational orders and to exhort the crew to carry them out in true Soviet fashion. The orders were then posted for all to see and be inspired by outside the ship's Lenin Room. In large surface ships this was a classroom where political awareness classes were held. In Red October it was a closet-sized library near the wardroom where Party books and other ideological material were kept for the men to read. Ramius disclosed their orders the day after sailing to give his men the chance to settle into the ship's routine. At the same time he gave a pep talk. Ramius always gave a good one. He had had a lot of practice. At 0800 hours, when the forenoon watch was set, he entered the control room and took some file cards from an inside jacket pocket. Comrades! he began, talking into the microphone, this is the captain speaking. You all know that our beloved friend and comrade, Captain Ivan Yurievich Putin, died yesterday in a tragic accident. Our orders do not permit us to inform fleet headquarters of this. Comrades, we will dedicate our efforts and our work to the memory of our comrade, Ivan Yurievich Putina fine shipmate, an honorable Party member, and a courageous officer. Comrades! Officer and men of Red October! We have orders from the Red Banner Northern Fleet High Command, and they are orders worthy of this ship and this crew! Comrades! Our orders are to make the ultimate test of our new silent propulsion system. We are to head west, past the North Cape of America's imperialist puppet state, Norway, then to turn southwest towards the Atlantic Ocean. We will pass all of the imperialist sonar nets, and we will not be detected! This will be a true test of our submarine and his capabilities. Our own ships will engage in a major exercise to locate us and at the same time to befuddle the arrogant imperialist navies. Our mission, first of all, is to evade detection by anyone. We will teach the Americans a lesson about Soviet technology that they will not soon forget! Our orders are to continue southwest, skirting the American coast to challenge and defeat their newest and best hunter submarines. We will proceed all the way to our socialist brothers in Cuba, and we will be the first ship to make use of a new and supersecret nuclear submarine base that we have been building for two years right under their imperialist noses on the south coast of Cuba. A fleet replenishment vessel is already en route to rendezvous with us there. Comrades! If we succeed in reaching Cuba undetected by the imperialists and we will! the officers and men of Red October will have a week or so of shore leave to visit our fraternal socialist comrades on the beautiful island of Cuba. I have been there, comrades, and you will find it to be exactly what you have read, a paradise of warm breezes, palm trees, and comradely good fellowship. By which Ramius meant women. After this we will return to the Motherland by the same route. By this time, of course, the imperialists will know who and what we are, from their slinking spies and cowardly reconnaissance aircraft. It is intended that they should know this, because we will again evade detection on the trip home. This will let the imperialists know that they may not trifle with the men of the Soviet Navy, that we can approach their coast at the time of our choosing, and that they must respect the Soviet Union! Comrades! We will make the first cruise of Red October a memorable one!

Ramius looked up from his prepared speech. The men on watch in the control room were exchanging grins. It was not often that a Soviet sailor was allowed to visit another country, and a visit by a nuclear submarine to a foreign country, even an ally, was nearly unprecedented. Moreover, for Russians the island of Cuba was as exotic as Tahiti, a promised land of white sand beaches and dusky girls. Ramius knew differently. He had read articles in Red Star and other state journals about the joys of duty in Cuba. He had also been there. Ramius changed cards in his hands. He had given them the good news. Comrades! Officers and men of Red October! Now for the bad news that everyone was waiting for. This mission will not be an easy one. It demands our best efforts. We must maintain absolute radio silence, and our operating routines must be perfect! Rewards only come to those who truly earn them. Every officer and every man aboard,

from your commanding officer to the newest matros, must do his socialist duty and do it well! If we work together as comrades, as the New Soviet Men we are, we shall succeed. You young comrades new to the sea: Listen to your officers, to your michmany, and to your starshini. Learn your duties well, and carry them out exactly. There are no small jobs on this ship, no small responsibilities. Every comrade depends for his life upon every other. Do your duty, follow your orders, and when we have completed this voyage, you will be true Soviet sailors! That is all. Ramius released his thumb from the mike switch and set it back in the cradle.

Not a bad speech, he decided a large carrot and a small stick. In the galley aft a petty officer was standing still, holding a warm loaf of bread and looking curiously at the bulkhead-mounted speaker. That wasn't what their orders were supposed to be, was it? Had there been a change in plans? The michman pointed him back to his duties, grinning and chuckling at the prospect of a week in Cuba. He had heard a lot of stories about Cuba and Cuban women and was looking forward to seeing if they were true. In the control room Ramius mused. I wonder if any American submarines are about? Indeed, Comrade Captain, nodded Captain Second Rank Borodin, who had the watch. Shall we engage the caterpillar? Proceed, Comrade. Engines all stop, Borodin ordered. All stop. The quartermaster, a starshina (petty officer), dialed the annunciator to the STOP position. An instant later the order was confirmed by the inner dial, and a few seconds after that the dull rumble of the engines died away. Borodin picked up the phone and punched the button for engineering.

Comrade Chief Engineer, prepare to engage the caterpillar. It wasn't the official name for the new drive system. It had no name as such, just a project number. The nickname caterpillar had been given it by a young engineer who had been involved in the subs development. Neither Ramius nor Borodin knew why, but as often happens with such names, it had stuck. Ready, Comrade Borodin, the chief engineer reported back in a moment. Open doors fore and aft, Borodin ordered next. The michman of the watch reached up the control board and threw four switches. The status light over each changed from red to green. Doors show open, Comrade. Engage caterpillar. Build speed slowly to thirteen knots. Build slowly to one-three knots, Comrade, the engineer acknowledged. The hull, which had gone momentarily silent, now had a new sound. The engine noises were lower and very different from what they had been. The reactor plant noises, mainly from pumps that circulated the cooling water, were almost imperceptible. The caterpillar did not use a great deal of power for what it did. At the michmans station the speed gauge, which had dropped to five knots, began to creep upward again. Forward of the missile room, in a space shoehorned into the crews accommodations, the handful of sleeping men stirred briefly in their bunks as they noted an intermittent rumble aft and the hum of electric motors a few feet away, separated from them by the pressure hull. They were tired enough even on their first day at sea to ignore the noise, fighting back to their precious allotment of sleep. Caterpillar functioning normally, Comrade Captain, Borodin reported. Excellent. Steer two-six-zero, helm, Ramius ordered. Two-six-zero, Comrade. The helmsman turned his wheel to the left. The USS Bremerton Thirty miles to the northeast, the USS Bremerton was on a heading of two-two-five, just emerging from under the icepack. A 688-class attack submarine, she had been on an ELINT electronic intelligence gathering mission in the Kara Sea when she was ordered west to the Kola Peninsula. The Russian missile boat wasn't supposed to have sailed for another week, and the Bremertons skipper was annoyed at this latest intelligence screw-up. He would have been in place to track the Red October if she had sailed as scheduled. Even so, the American sonarmen had picked up on the Soviet sub a few minutes earlier, despite the fact that they were traveling at fourteen knots. Conn, sonar. Commander Wilson lifted the phone. Conn, aye. Contact lost, sir. His screws stopped a few minutes ago and have not restarted. There's some other activity to the east, but the missile sub has gone dead. Very well. He's probably settling down to a slow drift. Well be creeping up on him. Stay awake, Chief. Commander Wilson thought this over as he took two steps to the chart table. The two officers of the fire control tracking party who had just been establishing the track for the contact looked up to learn their commanders opinion. If it was me, I'd go down near the bottom and circle slowly right about here. Wilson traced a rough circle on the chart that enclosed the Red Octobers position. So lets creep up on him. Well reduce speed to five knots and see if we can move in and reacquire him from his reactor plant noise. Wilson turned to the officer of the deck. Reduce speed to five knots. Aye, Skipper. Severomorsk, USSR In the Central Post Office building in Severomorsk a mail sorter watched sourly as a truck driver dumped a large canvas sack on his work table and went back out the door. He was late well, not really late, the clerk corrected himself, since the idiot had not been on time once in five years. It was a Saturday, and he resented being at work. Only a few years before, the forty-hour week had been started in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately this change had never affected such vital public services as mail delivery. So, here he was, still working a six-day week and without extra pay! A disgrace, he thought, and had said often enough in his

apartment, playing cards with his workmates over vodka and cucumbers. He untied the drawstring and turned the sack over. Several smaller bags tumbled out. There was no sense in hurrying. It was only the beginning of the month, and they still had weeks to move their quota of letters and parcels from one side of the building to the other. In the Soviet Union every worker is a government worker, and they have a saying: As long as the bosses pretend to pay us, we will pretend to work. Opening a small mailbag, he pulled out an official-looking envelope addressed to the Main Political Administration of the Navy in Moscow. The clerk paused, fingering the envelope. It probably came from one of the submarines based at Polyarnyy, on the other side of the fjord. What did the letter say? the sorter wondered, playing the mental game that amused mailmen all over the world. Was it an announcement that all was ready for the final attack on the imperialist West? A list of Party members who were late paying their dues, or a requisition for more toilet paper? There was no telling. Submariners! They were all prima donnas even the farmboy conscripts still picking shit from between their toes paraded around like members of the Party elite. The clerk was sixty-two. In the Great Patriotic War he had been a tank rider serving in a guards tank corps attached to Konevs First Ukrainian Front. That, he told himself, was a mans job, riding into action on the back of the great battle tanks, leaping off to hunt for the German infantrymen as they cowered in their holes. When something needed doing against those slugs, it was done! Now what had become of Soviet fighting men? Living aboard luxury liners with plenty of good food and warm beds. The only warm bed he had ever known was over the exhaust vent of his tanks diesel and he had to fight for that! It was crazy what the world had become. Now sailors acted like czarist princes and wrote tons of letters back and forth and called it work. These pampered boys didnt know what hardship was. And their privileges! Every word they committed to paper was priority mail. Whimpering letters to their sweethearts, most of it, and here he was sorting through it all on a Saturday to see that it got to their womenfolk even though they couldnt possibly have a reply for two weeks. It just wasnt like the old days. The sorter tossed the envelope with a negligent flick of the wrist towards the surface mailbag for Moscow on the far side of his work table. It missed, dropping to the concrete floor. The letter would be placed aboard the train a day late. The sorter didnt care. There was a hockey game that night, the biggest game of the young season, Central Army against Wings. He had a liter of vodka bet on Wings. Tomorrow, England Halseys greatest popular success was his greatest error. In establishing himself as a popular hero with legendary aggressiveness, the admiral would blind later generations to his impressive intellectual abilities and a shrewd gamblers instinct to Jack Ryan frowned at his computer. It sounded too much like a doctoral dissertation, and he had already done one of those. He thought of dumping the whole passage from the memory disk but decided against it. He had to follow this line of reasoning for his introduction. Bad as it was, it did serve as a guide for what he wanted to say. Why was it that introductions always seemed to be the hardest part of a history book? For three years now he had been working on Fighting Sailor, an authorized biography of Fleet Admiral William Halsey. Nearly all of it was contained on a half-dozen floppy disks lying next to his Apple computer. Daddy? Ryans daughter was staring up at him. And hows my little Sally today? Fine. Ryan picked her up and set her on his lap, careful to slide his chair away from the keyboard. Sally was all checked out on games and educational programs, and occasionally thought that this meant she was able to handle Wordstar also. Once that had resulted in the loss of twenty thousand words of electronically recorded manuscript. And a spanking. She leaned her head against her fathers shoulder. You dont look fine. Whats bothering my little girl? Well, Daddy, ysee, its almost Christmas, and Im not sure that Santa knows where we are. Were not where we were last year. Oh, I see. And youre afraid he doesnt come here? Uh huh. Why didnt you ask me before? Of course he comes here. Promise. Promise? Promise. Okay. She kissed her father and ran out of the room, back to watching cartoons on the telly, as they called it in England. Ryan was glad she had interrupted him. He didnt want to forget to pick up a few things when he flew over to Washington. Where was oh, yeah. He pulled a disk from his desk drawer and inserted it in the spare disk drive. After clearing the screen, he scrolled up the Christmas list, things he still had to get. With a simple command a copy of the list was made on the adjacent printer. Ryan tore the page off and tucked it in his wallet. Work didnt appeal to him this Saturday morning. He decided to play with his kids. After all, hed be stuck in Washington for much of the coming week. The V. K. Konovalov The Soviet submarine V. K. Konovalov crept above the hard sand bottom of the Barents Sea at three knots. She was at the southwest corner of grid square 5490 and for the past ten hours had been drifting back and forth on a north-south line, waiting for the Red October to arrive for the beginning of Exercise OCTOBER FROST. Captain Second Rank Viktor Alexievich Tupolev paced slowly around the periscope pedestal in the control room of his small, fast attack sub. He was waiting for his old mentor to show up,

hoping to play a few tricks on him. He had served with the Schoolmaster for two years. They had been good years, and while he found his former commander to be something of a cynic, especially about the Party, he would unhesitatingly testify to Ramius skill and craftiness. And his own. Tupolev, now in his third year of command, had been one of the Schoolmasters star pupils. His current vessel was a brand-new Alfa, the fastest submarine ever made. A month earlier, while Ramius had been fitting out the Red October after her initial shakedown, Tupolev and three of his officers had flown down to see the model sub that had been the test-bed for the prototype drive system. Thirty-two meters long and diesel-electric powered, it was based in the Caspian Sea, far from the eyes of imperialist spies, and kept in a covered dock, hidden from their photographic satellites. Ramius had had a hand in the development of the caterpillar, and Tupolev recognized the mark of the master. It would be a bastard to detect. Not quite impossible, though. After a week of following the model around the north end of the Caspian Sea in an electrically powered launch, trailing the best passive sonar array his country had yet made, he thought he had found a flaw. Not a big one, just big enough to exploit. Of course there was no guarantee of success. He was not only in competition with a machine, but also with the captain commanding her. Tupolev knew this area intimately. The water was almost perfectly isothermal; there was no thermal layer for a submarine to hide under. They were far enough from the freshwater rivers on the north coast of Russia not to have to worry about pools and walls of variable salinity interfering with their sonar searches. The Konovalov had been built with the best sonar systems the Soviet Union had yet produced, copied closely from the French DUUV-23 and a bit improved, the factory technicians said. Tupolev planned to mimic the American tactic of drifting slowly, with just enough speed to maintain steerage, perfectly quiet and waiting for the Red October to cross his path. He would then trail his quarry closely and log each change in course and speed, so that when they compared logs in a few weeks the Schoolmaster would see that his erstwhile student had played his own winning game. It was about time someone did. Anything new on sonar? Tupolev was getting tense. Patience came hard to him. Nothing new, Comrade Captain. The starpom tapped the X on the chart that marked the position of the Rokossovskiy, a Delta-class missile sub they had been tracking for several hours in the same exercise area. Our friend is still cruising in a slow circle. Do you think that Rokossovskiy might be trying to confuse us? Would Captain Ramius have arranged for him to be here, to complicate our task? The thought had occurred to Tupolev. Perhaps, but probably not. This exercise was arranged by Korov himself. Our mission orders were sealed, and Markos orders should have been also. But then, Admiral Korov is an old friend of our Marko. Tupolev paused for a moment and shook his head. No. Korov is an honorable man. I think Ramius is proceeding this way as slowly as he can. To make us nervous, to make us question ourselves. He will know we are to hunt him and will adjust his plans accordingly. He might try to enter the square from an unexpected direction or to make us think that he is. You have never served under Ramius, Comrade Lieutenant. He is a fox, that one, an old gray-whiskered fox. I think we will continue to patrol as we are for another four hours. If we have not yet acquired him then, we will cross over to the southeast corner of the square and work our way in to the center. Yes. Tupolev had never expected that this would be easy. No attack submarine commander had ever embarrassed Ramius. He was determined to be the first, and the difficulty of the task would only confirm his own prowess. In one or two more years, Tupolev planned to be the new master.

**THE THIRD DAYSUNDAY, 5 DECEMBER**

The Red OctoberThe Red October had no time of her own. For her the sun neither rose nor set, and the days of the week had little significance. Unlike surface ships, which changed their clocks to conform with the local time wherever they were, submarines generally adhered to a single time reference. For American subs this was Zulu, or Greenwich mean time. For the Red October it was Moscow standard time, which by normal reckoning was actually one hour ahead of standard time to save on utility expenses. Ramius entered the control room in mid-morning. Their course was now two-five-zero, speed thirteen knots, and the submarine was running thirty meters above the bottom at the west edge of the Barents Sea. In a few more hours the bottom would drop away to an abyssal plain, allowing them to go much deeper. Ramius examined the chart first, then the numerous banks of instruments covering both side bulkheads in the compartment. Last he made some notations in the order book. Lieutenant Ivanov! he said sharply to the junior officer of the watch. Yes, Comrade Captain! Ivanov was the greenest officer aboard, fresh from Lenins Komsomol School in Leningrad, pale, skinny, and eager. I will be calling a meeting of the senior officers in the wardroom. You will now be the officer of the watch. This is your first cruise, Ivanov. How do you like it? It is better than I had hoped, Comrade Captain, Ivanov replied with greater confidence than he could possibly have felt. That is good, Comrade Lieutenant. It is my practice to give junior officers as much responsibility as they can handle. While we senior officers are having our weekly political discussion,

you are in command of this vessel! The safety of this ship and all his crew is your responsibility! You have been taught all you need to know, and my instructions are in the order book. If we detect another submarine or surface ship you will inform me at once and instantly initiate evasion drill. Any questions? No, Comrade

Captain. Ivanov was standing at rigid attention. Good. Ramius smiled. Pavel Ilych, you will forever remember this as one of the great moments of your life. I know, I can still remember my first watch. Do not forget your orders or your responsibilities! Pride sparkled in the boys eyes. It was too bad what would happen to him, Ramius thought, still the teacher. On first inspection, Ivanov looked to have the makings of a good officer. Ramius walked briskly aft to the ships medical office. Good morning, Doctor. Good morning to you, Comrade Captain. It is time for our political meeting? Petrov had been reading the manual for the subs new X-ray machine. Yes, it is, Comrade Doctor, but I do not wish you to attend. There is something else I want you to do. While the senior officers are at the meeting, I have the three youngsters standing watch in control and the engineering spaces. Oh? Petrovs eyes went wide. It was his first time on a submarine in several years. Ramius smiled. Be at ease, Comrade. I can get from the wardroom to control in twenty seconds, as you know, and Comrade Melekhin can get to his precious reactor just as fast. Sooner or later our young officers must learn to function on their own. I prefer that they learn sooner. I want you to keep an eye on them. I know that they all have the knowledge to do their duties. I want to know if they have the temperament. If Borodin or I watch over them, they will not act normally. And in any case, this is a medical judgment, no? Ah, you wish me to observe how they react to their responsibilities. Without the pressure of being observed by a senior line officer, Ramius confirmed. One must give young officers room to grow but not too much. If you observe something that you question, you will inform me at once. There should be no problems. We are in open sea, there is no traffic about, and the reactor is running at a fraction of its total power. The first test for young officers ought to be an easy one. Find some excuse for traveling back and forth, and keep an eye on the children. Ask questions about what they are doing. Petrov laughed at that. Ah, and also you would have me learn a few things, Comrade Captain? They told me about you at Severomorsk. Fine, it will be as you say. But this will be the first political meeting I have missed in years. From what your file says, you could teach Party doctrine to the Politburo, Yevgeni Konstantinovich. Which said little about his medical ability, Ramius thought. The captain moved forward to the wardroom to join his brother officers, who were waiting for him. A steward had left several pots of tea along with black bread and butter to snack on. Ramius looked at the corner of the table. The bloodstains had long since been wiped away, but he could remember exactly what it looked like. This, he reflected, was one difference between himself and the man he had murdered. Ramius had a conscience. Before taking his seat, he turned to lock the door behind him. His officers were all sitting at attention, since the compartment was not large enough for them to stand once the bench seats were folded down. Sunday was the normal day for the political awareness session at sea.

Ordinarily Putin would have officiated, reading some Pravda editorials, followed by selected quotations from the works of Lenin and a discussion of the lessons to be learned from the readings. It is very much like a church service. With the demise of the zampolit this duty devolved upon the commanding officer, but Ramius doubted that regulations anticipated the sort of discussion on todays agenda. Each officer in this room was a member of his conspiracy. Ramius outlined their plans there had been some minor changes which he had not mentioned to anyone. Then he told them about the letter. So, there is no going back,

Borodin observed. We have all agreed upon our course of action. Now we are committed to it. Their reactions to his words were just what he expected them to be. As well they might be. All were single; no one left behind a wife or children. All were Party members in good standing, their dues paid up to the end of the year, their Party cards right where they were supposed to be, next to their hearts. And each one shared with his comrades a deep-seated dissatisfaction with, in some cases a hatred of, the Soviet government. The planning had begun soon after the death of his Natalia. The rage he had almost unknowingly suppressed throughout his life had burst forth with a violence and passion that he had struggled to contain. A lifetime of self-control had enabled him to conceal it, and a lifetime of naval training had enabled him to choose a purpose worthy of it. Ramius had not yet begun school when he first heard tales from other children about what his father Aleksandr had done in Lithuania in 1940 and after that countrys dubious liberation from the Germans in 1944. These were the repeated whisperings of their parents. One little girl told Marko a story that he recounted to Aleksandr, and to the boys uncomprehending horror her father vanished. For his unwitting mistake Marko was branded an informer. Stung by the name he was given for committing a crime which the State taught was not a crime at all whose enormity never stopped pulling at his conscience, he never informed again. In the formative years of his life, while the elder Ramius ruled the Lithuanian Party

Central Committee in Vilnius, the motherless boy was raised by his paternal grandmother, common practice in a country savaged by four years of brutal war. Her only son left home at an early age to join Lenins Red Guards, and while he was away she kept to the old ways, going to mass every day until 1940 and never forgetting the religious education that had been passed on to her. Ramius remembered her as a silver-haired old woman who told wonderful bedtime stories. Religious stories. It would have been far too dangerous for her to bring Marko to the religious ceremonies that had never been entirely stamped out, but she did manage to have him baptized a Roman Catholic soon after his father had deposited him with her. She never told Marko about this. The risk would have been too great. Roman Catholicism had been brutally suppressed in the Baltic states. It was a religion, and as he grew older Marko learned that Marxism-Leninism was a jealous god, tolerating no competing loyalties. Grandmother Hilda told him nighttime stories from the Bible, each with a lesson of right and wrong, virtue and reward. As a child he found them merely entertaining, but he never told his father about them because even then he knew that Aleksandr would object. After the elder Ramius again resumed control of his sons life, this religious education faded into Markos memory, neither fully remembered nor fully forgotten. As a boy, Ramius sensed more than thought that Soviet Communism ignored a basic human need. In his teens, his misgivings began to take a coherent shape. The Good of the People was a laudable enough goal, but in denying a mans soul, an enduring part of his being, Marxism stripped away the foundation of human dignity and individual value. It also cast aside the objective measure of justice and ethics which, he decided, was the principal legacy of religion to civilized life. From earliest adulthood on, Marko had his own idea about right and wrong, an idea he did not share with the State. It gave him a means of gauging his actions and those of others. It was something he was careful to conceal. It served as an anchor for his soul and, like an anchor, it was hidden far below the visible surface. Even as the boy was grappling with his first doubts about his country, no one could have suspected it. Like all Soviet children, Ramius joined the Little Octobrists, then the Young Pioneers. He paraded at the requisite battle shrines in polished boots and blood-red scarf, and gravely stood watch over the remains of some unknown soldier while clasping to his chest a deactivated PPSH submachinegun, his back ramrod straight before the eternal flame. The solemnity of such duty was no accident. As a boy Marko was certain that the brave men whose graves he guarded so intensely had met their fates with the same sort of selfless heroism that he saw portrayed in endless war movies at the local cinema. They had fought the hated Germans to protect the women and children and old people behind the lines. And like a noble mans son of an earlier Russia, he took special pride in being the son of a Party chieftain. The Party, he heard a hundred times before he was five, was the Soul of the People; the unity of Party, People, and Nation was the holy trinity of the Soviet Union, albeit with one segment more important than the others. His father fit easily into the cinematic image of a Party apparatchik. Stern but fair, to Marko he was a frequently absent, gruffly kind man who brought his son what presents he could and saw to it that he had all the advantages the son of a Party secretary was entitled to. Although outwardly he was the model Soviet child, inwardly he wondered why what he learned from his father and in school conflicted with the other lessons of his youth. Why did some parents refuse to let their children play with him? Why when he passed them did his classmates whisper stukach, the cruel and bitter epithet of informer? His father and the Party taught that informing was an act of patriotism, but for having done it once he was shunned. He resented the taunts of his boyhood peers, but he never once complained to his father, knowing that this would be an evil thing to do. Something was very wrong but what? He decided that he had to find the answers for himself. By choice Marko became individual in his thinking, and so unknowingly committed the gravest sin in the Communist pantheon. Outwardly the model of a Party members son, he played the game carefully and according to all the rules. He did his duty for all Party organizations, and was always the first to volunteer for the menial tasks allotted to children aspiring to Party membership, which he knew was the only path to success or even comfort in the Soviet Union. He became good at sports. Not team sports he worked at track and field events in which he could compete as an individual and measure the performance of others. Over the years he learned to do the same in all of his endeavors, to watch and judge the actions of his fellow citizens and officers with cool detachment, behind a blank face that concealed his conclusions. In the summer of his eighth year the course of his life was forever changed. When no one would play with the little stukach, he would wander down to the fishing docks of the small village where his grandmother had made her home. A ragtag collection of old wooden boats sailed each morning, always behind a screen of patrol boats manned by MGB as the KGB was then known border guards, to reap a modest harvest from the Gulf of Finland. Their catch supplemented the local diet with needed protein and provided a minuscule income for the fishermen. One boat captain was old Sasha. An

officer in the czars navy, he had revolted with the crew of the cruiser *Avrora*, helping to spark the chain of events that changed the face of the world. Marko did not learn until many years later that the crewmen of the *Avrora* had broken with Lenin and been savagely put down by Red Guards. Sasha had spent twenty years in labor camps for his part in that collective indiscretion and only been released at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. The *Rodina* had found herself in need of experienced seamen to pilot ships into the ports of Murmansk and Archangel, to which the Allies were bringing weapons, food, and the sundries that allow a modern army to function. Sasha had learned his lesson in the gulag: he did his duty efficiently and well, asking for nothing in return. After the war he had been given a kind of freedom for his services, the right to perform back-breaking work under perpetual suspicion. By the time Marko met him, Sasha was over sixty, a nearly bald man withropy old muscles, a seaman's eye, and a talent for stories that left the youngster wide-eyed. He had been a midshipman under the famous Admiral Marakov at Port Arthur in 1906. Probably the finest seaman in Russian history, Marakov's reputation as a patriot and an innovative fighting sailor was sufficiently unblemished that a Communist government would eventually see fit to name a missile cruiser in his memory. At first wary of the boy's reputation, Sasha saw something in him that others missed. The boy without friends and the sailor without a family became comrades. Sasha spent hours telling and retelling the tale of how he had been on the admiral's flagship, the *Petropavlovsk*, and participated in the one Russian victory over the hated Japanese only to have his battleship sunk and his admiral killed by a mine while returning to port. After this Sasha had led his seamen as naval infantry, winning three decorations for courage under fire. This experience he wagged his finger seriously at the boy, taught him of the mindless corruption of the czarist regime and convinced him to join one of the first naval soviets when such action meant certain death at the hands of the czar's secret police, the *okhrana*. He told his own version of the October Revolution from the thrilling perspective of an eyewitness. But Sasha was very careful to leave the later parts out. He allowed Marko to sail with him and taught him the fundamentals of seamanship that decided a boy not yet nine that his destiny lay on the sea. There was a freedom at sea he could never have on land. There was a romance about it that touched the man growing within the boy. There were also dangers, but in a summer-long series of simple, effective lessons, Sasha taught the boy that preparation, knowledge, and discipline can deal with any form of danger; that danger confronted properly is not something a man must fear. In later years Marko would reflect often on the value this summer had held for him, and wonder just how far Sasha's career might have led if other events had not cut it short. Marko told his father about Sasha towards the end of that long Baltic summer and even took him to meet the old seadog. The elder Ramius was sufficiently impressed with him and what he had done for his son that he arranged for Sasha to have command of a newer, larger boat and moved him up on the list for a new apartment. Marko almost believed that the Party could do a good deed that he himself had done his first manly good deed. But old Sasha died the following winter, and the good deed came to nothing. Many years later Marko realized that he had not known his friend's last name. Even after years of faithful service to the *Rodina*, Sasha had been an unperson. At thirteen Marko traveled to Leningrad to attend the *Nakhimov School*. There he decided that he, too, would become a professional naval officer. Marko would follow the quest for adventure that had for centuries called young men to the sea. The *Nakhimov School* was a special three-year prep school for youngsters aspiring to a career at sea. The Soviet Navy at that time was little more than a coastal defense force, but Marko wanted very much to be a part of it. His father urged him to a life of Party work, promising rapid promotion, a life of comfort and privilege. But Marko wanted to earn whatever he received on his own merits, not to be remembered as an appendage of the liberator of Lithuania. And a life at sea offered romance and excitement that even made serving the State something he could tolerate. The navy had little tradition to build on. Marko sensed that in it there was room to grow, and saw that many aspiring naval cadets were like himself, if not mavericks then as close to mavericks as was possible in a society so closely controlled as his own. The teenager thrived with his first experience of fellowship.