

Red Halblit



RED RABBIT

TOM CLANCY

C. P. PITNAM'S SONS + NEW VORK

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> G. P. Putnam's Sons Publishers Since 1838 a member of Penguin Putnam Inc. 375 Hudson Street New York, NY 10014

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Clancy, Tom, date. Red rabbit / Tom Clancy.

p. cm. ISBN 0-399-14870-1

ISBN 0-399-14914-7 (Limited Edition)

1. Ryan, Jack (Fictitious character)—Fiction. 2. John Paul II, Pope, 1920—Assassination attempts—Fiction.

3. Intelligence officers—Fiction. 4. Americans—

England—Fiction. 5. Assassination—Fiction.

6. Popes—Fiction. I. Title. PS3553L245R39

2002

2002067958

813'.54-dc21

Printed in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

This book is printed on acid-free paper. ⊗

BOOK DESIGN BY LOVEDOG STUDIO

RED RABBIT

ALSO BY TOM CLANCY

FICTION

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The Cardinal of the Kremlin
Clear and Present Danger
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Into the Storm:
A Study in Command
(With General Fred Franks, Jr. (Ret.))

Every Man a Tiger (With General Chuck Horner (Ret.))

Shadow Warriors (With General Carl Stiner (Ret.)) To Danny D and the men of Engine 52 and Ladder 52

Heroes are often the most ordinary of men. $\label{eq:hence} \textbf{Henry David Thoreau}$

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Leanart, Joni, and Andy, for holding my hand behind the Old Curtain, and the crash-course in smuggling.

Alex, of course, for holding the other one at all times.

Tom and the lads at Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress. So fine a body of men is difficult to find, and a rare pleasure to discover.

The FSOs at the United States Embassy, Budapest, for so graciously handling an unannounced walk-in.

And to Michael, Melissa, Gilbert, and CDR Marsha, in anticipation of your superior professionalism.

The most momentous thing in human life is the art of winning the soul to good or to evil.

PYTHAGORAS

Without recognizing the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man.

CONFUCIUS

RED RABBIT

THE BACK GARDEN

THE SCARY PART. Jack decided, was going to be driving. He'd already bought a Jaguar—pronounced *jag-you-ah* over here, he'd have to remember—but both times he'd walked to it at the dealership, he'd gone to the left-front door instead of the right. The dealer hadn't laughed at him, but Ryan was sure he'd wanted to. At least he hadn't climbed into the passenger seat by mistake and really made an ass of himself. He'd have to remember all that: The "right" side of the road was the *left*. A right turn crossed oncoming traffic, not a left turn. The left lane was the slow lane on the interstates—*motorways*, he corrected himself. The plugs in the wall were all cockeyed. The house didn't have central heating, despite the princely price he'd paid for it. There was no air-conditioning, though that probably wasn't necessary here. It wasn't the hottest of climates: The locals started dropping dead in the street when the mercury topped 75. Jack wondered what the D.C. climate would do to them. Evidently, the "mad dogs and Englishmen" ditty was a thing of the past.

But it could have been worse. He did have a pass to shop for food at the Army–Air Force Exchange Service—otherwise known as the PX at nearby Greenham Commons Air Base—so at least they'd have proper hot dogs, and brands that resembled the ones he bought at the Giant at home in Maryland.

So many other discordant notes. British television was different, of course, not that he really expected much chance to vegetate in front of the phosphor screen anymore, but little Sally needed her ration of cartoons. Besides, even when you were reading something important, the background chatter of some mindless show was comforting in its own way. The TV news wasn't too bad, though, and the newspapers were particularly good—better than those he normally read at home, on the whole, but he'd miss the morning *Far Side*. Maybe the *International Tribune* had it, Ryan hoped. He could buy it at the train station kiosk. He had to keep track of baseball anyway.

The movers—removers, he reminded himself—were beavering away under Cathy's direction. It wasn't a bad house, though smaller than their place at Peregrine Cliff, now rented to a Marine colonel teaching the earnest young boys and girls at the Naval Academy. The master bedroom overlooked what seemed to be about a quarter-acre of garden. The realtor had been particularly enthused about that. And the previous owners had spent a lot of time there: It was wall-to-wall roses, mainly red and white, to honor the houses of Lancaster and York, it would seem. There were pink ones in between to show that they'd joined together to form the Tudors, though that house had died out with Elizabeth I—and ultimately made way for the new set of Royals, whom Ryan had ample reason to like.

And the weather wasn't bad at all. They'd been in country three days and it hadn't rained at all. The sun rose very early and set late, and in the winter, he'd heard, it never came up and immediately went back down again. Some of the new friends he'd made at the State Department had told him that the long nights could be hard on the little kids. At four years and six months, Sally still qualified for that. Five-month-old Jack probably didn't notice such things, and fortunately, he slept just fine—he was doing so right now, in fact, in the custody of his nanny, Margaret van der Beek, a young redhead and daughter of a Methodist minister in South Africa. She'd come highly recommended . . . and then had been cleared by a background check performed by the Metropolitan Police. Cathy was a little concerned

about the whole idea of a nanny. The idea of somebody else raising her infant grated on her like fingernails on a chalkboard, but it was an honored local custom, and it had worked out pretty well for one Winston Spencer Churchill. Miss Margaret had been vetted through Sir Basil's agency—her own agency, in fact, was officially sanctioned by Her Majesty's government. Which meant precisely nothing, Jack reminded himself. He'd been thoroughly briefed in the weeks before coming over. The "opposition"—a British term also used at Langley—had penetrated the British intelligence community more than once. CIA believed they hadn't done so at Langley yet, but Jack had to wonder about that. KGB was pretty damned good, and people were greedy all over the world. The Russians didn't pay very well, but some people sold their souls and their freedom for peanuts. They also didn't carry a flashing sign on their clothing that said I AM A TRAITOR.

Of all his briefings, the security ones had been the most tiresome. Jack's dad had been the cop in the family, and Ryan himself had never quite mastered that mode of thinking. It was one thing to look for hard data amid the cascade of crap that worked its way up the intelligence system, quite another to look with suspicion at everyone in the office and yet expect to work cordially with them. He wondered if any of the others regarded him that way . . . probably not, he decided. He'd paid his dues the hard way, after all, and had the pale scars on his shoulder to prove it, not to mention the nightmares of that night on Chesapeake Bay, the dreams in which his weapon never fired despite his efforts, Cathy's frantic cries of terror and alarm ringing in his ears. He'd won that battle, hadn't he? Why did the dreams think otherwise? Something to talk to a pshrink about, perhaps, but as the old wives' tale went, you had to be crazy to go to a pshrink

Sally was running about in circles, looking at her new bedroom, admiring the new bed being assembled by the removers. Jack kept out of the way. Cathy had told him he was unfitted even to supervise this sort of thing, despite his tool kit, without which no American male feels very manly, which had been among the first things unpacked. The removers had their own tools, of course—and they, too, had been vetted by SIS, lest some KGB-controlled agent plant a bug in the house. It just wouldn't do, old boy.

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"Where's the tourist?" an American voice asked. Ryan went to the foyer to see who it—

"Dan! How the hell are you?"

"It was a boring day at the office, so Liz and I came out to see how things are going for you." And sure enough, just behind the Legal Attaché was his beauty-queen wife, the long-suffering St. Liz of the FBI Wives. Mrs. Murray went over to Cathy for a sisterly hug and kiss, then the two of them went immediately off to the garden. Cathy loved the roses, of course, which was fine with Jack. His dad had carried all the gardening genes in the Ryan family, and passed on none to his son. Murray gazed at his friend. "You look like hell."

"Long flight, boring book," Jack explained.

"Didn't you sleep on the way across?" Murray asked in surprise.

"On an airplane?" Ryan responded.

"It bothers you that much?"

"Dan, on a ship, you can see what's holding you up. Not in an airplane."

That gave Murray a chuckle. "Better get used to it, bud. You're gonna be building up a lot of frequent-flyer miles hopping back and forth to Dulles."

"I suppose." Strangely, Jack hadn't really considered that when he'd accepted the posting. *Dumb*, he'd realized too late. He'd be going back and forth to Langley at least once a month—not the greatest thing for a reluctant flyer.

"The moving going okay? You can trust this bunch, you know. Bas has used them for twenty-plus years, my friends at the Yard like them, too. Half of these guys are ex-cops." And cops, he didn't have to say, were more reliable than spooks.

"No bugs in the bathroom? Great," Ryan observed. During his very short experience of it so far, Ryan had learned that life in the intelligence service was a little different from teaching history at the Naval Academy. There probably were bugs—but wired to Basil's office . . .

"I know. Me, too. Good news, though: You'll be seeing a lot of me—if you don't mind."

Ryan nodded tiredly, trying to manage a grin. "Well, at least I'll have somebody to have a beer with."

"That's the national sport. More business gets done in pubs than at the office. Their version of the country club."

"The beer's not too bad."

"Better than the piss we have at home. I'm fully converted on that score."

"They told me at Langley that you do a lot of intel work for Emil Jacobs."

"Some." Murray nodded. "Fact of the matter is, we're better at it than a lot of you Agency types. The Operations people haven't recovered from seventy-seven yet, and I'm not sure that'll happen for a while."

Ryan had to agree. "Admiral Greer thinks so, too. Bob Ritter is pretty smart—maybe a little too smart, if you know what I mean—but he doesn't have enough friends in Congress to get his empire expanded the way that he wants."

Greer was the CIA's chief analyst, Ritter the Ops director. The two were often at odds.

"They don't trust Ritter like they do the DDI. Carryover from the Church Committee mess ten years ago. You know, the Senate never seems to remember who ran those operations. They canonize the boss and crucify the troops who tried to follow his orders—though badly. Damn, was that a—" Murray searched for the word. "The Germans call it a *schweinerei*. No translation, exactly, but, you know, it just sounds like what it is."

Jack grunted with amusement. "Yeah, better than fuckup."

The CIA's effort to assassinate Fidel Castro, which had been run out of the office of the Attorney General during the time of Camelot, had been right out of Woody Woodpecker, with a sprinkling of the Three Stooges: politicians trying to imitate James Bond, a character made up by a *failed* Brit spook. The movies just weren't the real world, as Ryan had learned the hard way, first in London, and then in his own living room.

"So, Dan, how good are they really?"

"The Brits?" Murray led Ryan out onto the front lawn. The removers were vetted by SIS—but Murray was FBI. "Basil is world-class. That's why he's lasted so long. He was a brilliant field spook, and he was the first guy to get a bad vibe about Philby—and remember, Basil was just a rookie then. He's good at administration, one of the most agile thinkers I've ever

come across. The local politicians on both sides of the aisle like him and trust him. That isn't easy. Kinda like Hoover was for us once, but without the cult-of-personality thing. I like him. Good dude to work with. And Bas likes you a lot, Jack."

"Why?" Ryan asked. "I haven't done much of anything."

"Bas has an eye for talent. He thinks you have the right stuff. He flat loved that thing you dreamed up last year to catch security leaks—the Canary Trap—and rescuing their next king didn't exactly hurt, y'know? You're going to be a popular boy down at Century House. If you live up to your billing, you might just have a future in the spook business."

"Great." Ryan still wasn't entirely sure that was what he wanted to do, though. "Dan, I'm a stockbroker who turned into a history teacher, remember?"

"Jack, that's behind you now. Look forward, will ya? You were pretty good picking stocks at Merrill Lynch, right?"

"I made a few bucks," Ryan admitted. Actually, it was a lot of bucks, and his portfolio was still growing. People were getting fat on The Street back home.

"So, apply your brains to something really important," Dan suggested. "I hate to tell you, Jack, but there aren't that many smart people in the intelligence community. I know. I work there. A lot of drones, a lot of moderately smart people, but damned few stars, pal. You have the stuff to be a star. Jim Greer thinks so. So does Basil. You think outside the box. I do, too. That's why I'm not chasing bank robbers in Riverside, Philadelphia, anymore. But I never made any million bucks playing the market."

"Getting lucky doesn't make you a great guy, Dan. Hell, Cathy's dad, Joe, has made a lot more 'n I ever will, and he's an opinionated, overbearing son of a bitch."

"Well, you made his daughter the wife of an honorary knight, didn't you?"

Jack smiled sheepishly. "Yeah, I suppose I did."

"That'll open a lot of doors over here, Jack. The Brits do like their titles." He paused. "Now—how about I drag you guys out for a pint? There's a nice pub up the hill, The Gypsy Moth. This moving stuff'll drive you crazy. It's almost as bad as building a house."

HIS DFFICE WAS in the first basement level of The Centre, a security measure that had never been explained to him, but it turned out there was an exact counterpart room in the headquarters of the Main Enemy. There, it was called MERCURY, messenger of the gods—very apt, if his nation acknowledged the concept of a god. The messages passed through the code and cipher clerks, came to his desk, and he examined them for content and code words, before routing them to the proper offices and officers for action; then, when the messages came back down, he routed things the other way. The traffic broke into a regular routine; mornings were usually inbound traffic and afternoons usually outbound. The tedious part was the encrypting, of course, since so many of the people out in the field used one-time pads unique to themselves—the single copies of those pads were located in the set of rooms to his right. The clerks in there transmitted and kept secrets ranging from the sex lives of Italian parliamentarians to the precise targeting hierarchy of American nuclear-strike plans.

Strangely, none of them talked about what they did or what they encrypted, inbound or outbound. The clerks were pretty mindless. Perhaps they were recruited with those psychological factors in mind—it would not have surprised him. This was an agency designed by geniuses for operation by robots. If someone could actually build such robots, he was sure they'd have them here, because you could trust machines not to diverge too greatly from their intended path.

Machines couldn't think, however, and for his own job, thinking and remembering were useful things, if the agency was to function—and function it must. It was the shield and the sword of a state which needed both. And he was the postmaster of sorts; he had to remember what went where. He didn't know everything that went on here, but he knew a lot more than most people in this building: operation names and locations, and, often enough, operational missions and taskings. He generally did not know the proper names and faces of field officers, but he knew their targets, knew the code names of their recruited agents, and, for the most part, knew what those agents were providing.

He'd been here, in this department, for nine and a half years. He'd

started in 1973, just after graduating from Moscow State University with a degree in mathematics, and his highly disciplined mind had gotten him spotted early on by a KGB talent scout. He played a particularly fine game of chess, and that, he supposed, was where his trained memory came from, all that study of the games of the old grandmasters, so that in a given situation he'd know the next move. He'd actually thought of making chess his career, but though he'd studied hard, it wasn't quite hard enough, it seemed. Boris Spassky, just a young player himself then, had annihilated him six games to none, with two desperate draws, and so ended his hopes of fame and fortune . . . and travel. He sighed at his desk. Travel. He'd studied his geography books, too, and in closing his eyes could see the images—mainly black-and-white: Venice's Grand Canal, London's Regent Street, Rio de Janeiro's magnificent Copacabana beach, the face of Mt. Everest, which Hillary had climbed when he himself had just been learning to walk . . . all those places he would never get to see. Not him. Not a person with his access and his security clearances. No, KGB was very careful with such people. It trusted no one, a lesson that had been learned the hard way. What was it about his country that so many tried to escape from it? And yet so many millions had died fighting for the rodina. . . . He'd been spared military service because of his mathematics and his chess potential, and then, he supposed, because of his recruitment to #2 Dzerzhinskiy Square. Along with it came a nice flat, fully seventy-five square meters, in a recently finished building. Military rank, too—he'd become a senior captain within weeks of his majority, which, on the whole, wasn't too bad. Even better, he'd just started getting paid now in certificate rubles, and so was able to shop in the "closed" stores for Western consumer goods-and, best of all, with shorter lines. His wife appreciated that. He'd soon be in the entry level of the nomenklatura, like a minor czarist prince, looking up the ladder and wondering how far he might climb. But unlike the czars, he was here not by blood but by merit—a fact that appealed to his manhood, Captain Zaitzev thought.

Yes, he'd earned his way here, and that was important. That's why he was trusted with secrets, this one for example: an agent code-named Cassius, an American living in Washington; it seemed he had access to valuable political intelligence that was treasured by people on the fifth