

PROF. ASHFORD is an idealist and a weak man. He is smart, but academic and impractical. In his youth he was an adventurer, made a fortune and lost it, married a beautiful woman but could not hold her. The centerpiece of his youth has threads to a kind of gnorish troublesomness. He takes the Arab side in the Middle East but does nothing about it.

He regards SUZA as he did his wife - an ornamental housekeeper.
He sees in DICKSTEIN something of his younger self, and therefore likes him despite a certain obligatory hostility to all Israelis.

HASSAN represents the Arab cause, and Ashford is at pains to like him for that reason, despite Hassan's contempt for the liberal-idealist. Then Hassan presents Ashford with a crisis: now do something about your ideals. Ashford is excited, frightened, and malleable: he helps.

RW.

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SUZA Ashford is a wonderful, unhappy woman. From her mother she learned to be beautiful, sexy and promiscuous. She wants a man who will be her equal partner, but she can't seem to find one. She always chooses older men who fall for her sexiness then end up using her, as her father does.

She worships ASHFORD, against all reason. When her mother died he was wonderful, gave her a role.

She hates HASSAN and all he stands for.

When she meets DICKSTEIN she is at first behaving according to pattern. Then - surprise, surprise - instead of leaning on her he ups and goes away! By reading her but not wooing her he breaks the pattern. Then Hassan forces her to choose between Daddy and Dickstein, and in fact makes her choose Dickstein. Now she is free.

When she sees CORNTONE she uses her old tricks, but consciously.

ROSTOV is an altogether more complicated man, and now she has to depend entirely on her wits.

LE

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Nat DICKSTEIN lives dangerously in order to be safe. He first learned that the world is a hostile place in the thirties in London, when Fascist persecution caused the death of his father and there was no one to look after Nat but Nat. His experiences in a Nazi POW camp confirmed and deepened his defensive isolationism, made him believe there was no morality, just survival. This attitude - look after myself, to hell with the rest - transferred naturally to Israel. Now, over the years, he has begun to love others - Esther, Mattie - but his commitment is still to violence. Until Suza, with whom he must settle down.

He dislikes BORG but respects his ability. Still he does not trust the man, for he knows Borg will lie to him if necessary, and use him; so Dickstein feels the need to manipulate Borg in order to prevent Borg manipulating him.

He sympathises with HASSAN and fails to comprehend the depth of the Arab's hatred.

He likes to talk to ASHFORD because Ashford represents a fairy-tale world: Oxford.

He feels he never really knew CORTONE despite their mutual affection.

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Somebody told Pierre BORG he was ugly, and he believed them. He touches his face continually, rubbing his eyes, adjusting his specs, tapping his teeth, pulling his ear, subconsciously trying to cover his ugliness.

He is paranoid, a bully, a shouter. He talks as if everyone likes him and acts as if everyone hates him. He comes on all ally but it's obviously a facade. He is hopeless at interpersonal relationships - doesn't know the rules. He is lonely. He can't keep help.

His identity is totally submerged in his job: if he is successful he is 'happy,' if he fails he is dead. He never takes a holiday. His desk is huge. He has no sense of humour.

DICKSTEIN neither believes his friendliness nor responds to his bullying, so Borg alternates between the two and worries. He never knows when Dickstein is going to knock him dead. He knows Dickstein is a fantastic agent, respects him professionally, etc.

Bog can bully MOHAMMED, whose subtle Arab digs never penetrate his thick skin.

DF

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David ROSTOV is a very smart man. He is a brilliant agent and a confident manipulator of the Soviet bureaucracy. He is an opportunist: he waits for his moment then pounces like a cat, rather than creating his own chances.

His father was a minor diplomat whose career was slunked by a lack of connections, particularly NKVD connections. In consequence, Rostov joined the KGB; but he never had the breadth of vision to become a statesman. Concentrating on his strengths, he became a superb technician and learned how to manipulate the bureaucracy in order to gain maximum kudos for his triumphs. Although now a Colonel he is still a field rather than political man.

His clever son has been rejected by the prestigious Phys-Mat school because he has not enough pull. Rostov is bitterly disappointed. He seizes upon the Dickstein affair as a way to increase his pull - although his better judgement tells him this is a dangerous game. But he has a lot to lose.

He knows his strengths but he is blind to his weaknesses.

HASSAN is forced upon him. He treats him first as a foolish child, then as a dangerous adolescent.

He respects and fears DICKSTEIN.

He is friendly but 100% commanding towards TYRIN.

He treats NIR like a dog.

SUZA he sees first as a silly girl, then as a usable intelligence, and finally falls in love with her.

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Yasif HASSAN is a man driven by guilt, hatred and wounded pride. Originally ability members of the Levantine upper-middle-class, he cautiously and successfully aped the dress and manners of the Arab aristocracy.

His future was wiped out by the 1948 war. (Hatred.) One of the traumatic moments in his life was seeing his father queue for food in a refugee camp - but the Europeanised son, who himself survived, was unable to help his father and unwilling to join the family in the refugee camp. (Guilt.) He is bitterly disappointed at the Arab's repeated failures to retake Palestine. (Wounded pride.)

He is cunning, [illegible], and proud - sometimes foolishly.

DICKSTEIN has a hidden strength and passion that Hassan respects - but blithely enjoys the country he stole from Hassan. Hassan hates him, but because of his Levantine qualities considers him a formidable enemy, a suitable opponent.

Hassan hates ROSTOV more than he hates Dickstein. Rostov condescends, mistrusts, patronises Hassan - and is able to remain convinced of his superiority simply because he is part of a powerful organisation.

He has a somewhat awestruck regard for MAHMOUD, who despite his lack of European sophistication has emotional and leadership qualities beyond Hassan's comprehension.

He despises ASHFORD for his painstaking theoretical egalitarianism and his weak academic impractical pro-Arab-ism.

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1. There are too many characters in the book, particularly early on.
2. Dickstein is too nasty and Rostov not nasty enough.
3. The scenes are too short; there is too much jump-cutting.

4. Use two kinds of breaker: a space for 'Later...' and a star for 'Meanwhile...'
5. Can I eliminate about half the [illegible]?
6. Chapter Two is an imponderable. It gives the adventure credibility by placing it in the scheme of international politics; but 'it stops the story dead' - Zuckerman.
7. (And see #3) Some of the scenes are shallow and finish too fast, too flourishily.