



Nao de Chine: Treasure of the Manila Galleon

Robbie Johnson

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Synopsis of the Story A treasure quest unlike any other! A billion dollars in Spanish gold, priceless Chinese porcelain, and thousands of pieces of polished jewelry mounted with everything from Indian rubies and diamonds, to Siamese sapphires and Chinese jade. Buried in a lava cave on a tiny coral atoll in the cold North Pacific Ocean almost 400 years ago. Just waiting to be found. The sole survivor of the wrecked Spanish galleon carrying the treasure is rescued, only to die days later, but not before leaving an encrypted message in his prayer for absolution to the Catholic Pope in Rome revealing the location of the treasure. But the message never makes it to the Vatican. Instead it is discovered four centuries later in a 17-year old British Third Lieutenant's sailing log. Found in a Fort Lauderdale, FL nautical antiques store, its secret still intact, the lieutenant's log is purchased by Jake Porter, a former U.S. Marine Corps sniper from the first Gulf War now working as the captain of a wealthy surgeon's yacht, the Sea Bones. On a hunch, Jake submits the log to a Marine Corps reserve officer and graduate of the U.S. Navy's cryptology school asking that it be examined for the possibility of a hidden message. But Jake Porter makes a mistake in the course of his research and inadvertently awakens an international consortium of murderous pirates who immediately scheme to intercept the treasury's recovery and kill anyone in their way. A deadly globe-girdling pursuit of the treasure is launched that pits vicious Japanese Yakuza criminals against a handful of young marines led by Jake Porter. They will clash on the tiny Pacific atoll of Minami Torishima, and do battle-to-the-death reminiscent of the bloody World War II clashes between U.S. Marines and suicidal Japanese Imperial troops. Only this time, the Japanese fight for treasure instead of their emperor. Acting on other information in the English Third Lieutenant's log, and impatient to pursue something which he feels in his bones, Jake sails his sailboat, the Giggling Witch, across the Pacific Ocean even as his friends discover the sailing log's hidden message and others are being murdered by persons unknown. He follows the tradewinds route of the Spanish galleons and lands on the island of Saipan in the northern Marianas. As he replenishes his supplies and waits for a seasonal change in the winds that will carry him to the treasure island of Minami Torishima, Jake meets and enters into a passionate affair with a voluptuous Chamorro native woman who has a mysterious tattoo on the bottom of her left foot. Her tattoo will change everything. Jake discovers that his sailboat, the Giggling Witch, has been compromised in some way and the Japanese Yakuza are tracking him by satellite. To give them the slip, he borrows an inter-island proa owned by his Chamorro lover's family and sails off on the final outward bound leg of his journey. Finally landing on the treasure island, Jake comes to realize that the passage of almost four hundred years has thoroughly obscured the location of the treasure. After weeks of frustrating labor digging exploratory trenches, fate intervenes in a very explosive and unsuspecting way. Jake is seriously injured and his treasure recovery capabilities severely limited. He is able to fill Makena, the native proa, with selected pieces of the treasure and bear away to the east, landing on the tiny, privately-owned Hawaiian island of Niihau, an incredible open-boat voyage of more than three thousand miles. But he has left nine-tenths of the treasure behind, and must now, somehow, race back to grab it before the pirates realize that he has not recovered all of the treasure. It will be a race to the death.

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