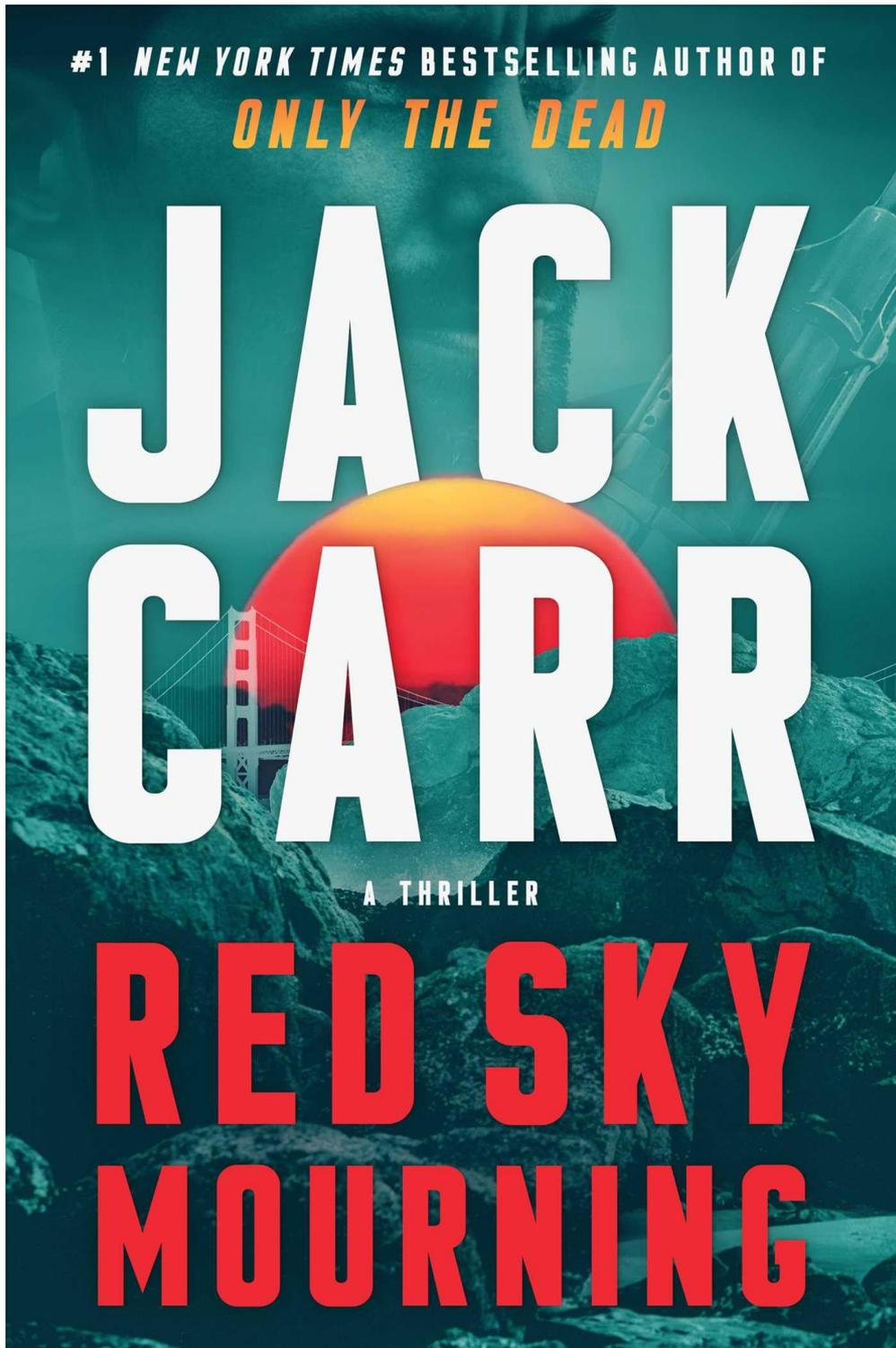


*Red Sky Mourning* (2024), Book 7 (James Reece) by Jack Carr



### About Jack Carr

George Petersen (born 3 July 1975), better known by his pen name Jack Carr, is an American author and former member of **United States Navy SEALs** who led special operations teams as a team leader, platoon commander, troop commander, and task unit commander. Over his twenty years in Naval Special Warfare, he transitioned from an enlisted SEAL sniper to a junior officer leading

assault and sniper teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, to a platoon commander practicing counterinsurgency in the southern Philippines, to commanding a special operations task unit in the most Iranian influenced section of southern Iraq throughout the tumultuous drawdown of US Forces. Jack retired from active duty in 2016 and lives with his wife and three children in Park City, Utah.

What follows are quotes from the book above. These quotes stood out in my reading of the book in January 2026. They are not meant to be exhaustive nor representative of the entire book. All quotes are to be read in this context and must not replace medical and/or other professional advice.

**Note:** Any typographical errors occurred through the transcription process and do not necessarily reflect what may be found in the book.

**Note too:** Beneath various quotations from the book, I have added my own comments and thoughts. Where I have made bold the text within a particular quotation, it's to emphasise a point. My emphasis does not necessarily appear in the original text.

## **Blurb**

*A storm is on the horizon. America's days are numbered. Deep in the Pacific Ocean, a rogue Chinese nuclear submarine sits within striking distance of the West Coast. In Silicon Valley, a tech mogul with unknown allegiances masterminds a revolution in Artificial Intelligence. A politician controlled by a foreign power is a breath away from the Oval Office. Three seemingly disconnected events are on a collision course to ignite a power grab unlike anything the world has ever seen. The country's only hope is a quantum computer that has gone dark, retreating to the deepest levels of the internet and learning at a rate inconceivable at her inception. She is now either the country's greatest saviour or its worst enemy. Known as "Alice, her sole connection to the outside world is a former Navy SEAL sniper named James Reece who has left the violence of his past life behind. Will the forces that threaten to bring America to her knees be enough to light the fuse of his resurrection?*

## **Preface**

"In a 1993 interview speaking about the film adaptation of his novel Jurassic Park, a reflection on the delusion of scientific control, author Michael Crichton said: "Biotechnology and genetic engineering are very powerful. ... The film suggests that [science's control of nature is elu-sive. And **just as war is too important to leave to the generals, science is too important to leave to scientists**. Everyone needs to be attentive."

"At times I've felt the pull to return to a life where every breath was sacred because of a constant awareness that it could be my last. As time ticks by, I feel that pull less and less. Perhaps that is because my mission of caring for my family and my passion for writing and history have combined to give me purpose."

I recall a conversation with a former detective who, retired from the Force, missed his days there. He lamented that a medical condition eventually took his badge and longed for a potential future where he could perhaps go back, even as a pen-pusher. And yet, he hated to see where the Force was heading—a place governed by politics and less by policing. The old-fashioned tactics of kicking down doors was slowly (and other time not so slowly) being replaced with identity politics-informed training and fearfulness of actually apprehending the bad guys.

I spoke with him about how our identity becomes trapped with a certain aspect of ourselves and, when that part is taken away, we find it difficult to adjust. Only when purpose is attained through another venture—and one must choose that venture wisely. Nothing, perhaps, can replace the adrenaline of going on a raid for a retired law enforcement professional. And yet, that man might still find meaning in other things. Like, it seems here, Carr has done. And my former detective is finding ways too as well.

## ***Part I: The Call***

### **Chapter 4**

"Just black [coffee] for me." "Are you sure you don't want to try a James Reece special?" she asked, pulling a jar of local honey from the shelf and opening the fridge to remove a small carton of half-and-half. "It's the only way to go," Reece said. "I'll give it a shot," Vic said "There's that CIA training. Are you building rapport with your subject?" Reece asked. "I guess it's just habit now," Vic admitted. "You look good, Reece."

"I guess it's just habit now". This is relatable. I'm told time and again (by my wife) to "Stop being a counsellor" when I'm using those skills in our conversations and those with friends. I forget that most don't employ the skills of, well, listening and empathising and asking all sorts of deep questions in typical conversations ... and I don't mind it. Just, might feel like an interrogation sometimes, lecturing

other times. And yet it's become part of who I am: habit.

## Chapter 8

"the art of politics; the art of compromise."

## Chapter 10

"Recently, in an effort to garner more clicks, he had penned a scathing review of a new thriller author. A former military guy. Geoff had printed something along the lines of "How did military service prepare one for the upper echelons of publishing?" Well, it turned out that he didn't know his audience the way he thought; the online comment section was filled with men and women pointing out that the likes of Ian Fleming, John le Carré, Roald Dahl, Jack Higgins, J. R.R. Tolkien, George Orwell, Dashiell Hammett, Joseph Heller, Herman Wouk, Alistair MacLean, Anton Myrer, Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, John Edmund Gardner, Charles McCarry, Bill Granger, W. E. B. Griffin, Frederick Forsyth, Stephen Coonts, Robert Ludlum, Stephen Hunter, and Nelson DeMille all served in the military. *Fucking comment section.*"

## Chapter 11

"The mind of another man was a sealed vault, much like the soul, though the soul was even harder to penetrate."

## Chapter 12

**"The problem is that the more I write, the more I remember, long-dead feelings, lad. Some that should stay dead."**

## Chapter 14

*"Play this like no one is coming. It's up to you. Be your own cavalry."*

## Chapter 26

"I gave up tennis early to save the knees. Sailing, fresh air, daily walks, Mr. Donovan. When I was younger and just starting out, I was passed some advice: **don't let the old man in. That's the key.**"

**"One does not need to be a clinical psychologist to be a student of human behavior.** That becomes a trait you develop over a lifetime of interactions and betrayals. When I walked into Hart's office, I took note of the books on the bookshelves just as you took note of mine when you entered my home. As you are well aware, **the books on one's shelves tell you quite a bit about them.**"

## Chapter 30

"China's one-child policy was instituted in 1980. The goal was to curb population growth and accelerate economic development. Unfortunately, the decision was more political than logical. It wasn't the population growth that was negatively impacting the economy, it was communist policies. A decade before 1980, the CCP had disincentivized having children, so a de facto one-child policy has been in place since at least 1970. They realized the fatal folly of the policy too late. It was lifted in 2016 but the damage was done. A second-order effect of the policy was the aborting of untold millions of girls, which means that between let's say 1970 and 2016 the number of males far exceeds the number of females." "That doesn't sound good." "It's catastrophic. They missed it by a generation, Reece. Even after lifting the one-child policy eight years ago, their birth rate has dropped by seventy percent." "Seventy?" "Yes. It's the largest birth-rate drop in recorded history. They hit peak workforce this past year; they simply can't sustain their industrial base and economy for another decade. Even if they were reproducing, there are not enough people under age forty to have enough children to revive Chinese society. China is in their final decade as an economic power. There is nothing they can do to stop it."

## ***Part II: The Threshold***

### Chapter 37

"I've read articles that detail how our content in America is destroying the youth. In China, TikTok is focused on math and science and building a strong patriotic society. **Your 'freedom' also gives you the freedom to destroy yourselves**, Mr. Reece."

### **Author's Note**

"TIME MACHINES EXIST. They exist in stories. All that is necessary to open the portal is a trip to your local library. Browse the bays, select your title, and settle in to be transported into history. The first stories, told around fires, passed on lessons of battle and of the hunt in an effort to keep the family, the tribe, the community, and even the species, alive. We are all here today because our ancestors listened to those stories, heeded their lessons and in turn passed them along to the next generation. We all share this connection to the past. We are all here today because of the power of story."

"Those familiar with Joseph Campbell and his seminal work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, certainly noticed the link to the three parts of this novel: The Call, The Threshold, and The Trials. I was introduced to Joseph Campbell and the "Hero's Journey" in 1988 through a series of interviews he did with Bill

Moyers that aired on PBS called *The Power of Myth*. It has stayed with me."

**Final reflections:** In his 1948 essay, 'Living In An Atomic Age' C.S. Lewis observed: "If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds."

This novel shows to me how what's (probably) happening behind the scenes in an obscure (and not so obscure) part of the world need not engross your mind. I've counselled enough who are glued to the television, consumed by the latest traumatic flavour of the day in the content they eat up to "be prepared". When asked how many of the things they bothered themselves about over the past few years actually had a direct bearing on their lives, they rarely come up with examples.

The human mind is capable of wondrous things ... things that add to humanity and that take away. It's up to us to decide how much (if at all) we focus on the things we do.

James Reece is a good example of a man on a mission to set things right. He knows he's flawed and yet he knows something must be done to move forward. He doesn't rest in the knowledge that screwed up things happen ... instead he looks to what he can do to intervene.

In an interview with Joe Rogan, former Green Beret Tim Kennedy was asked, "How do you fucking manage your mind dealing with so many horrific and traumatic experiences over and over and over again, just over a few years?" He replied: That's what my dad just asked me. But he asked me, like, way more pointed. He's like, are you okay? Are you okay, son? ... Do you remember Mr. Rogers? ... He was asked a real similar question, and it was during the civil rights protests where blacks are being beaten in the street ... and hippies are being condemned as, like, the next plague and pestilence that society could ever see. ... What would you do with all of this evil happening around us? Mr. Rogers says, ***Just look to the helpers. There's always people trying to help.***"

Reece is a helper. Are you?

*These Notes were developed by psychotherapist and author Emil Barna in January 2026 in his efforts to assist with professional development and further education for himself and those who read them. But remember, they are but a glimpse of what the book is actually about—for more context, buy the book and make up your own mind. You can find out more about Emil by visiting [www.barnacc.com](http://www.barnacc.com)*

***“History is fiction that did happen. Whereas fiction is history that might have happened.”***

**—André Gide**

***“A text without a context is a pretext to a proof text.”***

**—Dr. Don Carson**