



The Pyramid of Doom: A Novel (Nina Wilde & Eddie Chase Series Book 5)

By Andy McDermott

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A BURIED EGYPTIAN TEMPLE.
A SECRET KEPT FOR 6,000 YEARS.
A RACE FOR LIFE WORTH KILLING FOR.

An international TV audience waits breathlessly as archaeologists prepare to break into a long-hidden vault beneath the Great Sphinx. But student Macy Sharif has already made her own shocking discovery: a religious cult raiding the site. Their prize? A map that will lead to something far more astounding: the lost pyramid of Osiris. Framed by corrupt officials, Macy goes on the run, trying to reach the only people who can save her before she is silenced—permanently. American archaeologist Nina Wilde, once a renowned scientific explorer, now all but blacklisted by her colleagues, is trying to rebuild her reputation. But Macy's plea for help will send Nina and ex-SAS bodyguard Eddie Chase on the ultimate treasure hunt. From the streets of Manhattan to a yacht off Monaco to a buried desert site, they'll follow an elusive trail stalked by a killer determined to uncover a six-thousand-year-old secret. And beneath the forbidding desert, they'll enter a forgotten world both wondrous and horrifying, where the ancient God of Death has kept his secrets—until now.

From the Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

Review

“No fan of Indiana Jones, Matthew Reilly or action in general will be able to put it down.”

—*Northern Territory News*

“Adventure stories don’t get much more epic than this.”

—*Daily Mirror (U.K.)*

From the Paperback edition.

About the Author

Andy McDermott is the New York Times bestselling author of the Nina Wilde/Eddie Chase series of adventure thrillers, which have been published in over thirty countries and twenty languages. A former journalist and movie critic, he lives in Bournemouth, England, with his wife and son.

With acting credits that span stage and screen, Gildart Jackson is most often recognized for his role as Gideon on *Charmed*. He has also been featured on *Providence* and *General Hospital*, and his theater roles include Trigorin in *The Seagull*, Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, and Adrian in *Private Eyes* at the Old Globe.

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Chapter One

New York City

Three Days Later

Nina Wilde struggled to wakefulness, fighting simultaneously through the smothering sheets and the remnants of a cloying alcoholic fog to look at the bedside clock. It was well after ten am. “Crap,” she mumbled, about to chastise herself for oversleeping . . . before remembering that she had nothing to get up for.

She almost pulled the sheets back up in the hope of returning to sleep, but even a brief glimpse of the small and ugly bedroom was enough to make her want to get out of it. Not that the rest of the apartment was much better, but it represented a least-worst option.

She put on a tank top and a pair of sweatpants, ran her fingers through her unkempt hair, then padded into the other room. “Eddie?” she called, yawning. “You here?”

No reply. Her husband was out, though he had left a note on the small counter separating the kitchen area from the rest of the cramped living room. As usual, it was as terse as a military communiqué. Gone to work.

Will call later. Probably out until late. Love Eddie x. PS We need more milk.

“Great,” she sighed, picking up the small pile of mail beside the note. Credit card bill, probably large. Other credit card bill, almost certainly even larger. Junk, junk—

The last envelope had the name of a university printed in one corner.

Despite herself, she felt a flutter of hope, and hurriedly tore it open. Maybe this one was the way out of their miserable life of the past several months . . .

It wasn’t. She only needed to see the words We regret to know it was another rejection. The academic world had turned its back on her. Once someone was labeled a crank, it was a tag that was almost impossible to remove—even if that person had been right all along.

Nina put down the letter, then slumped on the creaking couch and sighed again. A smear campaign by a powerful enemy had not only cost her her job, but also left her regarded as a nut, on the same level as those who claimed to have found Noah’s Ark or El Dorado or Bigfoot. Her previous world-shaking finds—Atlantis, the tombs of Hercules and King Arthur—suddenly counted for nothing, academia as prone as any other field to having only a short-term memory: What have you done for us lately?

So now she was out of a job, out of prospects . . . and perilously close to being out of money. All she had was Eddie.

Except she didn’t, because the demands of his work meant he was almost never there.

A baby started crying in one of the neighboring apartments, the thin walls doing little to muffle the noise. “Goddammit,” she muttered, putting her hands over her face.

Eddie Chase emerged from the East Side brownstone building, glancing up and down the street before descending the steps.

“I saw that,” said a woman’s voice behind him.

Eddie looked around at her. “Saw what?”

“You, checking there wasn’t anybody outside who might know you.” Amy Martin came down the steps, her dark bob bouncing, and squeezed the balding Englishman’s waist. “You’re so cute.”

“It’s not exactly something I want getting back to Nina, is it?” he told the younger woman. “I’ll tell her myself, when the timing’s right. And I don’t want anyone else to find out either.”

Amy grinned. “You enjoy it, though. Don’t deny it.” She went to the curb, looking for a cab. “So, you wanna do this again tomorrow?”

“Yeah, if I can make it,” Eddie told her. “Depends if Grant Thorn needs me or not.”

She grinned again, shaking her head. “I still can’t believe you get to hang out with a movie star.”

“I’m not exactly ‘hanging out’ with him. I’m his bodyguard, not his best mate. And he’s, well . . . kind of a

prat.”

“But one with a Lamborghini, right? That’s pretty cool.”

“Bit of a waste, though. He never drives it faster than ten miles an hour, ’cause he wants everyone to see him inside it.”

“You guarding his body today?” She waved down an approaching cab.

“Yeah, picking him up in a bit. He wants to buy a suit for some charity bash this evening, so I’ve got to keep an eye on him. ’Cause Fifth Avenue’s such a dangerous place.”

The cab stopped just as Eddie’s phone rang. He looked at the screen: Nina. “Well, have fun with your Hollywood buddies!” Amy said as she got in.

“I’ll try,” he replied, answering the phone. “Hi.”

“Hi,” said Nina. “Where are you?” He had become all too familiar with her leaden tone over the past months, but this morning it had a little extra sprinkle of gloom.

“I’m . . . just at the gym with Grant Thorn.”

A pause. “Oh. When will you be able to come home?”

“See you tomorrow!” Amy called as the cab pulled away.

He gave her a slightly annoyed wave. “Not for ages, sorry. I’m with him all day.”

A second disappointed “Oh.” Then: “Who was that?”

He shot the departing taxi a guilty look. “Someone in a cab.”

“I thought you were at a gym?”

“I’m waiting outside. What’s wrong?”

She sighed. “Nothing. It doesn’t matter.”

“It matters to me. Look, I can call Charlie, see if someone can cover for me.”

“No, it’s . . . it’s okay. I mean, ha, we need the money, right?” The laugh came across as more desperate than amused.

“You sure? If you want, I can—”

“It’s okay, Eddie. It’s okay.”

His phone chirped. A glance at the screen told him it was his client calling. “Sorry, but I’ve got to go. Oh, did you get my note about the milk?”

“Yeah, I did. I’ll see you when you get back. I love you.”

“Love you too,” he said as she disconnected. Great. Now he felt even worse about lying to her.

He switched to the incoming call. “Hello?”

“Hey, the Chase-ster!” came the laid-back voice of Grant Thorn. “Where you been, man? Your phone was busy.”

“Yeah, my wife called.”

“The old ball and chain, huh? Just kidding, man. Not saying she’s old at all. Hey, why don’t I take you two out to dinner sometime? How about that?”

“Sounds like fun,” Eddie answered noncommittally, secure in the knowledge that all memory of the offer would have vanished from the actor’s mind by the time they met. “You still want me to meet you at your apartment?”

“Yeah. There’s this chick here, give me twenty minutes to get rid of her. Okay, two chicks. Make that thirty minutes. Oh, and can you pick me up a carton of OJ? Got a serious case of dry-mouth.”

“I’m your bodyguard, not your butler, Mr. Thorn,” Eddie reminded him. His job might be to look after his clients, but that didn’t include wiping their arses for them, and he always made sure they knew it. “Maybe you could get one of your chicks to go out for it.”

“Oh, dude! I don’t want them to come back! I mean, they’re hot and all, but once the box is opened there’s a no-return policy, right? Look, I got five hundred bucks in my wallet here. It’s yours if you bring me a carton of OJ. Like a bonus. Huh?”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Eddie told him before ending the call. Unlike the dinner, he was definitely going to remind Grant about that offer.

Nina sat morosely at the living room table, nursing a black coffee. Her laptop was open, awaiting her command, but so far she hadn’t even checked her email.

She took an experimental sip from her mug. Without milk, the coffee had been too hot to drink immediately; now that it had cooled, it was too bitter. She grimaced, wondering if she could drum up the energy to go to the store for milk. The more she considered it, the less likely it seemed.

Her phone rang, startling her. She picked it up. “Hello?”

“Hello, Nina.” A familiar voice—Professor Roger Hogarth, an associate from her university days. They had been in occasional contact over the past months, but mostly by email.

“Roger, hi! What can I do for you?”

“Always business first with you, isn’t it?” His chiding was delivered with amusement. “I’ll get to that in a minute. But how are you?”

"I'm . . . fine," she said flatly.

"And the new apartment? Liking it any more than when you moved in?"

"The less said the better, I think."

A small chuckle. "I see. Don't worry, things will improve, I'm sure. Probably when you least expect it. And on the subject of unexpected things . . . first, you remember that I was trying to meet Maureen to complain about that ridiculous sideshow she's got going on at the Sphinx?"

"Yes?" said Nina, feeling a stab of anger at the mere mention of the name. She'd had plenty of reasons to dislike Professor Maureen Rothschild even before the woman became one of the principal architects of her fall from grace.

"Well, she finally agreed to see me. Tomorrow, in fact."

"Really? That's great."

"Took a lot of persuading, as you'd imagine. But unfortunately, the second unexpected thing is . . . I can't go."

"Why not?"

"Slipped on the stairs, and now I'm sitting here with my foot bandaged up like a mummy."

"Are you all right?" she asked, concerned.

"Just a sprain, thank God. The perils of old age are ridiculous, though—I did the pole vault and high jump when I was young, never so much as stubbed a toe. Now I drop six inches and I'm out of action for a week!" He tutted.

"So what are you going to do about Maureen?"

"Well, that's why I'm calling. I was hoping you might go in my place."

"Are you serious?" Nina said, surprised. "She's the person who fired me!"

"Okay, it could be . . . awkward. But what she's doing is a travesty of archaeology. It seems that every time I turn on the TV there's another commercial for this circus."

"Yeah, I've seen them," Nina muttered. The promos for the live opening of the Hall of Records had been omnipresent for the last couple of weeks, irritating her more with each repeat.

"It's shameless commercialism, not science. And if there's nothing in there, it'll make the entire archaeological profession look like utter fools by association. I doubt it'll make any difference, but somebody at least has to say these things to Maureen."

"And you want me to do it? Sorry, Roger. Maureen Rothschild is one of the last people I want to see."

“I understand,” Hogarth said after a pause. “I thought you probably wouldn’t, but I had to try. Someone of your standing would have more chance of getting the point across.”

Nina tried to hold in her bitterness. “My standing’s not very high with anyone right now.”

“Don’t underestimate yourself, Nina.” This time, the chiding was more pointed. “One setback doesn’t end a career. I’ve had more than a few myself.”

“Not on my scale, though.”

“Oh well,” Hogarth said with a sigh, accepting defeat, “we’ll just have to pray this whole affair doesn’t turn into a disaster.”

“Let’s hope. Get well soon, Roger.”

“Thank you. And I’m sure things will get better for you too.”

She said good-bye then hung up, blowing out a glum breath. The coffee had gone cold, but she was now even less enthusiastic about leaving the apartment than before.

Users Review

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Corrina Sutton:

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