

# The Alexandria Link: A Novel

To Download this book in many format Visit :

<https://wocoentala.org/source1/3e6d89c071658f33c25c10962ae20620>

---

Cotton Malone retired from the high-risk world of elite operatives for the U.S. Justice Department to lead the low-key life of a rare-book dealer. But his quiet existence is shattered when he receives an anonymous e-mail: "You have something I want. You're the only person on earth who knows where to find it. Go get it. You have 72 hours. If I don't hear from you, you will be childless." His horrified ex-wife confirms that the threat is real: Their teenage son has been kidnapped. When Malone's Copenhagen bookshop is burned to the ground, it becomes brutally clear that those responsible will stop at nothing to get what they want. And what they want is nothing less than the lost Library of Alexandria.

A cradle of ideas-historical, philosophical, literary, scientific, and religious-the Library of Alexandria was unparalleled in the world. But fifteen hundred years ago, it vanished into the mists of myth and legend-its vast bounty of wisdom coveted ever since by scholars, fortune hunters, and those who believe its untold secrets hold the key to ultimate power.

Now a cartel of wealthy international moguls, bent on altering the course of history, is desperate to breach the library's hallowed halls-and only Malone possesses the information they need to succeed. At stake is an explosive ancient document with the potential not only to change the destiny of the Middle East but to shake the world's three major religions to their very foundations.

Pursued by a lethal mercenary, Malone crosses the globe in search of answers. His quest will lead him to England and Portugal, even to the highest levels of American government-and the shattering outcome, deep in the Sinai desert, will have worldwide repercussions.

Steve Berry is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Balkan Escape*, *The Paris Vendetta*, *The Charlemagne Pursuit*, *The Venetian Betrayal*, *The Alexandria Link*, *The Templar Legacy*, *The Third Secret*, *The Romanov Prophecy*, and *The Amber Room*. His books have been translated into 37 languages and sold in 50 countries. He lives in the historic city of St. Augustine, Florida and is at work on his next novel. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have founded History Matters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our heritage. To learn more about Steve and the foundation, visit [www.steveberry.org](http://www.steveberry.org).  
ONE

Copenhagen, Denmark

Tuesday, October 4  
The present

1:45 am

Cotton Malone stared straight into the face of trouble. Outside his bookshop's open front door stood his ex-wife, the last person on earth he'd expected to see. He quickly registered panic in her tired eyes, remembered the pounding that had awoken him a few minutes before, and instantly thought of his son.

"Where's Gary?" he asked.

"You son of a bitch. They took him. Because of you. They took him." She lunged forward, her closed fists crashing down onto his shoulders. "You sorry son of a bitch." He grabbed her wrists and stopped the attack as she started crying. "I left you because of this. I thought this kind of thing was over."

"Who took Gary?" More sobs were his answer. He kept hold of her arms. "Pam. Listen to me. Who took Gary?"

She stared at him. "How the hell am I supposed to know?"

"What are you doing here? Why didn't you go to the police?"

"Because they said not to. They said if I went anywhere near the police, Gary was dead. They said they would know, and I believed them."

"Who's they?"

She wrenched her arms free, her face flooded with anger. "I don't know. All they said was for me to wait two days, then come here and give you this." She rummaged through her shoulder bag and produced a phone. Tears continued to rain down her cheeks. "They said for you to go online and open your e-mail."

Had he heard right? Go online and open your e-mail?

He flipped open the phone and checked the frequency. Enough megahertz to make it world-capable. Which made him wonder. Suddenly he felt vulnerable. H[?] jbro Plads was quiet. At this late hour no one roamed the city square.

His senses came alive.

"Get inside." And he yanked her into the shop and closed the door. He hadn't switched on any lights.

"What is it?" she asked, her voice shredded by fear.

He faced her. "I don't know, Pam. You tell me. Our son has apparently been taken by God-knows-who, and you wait two days before telling a soul about it? That didn't strike you as insane?"

"I wasn't going to jeopardize his life."

"And I would? How have I ever done that?"

"By being you," she said in a frigid tone, and he instantly recalled why he no longer lived with her.

A thought occurred to him. She'd never been to Denmark. "How did you find me?"

"They told me."

"Who the hell is they?"

"I don't know, Cotton. Two men. Only one did the talking. Tall, dark-haired, flat face."

"American?"

"How would I know?"

"How did he speak?"

She seemed to catch hold of herself. "No. Not American. They had accents. European."

He motioned with the phone. "What am I supposed to do with this?"

"He said to open your e-mail and it would be explained."

She glanced nervously around at the shelves cast in shadows. "Upstairs, right?"

Gary would have told her he lived over the store. He certainly hadn't. They'd spoken only once since he'd retired from the Justice Department and left Georgia last year, and that had been two months back, in August, when he'd brought Gary home after their summer visit. She'd coldly told him that Gary was not his natural son. Instead the boy was the product of an affair from sixteen years ago, her response to his own infidelity. He'd wrestled with that demon ever since and had not, as yet, come to terms with its implications. One thing he'd decided at the time—he had no intention of ever speaking to Pam Malone again. Whatever needed to be said would be said between him and Gary.

But things seemed to have changed.

"Yeah," he said. "Upstairs."

They entered his apartment, and he sat at the desk. He switched on his laptop and waited for the programs to boot. Pam had finally grabbed hold of her emotions. She was like that. Her moods ran in waves. Soaring highs and cavernous lows. She was a lawyer, like him, but where he'd worked for the government, she handled high-stakes trials for Fortune 500 companies that could afford to pay her firm's impressive fees. When she'd first gone to law school he'd thought the decision a reflection of him, a way for them to share a life together. Later he'd learned it was a way for her to gain independence.

That was Pam.

The laptop was ready. He accessed his mailbox.

Empty.

"Nothing here."

Pam rushed toward him. "What do you mean? He said to open your e-mail."

"That was two days ago. And by the way, how did you get here?"

"They had a ticket, already bought."

He couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Are you nuts? What you did was give them a two-day head start."

"Don't you think I know that?" she yelled. "You think I'm a complete idiot? They told me my phones were tapped and I was being watched. If I varied from their instructions, even a little, Gary was dead. They showed me a picture." She caught herself and tears flowed anew. "His eyes . . . oh, his eyes." She broke down again. "He was scared."

His chest throbbed and his temples burned. He'd intentionally left behind a life of daily danger to find something new. Had that life now hunted him down? He grabbed the edge of the desk. It would do no good for both of them to fall apart. If whoever they were wanted Gary dead, then he was already. No. Gary was a bargaining chip—a way to apparently gain his undivided attention.

The laptop dinged.

His gaze shot to the screen's lower-right corner: receiving mail. Then he saw greetings appear on the from line and your son's life noted as the subject. He maneuvered the cursor and opened the e-mail.

YOU HAVE SOMETHING I WANT. THE ALEXANDRIA LINK. YOU HID IT AND YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON ON EARTH WHO KNOWS WHERE TO FIND IT. GO GET IT. YOU HAVE 72 HOURS. WHEN YOU HAVE IT, HIT THE NUMBER 2 BUTTON ON THE PHONE. IF I DON'T HEAR FROM YOU AT THE END OF 72 HOURS, YOU WILL BE CHILDLESS. IF DURING THAT TIME YOU SCREW WITH ME, YOUR SON WILL LOSE A VITAL APPENDAGE. 72 HOURS. FIND IT AND WE'LL TRADE.

Pam was standing behind him. "What's the Alexandria Link?"

He said nothing. He couldn't. He was indeed the only person on earth who knew, and he'd given his word.

"Whoever sent that message knows all about it. What is it?"

He stared at the screen and knew there'd be no way to trace the message. The sender, like himself, surely knew how to use black holes-computer servers that randomly routed e-mails through an electronic maze. Not impossible to follow, but difficult.

He stood from the chair and ran a hand through his hair. He'd meant to get a haircut yesterday. He worked the sleep from his shoulders and sucked a few deep breaths. He'd earlier slipped on a pair of jeans and a long-sleeved shirt that hung open, exposing a gray undershirt, and he was suddenly chilled by fear.

"Dammit, Cotton-"

"Pam, shut up. I have to think. You're not helping."

"I'm not helping? What the-"

The cell phone rang. Pam lunged for it, but he cut her off and said, "Leave it."

"What do you mean? It could be Gary."

"Get real."

He scooped up the phone after the third ring and pushed talk.

"Took long enough," the male voice said in his ear. He caught a Dutch accent. "And please, no if-you-hurt-that-boy-I'm-going-to-kill-you bra- vado. Neither one of us has the time. Your seventy-two hours have already started."

Malone stayed silent, but he recalled something he learned long ago. Never let the other side set the bargain. "Stick it up your ass. I'm not going anywhere."

"You take a lot of risks with your son's life."

"I see Gary. I talk to him. Then, I go."

"Take a look outside."

He rushed to the window. Four stories down H<sub>2</sub> jbro Plads was still quiet, except for two figures standing on the far side of the cobbled expanse.

Both silhouettes shouldered weapons.

Grenade launchers.

"Don't think so," the voice said in his ear.

Two projectiles shot through the night and obliterated the windows below him.

Both exploded.

Other Books

The Patriot Threat. "Once a member of an elite intelligence division within the Justice Department, Malone is now a retired bookshop owner in Denmark. But when his former boss, Stephanie Nelle, asks him to track a rogue North Korean who may have acquired some top secret Treasury Department files--the kind that could bring the United States to its knees--Malone is vaulted into a harrowing twenty-four-hour chase that begins on the canals in Venice and ends in the remote highlands of Croatia. With appearances by Franklin Roosevelt, Andrew Mellon, a curious painting that still hangs in the National Gallery of Art, and some eye-opening revelations about the dollar bill, Malone's high-stakes investigation will ultimately beg the question: What if the federal income tax is illegal? Now it's up to him to find the answer--at all costs"--Page 4 of cover.

Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ . "Once a member of an elite intelligence division within the Justice Department, Malone is now a retired bookshop owner in Denmark."