

*PART THREE*  
*RETURN*  
*TO DANVAR.*

*ARTIFACTS OF*  
*THE OLD WORLD.*



*FIG.3 COURTSHIP ATTIRE.*

*Sand.*

*hugh howey*



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## About the Book

An eldest daughter is a father's curse. Vic knows this. She knows she was never supposed to be the one. But her father taught her to breathe beneath the sand, taught her how to dive deep and find the treasures of the buried past. He taught her brother as well. When she hears of Danvar's discovery, it feels as though fate has slipped her by. If the rumors are to be believed, that is. And while she has her doubts, her missing brother sends her on a hunt of her own. Cities are not the only things that get buried and forgotten. There are families, too.

## About the Author

Hugh Howey spent eight years living on boats and working as a yacht captain for the rich and famous. It wasn't until the love of his life carried him away from these vagabond ways that he began to pursue literary adventures, rather than literal ones.

Hugh wrote and self-published his first adult novel, *Wool*, which won rave reviews and praise from readers. *Shift* is its prequel.

Hugh lives in Jupiter, Florida, with his wife Amber and their dog Bella.

## **Also by Hugh Howey**

*Wool*  
*Shift*  
*Dust*

# **Sand**

Part 3:

**Return to Danvar**

by Hugh Howey

## 1 • The Prodigal Daughter

All of life was like the deep sand, Vic had learned. From birth to death it was a series of violent constrictions, one after the other, an oily fist gripping hapless souls who popped free long enough to gasp half a lungful before they were seized again. This was how Vic had come to see the world. Everywhere she looked, she saw life squeezing people, forcing them from one tight spot to the next, the cruel palms of misfortune wrapped around hapless necks.

The secret to surviving these sufferings, she had found, was to keep perfectly still in its clutches. Learning how *not* to breathe was the answer. Learning how to find joy in not breathing. The only difference between a choke and a hug was an open pathway. Which was why Vic had taught herself to hold her breath. And then life had become a series of uninterrupted embraces.

At six hundred meters, sand refused to budge. It grew deaf as a selfish lover to her thoughts and wishes. It pinned her and held her helpless. Six hundred meters was well past where divers perished. Long before they reached these depths, most died because they struggled to simultaneously breathe and flow the sand. Wrestling two men at once was futile. Vic knew.

Another two minutes on that lungful of air, and she would pass out. Already, lights popped in her vision, the edges growing dim. It would take her thirty minutes to get to the surface from that depth. Thirty minutes to go on two minutes of air. She would be fine. She spotted two of the hard metal cases near one another, the kind with the good seals. The cases stood out bright orange in her vision amid the greens and blues of the softer bags. The oval conveyance device from which the bags had spilled was a