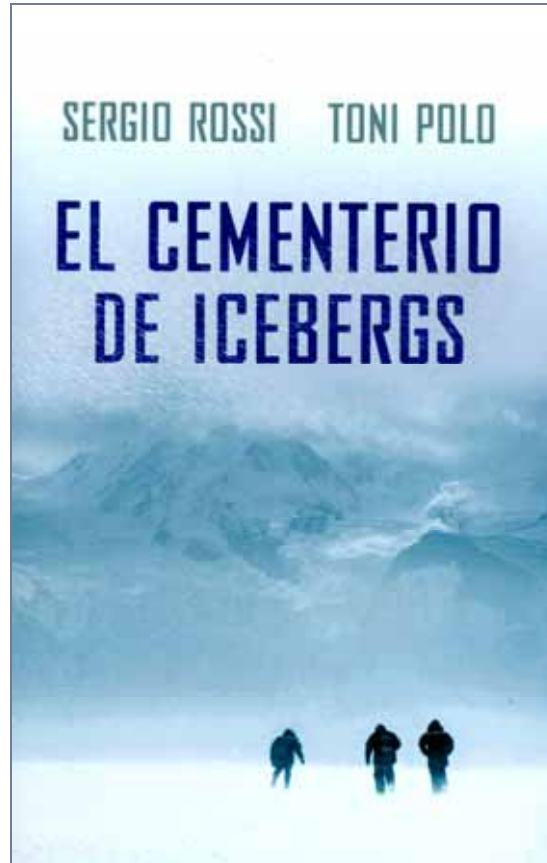


SERGIO ROSSI TONI POLO



**THE CEMENTERY
OF ICEBERGS**
ECOTHRILLER

THE CEMENTERY OF ICEBERGS

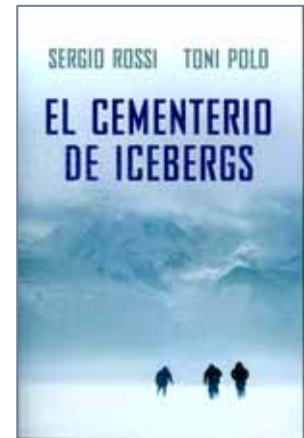




SERGIO ROSSI TONI POLO
**THE CEMENTERY
OF ICEBERGS**

ECOTHRILLER

Plaza 6 Janés
Barcelona, 2010
362 pages



An action-packed “ecothriller” set against the backdrop of the Antarctic and warning against indiscriminate exploitation of the only continent in the world that has escaped the hand of man ... so far!

The southern-hemisphere summer of 2013. Four Chinese scientists are found with their throats cut near the German base of Neumayer, in the Antarctic. Their murderers have left no clue regarding the motives for their crime. But that is only the beginning.

Shortly afterwards, well into the southern autumn of that same year, some fifty scientists embark on the world’s largest ice-breaking oceanography vessel, the *Polarstern*, heading for the Weddell Sea, in the Antarctic.

Among their number is doctor Tomás Martí, on a pioneering mission to observe the Antarctic ocean-bed organisms at a time of the year when they remain completely covered by the ice.

The scientists are joined at the last minute by a group about which nobody knows anything, headed by a man called doctor Hutty. The latecomers insist on getting to Austasen, the area called the “Cemetery of Icebergs”, where a large number of these immense masses of ice are retained by circular currents, at a time of the year when the ice shelf is fast solidifying and becoming dangerous.

After several confrontations and the sudden death of a researcher, the captain of the *Polarstern* decides to chart a course towards the much-feared Cemetery of Icebergs. When they reach the heart of Austasen the ship suffers a fault in its engines, and those on board are left isolated in a place with the most severe winters on the face of the earth.

While the scientists struggle for survival, the questions are piling up. Had the vessel had a breakdown or had it been sabotaged? What was the purpose of the strange apparatus that Hutty’s men have brought along? What strategic material lies concealed at the bottom of Austasen?

The intervention of Tomás and his group will prove vital in discovering the truth and saving the white continent from man’s greed.

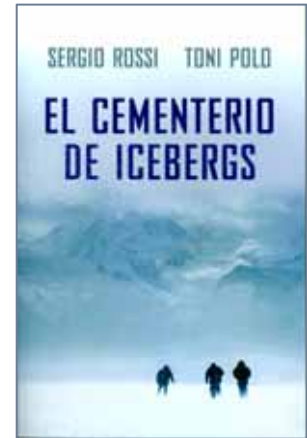




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Summary:

Four Chinese researchers are murdered right in the middle of the Antarctic ice shelf, near the German scientific base of Neumayer. Nobody can explain the reason, nobody knows who might have committed the crime, and not much was known even about the victims. Two months later, right in the middle of the southern-hemisphere autumn, the Catalan biologist Tomás Martí embarks on an expedition to the white continent on board the world's largest oceanographic vessel, the *Polarstern*, together with various groups of other scientists, to undertake a period of study in the Antarctic. It is a special mission, almost a pioneering one in polar science, since it would permit observation of the zone's submarine fauna at a time of the year in which the ice becomes impenetrable to the sunlight, which decreases to the point of disappearing completely in the winter season.

Of the groups of researchers, attention is immediately drawn to the one led by the American doctor Adrian Huty, made up of six researchers of different nationalities. While the other teams are busily engaged in getting hold of samples from the seabed, bickering over usage time for the laboratories, or spending entire nights keeping a close watch on their sample-gathering equipment, Huty and his team wait in worrying idleness for the appropriate moment to try out a sophisticated machine equipped with the most innovative technology, but about which they have not provided too many details. On the compulsory visit to the Neumayer base, the American arouses the suspicion of Tomás, who is beginning to think that all is not as it should be.

Then the death from a heart attack of the German professor Hans Franzel, the most veteran on the expedition, only increases the Catalan biologist's mistrust of the American scientist, which becomes a thoroughgoing though unjustified paranoia: he begins to strike him as haughty, devious, aggressive. The Italian Enrico Squarciarapino tries to mediate between his boss Huty and the scientists who simply cannot understand the way he is behaving. Tension comes out when David Corominas, a former scholarship holder with Tomás and by that time his right-hand man, overhears a conversation between two colleagues of Huty and discovers that they are not scientists but military men. And the young man panics when Pankow, a real lap dog of Huty's, threatens him and, in order to prevent him revealing what he had discovered, strikes him with an ice pick while they are cleaning the rear ramp of the *Polarstern*. An unfortunate accident, in the eyes of the crew.



Alongside these events, a commando made up of four Chinese soldiers is traversing the Antarctic ice shelf with one objective in mind – to locate the *Polarstern*, which they are convinced is carrying something that belongs to them.

The situation aboard the *Polarstern* becomes unsustainable when Hutty proposes that they go on as far as Austasen, the Cemetery of Icebergs, a dangerous place for ships at that time of year when the ice floes are left trapped in a current with no outlet. Just when it appears that the situation is calming down again, two of the ship's four engines break down.

The sea is solidifying rapidly and the vessel, without its power at one hundred per cent, runs a serious risk of becoming trapped during the imminent polar winter. The heating system has been left damaged also, and two of the three interior floors are unusable due to the cold. The captain, Sepp Fuller, irresistibly attracted by the charms of one of the female scientists on the expedition, is to feel betrayed and disappointed and, at those critical moments, loses control of the situation. The location of the vessel ends up alarming the crew, for they are locked in by ice right at the heart of the Cemetery of Icebergs, the final objective of Hutty. It becomes obvious that the captain had altered course without telling the rest of the crew, pressurised by an inflexible Hutty determined to get through to the end of his mission.

Nothing can be hidden any more. Hutty and his team reveal their true identity and intentions. Two people have died and one remains disappeared. By now nobody believes in coincidences any more. The soldiers are armed and turn out to be professional mercenaries whom nobody can face up to. Tomás's team manage to watch them while they are on the ship's deck trying out the mysterious machine they are transporting. Hundreds of microrobots emerge from the enormous appliance that Hutty has brought along, the very one he had stolen with force of arms from the Chinese he had then killed. Amazed, Tomás and his team understand that they have before them a powerful piece of technology for carrying out one of mankind's oldest dreams – that of obtaining minerals from the white continent, the last remaining bastion untouched by human greed.

Tomás and his companions grasp that what they are planning to do with the machine in the underwater mountain beneath Austasen is none other than extract from the depths a strategic material named tantalum. Truly horrified at their discovery, they realise that the international treaty protecting the resources of the Antarctic is turning out to be not worth the paper it is written on.

But putting the experiment into practice does not work out as Hutty had intended, and three of his men have to undertake a risky immersion. The internecine struggles of the group of soldiers come to light, and Tomás and Squarciapino will join together in an attempt to put an end to the madness of Hutty and his faithful followers. When it appears that they are all at the mercy of the two psychopaths Hutty and Pankow, the commando of Chinese soldiers burst onto the ship as if from nowhere, bringing the entire crew face to face with chaos and unleashing an unsustainable situation.





SERGIO ROSSI

TONI POLO

SERGIO ROSSI is a scientific researcher at the Marine Sciences Institute of Barcelona (CSIC). Born in 1969 in Barcelona, he is half Italian and half Spanish, has a doctorate in Biology from the University of Barcelona, and is a consummate observer of nature.

He specialises in marine biology, and has taken part in a number of scientific expeditions taking him all over the world: the Antarctic, California, Réunion island... He is involved in various scientific projects, such as *Eurogel* (a European project studying the impact of jellyfish on fisheries and tourism), *Filant* (a National project seeking to gain a better understanding of communities of organisms in the Antarctic), and *Coral Rojo* (*Red Coral* - a Regional project which is taking a close look at the serious problem of the drop in size and population density of this emblematic inhabitant of the Mediterranean).

He has published papers in a number of specialist research journals, and makes contributions as a reporter and photographer to various media featuring popular-science news (*La Vanguardia*, the *GEO* magazine, *Investigación y Ciencia*, *Muy Interesante*, *Quercus* and *Inmersión* among others).

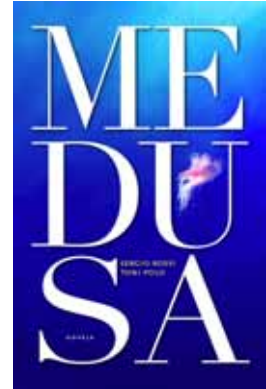
TONI POLO was born in Barcelona in 1969 and is a journalist. After graduating in Contemporary History at the Geography and History Department of the University of Barcelona, he obtained a Master's degree in Journalism through the course run by the daily newspaper *El País* in conjunction with the Autonomous University of Madrid. He then went on to make contributions to various media concerns.

Such as that same newspaper *El País*, the radio station *Cadena Ser* (*Radio Barcelona*), and other media channels such as the magazine *Penthouse* and the magazine *El Pipiripao*. He was a founder member of the editing team for the newspaper *20 minutos Barcelona*. He was the author of the restaurants guide *Comer bien en Barcelona* (*Eating Well in Barcelona*), published by *El País-Aguilar*.



TONI POLO & SERGIO ROSSI:
MEDUSA
MEDUSA

Plaza & Janés, Barcelona, 2007
336 pp – Genre: Eco-thriller



A **novel of the bestseller type whose theme – natural disasters – will attract the attention of a broad readership** concerned at the future of our planet. Set against the background of the murky interests of big companies

The book tackles the catastrophic situation faced by a future world that is not far off, a world in which marine fauna have been badly hit, with grave repercussions for mankind. The disaster was apparently caused by the appearance of a species of jellyfish feeding on fish larvae, though in the end the real culprit is glimpsed: the voracity of human beings.

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