

American Subversive Study Guide

American Subversive by David Goodwillie (author)

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Plot Summary

American Subversive by David Goodwillie is an interesting novel about how two unrelated individuals get involved in a bombing in New York City. Aidan Cole receives an anonymous email blaming the bombing on Paige Roderick, and when he pursues Paige, his life changes drastically in only a few days as he becomes involved with Movements and Actions he knows nothing about. American Subversive is an entertaining, though disturbing, account of one activist group's attempts to change the world.

Hiding in a safe house, Aidan Cole begins writing to explain his actions as Paige Roderick is doing the same elsewhere. At the party of Aidan's estranged girlfriend, Cressida, Aidan checks his email to find an anonymous email from EmpiresFall containing a photograph of Paige Roderick in front of 660 Madison Ave which was recently bombed; the caption says she is responsible. Paige meets Keith and Lindsay at a truck stop, and they drive to Vermont to plan their Actions. Paige became involved with various activist groups after her brother, Bobby, was killed in Iraq, and she has recently fallen in with Keith Sutter. Hesitant to deal with the hassle the FBI will pose if he posts his newfound information on his blog, Roorback.com, Aidan searches for Paige Roderick online, but when his efforts are futile, he contacts Cressida for help, asking her to research Paige and two other names. Keith tells Paige that, in Vermont, Lindsay will get a job in town in order to be their eyes and ears, while he and Paige will work from the house, planning Actions.

When Aidan and Cressida meet for dinner, Cressida is convinced that LeRoux is the focus of Aidan's search, causing her to storm off angrily when he refuses to pursue the story, but Aidan leaves the restaurant with a new photo of Paige Roderick which is attached to an article about a dance at Fishers Island. Aidan calls Julian, his best friend, and tells him about the photo since Julian's parents belong to the golf club on Fishers Island. Keith, Lindsay and Paige settle in at the house in Vermont, and Keith and Paige steal two cases of Toval, an explosive, from the government for Keith to use in making his bombs. Julian flies Aidan to Fishers Island to talk to Brendan Carlyle, Paige's date in the article. Pretending to be Brendan, Aidan calls the Rodericks in North Carolina, and when they mention they believe Paige called them from a pay phone in Vermont, he calls the Vermont Directory and learns that the number corresponds to the village of Waitsfield. Paige finds a target, Indigo Holdings, and planning the Action leads to Paige and Keith going to New York to check out 660 Madison Ave, the location they plan to bomb. Since Julian refuses to go to Vermont with him, Aidan takes a ferry and a train to his mother's house where he borrows her car to drive to Waitsfield, but his inquiries in town for Paige Roderick yield no results.

Lindsay and Keith go to New York to detonate the bomb above Barney's, but the bomb goes off on the wrong floor. When Lindsay alerts Keith that a man is in town asking about Paige, Paige stakes out Aidan's motel room and follows him to the county fair where she confronts him to ask what he wants. She runs away from him after seeing the photograph of herself in front of Barney's. Back in New York, Julian does not know

what to tell Aidan about Paige but suggests Aidan could help her indirectly, and Cressida breaks up with Aidan after a fight. Keith does not believe that their patrons sent the picture of Paige, so the group begins planning for their next Action; Keith wants to bomb the National News Network, N3. When Keith and Lindsay go to New York on a reconnaissance trip, Paige looks at the bomb in the garage, and when she finds it filled with shrapnel, she leaves and drives to Aidan's house. While recounting her drive, Paige stops writing after she notices a man outside the window. At Aidan's apartment, Paige tells him that she wants him to publish an expose on Roorback concerning the Barney's bombing in order to stop the N3 Action, but Aidan convinces her to wait a day and try to think of another idea while he visits his father in Connecticut.

When Cressida sees Paige in Aidan's apartment building, Paige checks into the Liberty Inn, and Aidan hurries home. Aidan interrupts his narrative to express his distress at Paige's disappearance. When Aidan cannot get in touch with Cressida or Julian, Paige takes him to the staging apartment in Chatham Square so they can confront Keith and try to dissuade him from the N3 Action. Simon, Aidan's mom's boyfriend, arrives and confesses he is Keith's patron as well as EmpiresFall. As Simon, Paige and Aidan plot to stop Keith, Simon finds a news report that Paige and Aidan are suspected in the Indigo bombing, and Aidan is distraught to find that Julian and Cressida betrayed him. Aidan, Paige and Simon drive to N3 to try to intercept Keith and Lindsay, but they are too late; the bomb is already planted. Simon tries to disarm the bomb, but it detonates, and Paige and Aidan drive away. Paige runs from her safe house because her handler's friend surveys her apartment. After N3, she and Aidan go to the Movement who protects but separates them. Paige contacts Simon's friend who sends her out West.

Section 1: pages 1-20

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In the Prologue, Aidan Cole informs the reader he is in hiding somewhere that they cannot find him, a half mile from the county road in a house converted from a barn. He is unable to communicate with anyone because he never knows who may be listening in, but his handlers bring him newspapers and supplies twice weekly. For three years, Aidan wrote and edited a popular blog, Roorback.com, about the defamations and falsehoods in the present media age. Somewhere, Paige Roderick is also using words to explain their actions because that was their promise the last night they were together in hopes their accounts may aid their defense if they are caught or enlighten others if they are killed.

Aidan continues that it all starts three months ago at the party of his girlfriend, Cressida Kent, a relationship columnist for the New York Times. The city is still reeling from a bomb that went off the last Wednesday of August. Cressida's loft is full of people with journalistic questions about the specifics of the bombing, but Aidan searches for Cressida because they have been fighting about her latest column and he hopes to reconcile. When he catches the attention of his best friend, Julian Touche, the two pick up where they left off as Julian has disappeared for several months as usual. The bomb detonated at 3:45 A.M. on August 22 on the deserted fifteenth floor of 660 Madison Avenue, the building where Barney's is located. As Julian flirts with the deejay across the room, he informs Aidan that he obtained his pilot's license because it might be helpful back home in Venezuela. Cressida interrupts the conversation, so Julian leaves to allow them to get reacquainted. Cressida refuses to discuss why she did not invite Aidan to her party because she does not want to ruin the night. They schedule a date for the following evening before Cressida returns to her duties as hostess. After enduring several minutes of jokes about Roorback and Cressida from his boss, Derrick Franklin, Aidan ducks into Cressida's bedroom to use her computer. The last email contains an attachment but no subject, and as the image opens, Julian enters the room with the deejay but stares at the image on the laptop of a young, dark-haired woman striding across Madison Avenue with Barney's in the background. Julian asks who she is, but Aidan's attention is drawn to the caption below the picture: "This is Paige Roderick. She's the one responsible" (page 20).

Section 1: pages 1-20 Analysis

The first three pages of the novel serve as a Prologue in which Aidan introduces his reasons for writing and also foreshadows Paige's role as a narrator by mentioning that she is also writing a defense of their situation. Sitting at his desk, Aidan searches for a voice because "I want to remember what my life was like before" (page 2). The public facts are familiar, yet the truth remains elusive. He hopes writing will help him accept what has happened. Maybe, he and Paige will publish their joint stories as a memoir someday, but it is more likely the pages will never find an audience. According to Aidan, "we're far from innocent. But we're hardly guilty as charged" (page 3). This statement, combined with the fact that Aidan is in hiding, foreshadows the fact that he has committed some kind of crime. At Cressida's party, Aidan describes how he became friends with Julian Touche. Aidan and Julian met at a party during grad school and immediately hit it off. Julian is from a wealthy family, and he enjoys all kinds of excesses but manages his life so closely that even his closest friends never know where they stand with him. As Julian teases Aidan about Cressida dancing with an editor, they stand by a window, and even Julian is bothered by the hordes who seem unaffected by the bombing only four days earlier. When Aidan claims he never asks about Venezuela because Julian would never answer, Julian accuses Aidan of buying into the American narrative too fully to be able to accept foreign ideas as potentially valid. Cressida's interactions with Aidan show she is cold and unforgiving, and this foreshadows her future betrayal. Aidan's fascination with the photograph of Paige Roderick foreshadows his growing interest in this woman accused of bombing Barney's.

Section 2: pages 21-40

Section 2: pages 21-40 Summary

Paige sits at a table near a window in a run-down truck stop, pretending to read the paper. She arrived too early because she is excited, and at 9:04 A.M., a gray Toyota Corolla parks in a spot further from the entrance. Paige joins Keith and a girl she does not know, and they drive in silence for a while. When Keith announces they are clear, the tension in the car evaporates as he introduces Paige to Lindsay and points out a bag of clothes for Paige in the backseat. It all began at her brother Bobby's funeral a year ago when she makes plans with Bobby's best friend, Carter Gattling, and his girlfriend, Jodie. After hanging out at a bar for a bit, they invite her to a party on the lake, but Paige goes to bed when Carter and Jodie disappear during the party. When their voices wake her later, Carter tells her they were at a meeting of activists who take an offensive approach to trying to change things; their goal is to bring environmental offenders to the public's attention. Paige slowly becomes involved with the group, and in late February, Carter asks Paige to be the point person for an Action planned outside Keyser, WV to alert the public to 150 acres of forest being cleared for a new paper mill. Because the Action is successful, Paige is treated like a star after that and eventually falls in with a new group of professional radicals who meet in a basement apartment in a run-down section of Raleigh where Paige first meets Keith late one night. Keith calls Paige outside and tells her about his plan to blow up a coal mine, Tarver Coal and Energy, in eastern Kentucky. Knowing he is testing her, Paige suggests blowing up a mountaintop mine since miners are replaced by machines, thus eliminating the potential for casualties, but Keith objects because the purpose of every Action should be generating attention. As he leaves, Keith asks Paige to come work with him this summer, and she agrees.

Section 2: pages 21-40 Analysis

Paige emerges as a narrator at this point to describe how she got involved with activist groups after her brother, Bobby, was killed in Iraq. She meets her new group at a truck stop. Keith and the girl came from the South and plan to keep going, but Paige has no clue where; the hardest part is always the lack of information. Though Paige made her choice carefully, "that doesn't make it any easier in the moment" (page 23). Paige knows Keith Sutter mostly by reputation, but she has come to see him as her only chance for vengeance. Paige had already been depressed as she began to understand the bitter truth of governmental stagnation, and when Bobby died, she went from feeling helpless to feeling nothing. Carter must have guessed her mindset that night by the lake and known she would say yes, so she is slowly indoctrinated in his group until she begins taking a more active role in the Actions, such as driving the getaway cars. At the paper mill, they paint "Paper Burns Well. Get out!" (page 33) on the building and light a fire after alerting the press. Things go as planned, and for the first time, Paige feels "the unburdening, the sudden freedom of the anticitizen, the cool blackness of an illicit world



- open and immediate and malleable for the first time" (page 36). When Keith first appears in her life, Paige has the feeling he has come because of her, and this suspicion is confirmed when he invites her to work with him over the summer. Paige's account of the events that lead to her bombing Barney's reveals a logical progression of events that occur after Bobby's death.

Section 3: pages 41-64

Section 3: pages 41-64 Summary

The next morning, Aidan wakes to his phone but ignores it since he knows it is Derrick calling because Aidan should have started posting two hours ago. Remembering the girl on the screen, Aidan checks his email and again sees the image sent by EmpiresFall@gmail.com. His online search for Paige Roderick yields no results, but he decides against posting her picture because it might generate the FBI's interest; "the potential hassle outweighed the benefits" (page 43). Aidan posts several blogs, but he cannot stop thinking about Paige Roderick so he responds to the email asking about the shopping. At 5:42 P.M., EmpiresFall responds that the blowout sale was on the wrong floor and this is Aidan's chance. Thinking he may be onto something, Aidan calls Cressida at the Times and asks her to do background checks on Easton St. Claire, Paige Roderick and Kimball LeRoux, promising to fill her in at dinner.

Paige, Keith and Lindsay spend the night at a motel in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and Keith visits the girls' room to tell Paige about the house they will be staying at in Vermont where Paige will start building her new identity. Paige will obtain a local job in order to be their eyes and ears, while Keith and Paige work from home, planning and researching. Once Keith leaves, Lindsay tells Paige about how she met Keith at the WTO protests in Seattle, and it is obvious that Lindsay is claiming Keith as hers because she is in love with him. Two weeks after she met Keith, she read about the Pike County coal mine collapse, and though no one was hurt, the governor of Kentucky ordered inspectors to reevaluate mining safety procedures. Paige lays awake thinking that targeted violence can really work.

Section 3: pages 41-64 Analysis

After opening the email from EmpiresFall, Aidan and Julian stare at the woman on the screen because she is beautiful, but when the deejay calls Julian, Aidan leaves and goes home. Aidan detours from his narrative to describe his past: It is hard for Aidan to be alone in the country because he grew up in the Upper West Side where his parents had moved after graduating college. He had a middle-class upbringing, and his parents divorced while he was in college in Vermont because his father had an affair. After graduation, Aidan partied and worked as a bartender until 9/11 changed everything. He studied journalism at NYU as a grad student but does not get the political bug like other journalists since, due to his parents' youthful idealism, he knows he cannot change the world, plus "American prosperity encouraged us to disengage, to stop caring. So I did" (page 50). Aidan quit school before his second year and worked in advertising until he contacted Derrick who had made blogging a viable business. Aidan becomes fascinated with the anonymous email and the picture of Paige, but he hesitates when thinking about involving the FBI. Instead, he replies to the email and receives a response. The comment about the wrong floor in EmpiresFall's second email captures Aidan's attention

since there is speculation of a botched job since the bomb went off in a dressmaker's studio. Aidan's decision to involve Cressida in his search for Paige Roderick foreshadows future problems with Cressida as a result. When Paige, Keith and Lindsay stop at a hotel in Pennsylvania, Keith fills Paige in on some of the details of their plans for the summer. After he leaves the girls' room, Lindsay describes how she met Keith, obviously staking her claim because she is in love with him. Paige trusts Keith, and since Keith trusts Lindsay, Paige does too. The more distant Keith is, the more Paige wants to know him. This seems to foreshadow the potential for jealousy problems between Paige and Lindsay. Keith's successful bombing of the Pike County coal mine convinces Paige that targeted violence can actually work, solidifying her position in Keith's group as her faith in their mission grows.

Section 4: pages 65-83

Section 4: pages 65-83 Summary

At dinner, Cressida agrees to give Aidan everything she found if he tells her what it is all about. He shows Cressida a copy of the second email from EmpiresFall, though he erased the address, and asks for her thoughts. Cressida says Easton St. Claire does not exist, and while several Paige Rodericks exist, none of them seem like terrorists so Cressida is sure Aidan is really concerned with Kimball LeRoux. Cressida talks about LeRoux as Aidan browses the folder about Paige Roderick trying to hide his surprise when he finds a picture of the same woman from his email. Cressida wants to follow-up on LeRoux, and when Aidan refuses, she accuses him that "you spend your life waiting for people to make mistakes, and then you publicize them. And when, God forbid, something interesting comes your way, a story you could actually chase down, you let it pass right by" (page 69). Deciding to do something about it since Aidan won't, Cressida takes the LeRoux folder and leaves, so Aidan grabs the other two folders as he hurries home. In his living room, he finds the photograph of Paige Roderick and reads the caption about her attending a dance on Fisher Island with Brendan Carlyle. Aidan calls Julian and tells him about the new photograph and the attached article because Julian's parents belong to the golf club at Fishers Island. Julian knows Brendan Carlyle's sister, and saying there is only one thing to do, he asks if Aidan is free this weekend.

During the first week, Lindsay finds a job in town while Keith and Paige set up security measures at the house so that their phone and internet are not traceable. Keith uses the garage to build his bombs, but they only discuss these devices that would soon define their lives once. Paige spends her time researching potential targets. One afternoon, Keith asks Paige to take a drive, and after an hour, they find a No Trespassing sign. Keith explains it is a storage facility for road crews as he breaks into the building and finds Toval, an explosive used in dynamite sticks because it cannot be detonated by heat. They struggle carefully with the heavy boxes, carrying two cases to the car, and on the drive home, Paige looks at the seemingly harmless crates, feeling the journey should have a certain intimacy because of their contents; however, looking at Keith, his are "the eyes of a true believer...and for a moment they scared [her] more than anything else in the car" (page 83).

Section 4: pages 65-83 Analysis

As Aidan crosses Washington Street to meet Cressida, he thinks about how they have run out of things to say to one another. His thoughts indicate that their relationship is rapidly deteriorating. At the table, Cressida addresses her search for the three names Aidan provided, but she thinks that his focus was on LeRoux rather than Paige. The fact that Aidan is unwilling to share information with Cressida indicates the lack of trust in their relationship. They argue about their relationship while eating, and this fuels Cressida's anger when Aidan refuses to pursue the LeRoux avenue. Aidan recognizes

the same zeal that first attracted him to Cressida when they met at one of Derrick's dinner parties a year ago, but as she stares challengingly at him, he cannot let her know yet that he is being the person she is begging him to become. When Cressida storms off to follow up with LeRoux, Aidan takes the other two folders and returns to his house where he studies the new picture of Paige that Cressida found. Since the caption indicates that Paige was at a dance on Fishers Island, Aidan calls Julian since Julian's family belongs to the golf club on Fishers Island, and Julian confirms that he knows the sister of Brendan Carlyle, Paige's date according to the article. Julian invites Aidan to accompany him to Fishers Island that weekend to continue his research on Paige Roderick. The house in Vermont is worn but private, and Keith praises the thickness of the walls as he leads Lindsay and Paige through the house. The three settle into their daily routines as they search for targets for their Actions. Though they become close, they are never friends in the traditional sense due to their strange situation, and while they hold debates, Keith makes all final decisions, foreshadowing his evolution into a sort of dictator in their group. After stealing the Toval, Paige is frightened by the zealot look in Keith's eyes.

Section 5: pages 84-105

Section 5: pages 84-105 Summary

That weekend, Aidan takes a cab to Essex County Airport to meet Julian, figuring it will be a weekend out of the city even if they do not find Paige. Aidan is terrified as Julian takes off, and Julian points out EmpiresFall must be involved since he did not call the police. He probably expected Aidan to post the information immediately, and Julian asks why Aidan didn't. Julian arranges to meet Brendan Carlyle for a drink at the Pequot later. At the Pequot, Brendan is impressed when the bartender flirts with Julian, so Julian praises the beautiful girl Brendan brought to a dance a few years earlier. Brendan says he dated Paige, a girl from North Carolina, three years ago, but bringing her to Fisher Island was a mistake. Aidan is confused when Julian changes the subject to talk about Cressida, but when Julian mentions boring an actress by bringing her to the island, Brendan explains it was more of a political thing with Paige; she got upset about a dinner conversation about Iraq because her dad or brother were in the military. She broke up with Brendan shortly after the trip, and all he has heard since they broke up is that she moved to D.C. At Julian's suggestion, Aidan phones the Rodericks listed in North Carolina the next day, asking for Paige. When a woman asks who is calling, Aidan claims he is Brendan, trying to reach Paige, but Mrs. Roderick says Paige disappeared a few months ago without any word. Mr. Roderick gets on the phone to tell Aidan how worried they are, and he also mentions receiving a silent, anonymous phone call two weeks ago, on Bobby's birthday. The number was from Vermont and no one answered when he called back, but Mr. Roderick believes it was Paige. After getting the number, Aidan tries calling it, but since there is no answer or machine, he assumes it is a pay phone. Suddenly recalling how phone number prefixes used to correspond to specific towns, Aidan calls the Vermont directory and learns the number corresponds to the town of Waitsfield. Julian refuses to head north because there are too many maybes and the whole search is based on an anonymous email.

Section 5: pages 84-105 Analysis

On Julian's plane to Fishers Island, Julian points out that the fact that EmpiresFall did not contact the authorities likely means that he is involved, foreshadowing the discovery of who sends Aidan the email from EmpiresFall@gmail.com. Julian does not understand why Aidan did not post the information immediately after receiving the email. Once they land, Aidan checks in with Derrick who is covering the blog for the weekend, and after napping at the Touche's compound, Aidan thinks about Julian and how he identifies with his Venezuelan roots in terms of his subtle anti-Americanism. Julian arranges for him and Aidan to meet Brendan Carlyle that evening, and from that meeting, they learn a little more about Paige which leads Aidan to calling the Rodericks in North Carolina and learning that they believe Paige is in Vermont. Furthermore, he contacts the Vermont directory and identifies which town the phone number corresponds to, foreshadowing his trip to Waitsfield. When refusing to accompany Aidan to Vermont, Julian also points

out that Aidan will be involved if he finds her, "even heroism is a kind of infamy" (page 105). Julian's sudden disinterest in Paige foreshadows his betrayal of Aidan. Aidan needs to catch the ferry to New London and take the train from there.

Section 6: pages 106-128

Section 6: pages 106-128 Summary

In July, Keith mentions targeting Indian Point, a nuclear power plant on the Hudson River where he wants to set off a small, controlled explosion away from the reactor walls; nothing will actually get damaged, but the government will immediately shut down the plant, and the community will keep it down indefinitely. Paige's research reveals a cache of spent uranium is stored on the premises, though, and Keith agrees it is too dangerous. When Paige finds an article about Indigo Holdings, a pan-Asian oil pipeline which funds man's corruptions, Keith agrees it is the grand stage they have been searching for. Indigo Holdings has an office in New York City, on Madison Avenue, above Barney's.

It is December 25, but Aidan continues to pay attention to the ongoing search for Paige and him. The monotony of his life was interrupted yesterday when he heard a car door slam and saw a man at the front of the house while he was cutting down a Christmas tree yesterday. The man leaves an invitation for Aidan to join his neighbor for Christmas carols and cocktails, and Aidan, floored by the act of humanity, wants to attend, though he knows he cannot.

Paige and Keith leave at first light since their goal is to reach New York City by noon. Keith parks on Manhet and leads Paige to an apartment building halfway up the block where they find the architectural plans for 660 Madison rolled up in the corner. After they finalize their plans, Paige shops for a modest skirt and top so she will blend in at Barney's during lunchtime tomorrow. She returns to the apartment to find Keith arguing with a man on the phone, but he will not discuss it with her. Once they work out all possible contingencies, Paige and Keith's conversation turns to their pasts, but when Keith places his hand on Paige's, she is afraid because the Action must be more important than the individuals involved. He pulls her toward him, but she pulls away from his betrayal and hides in the bathroom for a while, returning to find Keith pretending to sleep. When she wakes, Keith is gone with his bag and the car, but as Paige decides she can still walk away, he returns to go over their plans once more. At 660 Madison, Paige slips into Barney's, past the dressing rooms and through a plain white door.

Section 6: pages 106-128 Analysis

By July, Paige's role evolves to focus on specific targets, but Lindsay provides their first hard lead after watching an online newscast about Texas Consolidated, Inc., a profitable oil company. Unfortunately, Keith decides that the CEO will elicit sympathy after Paige researches him, so they need to target an institution rather than an individual. Keith then suggests bombing Indian Point, a nuclear power plant, but they discard this idea after Paige's research reveals that a cache of spent uranium is stored on the premises.

During their nuclear flirtation, the mood in the house changes as Keith begins thinking about explanations for the Actions when he originally claimed they should speak for themselves. Finally, Paige learns about Indigo Holdings, and the group decides to target the company's New York office. Paige, Keith and Lindsay grow restless once they find a definable target. Aidan is worried when a stranger visits his property, but it is only a neighbor, inviting him to Christmas carols and drinks. Aidan assumes the neighbors saw his handlers, Jim and Carol, driving to the house. Suddenly despondent, Aidan resumes his writing; he wants to attend his neighbors' festivities but knows he cannot. In New York, Keith takes Paige to an apartment owned by one of their patrons in order to prepare for their mission. This patron is presumably the one who leaves the floor plans to Barney's inside the apartment, and when Paige finds Keith arguing on the phone with a man, his refusal to discuss the matter foreshadows the revelation of who their patron is. Paige is appalled when Keith comes onto her because she feels it is a betrayal of their goals. When she finds him missing in the morning, she believes he has left her because of his wounded pride, but he returns, and they carry on with their plans. Paige does not describe what she does inside Barney's, only that she slips past the dressing rooms through another door.

Section 7: pages 129-152

Section 7: pages 129-152 Summary

On the train to Connecticut, Aidan reads an article in the Saturday "Times" that claims Indigo Holdings was the likely target of the bomb, but he decides against calling Derrick or Cressida because he does not want them involved yet. He disembarks from the train at Rhinecliff and takes a cab to his mother's farmhouse in Shady where he finds her with Simon Krauss and some friends having a dinner party. When Aidan mentions his plan to visit a friend in Vermont for a few days, his mom offers to let him borrow her car.

When Paige and Keith return after midnight, Lindsay is eager for them to recount the trip and their apparent success. After two weeks filled with detail and repetition, it is Lindsay's turn to go to New York with Keith. After they leave, Paige puts the finishing touches on her new identity, Isabel Clarke. Next comes the change in appearance, so she cuts her hair short and dyes it a few shades lighter. At 3:25 A.M., 20 minutes before detonation time, she begins checking the news sites until the story about the bomb breaks. There is no mention of casualties, but Paige notices the hole in the building is on the fifteenth floor; Indigo's office is on the fourteenth. When Keith and Lindsay returns, Paige tells them they have a problem. Lindsay missed one small detail: many buildings do not have a thirteenth floor. Keith is unconcerned because Indigo will have been damaged also, so they celebrate.

Aidan drives to Vermont and rents a room at the Mad Mountain Motel near Waitsfield. Near 5 P.M., Aidan drives to town and begins asking locals if they have heard of Paige Roderick, producing her picture for identification, but he comes up empty-handed. He drives to the Purple Moon where he is told everyone goes, but the bartender has never seen Paige. In the morning, Aidan packs and checks out, but when he hits traffic because of the county fair, he decides to stop. As he watches a boy playing a game, someone grabs his arm and Aidan starts to turn, but as he hears a stern voice in his ear, everything else falls away.

Section 7: pages 129-152 Analysis

Julian drives away as Aidan boards the ferry, and Aidan thinks it is unlike Julian to shy away from adventure like this. On the train, he reads that Indigo Holdings was the likely target of the bomb which makes sense since EmpiresFall's second email stated it was the wrong floor. His refusal to involve his friends reveals his distrust as well as his potential interest in Paige in more than a professional manner. Aidan continues on to his mom's house where he provides background information on her boyfriend, Simon Krauss. Right after Aidan's mom had moved in, Simon had walked in the door, thinking he was coming home from a long trip to find the house had been sold. She let Simon keep his large metal work on her lawn to work on whenever he wants, so Simon had purchased a house nearby and they have been together since then, though they live

apart. Aidan borrows his mom's car to drive to Vermont. Paige goes to the garage the night before Keith and Lindsay leave for New York because she needs to see what they have wrought once, and it is obvious that Keith is amazed by his own creation. She works on her new identity, Isabel Clarke while they are away, and then, she begins checking the news sites to find out what is being said about the bombing; Paige is distraught when she realizes the bomb went off on the wrong floor, but Keith seems unperturbed by their mistake. The bombing seems unreal to Paige after the fact, and as the full gravity of what they have done hits her, she begins shaking uncontrollably. The fact that Aidan considers talking to Simon about Paige Roderick foreshadows Aidan's discovery of Simon's involvement with Paige and demonstrates his exceptional instincts, though he ignores them. Aidan's search for Paige Roderick in Waitsfield yields no results, but he stops at the county fair on his way out of town where he is confronted by a stern voice and a hand on his arm, presumably Paige or one of her associates.

Section 8: pages 153-167

Section 8: pages 153-167 Summary

Keith runs in the house, demanding the keys, because he got an emergency text from Lindsay, so he instructs Paige to wipe down the house and leave if she does not hear from them within two hours. It takes forty minutes for Paige to thoroughly wipe the house down to remove their fingerprints and all evidence of their presence, and then, Lindsay returns to tell her some guy showed up in town a couple hours ago looking for Paige. He knew her name and even had a photograph of her, but since his search yielded no results, he is now at the Purple Moon where Keith is waiting. At the Purple Moon, Keith shows Paige a picture of the guy on his cell phone, but she has never seen him before. At 4 A.M., Keith wakes Paige and sends her to relieve Lindsay who is staking out the stranger's motel room; he tells Paige to find out who the guy is and why he is here. At the Mad Mountain Motel, Lindsay points out the guy's room, and Paige watches until he appears at the back door at 8:05 A.M. When he leaves the room, she rummages through his things and learns his name is Aidan Cole, and she finds his address on a prescription bottle. He reappears thirty minutes later to pack and leave, so Paige follows him at a distance as he drives to the livestock fair.

The calm, forceful voice asks Aidan what he wants, and he knows who it is before he turns around. He recognizes Paige Roderick, though she looks different, and suddenly realizes he may be in danger. He assures her that he is alone, so Paige leads him to the edge of the fairground and asks who he works for, what he wants and how he found her. Aidan tells Paige exactly what the emails said and how he tracked her down. He wants her story; as he tells Paige, "I don't want notoriety. I want to understand...why you did it" (page 166). Paige stares at the photograph of herself, then hands it back to Aidan and starts walking away. When he calls after her, she begins to run.

Section 8: pages 153-167 Analysis

Keith rushes out of the house after receiving an emergency page from Lindsay, and when Lindsay returns to the house, she informs Paige that a man was inquiring about her in town. Paige and Lindsay meet Keith at the Purple Moon to look at a photograph Keith took of Aidan on his cell phone, but Paige has never seen Aidan before. Keith thinks they are safe for now since the guy does not look like a Fed and has no proof that Paige is actually in Waitsfield, but they spend the evening revisiting their time in Manhattan since the guy has New York tags on his car. In the middle of the night, Keith wakes Paige and sends her to watch Aidan's motel room, and Paige knows this is her mess to clean up. When Aidan leaves his room, Paige rummages through his things, learning his name and address. She follows him when he leaves. At the county fair, the stern voice proves to be Paige who demands to know what Aidan wants. She pulls him toward the back of the fair where he tells her about the anonymous emails, claiming he does not plan to publish the story; he only wants to understand why she did it. At first,

Paige does not believe Aidan when he tells her he is a blogger and learned about her from an anonymous email. She calms down when he points out that he would have already turned her in if that was his plan. When Paige sees the picture of herself in front of Barney's, she seems shaken and walks away from Aidan, running and disappearing into the crowd when he calls after her.

Section 9: pages 168-183

Section 9: pages 168-183 Summary

As Paige follows Aidan Cole through the fairgrounds, he does not seem to be searching for her. As he stops to watch a boy shooting baskets, she angrily demands answers, leading him to the back of the fairgrounds where she feels confident she can escape if necessary. Aidan tells her about the emails and photograph, but Paige cannot believe he found her after so many months of careful planning. None of it makes sense, but she is fine until he shows her the picture. Paige asks herself who knew she was there and who could have taken it, but she does not want to know the answers "for there was only one answer. And it was as unacceptable as it was implausible" (page 172). Finding herself all alone and unable to trust anyone, Paige runs.

Back in New York, Aidan works for a while but cannot focus; he had not thought about what he would do if he really found Paige Roderick, but he is not going to turn her in or post the story about her on Roorback. Rather than dig deeper or contact Cressida, he does what he always does in a bind: he texts Julian. At Julian's apartment, Aidan tells his friend about Paige, asking Julian's advice because he feels sure Paige was involved in the bombing. When Julian suggests the whole thing is a prank, Aidan asks why he did not come to Vermont. Julian points out that knowing about the crime and not reporting it to the authorities is treason, and he tells Aidan about his father's best friend who was killed in Venezuela for not telling Chavez about a planned coup, even though he did not participate in it. Julian partially thinks Aidan should hand the story over to Cressida, but another part of him thinks Aidan should help Paige indirectly by providing her a place to stay or a ride somewhere. After leaving Julian's apartment at 3 A.M., Aidan leaves a message for Cressida. When he runs out of wine forty-five minutes later, he takes a cab to Cressida's apartment because "surely Cressida would have wine, or answers, one of the other, it didn't matter which" (page 183).

Section 9: pages 168-183 Analysis

Walking through the county fair in Vermont reminds Paige of the time she and Bobby went to the county fair in North Carolina when they were children. When Aidan stops to watch a game, she considers retreating because of the risk of capture, but she needs to know who he is. Paige relates the same story regarding her interactions with Aidan at the fairground with the only variance being her feeling that being found after her careful planning makes no sense. She also explains why she ran away after seeing the picture: no one knew where she was that day so there is only one answer about who could have taken the photograph. She runs because she feels that she is alone and can no longer trust anyone. On the drive back to Shady, Aidan ponders how to proceed from here. Again, he considers talking to Simon about the situation, but he fears he will sound ridiculous. This again foreshadows Simon's involvement. When Aidan contacts his best friend after returning to New York, he fills him in on what has happened since he left

Fishers Island. Julian does not believe in Paige's methods because political violence scars nations, but "too much prosperity can ruin them" (page 181). He reminds Aidan that involvement with those suspected of such acts is treason, and then Julian proceeds to explain why such an act terrifies him, sharing the story about his father's best friend who was killed in Venezuela for treason. Aidan's decision to turn to Cressida in the middle of the night foreshadows their continued fighting which in turn demonstrates the dissolution of their relationship.

Section 10: pages 184-205

Section 10: pages 184-205 Summary

Paige does not reveal Aidan's name, address or blog name when she relates the story to Keith and Lindsay because she is tired of being the one in the dark. At first, Lindsay accuses Paige of endangering them because the man now knows Paige exists, but she apologizes a while later while Paige is trying to calm down. After Lindsay goes to bed, Paige asks Keith who contacted Aidan because it must be someone with inside information, and when he insists it is not him or Lindsay, Paige suggests it is one of their patrons because it would otherwise be impossible for her to have been photographed outside Barney's since no one else knew she would be there. Keith does not understand how it is possible, but he explicitly trusts their patrons. At breakfast, they discuss their options, deciding not to move for a week because Keith is not ready and Paige believes Aidan will not talk. Keith works harder, and Lindsay gives notice at her job to avoid raising suspicions by disappearing. Paige spends her time online, researching their next target, and does not see Keith until he comes in for dinner the Saturday night of Labor Day weekend to start talking about the next Action, but he does not want to see Paige's note because he has already decided their next move is bombing the headquarters of N3, the National News Network. Five days before they are supposed to leave Vermont, Keith and Lindsay go on a reconnaissance trip to New York while Paige cleans thoroughly. When it grows dark, Paige worries that Keith and Lindsay have left her as a sacrifice because she has become a liability and she cannot make a deal with the Feds because she knows nothing. The next day, she decides to look in the garage since she will know they are not coming back if the bomb is gone. She finds the suitcase with the bomb, but it is lined with fragments to be used as shrapnel; "this was no attention-getting explosive. This was a weapon meant for murder" (page 198).

Aidan enters Cressida's apartment and continues on to her bedroom, planning to wake her with a kiss, but he howls in pain when he stubs his toe on her bed. At first, Cressida tells him to leave, but after he touches her, they make love. Cressida wants Aidan to apologize for disappearing because she feels she is making all the effort. She asks if he even cares about their relationship or his job anymore. When he does not respond, she tells him to get out now.

Section 10: pages 184-205 Analysis

When Paige tells Keith and Lindsay about confronting Aidan, she leaves out any means by which they can identify him, thus protecting Aidan and showing that Paige trusts him. When Paige questions Keith about who could have taken the photograph of her, he refuses to admit the possibility that their patrons were involved, likewise denying that he took the picture himself. Keith insists their strategy works and they need to come back together and move forward, but Paige feels herself backing away from the precipice because she cannot tell if Keith is acting. Paige, Keith and Lindsay decide that they are

safe for now so they do not have to move immediately, but though Paige has been researching their next potential target, Keith announces one day that he has already chosen their target: the National News Network, N3. Acting like a preacher, Keith explains his reasoning, but Paige's only responsibility lies in helping decide when and where because it is obvious that Keith has already determined that it will happen. Paige researches the building where N3's headquarters are stationed, finding schedules and the building layout. While Keith and Lindsay go to New York on a reconnaissance trip to N3, Paige cleans the house of all evidence of their presence since they plan to leave as soon as Keith and Lindsay return. Then, Paige browses Roorback and wonders why Aidan is "risking so much when he could risk nothing and become famous" (page 194). When Lindsay and Keith are late returning, Paige worries they are setting her up, so she goes to the garage to search for the bomb, knowing they would not leave it behind if they were not planning to return. She finds the bomb and is thus reassured that Lindsay and Keith are not abandoning her; however, she is distraught when she learns the bomb is filled with objects to be used as shrapnel, making this a murderous weapon and thus foreshadowing her departure from the group. Aidan's interactions with Cressida demonstrate her discontent with their relationship, and the fact that she tells him to get out indicates that their relationship has ended.

Section 11: pages 206-229

Section 11: pages 206-229 Summary

Paige drives reflexively, seeing only snapshots of her previous life. She knows she is going to Aidan because she has no other options. As she writes, she notices a man outside the window.

Aidan's door buzzer rings, though no one responds when he answers, and Aidan finally charges outside to see no one. Paige casually crosses the street and asks if Aidan lives alone. Though he should call the cops, Aidan leads her upstairs, reassuring her that it is okay. Paige wants to tell him everything she knows about the bombing so that he can break the story on Roorback, exposing the whole operation in order to stop her compatriots from detonating the next bomb which is designed to kill. She wants Aidan to write the truth about everything except her being at his apartment and to wait twenty-four hours to give her a head start. He asks her to stay the night, promising to write the story in the morning and let her proofread it; besides, he is renting a car to drive to Connecticut for his father's birthday tomorrow so he can give her a ride out of town. After Paige agrees, they talk about their pasts, but Paige knows Aidan does not see the world as she does after reading Roorback. She has come to the "horrible realization that you can't really change anything or trust anyone" (page 219), but when Aidan argues that systemic changes must be fought for over decades, Paige grabs her stuff to leave, saying Aidan is like everyone else, oblivious until it is his brother they kill. Aidan grabs her wrist and asks about her brother, and though Paige says she should not have mentioned her brother, she confesses he is the reason why. Aidan tries to comfort Paige, and once he goes to bed, he tries to imagine what she is thinking. He feels overwhelmed as he wonders what he is doing, but he feels a pulsing glow emanating from within him.

Section 11: pages 206-229 Analysis

When Paige leaves Vermont, she takes money, a knife, her laptop, printer and clothes in the old car they drove to Vermont, and at a gas station near Albany, she destroys the laptop and printer, planning to get rid of the hard drive later. Her only option is to go to Aidan's so that is where she is headed. Wondering what he will say, Paige keeps the knife in her pocket to use as a deterrent though she would never use it. The commentators on Roorback complain about the decrease in the quality of the posts, but Derrick loves the audience participation. As Derrick and Aidan argue on the phone, the door buzzer rings, so Aidan claims it is his lunch to get off the phone, though he has no clue who it could be. Then, he notices Paige leaning against the gay bar across the street. Paige needs Aidan to do something for her, but first she wants to know why he did not go public about her. Aidan claims he was bluffing at the fair and does not really know anything, and when he asks why she came to him, she admits to having a lack of better options. Aidan listens attentively as Paige tells him about Lindsay, Keith, targets

and Actions before she returns to the Roorback expose which she sees as the "only way she could stop the next Action without turning herself in" (page 216). She tells Aidan about her alias, Isabel Clarke, and the accompanying back story, and they talk about the time Paige spent living in New York right after 9/11 when she worked for Earth Initiative. Since she never fit in with the world, she gradually built up an animosity towards everyone, eventually moving to D.C. to go to grad school at John Hopkins Advanced International Studies. After school, she worked for a D.C. Think Tank for a while, but no one was paying attention to the causes. By then, Bobby was stationed overseas, and though he survived his first tour without a scratch, he was called for his second tour in 2008, and his despondence at the destruction he saw upon his return to Iraq made it obvious that something bad would happen. His convoy was ambushed outside of a village north of Mosul, and Bobby was killed.

Section 12: pages 230-250

Section 12: pages 230-250 Summary

Paige wakes Aidan up at 7:15 A.M., and while he showers, he wonders why he did not turn her in. As he emerges from the bathroom, Paige reads a list of key points he should include before trying to leave. Aidan asks her to stay until he returns, threatening not to write the expose if she leaves; he believes there must be another way to stop Keith and Lindsay that does not involve Paige ruining her life. Aidan promises he will post the expose when he returns from his father's if they cannot think of another way by then. Though this is not what she wants, Paige agrees. When Aidan says he will call when he gets to Litchfield, Paige instructs him to use the house phone at 10 P.M., let the phone ring twice, hang up and call right back, and she tells him to stay in Litchfield if she does not answer.

As he drives, Aidan worries about leaving Paige alone, but he acquits himself of any wrongdoing since he can always write the Roorback post to escape blame. Aidan drives to his father's house where he can barely tolerate his father's young wife, Julie. When Julie tells Aidan about a news report that four Muslims have been arrested for the bombing at Barney's, he wonders if Paige knows them or if she has been lying the entire time. At 10 P.M., he calls his house, hangs up after two rings and calls back, but he worries when Paige does not answer. As he asks to talk to his dad about something, the phone rings, and Julie tells Aidan that Isabel is calling for him. Paige asks Aidan about a red-haired British girl with keys to his apartment, and after he admits it is his ex-girlfriend, he lies when Paige asks if there is any chance Cressida would recognize her. Paige had gone downstairs when she heard someone heading toward Aidan's apartment, but she passed Cressida on the stairs, and Cressida looked back as if she recognized Paige. Paige says the city is too hot right now and she should turn herself in, but Aidan says the Muslims' arrest should give her more breathing room. He says he will come home first thing in the morning and recommends Paige stay at the Liberty Inn two blocks away. Paige points out that Aidan cannot go home either until things play out before hanging up.

Section 12: pages 230-250 Analysis

Aidan understands the potential consequences of helping Paige and knows he is being stupid, but he cannot bear the thought of her leaving. Aidan does not want to leave Paige because he is drawn to her both because of and despite who she is and what she believes. He runs errands and rents a car, returning to his apartment to find Paige writing a letter to her parents since it may be her last chance. Aidan promises to call Paige when he gets to his father's house, and she instructs him on how to call so that she will know it is him. He drives to Litchfield, CT where his father lives with Julie, his wife who is only a year older than Aidan. Aidan's father always begs him to visit for his birthday since it always falls on one of the few weeks during the year when Julie gets

her three children. When he reaches his father's house, Loretta, the Honduran maid, signals that Aidan's father and stepmother are at the golf club so Aidan drives there to find Julie flirting with her instructor. The house is in chaos when they return, so Aidan tries to tune everything out as he thinks how different Paige is from how she seemed in the Fishers Island photo. Aidan is confused when Julie tells him four Muslims were arrested in connection with the Barney's bombing, but when he calls his house, he worries when Paige does not answer, showing that he has already begun to care about her. When Paige phones him to tell him about her encounter with Cressida, Aidan promises to return to New York first thing in the morning, but Paige warns him that he cannot go home because they may both be in danger now that Cressida has seen her, even though Aidan lies and assures her that Cressida could not possibly recognize her. Aidan tells his father that he has to leave in the morning and may not see him for a while. Laying in bed, Aidan forgets the danger he is in for a while, as well as the fact that he lied to Paige by not telling her Cressida may have recognized her from the Fishers Island photograph.

Section 13: pages 251-269

Section 13: pages 251-269 Summary

Aidan's handlers, Jim and Carol, tell Aidan that Paige had been hiding in a busy college town in the Midwest where she had begun frequenting a nearby Internet cafe, though she knows it is risky to adopt such a routine. One morning, Paige left and never came back; "something unexpected must have happened because she left all her stuff behind" (page 252). Looking out the window into the dark, he hopes Paige is out there someone because it would be worse if she is not.

Aidan takes a cab to the Liberty Inn and asks for Isabel Clarke. The clerk directs him to her room where he finds that Paige has changed her appearance to tousled black hair and dark-framed glasses. When Paige asks why Cressida was at his apartment, Aidan admits there is a chance that Cressida recognized her. He offers to call Cressida because he will be able to tell if something is up, but Paige forbids him to use his cell phone since it can be traced. They need a new place to stay, so Aidan suggests calling Julian, and though Paige objects, she gives him a safe phone card to call Cressida and Julian at a nearby payphone. Cressida does not answer, and Aidan leaves a message for Julian when he receives his friend's voicemail, though he immediately realizes his mistake as Paige warned him against leaving messages. At the room, Paige insists they find a new place to stay, but they cannot leave the city since Keith will be here. Paige thoroughly cleans the room while Aidan naps, and then, they hire a town car to take them to Chatham Square where Paige leads Aidan to the apartment Keith uses as a staging area before Actions. Aidan worries what will happen if Keith finds them here, and when he wakes in the morning, he goes out for supplies since there is a greater chance of Paige being recognized. He stops at an internet cafe and checks Roorback and the news where all seems suspiciously like business as usual. Paige relaxes somewhat after Aidan tells her there is no mention of either of them in the news. Aidan dozes off, but Paige shakes him awake, clasping her hand over his mouth before he can utter a sound.

Section 13: pages 251-269 Analysis

Aidan is distraught when he learns that Paige has disappeared from her safe house. This parallels and reinforces what the reader can see from Paige's last entry and her subsequent absence as a narrator in *American Subversive*. Aidan knows she probably was not arrested since it has not been on the news, and Jim informs Aidan that he made the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List. After his handlers leave, Aidan wonders what he will do now since knowing Paige was okay kept him writing as he has "come to think of our dual narratives as unrequited love letters, fervently baring our true feelings - words we wished we'd spoken and one day still might" (page 253). When Aidan reaches the Liberty Inn, Paige tells him that Cressida's visit means there is no going back because they could be looking for both of them now. Since Aidan is now involved, Paige spends

an hour giving him a crash course on survival on the run. Aidan uses Paige's secure phone card to call Julian and Cressida, but he receives no response from either of them. He knows he has made a mistake as soon as he leaves a message for Julian, but he trusts his best friend. Insisting they need to move immediately, Paige takes Aidan across town to Chatham Square. At the staging apartment, Paige turns the lights off so they do not scare Keith and Lindsay away in case they arrive early, though she claims Keith will not arrive until tomorrow. As they eat in the dark, Paige tells Aidan about the last time she was in the apartment and how Keith's advances opened her eyes to his hypocrisy. When Aidan checks Roorback and the news sites in the morning, he notes that everything seems suspiciously like business as usual, foreshadowing a pending change in that analysis. No longer anticipating the future since they have not made the news, Aidan returns to the apartment and tells Paige about his relationship with Cressida, and she shares stories about her childhood in the Smoky Mountains. Paige wakes Aidan and clasps her hand over his mouth, indicating they are in danger and foreshadowing the entrance of an unexpected third party.

Section 14: pages 270-286

Section 14: pages 270-286 Summary

Aidan is paralyzed with fear when he hears the jangling of keys, and as the door opens and Paige raises her arm containing a switchblade, Aidan sees the man and yells for Simon to stop. Simon informs them this is his apartment and he knows everything that is going on. After Paige searches Simon for a wire or a weapon, Simon explains he is a famous artist, Aidan's mom's boyfriend and Keith's patron. He came to the apartment hoping to find Keith so he could dissuade him from the N3 Action. He admits that he is EmpiresFall, and he sent the picture thinking Aidan would post it, causing Paige, Keith and Lindsay to scrap the N3 Action since their cover was blown. This would also give them a head start on the Feds since he does not squeal on his own. Simon also saw the possibility that Aidan would further investigate Paige, but he never thought Aidan would actually find her, and he knew Aidan would not call the police because he would never forgive himself for ratting on a girl like that. When Simon suggests getting Aidan out of here, Paige tells him it is too late and fills him in on everything that has happened. Simon tells Paige and Aidan about his history. He has been involved with Paige's group since the beginning, and Keith was always the focal point, but "Keith wasn't the man we thought he was" (page 284). Unfortunately, Simon realized it too late. Indian Point was obviously too risky, but Keith was too in love with the idea to listen to Simon's reservations. Simon followed Paige at Barney's to provide support on her first major Action, and he was shocked when the bomb went off on the wrong floor; however, Keith was pleased with himself and blamed the mistake on Paige and Lindsay. Simon tried to dissuade Keith from the N3 Action, but Keith only gave him a look that convinced Simon he had to stop Keith. Late in the morning, Simon sneaks outside to check his van and buy the newspaper while Paige keeps watch at the window. Just as Aidan decides to tell her what she means to him, Paige pulls away from the window and tells him something is wrong.

Section 14: pages 270-286 Analysis

Aidan is astounded when their surprise visitor turns out to be Simon, his mother's boyfriend, and Paige immediately suspects that Aidan called Simon; however, Simon soon clears the matter up by explaining that he is Keith's patron and has come to stop Keith from pursuing the N3 Action. He also admits that he sent the anonymous emails to Aidan, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing regarding the identity of EmpiresFall. Simon further explains his plan was to discourage Paige's group from completing the N3 Action, but he knew that Aidan would not call the police about Paige. Simon wants to get Aidan away from the situation, and he is saddened and guilty when he learns about Cressida's visit which is why Aidan is now involved past the point of potential extraction. Since it is only 6:30 A.M. when Simon first arrives, they take a few moments to collect themselves; Simon's appearance changes the parameters of their situation, but it also focuses them. He wants to give Keith twenty-four hours to appear, and otherwise, Aidan

will post the story on Roorback while Simon gets Paige out of the city. They believe Keith will still try to carry out the N3 Action, but Simon has not spoken to Keith since before Paige disappeared. Intercepting Keith is their last hope so they plan for confrontation. Simon shares his history with Paige and Aidan to explain how he is involved with Keith and his Actions; thirty years early, Simon was a Weatherman in the Northwestern chapter of SDS, and he was Jonathan Glassman until March 1970 when a town-house explosion set him on the run for several years until he became Simon Krauss in the 1980s. His art career began after he got a nighttime job in a scrap yard in California and began working with the twisted metal until an art collector happened to drive by and make an offer. Simon decided to try building a whole new persona as an artist, so he moved to New York City where he found the art world was a perfect cover since mystery sells best of all. After he became rich and famous, he was occasionally recognized by members of the Movement, but he turned his back on that business until Iraq woke him up and forced him to get involved again. He started small, but "Revolution was always out of reach, and ultimately unnecessary" (page 281). Simon's focus became Actions until he met Susan, Aidan's mom, and since he wanted to protect her from his more private activities, he decided to work strictly behind the scenes. Simon returns to their present situation, explaining that he tried to discourage Keith's current planned Action, but Keith's stubbornness convinced him to try to scare them by sending Aidan the picture of Paige, and when that did not work, Simon decided to come to the apartment to try again to dissuade Keith from pursuing his plans. When Simon goes outside to his van, Aidan decides to tell Paige what she means to him, revealing that he has come to care for her romantically; however, Paige observes that something is wrong while watching Simon, so she and Aidan wait anxiously as Simon returns to the apartment.

Section 15: pages 287-309

Section 15: pages 287-309 Summary

Simon returns to the apartment and shows Paige and Aidan the Drudge report where their photos are posted with an article about them being suspected in the Indigo bombing. It recounts everything that happened with the emails and Aidan's search for Paige, so Aidan knows Cressida and Julian are the contacts and cannot believe they betrayed him. Now, it is too risky for Keith to come to the apartment, but he will still likely try the N3 Action since it may be his last chance to use the bomb, plus the media will blame Aidan and Paige. As they resume plotting to stop Keith and Lindsay, Simon tells Paige what happened on Keith and Lindsay's reconnaissance trip since he met Keith on the way back to Waitsfield afterwards. Keith has no clue Simon contacted Roorback or Paige would disappear, but he believes everyone will understand after he explains himself. Keith finds his way into the N3 building through a studio emergency-exit door which is already propped open while Lindsay tours the facility to note schedules for cleaning, security, alarms and so forth. They find a parking spot on 6th Avenue where they can see the building, and Simon produces two walkie-talkies and a pair of binoculars. After giving Aidan a piece of paper with the address of a farm in Bernardsville, NJ just in case, Simon enters the building while Paige uses the binoculars to watch the building. Simon contacts them on the walkie-talkie to tell them he is in an empty storage room on the ground floor and is safe for now. When Aidan asks how Paige is doing, she leans over and kisses him, but the walkie-talkie interrupts them when Simon announces they are late; the bomb is already in the closet and it is armed, but he thinks he can disarm it. Paige tells him to come back and call the police, but Simon insists he can do it and the line goes dead. Suddenly, a light flashes and a sonic boom shakes the ground as the world falls. Paige tells Aidan to drive, and he steers away from the falling world as she watches the chaos from the window.

Paige spends a long time living in Columbus, Ohio as Isabel Clarke. Her handler is young but seems trustworthy. Feeling more comfortable with her surroundings, Paige begins venturing outside, and one day, she sees her handler point out her apartment to another young man, but she assumes she is about to be handed off to a new handler. While she is working at an internet cafe the next day, she sees her handler's friend again, but he seems too focused on her apartment building, so she sneaks out the back door. When the N3 bomb goes off, Paige instinctively knows where to go and that they will be taken care of. Aidan drops her off at the 9th Street PATH station and meets her at Journal Square half an hour later. The Movement knows the whole story and takes care of Paige and Aidan. The Movement moves Aidan and Paige around at first, but they are separated after Pittsburgh because their names and photos are all over the news. After sneaking out of the internet cafe, Paige keeps moving until she steps out of a YWCA in Joplin, Missouri and calls a number in Chicago. She meets one of Simon's friends, an original Weatherman, at a diner outside of Gary, Indiana, and he tells her she still has options. He informs her that her handler's friend is an undercover Federal Agent who had convinced the handler he was a member of the Movement. In the morning, the man

drives Paige to the Greyhound station in Joliet, and she resumes writing on the bus. Paige wishes she could find Aidan and save him the same way he had saved her, but instead, she continues writing and knows it is "better that way, to stop dwelling on the past, to head somewhere hopeful" (page 309). Her new handlers are named Jim and Carol, and she will call them from a pay phone when she gets closer.

Section 15: pages 287-309 Analysis

The foreshadowing is immediately fulfilled when Simon returns to the apartment and announces that Paige and Aidan have been named as suspects in the Barney's bombing. The article on the Drudge Report details all of Aidan's interactions with Paige, and Aidan feels betrayed to realize that Cressida and Julian are the sources for the article; this also fulfills earlier foreshadowing about these two eventually betraying Aidan. After learning that Aidan and Paige are suspected in the Barney's bombing from the Drudge Report, Simon wants to take Aidan and Paige to a safe house in New Jersey, but Paige insists that stopping Keith is worth everything, and Simon converts to her viewpoint after she tells him the new bomb is filled with shrapnel. Simon suggests contacting the authorities, but Paige points out they will not catch Keith and Lindsay even if they manage to stop the N3 Action; she needs one last chance to talk Keith out of it. Keith did not listen when Simon told him not to continue with the Action, but Simon agrees to try once more. Paige and Simon decide to confront Lindsay on the ground floor and convince her to hand the bomb over. On the way to N3, Simon insists Paige and Aidan leave the island separately, so they plan for Aidan to ride with Simon while Paige takes the PATH to Jersey City where Simon and Aidan will pick her up. Simon goes inside the building while Paige watches for any sign of Keith or Lindsay. As they watch and wait, Paige sympathizes with Aidan over Julian's betrayal. Simon checks in again, but since there is still no sign of Keith or Lindsay, he searches the building and finds that the bomb has already been planted. Despite Paige's protests, Simon insists on attempting to detonate the bomb, so Paige tells Aidan to start the car so they can have Simon meet them at the corner, suggesting Keith planted the bomb early because he anticipated someone would try to stop him. The bomb goes off suddenly, shaking the world, and Aidan speeds away from the horrific scene.

In the final pages of the novel, Paige suddenly returns as a narrator and explains her absence. She had seen her handler point out her apartment to another young man, and when she sees that young man outside her apartment again the next day, she feels something is off and sneaks out the back door of the internet cafe where she is writing her memoir. Three months ago, Paige had begun writing an explanation for her actions, but it threatened to become something else since she has become someone else. The Movement is real and effective, but there is no unified goal and the members only have each other in common. She and Aidan turn to the Movement after the N3 bombing, and the members of the Movement take care of them. The Movement sees Keith as a traitor and a genius; Simon was the only casualty of the N3 Action, and Keith's plan would have worked perfectly if Simon, Paige and Aidan had not interfered. The price was Simon's death, and they "were all to blame. And [they] were all innocent. The world held no absolutes" (page 306). After running for a while, Paige finally contacts one of

Simon's friends, an original Weatherman who aids her. When Paige asks about Aidan, the man is unable to discuss that, but he gives Paige the name of a town and contact information before sending her out West. She asks him to get word to her parents that she loves them and is sorry, and he promises he will. On the bus, Paige again realizes the incredible chance Aidan had taken and wonders about their futures as she admits she is in love with him. The fact that her new handlers are Jim and Carol foreshadow that she may be reunited with Aidan soon since these are also his handlers.

Characters

Aidan Cole

Aidan Cole is one of the main characters, and he is the main narrator. He writes a blog called Roorback.com and lives in New York City. His girlfriend, Cressida Kent, is a report for the New York Times. Hiding in a safe house, Aidan begins writing to explain his actions as Paige Roderick is doing the same elsewhere. At the party of Aidan's estranged girlfriend, Cressida, Aidan checks his email to find an anonymous email from EmpiresFall containing a photograph of Paige Roderick in front of 660 Madison Ave which was recently bombed; the caption says she is responsible. Hesitant to deal with the hassle the FBI will pose if he posts his newfound information on his blog, Roorback.com, Aidan searches for Paige Roderick online, but when his efforts are futile, he contacts Cressida for help, asking her to research Paige and two other names. When Aidan and Cressida meet for dinner, Cressida is convinced that LeRoux is the focus of Aidan's search, causing her to storm off angrily when he refuses to pursue the story, but Aidan leaves the restaurant with a new photo of Paige Roderick which is attached to an article about a dance at Fishers Island. Aidan calls Julian, his best friend, and tells him about the photo since Julian's parents belong to the golf club on Fishers Island. Julian flies Aidan to Fishers Island to talk to Brendan Carlyle, Paige's date in the article. Pretending to be Brendan, Aidan calls the Rodericks in North Carolina, and when they mention they believe Paige called them from a pay phone in Vermont, he calls the Vermont Directory and learns that the number corresponds to the village of Waitsfield.

Since Julian refuses to go to Vermont with him, Aidan takes a ferry and a train to his mother's house where he borrows her car to drive to Waitsfield, but his inquiries in town for Paige Roderick yield no results. At the county fair, Paige confronts Aidan, demanding to know what he wants, but she runs away after he shows her the photo he received from EmpiresFall. Back in New York, Julian does not know what to tell Aidan about Paige but suggests Aidan could help her indirectly, and Cressida breaks up with Aidan after a fight. When she arrives at Aidan's apartment, Paige tells him that she wants him to publish an expose on Roorback concerning the Barney's bombing in order to stop the N3 Action, but Aidan convinces her to wait a day and try to think of another idea while he visits his father in Connecticut. When Cressida sees Paige in Aidan's apartment building, Paige checks into the Liberty Inn, and Aidan hurries home. Aidan interrupts his narrative to express his distress at Paige's disappearance. When Aidan cannot get in touch with Cressida or Julian, Paige takes him to the staging apartment in Chatham Square so they can confront Keith and try to dissuade him from the N3 Action. Simon, Aidan's mom's boyfriend, arrives and confesses he is Keith's patron as well as EmpiresFall. As Simon, Paige and Aidan plot to stop Keith, Simon finds a news report that Paige and Aidan are suspected in the Indigo bombing, and Aidan is distraught to find that Julian and Cressida betrayed him. Aidan, Paige and Simon drive to N3 to try to intercept Keith and Lindsay, but they are too late; the bomb is already planted. Simon tries to disarm the bomb, but it detonates, and Paige and Aidan drive away.



Paige Roderick

Paige Roderick is the secondary narrator and a main character in this novel. She is a beautiful young woman who becomes involved with activist groups after her brother, Bobby, is killed in Iraq. Paige meets Keith and Lindsay at a truck stop, and they drive to Vermont to plan their Actions. Paige became involved with various activist groups after her brother, Bobby, was killed in Iraq, and she has recently fallen in with Keith Sutter. Keith tells Paige that, in Vermont, Lindsay will get a job in town in order to be their eyes and ears, while he and Paige will work from the house, planning Actions. Keith, Lindsay and Paige settle in at the house in Vermont, and Keith and Paige steal two cases of Toval, an explosive, from the government for Keith to use in making his bombs. Paige finds a target, Indigo Holdings, and planning the Action leads to Paige and Keith going to New York to check out 660 Madison Ave, the location they plan to bomb. Lindsay and Keith go to New York to detonate the bomb above Barney's, but the bomb goes off on the wrong floor. When Lindsay alerts Keith that a man is in town asking about Paige, Paige stakes out Aidan's motel room and follows him to the county fair where she confronts him to ask what he wants. She runs away from him after seeing the photograph of herself in front of Barney's. Keith does not believe that their patrons sent the picture of Paige, so the group begins planning for their next Action; Keith wants to bomb the National News Network, N3.

When Keith and Lindsay go to New York on a reconnaissance trip, Paige looks at the bomb in the garage, and when she finds it filled with shrapnel, she leaves and drives to Aidan's house. While recounting her drive, Paige stops writing after she notices a man outside the window. When she arrives at Aidan's apartment, Paige tells him that she wants him to publish an expose on Roorback concerning the Barney's bombing in order to stop the N3 Action, but Aidan convinces her to wait a day and try to think of another idea while he visits his father in Connecticut. When Cressida sees Paige in Aidan's apartment building, Paige checks into the Liberty Inn, and Aidan hurries home. When Aidan cannot get in touch with Cressida or Julian, Paige takes him to the staging apartment in Chatham Square so they can confront Keith and try to dissuade him from the N3 Action. Simon, Aidan's mom's boyfriend, arrives and confesses he is Keith's patron as well as EmpiresFall. As Simon, Paige and Aidan plot to stop Keith, Simon finds a news report that Paige and Aidan are suspected in the Indigo bombing, and Aidan is distraught to find that Julian and Cressida betrayed him. Aidan, Paige and Simon drive to N3 to try to intercept Keith and Lindsay, but they are too late; the bomb is already planted. Simon tries to disarm the bomb, but it detonates, and Paige and Aidan drive away. Paige runs from her safe house because her handler's friend surveys her apartment. After N3, she and Aidan go to the Movement which protects but separates them. Paige contacts Simon's friend who sends her out West.

Simon Krauss

Simon Krauss is Susan Cole's boyfriend, a famous artist and Keith Sutter's patron. Simon was born Jonathan Glassman but has been living under his assumed identity for



over thirty years due to some Actions with which he was involved in his youth. In Shady, Aidan considers confiding in Simon about Paige, but he decides against it. Simon sends Aidan the email from EmpiresFall@gmail.com, alerting him to Paige's involvement with the Indigo Holdings bombing, in an attempt to stop Keith's N3 Action. Simon plots with Aidan and Paige to stop Keith, but the bomb is already planted when they get to the N3 building. Simon attempts to disarm the bomb, but it detonates and kills him.

Julian Touche

Julian Touche is Aidan's best friend. He is ridiculously wealthy and frivolous. When Aidan finds the article about Paige at Fishers Island, Julian flies him to Fishers Island, but he refuses to join his friend's pursuit to Vermont. He suggests Aidan provide Paige indirect support after Aidan meets Paige, but he acts as a source in the story about Paige and Aidan's involvement in the Indigo Holdings bombing; Aidan is devastated by his friend's betrayal.

Cressida Kent

Cressida Kent is Aidan's girlfriend at the beginning of the novel. She is a reporter for the New York Times. Aidan convinces Cressida to research Paige Roderick and two others, but she is furious when he refuses to pursue LeRoux who she thinks was his real focus. Cressida and Aidan fight a lot, and she breaks up with him after he returns from Vermont. She sees Paige in Aidan's building while Aidan is in Connecticut, and she serves as a source in the story about Paige and Aidan's involvement in the Indigo Holdings bombing.

Keith Sutter

Keith Sutter is the leader of Paige's activist group which bombs Indigo Holdings. He is radical and plans to bomb N3 despite Paige and Simon's protests, and their attempts to stop him cause Simon's death.

Lindsay

Lindsay is the third member of Paige and Keith's group. She is in love with Keith and stakes her claim when she first meets Paige. Lindsay works in town in order to be the group's eyes and ears.

Derrick Franklin

Derrick Franklin is Aidan's boss who covers the posts on Roorback while Aidan is out of town.

Bill Cole

Bill Cole is Aidan's father who lives in Connecticut. Aidan visits Bill on his birthday but returns to New York early because Cressida sees Paige in his apartment.

Susan Cole nee Hamlin

Susan Cole, nee Hamlin, is Aidan's mom and Simon's girl friend. She loans Aidan her car to drive to Vermont to visit a friend, though he does not tell her he is really going in search of Paige.

Bobby

Bobby is Paige's older brother who is killed in Iraq. His death is what causes Paige to get involved with the Movement.

Objects/Places

New York City

New York City is the main setting for the bulk of this novel. Aidan lives in New York, and this is where the offices targeted by Keith's Actions are located.

Waitsfield, VT

The Movement puts Keith, Lindsay and Paige in a safe house in Waitsfield, VT for them to plot their Actions.

Litchfield, CT

Aidan's dad lives in Litchfield, CT, and Aidan visits his father the day after Paige arrives at his apartment.

Shady, NY

Aidan's mom and Simon live in Shady, NY. Aidan visits them to borrow his mom's car on his way to search for Paige in Waitsfield.

Fishers Island

The photograph of Paige that Aidan receives from Cressida includes a caption that it was taken at Fishers Island, so Aidan and Julian fly to the island to follow the lead. Here, they meet Brendan Carlyle who provides enough information that Aidan is able to call Paige's parents and track her to Waitsfield, VT.

Retrofitted Barn

After the N3 bombing, the Movement puts Aidan in a retrofitted barn turned safe house which is where he lives while writing his narrative.

Columbus, OH

The Movement places Paige in a safe house in Columbus, OH after the N3 bombing. She begins her memoir from Columbus but flees after noticing a suspicious man with her handler and then again at her apartment the next day.



Mad Mountain Motel

Aidan stays at the Mad Mountain Motel outside Waitsfield, VT when he searches for Paige.

County Fair

Paige first confronts Aidan about searching for her at the county fair in Vermont.

Liberty Inn

After being seen by Cressida, Paige hides out at the Liberty Inn, a couple blocks from Aidan's apartment, until he returns to New York and joins her.

Chatham Square

The apartment where Keith and Paige go to prepare for Barney's is in Chatham Square. It is owned by Simon Krauss and used to stage the Movement's Actions in the city.

660 Madison Ave

Paige's first major Action with Keith and Lindsay is the bombing of 660 Madison Ave. They target Indigo Holdings, but Lindsay leaves the bomb on the wrong floor. EmpiresFall sends an email to Aidan containing a photo of Paige which claims she is responsible, and this sets off Aidan's frantic search for Paige Roderick.

Themes

Betrayal

An important theme in this novel is betrayal. Paige's activist career begins after Bobby's death because she feels betrayed by the government and society which allowed her beloved brother to die. This leads her down the road to Keith Sutter, a radical activist with whom she moves to Vermont. When Paige and Keith go to New York to do some reconnaissance for their planned bombing of Indigo Holdings, Keith attempts to kiss her in the staging apartment. Paige feels betrayed by his attempt because the Actions are supposed to be more important than the individuals, so she sees Keith as a hypocrite. She is betrayed again when she learns about Aidan's photograph of her in front of Barney's which she knows could only have been taken by Keith or one of their patrons. Later, Paige also worries she is being betrayed when Keith and Lindsay leave her in Vermont while they do some reconnaissance for the N3 Action; however, when she finds the bomb is filled with shrapnel, she betrays them by leaving to go to Aidan and try to convince him to post an expose on Roorback about the first Action. In the staging apartment, Simon confirms that he betrayed Paige by sending the email to Aidan, but he also tells her that Keith betrayed her and Lindsay by blaming them for the fact that the bomb at 660 Madison Ave went off on the wrong floor. While Paige is hiding in Columbus, OH, her handler points her apartment out to an FBI agent posing as a member of the Movement, inadvertently betraying her, but the man makes Paige uncomfortable so she flees to safety.

Aidan feels betrayed by Julian when Julian refuses to accompany him on his search for Paige to Vermont, but after Aidan returns to New York, Julian provides valid reasoning and suggests Aidan can help Paige indirectly. When Aidan visits his father, he mentions his feelings of betrayal at his father for marrying a woman who is only one year older than Aidan. Aidan's distrust of Cressida throughout the novel shows that he fears she will betray him, and this fear is validated when she and Julian report his interactions with Paige to the authorities. Aidan and Paige are named as suspects in the Indigo Holdings bombing, and Aidan cannot believe Julian betrayed him.

Secrecy

Secrecy plays a major role in *American Subversive*. To begin with, both narrators, Aidan and Paige, are in hiding as they begin writing their narratives. Aidan receives an anonymous email from EmpiresFall concerning Paige's involvement with the Indigo Holdings bombing, but when he asks Cressida to research Paige, he also provides her with two additional names to research because he does not want her to know who he is really looking for. Additionally, he is unwilling to share his intent to continue his search for Paige when Cressida wants him to pursue the information he received in the email. Aidan does not tell his mom or Simon about Paige when he stops in Shady to borrow his mom's car for his drive to Vermont. Aidan continues keeping secrets as he helps

Paige and falls in love with her, eventually becoming alienated from his friends and his entire life.

Paige's entire activist life is secretive. When she joins Keith and Lindsay at the truck stop, she knows nothing about where they are going, but she has come to accept the secrecy in her life. In Vermont, the group lives a secretive life, and though they grow close, they are not friends in the traditional sense. Paige is distraught when she sees the picture that Aidan was sent connecting her to the Indigo bombing because she knows someone has betrayed the group's secrecy since only the group and their patrons knew she would be outside Barney's at that specific time. Paige abandons Keith and Lindsay after finding that their newest bomb is intended to kill, but when she and Aidan meet Simon and learn he is Keith's patron, she understands his earlier betrayal in contacting Aidan in order to stop Keith. Simon's entire life is secretive since he has been living under an assumed identity for over thirty years.

Loyalty

While betrayal is a major theme in *American Subversive*, loyalty is also an important theme, ironically. When Aidan receives the email from *EmpiresFall* naming Paige as the one responsible for the Indigo Holdings bombing, he is immediately loyal to the beautiful woman which he demonstrates by not going to the authorities with the information. Even after he finds her in Vermont, Aidan does not contact the police about her involvement in the bombing. He helps Paige when she shows up at his apartment despite the repercussions on his life that result. Aidan remains loyal to Paige when he writes his narrative three months later as shown by his overwhelming concern when she disappears. Likewise, Aidan could not feel the pangs of sorrow at Julian's betrayal if he was not of such a loyal nature.

Paige reveals her loyalty first through her dedication to the Actions which she feels are important. She is loyal to Keith and Lindsay also but not above the Actions as revealed by her revulsion when Keith comes on to her. After finding Keith's new bomb filled with murderous shrapnel, Paige turns to Aidan because she trusts him to help her stop Keith. Her loyalty continues through her hiding in Columbus and as she travels to the West, wondering how she can save him as he saved her. Simon also reveals his loyalty; though he betrays Paige to Aidan via email, he did so knowing that Aidan would not contact the authorities. Simon's intention was that Aidan would post a blog on Roorback.com about Paige's involvement which would in turn alert Paige's group that they were not safe, causing them to flee and preventing Keith's N3 Action.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of *American Subversive* is first person, limited and reliable. This is proven by the fact that the two narrators, Aidan and Paige, only know their own stories and what they have been told. Likewise, this alternation between narrators proves their reliability since they are writing separately, yet they never contradict one another, proving that they are both telling the truth, or at least they are not proven to be dishonest. This point of view is important because the events they describe are not very honorable, but their honesty in relating their intentions prove that those intentions were honorable, even when the actions were not. This serves to make the characters, especially Paige, more sympathetic to readers.

The novel is written using mostly exposition, with a minute amount of dialogue, as Aidan and Paige recount the past events described. This distribution is useful because it allows the novel to focus on the story as a whole rather than inconsequential details. It also serves to characterize Aidan, Paige and the other characters in *American Subversive*. The viewpoint of the novel alternates between Aidan and Paige, though Aidan narrates the majority of the novel since Paige runs from her safe house after being spied on by an FBI Agent.

Setting

American Subversive is set in the real world, in America in modern times, post 9/11. The majority of the characters are either activists or journalists of some variety. The activists seem to be from middle class families while most of the people in Aidan's world are quite wealthy. New York City is the main setting for the bulk of this novel. Aidan lives in New York, and this is where the offices targeted by Keith's Actions are located. The Movement puts Keith, Lindsay and Paige in a safe house in Waitsfield, VT for them to plot their Actions. Aidan's dad lives in Litchfield, CT, and Aidan visits his father the day after Paige arrives at his apartment. Aidan's mom and Simon live in Shady, NY. Aidan visits them to borrow his mom's car on his way to search for Paige in Waitsfield.

The photograph of Paige that Aidan receives from Cressida includes a caption that it was taken at Fishers Island, so Aidan and Julian fly to the island to follow the lead. Here, they meet Brendan Carlyle who provides enough information that Aidan is able to call Paige's parents and track her to Waitsfield, VT. After the N3 bombing, the Movement puts Aidan in a retrofitted barn turned safe house which is where he lives while writing his narrative. The Movement places Paige in a safe house in Columbus, OH after the N3 bombing. She begins her memoir from Columbus but flees after noticing a suspicious man with her handler and then again at her apartment the next day. Aidan stays at the Mad Mountain Motel outside Waitsfield, VT when he searches for Paige. Paige first confronts Aidan about searching for her at the county fair in



Vermont. After being seen by Cressida, Paige hides out at the Liberty Inn, a couple blocks from Aidan's apartment, until he returns to New York and joins her. The apartment where Keith and Paige go to prepare for Barney's is in Chatham Square. It is owned by Simon Krauss and used to stage the Movement's Actions in the city. Paige's first major Action with Keith and Lindsay is the bombing of 660 Madison Ave. They target Indigo Holdings, but Lindsay leaves the bomb on the wrong floor. EmpiresFall sends an email to Aidan containing a photo of Paige which claims she is responsible, and this sets off Aidan's frantic search for Paige Roderick.

Language and Meaning

The language used in *American Subversive* is casual and informal, though grammatically proper. This is important since Paige and Aidan are writing their individual accounts of the events which have transpired. The language aids comprehension because it provides a very detailed account of these events and what led each of the narrators to their current situations. Generally, the language used also serves to characterize the thoughts, beliefs and upbringings of both Paige and Aidan in addition to the way their lives were before they were brought together by Simon's anonymous email.

The novel is written using mostly exposition, with a minute amount of dialogue, as Aidan and Paige recount the past events described. This distribution is useful since it allows the novel to focus on the story as a whole rather than inconsequential details. It also serves to characterize Aidan, Paige and the other characters in *American Subversive*. The language utilized aids the author's writing style since it is easy to comprehend, and the detailed accounts of their actions proves what Aidan says in his introduction: "we're far from innocent. But we're hardly guilty as charged" (page 3). Overall, the language is easy to understand and extremely useful in revealing the mindsets that led to the events described.

Structure

American Subversive is comprised of three hundred, nine pages which are divided into twenty-nine sections which are not titled or numbered. The sections are identified by the name of the narrator, either Aidan or Paige. At first, the narrators alternate, but Aidan narrates exclusively for the second half of the novel after Paige disappears from her safe house until the very last section when Paige resumes her narrative. The chapters are generally quite short, but they are very detailed. Each section describes a brief period of days or hours, though the narrators divert to stories about their childhoods sporadically and may describe a period of several years in the middle of an anecdote about a specific day.

American Subversive by David Goodwillie is an interesting novel about how two unrelated individuals get involved in a bombing in New York City. Aidan Cole receives an anonymous email blaming the bombing on Paige Roderick, and when he pursues

Paige, his life changes drastically in only a few days as he becomes involved with Movements and Actions he knows nothing about. *American Subversive* is an entertaining, though disturbing, account of one activist group's attempts to change the world. The novel is quick-paced and very easy to read as alternating between narrators allow Aidan and Paige to fill in the blanks missing in each other's narratives. The novel contains many flashbacks to Aidan and Paige's pasts, and their narratives are actually written from a future time as they reflect on the events of three months prior. Overall, *American Subversive* is very easy and enjoyable to read.

Quotes

"There is no romance in going underground, in becoming anonymous, stateless, tended to by strangers who come and go in shadows." Aidan, page 1

"Our tenuous situations will change, or certain memories will prove too much to revisit day after day. And maybe that's for the best. Still, we must try, while we have time and truth on our side. We're far from innocent. But we're hardly guilty as charged." Aidan, page 3

"I think deep down you like what she does, the power of her pen, so to speak. Of course, the power of your pen seems more the issue these days." Julian Touche, Aidan, page 11

"Ah, Aidan, it's what we do. We children of the wealthy are doomed by the long shadows of our forefathers to lives of insignificance. And so we learn to pass the time with material pleasures, embrace the hobbies of our birthright - boats and planes, horses and golf. How else to forget the failures of our class?" Julian Touche, Aidan, page 13

"That was the toughest part in the beginning, the lack of information. I knew not to ask questions, not to speak at all. But I knew something else, too, knew it as soon as I sat down. That this felt right. These two people, this car, it was where I wanted to be, needed to be." Paige, page 22

"The object of every Action should be visibility, generating attention." Paige, page 39

"We never believed in anything, which, as I write now, seems as good a generational epigraph as any." Aidan, page 41

"What was the lesson in all this? That you couldn't shape the world in your image. And it was a waste of time to try. Life would roll along as scheduled, and all a journalist could do was shine a weak light on the passing trains." Aidan, page 50

"I can see why you didn't become a fucking journalist. Do you know what your problem is? Or one of them, at least? A complete lack of curiosity. You spend your life waiting for people to make mistakes, and then you publicize them. And when, God forbid, something interesting comes your way, a story you could actually chase down, you let it pass right by. Look! We have his address, his phone number! Don't you think it's worth fifteen minutes?" Cressida, Aidan, page 69

"Keith believed the ills of the country, of mankind, could be traced to one word: energy. And America's energy policy is what he intended to change." Paige, page 76

"There is no leverage without violence or the threat of it." Keith, Paige, page 78

"The rich do get richer, I realize that now. Between Dalton and Middlebury I'd know plenty of well-heeled offspring, but no one like Touche. He was too wealthy to



understand money, to realize it was the permanent focal point of everyone else's existence. Debt, like public transportation, just wasn't part of his world." Aidan, page 93

"And what if it is her? Have you considered that? What if you somehow do find her, and over a nice glass of chardonnay she admits she builds bombs in her free time? Then you're involved. Then you have to turn her in. And even if you don't get in trouble for having failed to alert the police sooner, your life from that point on... it will always be that one thing. You'll never escape it. Even heroism is a kind of infamy." Julian Touche, Aidan, pages 104-105

"It wasn't so different: three generations of war, of duty and slowly mounting despair. You give so much, and then you give everything." Paige, page 124

"It's always the smallest detail. The busted brake light. The earring left under the pillow. Or the simple fact that many buildings don't have thirteenth floors. Lindsay made the mistake, but any of us could have caught it." Paige, page 143

"What was I doing? Chasing a character I'd invented through the landscapes of my youth. The truth was, I barely recognized the single-minded person I'd become. I guess I'd never taken anything so far. But now there was nowhere left to go." Aidan, pages 149-150

"I knew what was happening. This was my mess and I had to clean it up. Whoever this guy was hadn't used Keith's name or Lindsay's; he'd used mine. I was at least partially exposed, and therefore a danger to the group. But if a chasm was developing between the three of us, its depth was limited. Because things had happened now, and we were all culpable. Was there any choice but to stay together?" Paige, page 159

"I couldn't turn around now. I had to know who this man was, this bridge between my lives. Because I thought I'd burned them all." Paige, page 171

"I'm speaking of the American malaise. The triumph of the wealthy: complete disengagement, derived not from admirable self-sufficiency but sickening self-regard... We are the walking dead, my friend: America's winners. Too tired making money to live. And the rest of the country? Too tired living to fight." Julian Touche, Aidan, page 181

"I could broker a deal with the Feds, tell them all I knew, except I knew nothing. I'd wandered blind through these last months, stupidly equating my doubts with some lack of faith or courage." Paige, page 194

"Do you even care anymore? About our relationship? About your job? Roorback's been nothing but shit for a week now. At least you used to care about not caring. Now you've given up on everything- and it's embarrassing. Do you think my friends don't notice? They don't trust you anymore, Aidan. I mean, what am I supposed to say when they ask where you are? And who you're with?" Cressida, Aidan, page 205

"The way we come to trust people, men. The old schoolyard game, falling backward from a height and knowing we'll be caught. They didn't tell us it would never be so easy

again. They didn't tell us everything would be a futile attempt to get back to that perfect moment, the risk and certain reward." Paige, page 206

"We've become a nation that buckles down and endures instead of rearing up, instead of revolting against unacceptable circumstances. And why? Because no one will lead the way: the poor are too weighed down by the task of survival, and the wealthy will never challenge a system that's taken such good care of their interests." Paige, Aidan, page 219

"I was drawn to her, both because of and despite who she was, what she believed. But what did she believe? How much of all this was a symptom of her grief? And how much came from the woman underneath?" Aidan, page 234

"Appearances: I'd spent my working life judging them, and the rest of the time keeping them up. What good had come of my efforts? For me? For anyone else?" Aidan, page 244

"What would I do now? Knowing that Paige was okay had kept me going- and kept me writing. I'd come to think of our dual narratives as unrequited love letters, fervently baring our true feelings- words we wished we'd spoken and one day still might. But now what? I'd never imagined her in trouble. On the run again... She was out there somewhere. Or worse, she wasn't." Aidan, page 253

"Chances get you killed." Paige, Aidan, page 256

"I don't know what tripped me up: the thought of returning to my life or the thought of Paige leaving it." Aidan, page 258

"I didn't believe in Paige's version of the world, but I believed in her. If we could just stop running, simply surviving, long enough to breathe again, I would do everything I could to pull her to safety. For something inside me had sparked and caught fire. And when that happens, you can defend any decision, justify any Action." Aidan, page 265

"This is my apartment. I'm on your side. I know what's going on." Simon, Aidan, page 271

"Simon listened carefully, his face creasing in concern, and what looked like regret. Was he blaming himself? He was, after all, responsible for the two of us being there. And Paige? Why wasn't she still spewing venom at the man who'd leaked her identity? Perhaps it was something they shared, these two, beyond searing passion and cool objectivity, this ability to steer around impediments, around tragedy. Is that what kept them alive to the damaged world? Or alive in it?" Aidan, page 274

"Certainly that was part of it. I was tired of running, of pretending. And, yes, I'd fallen into this strange lucrative career, transparent as it was, as it is, but when you've spent your adult life working the docks and tarring roofs and frying eggs in boxcar diners, all because you cared too much, because you took action where others wouldn't, I'll just

say my new circumstance was something of a pleasant change." Simon Krauss, Aidan, pages 280-281

"Lines blur at their extremes, and sometimes people crack. Keith cracked and I recognized it too late. When he mentioned his idea for N3, I begged him to forget it. The media, for Christ's sake. But he gave me a look I'll never forget. And when he got out of the car and slammed the door, I knew I'd have no choice but to try to stop him." Simon Krauss, Aidan, page 285

"I just... I just wanted to let you know that I'm really sorry about Julian. I know what it's like to be betrayed by someone you trust. It's the loneliest feeling in the world." Paige, Aidan, page 298

"What I started writing- three months ago now- was an explanation for my actions. What it threatened to become was something else entirely. Because I had become someone else. And I don't mean Isabel Clarke. I mean that I had changed, evolved, on the inside, and fleshing out the events of my recent life began to help me understand exactly how. Everything had happened so quickly- a single year bookended by death- and I needed time. Aidan, I believed, and still believe, was writing his own story, and that made a seemingly futile exercise- for who will read these words unless something goes horribly wrong or wonderfully right?- potentially worthwhile." Paige, pages 302-303

"Deceit and then death. We were all to blame. And we were all innocent. The world held no absolutes- I'd learned that the hard way- and those who believe otherwise were fooling themselves. Yes, a man was dead, only one man, and still the loss was horrific. My brother had been one man, too. One death can mean so much." Paige, page 306

Topics for Discussion

How does Aidan find out about Paige?

How do Aidan and Paige change throughout the novel?

Why does Paige get involved with the Movement?

Who is Simon Krauss, and why is he important to the novel's plot?

What does Paige want Aidan to do when she first arrives at his apartment?

Why does Paige abandon Keith and Lindsay?

How does Paige ruin Aidan's life? Does Aidan think she ruined his life?

Who betrays Aidan, and why? How does Aidan feel about this?