

Die Trying Study Guide

Die Trying by Lee Child

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Contents

Die Trying Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-7.....	5
Chapters 8-13.....	7
Chapters 14-16.....	9
Chapter 17.....	11
Chapters 18-21.....	12
Chapters 22-23.....	14
Chapters 24-26.....	16
Chapters 27-30.....	18
Chapters 31-34.....	20
Chapters 35-36.....	22
Chapters 37-40.....	24
Chapters 41-43.....	26
Chapters 44-46.....	28
Characters.....	30
Objects/Places.....	34
Themes.....	36
Style.....	38
Quotes.....	40
Topics for Discussion.....	42



Plot Summary

Die Trying is Lee Child's second in the Reacher series. This novel finds Jack Reacher kidnapped by coincidence when he stops to help a young woman regain her balance outside the dry cleaners. Reacher proves himself a hero when he refuses to leave this woman's side, despite the possibility of escape on his own. Once in the hands of the man who orchestrated this kidnapping, Reacher waits for the opportunity to exact revenge and to rescue the damsel in distress. Die Trying is a novel based on coincidences that proves that life is just a series of accidents.

Jack Reacher is walking down the street when he sees a young woman about to fall as she comes out of the dry cleaners. Reacher steadies the woman on her feet and takes her arm to help her to her intended destination. Before they can take more than a single step, Reacher and the young woman are forced into a car at gunpoint. Soon after, Reacher and the woman are transferred to a white panel truck in which they are driven for several hours. On the drive, Reacher learns this woman is Holly Johnson, an FBI agent. What Reacher does not know is that this woman is also the daughter of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

While Reacher and Holly spend a restless night in an old barn, Holly's fellow FBI agents are searching for clues to her disappearance. The director of the FBI is notified and placed in charge of the case. The Chicago office where Holly was assigned takes lead on the local aspects of the case, paring those in the know to just the agent in charge and two trusted agents. The investigation begins slowly.

The following morning, Reacher and Holly are once again transported in the white panel truck. Holly does not understand why Reacher did not take an opportunity the night before to escape, but feels responsible for his safety. That night, however, it becomes obvious they are responsible for each other's lives. Reacher is forced to murder one of the kidnapers when he comes into the barn and tries to rape Holly. Reacher is able to break free of his restraints, kill the man, and hide his body so that the other two kidnapers know nothing about the night's events.

As Holly and Reacher spend their third day in the white panel truck, the FBI finally gets some leads and are able to send out an APB on the truck. Unfortunately, their APB stops the wrong truck. Holly and Reacher arrive at their destination, which turns out to be the camp of a radical militia intent on creating their own country. Holly is placed in a room that was built specifically for her with a hollow between the walls that is stuffed with dynamite. Holly is approached by an undercover FBI agent who promises to get her out that night, but Holly refuses to go without Reacher.

At the same time, Reacher is being given a grand tour of the camp in order to go back to civilization and tell the world about the militia's grand plans. However, before Reacher can leave, news of the rapist's death reaches the camp and Reacher is put on trial for murder. When Holly learns that Reacher is to be executed, she escapes her room and



insists they let Reacher go. Instead, the commandant commutes Reacher's sentence to time in the punishment cabin after he proves his identity in a rifle shooting contest.

As part of his punishment, Reacher and Holly are sent into the woods to bury the body of the undercover FBI agent. Reacher warns Holly that the militia is planning something big and it is to take place on the Fourth of July. At the same time, the FBI and Holly's father have set up a command post a few miles from the camp, despite the fact that the President has refused to allow them to take a rescue party into the camp. That night, Reacher escapes from the punishment cabin and begins to explore the camp. Reacher finds the abandoned mine where the militia keep their vehicles and discovers that they have stolen a military caravan transporting missiles.

The following morning, Reacher returns to the main part of the camp, where he is forced to rescue Holly's agent in charge who has gotten kidnapped after attempting to break into the camp and save Holly. The agent in charge has been working with two agents who are both working with the commandant of the militia in exchange for money. Reacher and the agent in charge stalk the camp, looking for a way to rescue Holly. Finally the commandant takes Holly out into the yard and attempts to execute her in view of spy cameras that her father is watching at the command post. Reacher is able to kill the commandant. However, in the rush of excitement afterwards, Holly is once again taken hostage by one of the rogue FBI agents. Reacher rescues her again.

Reacher, upon discovering that there is no dynamite surrounding Holly's room, realizes that the commandant sent a truck loaded with the explosives to San Francisco that morning with the intention of setting it off during the crowds celebrating the holiday. Reacher, the FBI, and Holly rush along the highway in a helicopter to find the truck. When they do, Reacher fires a single bullet into the cargo bay, detonating the explosives and killing the driver.



Chapters 1-7

Chapters 1-7 Summary

Reacher is a retired military man who has been moving from place to place, getting to know America for the first time due to the fact that he was raised on military bases because of his father's service to his country. Holly Johnson is also an Army brat who was a Wall Street analyst, but now works as an agent for the FBI in their Chicago field office.

Reacher stops to help Holly. Holly has dropped the crutch she has been using since she hurt her knee in a soccer game. Before Holly and Reacher can take a step, two gunmen approach and force them into the back seat of a luxury sedan. Holly and Reacher are driven a few blocks and then forced into the back of a white panel truck. Holly's purse and her dry cleaning are left in the car, which is then lit on fire. More than one thousand miles away, a room is being demolished inside an old building. When the workers are done, their employer takes them to a remote cavern and kills them.

Reacher and Holly introduce themselves in the back of the truck. Reacher assess the situation, believing that the men have been watching Holly for many weeks and that she made a mistake by being too regular in her habits. Reacher wonders why the men want Holly, but gets no response from Holly. Reacher thinks maybe Holly upset someone in her work at the FBI.

The newly demolished room is getting a new room built inside of it with exactly one foot between it and the frame of the old room. A case conference Holly was supposed to run at the Chicago field office begins. However, when Holly fails to show up, Paul 'Mac' McGrath, the agent in charge of the field office, becomes concerned.

The truck stops and Reacher and Holly are tied up in stalls in an old barn. As the kidnapers lock up Reacher, they ask him questions. Reacher answers them honestly, even though they do not believe him. Later the men return with food. Reacher uses his fork to release his handcuffs. Reacher searches the barn for a way out, but only finds one high up the wall, a point Holly has no chance of reaching with her bad knee. Reacher locks himself back into place despite Holly's insistence that he go without her.

The room inside the room is finished and the walls between the two rooms are packed with a ton of material. One of the men who loads the walls sneaks into the woods when it is finished and uses a radio to send a message about the material. The message is received by an FBI field agent, who recognizes its importance, but when the message is forwarded it gets bogged down in the flow of information between offices. Webster, director of the FBI, receives word of Holly's disappearance and immediately calls Mac. After the call, Webster goes immediately to the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and tells him that his daughter is missing.



Chapters 1-7 Analysis

Reacher and Holly are introduced in these chapters. Reacher is a man who has extensive military training but is retired and roaming the country at will. Reacher stops to help a young woman and finds himself kidnapped. Holly is a young, stubborn lady who has been injured playing soccer but is determined to continue living her life as normally as possible. It is because of this injury that Reacher is kidnapped alongside Holly, because he stopped to help her when she dropped her crutch. This crutch is an important item, and it should be noted that Holly's kidnapper makes sure to take it with them. This implies to the reader that the kidnappers do not plan to kill Holly. The fact that they feed her when they stop that night implies the same thing. Holly and Reacher have no idea why these people have taken Holly, but it is clear that they want her alive; therefore, it seems Holly is someone of value to them. Later, when the FBI director informs the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that his daughter is missing, it becomes clear just why Holly is so important.

Reacher finds an opportunity to escape this kidnapping, but refuses to take it. This tells the reader that Reacher is either insane, or he is a kind man who cannot leave a helpless woman to the mercy of kidnappers. At the same time, a room is being built in a place more than a thousand miles from Chicago. The reader does not know what this place is, but it is clear that it is where Holly is being taken. It is also clear that the man running this place is ruthless in the fact that he has killed the men who demolished the room in preparation for building the new room. At the same time, there is an undercover FBI agent at this place, suggesting it is a place of interest to the government as well. Again, the reader does not know where this place is, but it does not seem like a hospitable place.



Chapters 8-13

Chapters 8-13 Summary

Mac announces to the agents assembled in the Chicago field office to search for Holly that she has been found. Mac says that Holly was contacted by the hospital that a spot had opened on the surgery schedule for that day and she forgot to let anyone know in the hurry to get there. After everyone leaves, Mac tells Brogan and Milosevic that the story is just a cover, that Holly is still missing and the three of them are going to run the investigation in Chicago. At the same time, the room inside a room is complete. The employer tells the carpenter that he needs to make sure no one can get out of the room. The employer locks the carpenter into the room and tells him if he does not get out by morning he will use his own saw to cut his arms off.

Reacher thinks over his situation, trying to decide what his plan of action should be. Reacher decides it should be his priority to make sure Holly survives this ordeal. Mac learns that Holly went to the dry cleaners during the period in which she disappeared. Mac, Milosevic, and Brogan search through the phone book for dry cleaners near the office and find more than a dozen. Eventually Milosevic finds the right one and interviews the clerk, but learns very little. They do, however, get the security footage covering Holly's visit. At the same time, the carpenter was unsuccessful in breaking out of the room.

Reacher and Holly are awakened by the kidnappers. Reacher insists they provide them with breakfast. When they do, Reacher tells Holly to send hers back. Later, when the kidnappers load them into the truck, Reacher insists on mattresses to ride on. Reacher also manages to get two of the men to tell him their names.

Mac views the security footage from the dry cleaners. The camera does not record on a continuous feed, but takes snapshots every ten seconds; therefore, whole sections of Holly's kidnapping are missing. However, the camera catches a picture of Reacher grabbing Holly outside the door of the dry cleaners and of Holly being shoved into the car. This footage leads Mac to believe there are four kidnappers, including Reacher.

Holly tells Reacher that he should have escaped when he had the chance and next time the opportunity presents itself she wants him to leave. Reacher agrees and then begins to talk over the evidence he has noticed. Reacher insists the kidnappers had to have been watching Holly for at least a few weeks. Reacher also believes that the kidnappers made a mistake when they burned the luxury sedan and that this is going to lead the police to them. All of these observations make Holly wonder who Reacher really is.

Chapters 8-13 Analysis

Mac tells a lie to his agents in order to take them off of Holly's disappearance. Then Mac arranges for only two agents to work with him on the case. Mac's actions suggest to the



reader that the FBI is concerned about word of Holly's disappearance becoming public. Perhaps the FBI does not trust that their own agents will not spill the beans to the press. Mac's action could also suggest that there will be involvement from another source. Since the reader knows that Holly is the daughter of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it might have crossed the reader's mind that the military might become involved.

Mac and his agents find the dry cleaner where Holly was kidnapped and view the security footage. This footage leads Mac to believe that Reacher is one of the kidnappers. The reader knows this is untrue. This causes the reader to wonder if perhaps Reacher's life is now in danger now from both the kidnappers and the FBI. Not only this, but the misunderstanding could also mean that the FBI has lost an advantage they might have had by having Reacher on the inside.

Reacher's character and motivations are probed for the reader as he lies awake thinking about his current situation. Reacher could have escaped when he freed himself after dinner that first night, but he chose not to because he knows Holly needs his help. Reacher is clearly a man who understands duty and chivalry. Reacher has made it his mission to help Holly even though he does not know her and has little personal stake in her survival. At the same time, Reacher, who is supposedly just a doorman, knows enough about police procedure that he can point out to Holly all the mistakes the kidnappers have made. This leads both Holly and the reader to wonder exactly who Reacher is. It seems that he is some kind of military or law enforcement person who can be an asset during this ordeal. Reacher's knowledge injects a tone of optimism into the novel, leaving the reader hoping that both he and Holly will survive this ordeal.



Chapters 14-16

Chapters 14-16 Summary

Mac takes the security footage to the tech department and has several photographs made of the suspects. The tech guy tells Mac that he can get full color photos of the man driving the car, despite the fact that his face is turned. Mac sends Brogan and Milosovic to get the information the tech guy needs. More than a thousand miles away, the commander has the women on punishment detail clean up the blood left from the dismemberment of the carpenter. Back in Chicago, the luxury sedan is identified from the security footage and quickly found burned near Meigs Field. Based on its location, the FBI believe Holly was put on a plane.

Holly argues with Reacher about his need to protect her. Holly insists that she can take care of herself. Reacher questions Holly about why the kidnappers would want her specifically, but Holly refuses to answer any of his questions. Holly questions Reacher as well and learns that he was an Army brat who joined the MPs as an adult and only recently retired. Holly shares some of her memories of a childhood of Army bases and lets it slip that her father is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mac and his agents interrogate everyone at Meigs Airport, but cannot find any evidence that Holly and her kidnappers took a plane. Mac calls Webster and tells him what they have found so far and assures him that they are keeping a tight lid on the situation. Webster promises more resources. At the same time, Brogan and Milosevic investigate the dentist who owned the luxury sedan and was found murdered in its trunk. Not far from his home, a truck is found burned, enough of a coincidence to convince the agents that the truck belonged to the kidnappers. More than a thousand miles away, the undercover agent is eager to make contact with his superiors again, but learns from the commander that they are monitoring radio signals in and out of the camp, making it too dangerous for the agent to attempt to call his superiors again.

Chapters 14-16 Analysis

Mac and his team are finally making some progress. They find the luxury car with the body of its owner in the trunk. The location of the burned car leads them to a nearby airport, but it turns out to be a waste of time, as the reader already knew it would. However, the dentist's body does lead them to another burned car that might be traced back to the kidnappers. Time is of the essence in this search since the FBI has no idea what the kidnappers want with Holly and she could be killed at any moment. Silence is also important because the FBI does not want press coverage to tip off the kidnappers, either. All of this makes it difficult for the FBI to do its job quickly, but Mac, Brogan, and Milosevic appear to be good agents who know their business.



At the same time, Holly and Reacher are getting to know each other. It is finally revealed that Reacher was in the military with the military police. This explains Reacher's knowledge of law enforcement techniques and his quick assessment of the situation. Reacher learns that Holly is the daughter of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explaining somewhat why the kidnappers are interested in her. However, Reacher does not believe that kidnapping Holly would offer any leverage with her father because he would be replaced the moment it appeared he was compromised. This confuses the reader as well, leaving the reader convinced there is more to Holly than the reader knows at this point. Holly's reluctance to reveal who her father is gives the reader some insight to her personality. Holly is annoyed that the assumption is made that she was kidnapped to get to her father. Holly clearly is not happy living in the shadow of such a great man, touching on a theme of the novel.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Holly talks about how difficult it is to live in the shadow of a man like her father. Reacher is confused as to what the kidnappers were hoping to gain by holding Holly, since her father would be replaced the second he came under duress. Reacher insists on talking to the kidnappers, forcing them to pull over to the side of the road. As Reacher begins to argue that the kidnappers have made a mistake, Loder fires the shotgun through the roof of the truck, leaving over a hundred holes in the ceiling. Back on the road, Reacher and Holly discuss where they might be going, able to narrow it down to the west somewhere. Eventually they stop for the night. The kidnappers are less friendly, not allowing Reacher to help Holly out of the truck. Both Holly and Reacher are handcuffed to metal rings inside horse stalls. Later the kidnappers bring Holly dinner, but refuse to feed Reacher. Holly tries to share with Reacher, but there is too much space between their stalls.

Late that night, one of the kidnappers comes into the barn alone. Reacher has been expecting this moment based on the way the man was always looking at Holly. Exactly as Reacher has predicted, the man goes to Holly's stall and announces his intention of raping her. Holly tries to fight, but she has only one good leg and one of her arms is handcuffed to a ring at the back of the stall. Holly manages to get in a few good kicks, but eventually the kidnapper is able to injure her knee enough to take the fight out of her. As the kidnapper is preparing to rape Holly, Reacher pulls the metal ring he is handcuffed to out of the rotted wood it is anchored to. Reacher attacks the kidnapper and suffocates him against Holly's mattress.

Chapter 17 Analysis

The danger of Holly's situation becomes glaringly obvious in this chapter. First Holly and Reacher are nearly killed when the kidnappers become angry at Reacher's audacity and fire a shotgun inside the truck. Later, Reacher is mistreated, suggesting to the reader that the kidnappers have finally had enough of Reacher's reverse psychology. However, the most obvious sign is when one of the kidnappers comes into the barn where Holly and Reacher are being held and attempts to rape Holly. Holly fights back, but she has a bad knee and is handcuffed to the wall. Holly is rendered helpless by the kidnapper and would have been raped if Reacher had not been able to break free of his own restraints. Reacher kills the man and saves Holly, something he would not have been able to do if he had escaped the night before as Holly admonished him for not doing. The near rape combined with the ruthless behavior of the commander of the place where Holly is being taken clearly leaves the reader concerned that Holly's future may be very short if the kidnappers do not get what they want from her father.



Chapters 18-21

Chapters 18-21 Summary

General Johnson goes to visit Webster to find out if any progress has been made on the case. Webster brings Johnson up to date on the case, but cannot make any promises that Holly will be rescued. Reacher slips out of the barn to see if he can possibly get himself and Holly out of harm's way. Unfortunately, there is no way for Reacher to procure a vehicle without alerting the other kidnappers. Reacher returns to the barn, makes a hole in the wall, and then runs the corpse of the dead kidnapper more than a mile from the farm where they are being held. Reacher then relocks the front door, slips into his stall through the hole in the wall, and repairs both the hole and his broken metal ring to keep the other kidnappers from knowing what has taken place. At dawn, the other two kidnappers discover their missing companion and decide to kill Reacher in order to reduce their burden. Holly convinces the men not to kill Reacher, convincing them they are only wasting time. The kidnappers agree, loading Reacher and Holly into the truck and getting back on the road.

Brogan discovers that the kidnappers painted the side of the vehicle they used to leave town. Brogan does a search and discovers a local electrician had a panel truck stolen. The FBI put out an APB on this stolen van. At the same time, the FBI technicians get prints off the paintbrushes. At Quantico, the burned truck is closely investigated and is traced back to California. They also begin to trace the dirt found in the wheel wells. At the same time, a cop in Arizona finds the stolen panel van. A massive roadblock is instituted and the van is stopped. However, it turns out to be filled with illegal immigrants headed to Chicago.

Holly and Reacher draw comfort from one another. Again they try to reason out where they might be, but they cannot be certain. Eventually the van stops. Reacher and Holly are taken out of the truck in the middle of a clearing that is filled with wooden structures and a group of people all wearing camouflage. When Holly asks where they are, she is told they are in a new country.

Chapters 18-21 Analysis

Reacher tries again to rescue himself and Holly, but again finds that there is no way to get Holly safely out with her injuries. Instead, Reacher covers up the evidence of the night's activities and returns to the barn. Reacher's actions are done with careful thought, showing the reader that Reacher is accustomed to working under duress and that he is comfortable around death. Reacher is an intelligent, insightful man, suggesting he will be able to help Holly no matter what happens when they arrive at their destination, which they eventually do at the end of this set of chapters. Holly asks where they are and is told they are in a new country, suggesting one of two things to the reader. It could be that Holly and Reacher have been taken to some foreign location,



though it is unlikely because they drove the entire way, which means they are still in North America. Or, it suggests that Holly and Reacher have been taken captive by some sort of militia who do not agree with the policies of the United States government, a theme of the novel. Either way, it seems that Holly and Reacher are in the hands of unstable people.

The FBI continues to investigate and make another breakthrough. Unfortunately, the truck they believe the kidnappers stole turns out to be a van stolen to transport illegal immigrants across country. The reader sees this as a big mistake and a waste of time. The van was headed in the wrong direction when the police found it. The reader wonders if perhaps someone is not trying to waste time. Perhaps one of the kidnappers is influencing the investigation somehow. Either that, or the cops in Arizona misunderstood the point of the APB.



Chapters 22-23

Chapters 22-23 Summary

Mac is beginning to worry about the progress of the case, because he knows the longer it takes to find a kidnapping victim, the more likely a living person will not be found. Evidence from the burned truck suggests the kidnappers came from Montana, and that it was last known to be in the possession of a man named Beau Borken. Mac is also informed about the discovery of the body of the driver from the security footage in North Dakota, making them believe the kidnappers are headed back to Montana. Finally, Mac learns that the kidnappers rented a white panel truck with the dead dentist's credit card.

At that point, Webster takes a more active role in the investigation. Together with Mac and his team, Webster flies to North Dakota, where they review the crime scene where the body of the driver was found. From the evidence, Webster and Mac know that Reacher killed the man. They believe that Reacher is the leader, a terrorist who hired the other three to kidnap Holly for unknown reasons. Reacher then killed the driver because he attempted to assault Holly, reassuring the FBI that the kidnappers understand Holly's value, but also showing them that the kidnappers are ruthless when crossed.

Holly is locked alone in the room within a room. Holly finds a bathroom in this room and quickly takes a shower, changing into faded fatigues left for her use. Reacher is taken into one of the wooden structures, where Loder is being disciplined by a man named Fowler for making five mistakes during the kidnapping and subsequent drive back to Montana. It is decided Loder will stand trial for these mistakes. Reacher asks about Holly and is taken to her room. Holly tells Reacher that she cannot share a bed with him because she is in love with someone else. Reacher is then removed from the room. It seems the kidnappers wanted Reacher in the room to test a listening device. Reacher is taken back to the wooden structure where Loder is lying bleeding on the floor. Reacher is introduced to the commandant, Beau Borken. At the same time, the undercover agent comes to Holly's room and tells her that he will get her out the following day. Holly insists that Reacher be rescued as well. Borken has Loder beaten to prove his power to Reacher.

Later, Holly begins searching for a weapon in her room while Loder is taken from the room where Reacher waits. A man comes to watch over Reacher. Reacher tries to talk to this man and learns that Borken has convinced the people at this camp that the United States Government puts computer chips in infants and cars in order to control its citizens. The man says that they are planning to secede from the union and create their own country where the citizens will be able to live with the freedoms intended in the Constitution. The man says Borken's plan will go into action on the Fourth of July.



Chapters 22-23 Analysis

While the FBI becomes convinced that Reacher is some sort of terrorist who has kidnapped Holly with help from three radicals for some unknown plan, Reacher and Holly arrive at their final destination. Holly is placed in a room, where her rescue is planned. Holly is smart, however, and does not sit back to wait for someone to rescue her. Holly begins searching for a weapon to help her rescue herself. This shows Holly's depth of character, her strength, and her determination not to get lost in anyone's shadow, a theme of the novel. At the same time, Reacher learns a few more details about the place to which they have been brought.

Beau Borken, the owner of the truck that the FBI have traced to the kidnappers, is a violent, ruthless man who is clearly the same commander who commissioned the room inside the room and killed all the construction workers connected to it. Borken continues to prove his ruthlessness by punishing Loder for making mistakes during the kidnapping. Reacher is not afraid, however, showing again his calm in dangerous situations. Reacher is able to establish that Borken is planning on creating his own country with a plan that is to begin on the Fourth of July, in only a few days. This gives the reader a deadline and injects once again a bit of tension into the tone of the developing plot.



Chapters 24-26

Chapters 24-26 Summary

Webster, Mac, Brogan, and Milosevic fly to the Mojave Desert, where the truck used by the kidnapers was originally purchased. They speak to the local sheriff where the owner of the truck lived. They learn that the truck's owner was a farmer who lost his farm when the bank foreclosed on it. The farmer had a son, Beau Borken, who was a trouble maker. Three of the kidnapers the FBI has identified were friends of Borken's. A fifth person also hung around with Borken, named Odell Fowler. All five disappeared about the same time shortly after the death of the farmer. From there the FBI went to Peterson Air Force Base. There they speak to Johnson's aide and learn that several bases are being closed down in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War. When they speak to Johnson they decide to send a photograph of Reacher to the Pentagon in hopes of identifying him.

Reacher is taken from the wooden building and given a tour of the camp with Fowler. Reacher questions Fowler as he shows him the firing range, the bunkhouses, and the kitchen. Fowler discusses the failures of the United States government just as the man who guarded Reacher the night before did. Reacher also speaks to Borken, who tells him how the Federal Reserve is behind the destruction of the middle class. Holly is visited again by the undercover FBI agent and again insists that she will not leave without Reacher. That same morning, Reacher is taken to the courthouse where Loder is to go on trial. The trial is quick and Loder is not allowed to present a defense. Loder is found guilty and executed immediately.

Webster learns Reacher's identity and the details of his military record. Reacher is such a hero that Webster is confused by his role in Holly's kidnapping. Johnson's aid suggests they contact Reacher's old commander to learn more about his state of mind.

Chapters 24-26 Analysis

The picture of the kidnapers is beginning to come together. Borken is clearly the leader, but the reader is already aware of this fact. The others are friends of Borken's, with whom he has grown up. They have committed crimes together in the past and now are attempting to create their own country together, but for what purpose the reader is not entirely clear. True, Borken's father died because he defaulted on a loan to the bank, and Borken blames the Federal Reserve for this. However, the reader gets the impression Borken's actions are simply a twisted way of trying to gain power. At the same time, the reader sees how crazy Borken is when he kills one of his long time friends for making simple mistakes during the kidnapping. The reader must be concerned at this point that if Borken will kill a friend, what will he do to total strangers?



Reacher is treated almost as a guest at Borke's camp while Holly is locked away in a special room built specifically for her. The room implies that her kidnapping was well planned out, giving the reader the impression that Borke and his group have been planning this for some time. The undercover agent comes to Holly again, but again she refuses to leave without Reacher. Holly's insistence on helping Reacher shows that she believes she owes Reacher for saving her own life and that she is the type of person who will not sacrifice another for her own safety. Finally, the FBI finds out who Reacher is, but unfortunately still believes Reacher is one of the bad guys. Again, the reader worries that Reacher might be caught in the crossfire should the FBI storm the camp to save Holly.



Chapters 27-30

Chapters 27-30 Summary

Reacher insists on seeing Holly after Loder's execution. Fowler takes him to her room and allows them to go for a walk. Reacher tells Holly that there is a mole inside the Chicago office, an assumption he bases on the fact that at Loder's trial he learned that Loder and the others were only in Chicago for a day before taking Holly and Reacher. This means they could not have learned her routines and known where to grab her. Holly tells Reacher about the undercover agent and he promises to try to get word to him about the mole if Holly does not tell him first.

After their walk, Fowler continues to take Reacher around the camp for his tour, telling Reacher about the abandoned mine near the small town they have taken over and the day-to-day workings of the camp. Reacher is to go to the FBI and tell them about the camp, assuring them their threat is real. When they reach the kitchen, Reacher requests a meal. The woman who makes the meal asks Reacher to come speak to her later that night. Fowler also tells Reacher that they have access to over twenty million dollars. Reacher inspects the targets on the firing range and notices that most of the ones with bullet holes are the closer ones, assuring him that most of the people in the camp do not have the experience to shoot long range rifles, although Fowler assures him that they are training their men as often as possible. Toward the end of the tour, Borke sends for Reacher. Reacher is told his mission is canceled and he is beaten without explanation to the change in attitude. All this time, Holly is working on removing the bolts from her bed frame in order to use it as a weapon.

Mac discusses the undercover agent in Borke's camp with the agent in charge. The undercover agent, Jackson, has not reported in since reporting on the dynamite that was placed behind the walls of Holly's room. Mac now has the radio, however, and hopes to hear from him soon. At the same time, Webster orders surveillance plans to fly over the camp to give them more information, but orders no intervention.

Holly escapes her room after the woman who brings her lunch tells her that Reacher is going to be executed for killing Bell. Holly hits the woman with a leg from the bed and escapes into the abandoned hallway outside her room.

Webster goes to the attorney general to request permission to plan a rescue for Holly. The attorney general makes Webster wait a long time before returning to tell him that she has been removed from the case. Dexter, the President's advisor, comes to tell Webster that it would be politically ill advised for the President for there to be another Waco. Webster is told to come back on Monday if there is still a problem. At the same time, Johnson and Mac discuss where to set up a command post near Borke's camp. Johnson receives a phone call during this meeting informing him that the military has lost contact with a convoy removing missiles from a closed base.



Chapters 27-30 Analysis

Reacher knows there is a mole in the Chicago office because Loder and his friends did not have enough time to find Holly on their own. This suggests that someone close to Holly played a role in her kidnapping. The situation also implies that Borken is still getting information that could place Holly or Reacher in harm's way. This is confirmed when Borken cancels his plans to send Reacher to convince the American government of the seriousness of his intentions and begins to beat him. Clearly Borken has learned something about Reacher that he does not like, perhaps that Reacher killed Bell. At the same time, the mole places Jackson, the undercover agent, in danger. This foreshadows the possible murder of either Reacher or Jackson or both.

Webster and Mac are fighting to rescue Holly, but find resistance in an unexpected place. The President has chosen his chances of re-election over the safety of Johnson's daughter. Webster is told to pretend he never was told not to rescue her and to come back if there is still a problem on Monday. This implies to both the reader and Webster that he is being given permission to do whatever he needs to do, but alone and without support. At the same time, Johnson receives word that a group of missiles traveling through Borken's camp have disappeared. The disappearance of these weapons implies to the reader that Borken intends to execute an assault somewhere, perhaps on an American city.



Chapters 31-34

Chapters 31-34 Summary

In Holly quietly makes her way out of the courthouse and into the woods across the street. Holly goes as quickly as she can, but her leg slows her down. Holly is nearly caught a few times, but she finally makes her way to a clearing where Borken is about to execute Reacher. Holly moves into the center of the crowd and threatens to kill herself if they do not let Reacher go.

Borken is clearly shaken by the idea of losing Holly as a hostage. Borken announces that he had already changed his mind about killing Reacher for the death of Bell. Borken says that he has learned that Reacher is an award winning sharpshooter and agrees to commute his sentence to time in the punishment hut if he can prove his skills. Reacher agrees. The entire camp moves to the firing range, where Borken fires first. Borken hits the target, which is just over eight hundred yards away, one time. Reacher takes his turn and at first it appears that he has missed the target completely. However, it is quickly discovered that he chose a target more than a thousand yards away and made a perfect B with his six rounds.

Borken assigns Reacher to his day's punishment and sends Holly to help him. In a few minutes, Reacher and Holly discover they are expected to bury the tortured remains of FBI agent Jackson. Reacher does most of the work. Afterward, Holly and Reacher find comfort in each others arms. Reacher later asks Holly who the mole could be in the Chicago field office and she can think of two suspects, both of whom are on the team attempting to rescue her.

Mac and his team fly with Johnson and his aid to the location of the command post. Webster visits the President again when he learns of the missing missile convoy, but receives the same answer. Webster returns to his office briefly before leaving to fly to Montana. General Garber, Reacher's ex-commander, is waiting there for him. Garber accompanies Webster to Montana where Webster briefs everyone on the situation.

Holly and Reacher return to camp. Reacher is taken to the punishment hut where he is supposed to stand on a circle at attention, but he refuses. Instead, Reacher convinces his guard that he is part of a special division of the World Army and that his people have a laser pointed at the guard as they speak. Reacher tells the man that if he does not allow him to leave the hut at exactly ten o'clock, a laser will kill him where he stands. To prove his point, Reacher tells the man he will go to sleep and his fellow soldiers will send a signal to wake him at exactly ten o'clock.

Chapters 31-34 Analysis

Holly proves her bravery and her strength when she rushes into a crowd of hostile strangers and demands that they let Reacher go. Holly believes that she owes Reacher



her life and she is willing to sacrifice herself for him. This proves that Holly is as brave as her father, if not more so, and that she is willing to put herself to the test. Holly's bravery is sure to be tested again before this ordeal comes to an end. Reacher also proves himself in the shooting contest when he positions his bullets in such a way that they spell out a B on a tree more than two yards past the target he was supposed to hit. Reacher's talent may come in handy if he ever gets a chance to fight against Borke and his followers.

Webster attempts to get help from the President but is put off. The President is more worried about politics than the safety of one woman. Webster goes to Montana to join Mac and Johnson, but there is little he can do with just eight Marines and two spy planes. At the same time, Webster is joined by Reacher's ex-commander, allowing some hope that the FBI will eventually realize they have help inside Borke's camp with Reacher. At the same time, Reacher and Holly are forced to bury Jackson's tortured body. Clearly Reacher's suspicions of a mole inside the Chicago office were correct and this mole has revealed Jackson's true identity to Borke. This could mean trouble for Holly and Reacher as they begin to plan their escape.



Chapters 35-36

Chapters 35-36 Summary

Garber insists that Reacher could not have anything to do with the planning or execution of the kidnapping of Holly Johnson. However, Webster and Mac refuse to believe him. While Mac and Johnson plan a rescue, Holly is returned to her room and begins looking for a new weapon to use now that they have taken away her bed. Mac and Webster decide the first line of attack should be to control information in and out of the camp. Webster orders Mac to have the phone lines cut and rerouted to their command post, giving the order after Borken and Milosevic have gone to get some sleep.

Reacher wakes a few minutes before ten, convincing his guard of his story about the World Army. The guard allows Reacher to go free. Reacher speaks to the cook who tells him that Borken took over several different groups that were living up there before he arrived, running off their leaders and frightening the people into staying. The woman hopes Reacher can help free them all before Borken orders them to commit mass suicide.

Reacher begins to explore the area around the camp, hoping to find a vehicle and a path to safety. Reacher finds the abandoned mine and the cave Borken is using as a motor pool. In another cave, Reacher finds five army trucks, four of which contain missiles. While Reacher is investigating this find, Borken and Fowler arrive. Reacher hides among the dead bodies of twenty soldiers who were traveling with the missiles. Reacher hears Borken talking about a plan that is set to be put into motion in the morning. After they are gone, Reacher discovers that Borken and Fowler have locked him in the cave. Reacher searches for a way out and finds a small tunnel at the back of the cave. Reacher begins to crawl through the tunnel, despite a fear of enclosed spaces, and becomes trapped when the tunnel ends and he is too tightly wedged to back up. Reacher is convinced he will die there when he suddenly realizes the rats are moving passed him. Reacher finds a turn in the tunnel and is able to crawl through it to the motor pool.

Reacher quickly makes his way to the courthouse where he picks the lock on Holly's door. Reacher takes Holly to the communications hut and has her send a fax to Mac about the missiles and the mole in his office. After sending the fax, Reacher disables the shortwave radio to keep the mole from contacting Borken again. Reacher then decides he needs a gun, so he takes Holly to the punishment hut. Unfortunately, Borken is waiting for him there.



Chapters 35-36 Analysis

Garber attempts to tell Webster and Mac that they have an ally in Reacher, but they do not believe him. Instead, Webster and Mac continue to plan the rescue with the idea that Reacher is the one in charge. At the same time, Reacher manages to escape from the punishment hut by playing on the fears of the guard and speaks to the cook. Reacher learns that Borken built his army out of members of other groups who came to this area to find a peaceful place to live outside the grid. This tells Reacher not only that Borken is a power hungry criminal, but that the people in this army are not going to put their lives on the line for Borken. Not only this, but the cook is afraid that Borken is going to orchestrate some sort of mass suicide, putting pressure on Reacher to stop whatever Borken is planning not only for Holly, but to save the hundred or so people living in the camp.

Reacher finds Borken's motor pool and his hiding place for the men he murders. Reacher also finds Johnson's missing missiles. This leads Reacher to believe that whatever Borken plans to do on the Fourth of July includes killing lots of people. It seems that Borken is serious about starting a war with the United States government. The tone of the novel changes again with this revelation, leaving the reader less amused by Borken's inept army and more concerned for the innocent people who could be hurt by these badly trained men.

Finally, Reacher gets Holly and has her send a fax to Mac. Now the reader is hopeful that Mac will know about the mole and stop speaking freely in front of Borken and Milosevic who have to be the two that Holly suspect. Then Reacher does something out of character and gets caught by Borken when he returns to the punishment hut and is taken prisoner once more.



Chapters 37-40

Chapters 37-40 Summary

The phone lines from Borken's camp were finally rerouted to the command post a little after four in the morning. Around five, Webster and Mac wake Brogan and Milosevic and tell them to watch things for a while so they can sleep. Minutes later, Holly's fax comes in. A little over an hour later, Brogan wakes Johnson to take a call from Peterson. The military is sending a helicopter to search for the missing missile convoy. Johnson and Webster talk about it and decide there is nothing they can do to stop it. At the same time, Borken makes an example of the guard who let Reacher go and then orders Fowler to kill Reacher. A short time later, Borken sends off three faxes declaring independence.

Fowler interrogates Reacher about the phone line and the reason why the shortwave is not working. Reacher refuses to answer the questions. Reacher allows Fowler to tell him about their plan and then he takes advantage of his sense of security. Reacher kills Fowler and injures the two guards working with him. As Reacher escapes to the woods, he sees the rescue helicopter flying over the town. Reacher spots a man with a missile launcher aimed at the helicopter. Reacher tries to shoot the man before he fires, but is a millisecond too slow. The missile hits the helicopter and takes it down not far from the courthouse where Holly is under guard. At the same time, Johnson and Webster put into action a plan to take a special military vehicle into the town. Unfortunately, they discover that the only way in is through an impassable ravine.

Reacher continues to hide in the woods where he becomes aware of several groups of men marching through the woods, looking for him. Reacher can easily avoid them, but he is worried about the dogs. Reacher returns to the mine where he sees the military vehicles have been moved out of the cave and are under guard. Reacher takes out a set of tires on each vehicle to prevent them from being moved. On the way back to the camp, Reacher comes across a set of dogs. Reacher is able to subdue them and continue back to the camp where he sees Borken talking on the handheld radio Jackson used to communicate with his superiors.

Borken is using Jackson's radio to talk to Webster. Borken orders all the Marines as well as Webster and Johnson to sit on the blown bridge where he can see them. Webster does not tell Borken about Garber, Mac, Brogan, or Milosevic. Mac decides he and his two agents should go in on foot, each starting at a different point and meeting just inside the camp. Mac makes good time and arrives well before the others. As he waits, Mac thinks over the things Borken said and realizes that Borken said some things he could not possibly have known unless one of his own agents had told him. At that same moment, Borken drives up and takes Mac prisoner.



Chapters 37-40 Analysis

To give proof that either Brogan or Milosevic is the mole, the fax that Holly sent to Mac arrives just after Brogan and Milosevic take over watching the command post. Mac never sees the fax. The fact that both Brogan and Milosevic are present makes the reader wonder how one could hide the fax without the other knowing. At the same time, Reacher is being held by Fowler, who has been told to get rid of him. First Fowler wants to know what Reacher did with the shortwave that he has been using to communicate with the mole. Instead of answering, Reacher manages to kill Fowler and escape into the woods once more. Reacher's military skills prove important here, not only because he is able to escape again, but he recognizes the rocket launcher that is aimed at the rescue helicopter and attempts to save the helicopter from disaster. Unfortunately, he is too late. However, Reacher is able to disable the trucks carrying the rest of the missiles, thereby averting a national tragedy.

Mac and Webster attempt to drive a military vehicle into the middle of Borke's camp, but are unsuccessful. At the same time, Borke has reestablished contact with the mole and is able to disable Webster and Johnson. Mac shows his bravery by deciding he must go in and save Holly himself, but realizes too late there has to be a mole in his camp. Mac is taken prisoner, leaving Holly relying solely on Reacher and perhaps either Brogan or Milosevic, whichever is not the mole.



Chapters 41-43

Chapters 41-43 Summary

Reacher watches Mac being taken prisoner, though he does not know for sure which of the FBI agents he is. Garber watches as well from his position behind Mac. Garber followed Mac in the hopes of protecting Reacher should Mac come across him while still believing him to be the enemy. Borken contacts Webster and tells him to go back to his command post and watch Mac die in punishment for lying to him. At the same time, Reacher is trying to find a way to save Holly without risking firing his weapon into the walls around her room where he believes there is dynamite waiting to explode.

Three guards then take Mac out into the middle of the lawn outside the old city hall building and tie him to the ground. Just as the guards are about to kill Mac, Reacher shoots them. Reacher helps Mac escape, but Mac still believes Reacher to be one of the kidnappers and turns on him. Reacher convinces Mac he is a good guy and they agree to work together to help Holly. Borken hears the gunshots and knows that Reacher has rescued Mac. At the same time, Reacher and Mac try to decide who the mole is, putting their money on Brogan.

Garber kills a guard on the tree line in order to take up a position where he can set up a watch point. Webster and Johnson review the tape of Mac's rescue and finally realize Reacher is a good guy. Borken decides to use Brogan to lure Reacher out into the open. Several guards drag an unwilling Brogan to the punishment shed. Reacher watches, then asks Mac a couple of questions regarding Brogan's height before firing a single bullet through the door of the hut. Brogan comes out with a bullet wound to his shoulder, making it obvious that the whole thing was a set up and Brogan is the mole. Mac fires his weapon and kills Brogan. The man who guarded Reacher walks by them and Reacher tries to warn him that the end has come, but the man refuses to disobey Borken. At that moment, Reacher realizes Borken is still planning on attacking civilians somewhere far from Montana and that he never intended to participate in a mass suicide.

Chapters 41-43 Analysis

Reacher once again proves his bravery by rescuing Mac from Borken's men. Mac still believes Reacher is one of the bad guys, however, and ironically turns the gun Reacher gave to him. Reacher is able to convince Mac he is a good guy and they both begin to work together to save Holly. At the same time, Garber is somewhere in the woods watching the same things Reacher and Mac are seeing, suggesting that he is close enough to be of some help when Reacher and Mac finally figure out a way to rescue Holly from the dynamite enclosed room.



Borken believes he knows everything there is to know about Reacher, therefore he uses Brogan to lure him into the open. However, Borken forgets to hit Brogan in the nose first, something Borken has done to everyone he dislikes, including Reacher and Mac. Reacher lures Brogan out and Mac kills him, believing he is the mole. At the same time, Reacher realizes that Borken still plans on committing a terrorist act on citizens celebrating the Fourth of July. Reacher knows now that Borken never intended a mass suicide, which would have been against Borken's character because he himself would have died, but the reader has already seen that Borken likes to kill, but does not have any plans of dying himself. Now Reacher must not only save Holly, but figure out where Borken plans to set off his other attack.



Chapters 44-46

Chapters 44-46 Summary

Borken drags Holly out of the courthouse into the open where Webster and Johnson can watch from the video feed coming from the spy plane. At the same time, Reacher tells Mac about the panel truck he and Holly were driven in from Chicago. Reacher remembers it sagging on its springs when he saw it the night before in the motor pool. Reacher thinks Borken plans to use it as a car bomb. A moment later, Holly attempts to escape by attacking her guards with broken tiles from the bathroom, but is unsuccessful. Borken ties Holly to a tree and begins firing at her, promising to hit her if Webster does not get CNN on the line with Borken immediately. Reacher watches the whole thing from atop the kitchen and sends Mac to get him the Barrett rifle he used in the shooting contest. At the same time, Garber is taking aim at Borken from the woods. Unfortunately, Holly's room is right behind him and his bullets will most likely set off the dynamite and kill Holly. Garber and Reacher fire at almost the same instant. Reacher's bullet kills Borken.

Garber continues to fire and kills Borken's guards. When the dynamite does not detonate, Reacher begins tearing apart the walls and discovers the dynamite is gone. Reacher insists everyone get into the Jeep. Milosevic reaches it first and takes off with Holly. Reacher, Garber, and Mac follow. Milosevic ends up at the mine where he barricades himself in one of the caves. Reacher puts his fears aside and crawls through the tiny tunnel in order to surprise Milosevic from behind. Reacher and Milosevic struggle until Holly kills Milosevic with one last piece of broken tile. Johnson and Webster arrive in a helicopter just as the battle ends.

Reacher rushes everyone onto the helicopter and instructs the pilot to head south. Reacher believes Borken would have ordered Stevie to drive the car bomb to San Francisco, where not only would there be people celebrating the holiday in a public place, but there is also a Federal Reserve Bank. However, when they reach the point where they should have found the truck, there is no truck. Reacher begins to doubt himself when he realizes that Borken would have had the truck repainted to prevent this exact situation. They turn back and come up on a green panel truck. Reacher recognizes it from the shotgun holes in the roof. Reacher fires a single bullet into the cargo area of the truck and it explodes. They land and Holly tells Reacher that she is in love with Mac. Reacher tells her to share her feelings with Mac, which she does, moving in with him a short time later.

Chapters 44-46 Analysis

Borken brings Holly out into the open, unwittingly solving Reacher's dilemma in regards to how to get her out of the courthouse without firing bullets into the walls surrounding her room. Unfortunately, Garber does not know about the dynamite and fires from his



position directly across from the courthouse. Holly is saved, but Reacher is distracted by the fact that the room did not detonate as it should have. Reacher finally realizes that while Borken planned on starting a war in Montana, he had also hoped to distract the nation from it by creating a terrorist attack elsewhere. Reacher understands Borken's character enough that he can predict not only what Borken was planning, but where he was planning to do it. Reacher finds the car bomb and prevents the attack.

Reacher saves Holly as well when it turns out, ironically, that not one mole existed in the Chicago field office, but two. Milosevic was also a mole. Reacher attacks Milosevic by facing his own fear of tight spaces and allows Holly to make the kill, proving herself just as brave as her dad and bringing her out of his shadow once and for all. In the afterglow of her success, Holly confesses her love not to Reacher, but to Mac, and they move in together to begin their own happily ever after.



Characters

Jack Reacher

Jack Reacher is a retired Army MP who is kidnapped when he stops to help a woman with her dry cleaning. Holly Johnson injured her knee playing soccer and is having trouble negotiating the door of the dry cleaning business while holding her freshly cleaned clothing. Reacher happens to be outside the door as Holly reaches it, and he automatically grabs her arm to keep her from falling. As soon as Holly is steady on her feet again, Reacher takes her dry cleaning with the intention of helping her reach her destination. At that moment, two men with guns come up and force both Holly and Reacher into a waiting car. This begins a week long adventure for both Reacher and Holly.

Reacher is an intelligent man who, along with his training, is able to assess the situation quickly. Reacher waits until he and Holly are placed in an old barn that first night before taking a look at the situation. Reacher is able to get free of the handcuffs holding him and investigate the location where he and Holly are being held. Unfortunately, Reacher cannot find a way out of the barn that Holly can utilize with her injured knee. Rather than leave on his own, Reacher chooses to stay for Holly. Reacher knows Holly must be someone of interest to be the target of kidnapers, and he cannot in all conscience leave her to the whim of these crazy men.

Reacher is transported with Holly to a remote location in Montana. On the way, Reacher is forced to kill one of the kidnapers who attempts to rape Holly. Once in Montana, the leader of this group of militia tells Reacher how they plan to secede from the union and become a country all their own. Reacher plays along, even agreeing to go to the police with information about the group. However, Reacher is plotting the whole time to find a way to rescue Holly. Eventually, a team of FBI and military personnel come to save Holly. They are only a few, limited by the President's desire to protect his chances of re-election. However, with their firepower and Reacher's intelligence, Holly is saved.

Holly Johnson

Holly Johnson is the daughter of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the goddaughter of the President of the United States. Holly is also a competent FBI agent. Holly is kidnapped off the streets of Chicago along with a civilian and is transported to Montana in the back of a panel truck. Holly does not want to believe that the only reason these people have kidnapped her is because of who her father and godfather are, but it soon becomes glaringly clear that this is exactly the kidnapper's motivation.

As an FBI agent, Holly feels responsible for Reacher. Holly begs him to run away, but finds that he is stubborn and determined to protect her. On the second night of their kidnapping, Reacher manages to break free of the handcuffs holding him to an old



horse stall and save her from one of the kidnapers who attempts to rape her. Holly is grateful and begins to feel as though Reacher is the one sent to protect her. Once they arrive in Montana, Holly and Reacher are separated. An undercover FBI agent comes to Holly and promises to help her escape. However, Holly refuses to leave without Reacher.

While being held captive, Holly manages to escape by using a piece of the bed frame. Holly rushes to Reacher's aid just as he is about to be executed for the death of the rapist. Holly insists that they let Reacher go. Instead, Reacher is tested. Reacher must prove his identity by participating in a shooting contest. Reacher wins the contest. Holly and Reacher are then sent to do penance. Their penance turns out to be burying the body of the undercover FBI agent. Afterward, Holly and Reacher make love to reaffirm the fact that they are still alive. A short time later, Holly is rescued and makes the choice to become involved with a fellow FBI agent rather than to pursue her relationship with Reacher.

Brogan and Milosevic

Brogan and Milosevic are FBI agents assigned to the Chicago field office. Brogan is a man who has two ex-wives and a girlfriend, therefore his expenses are high. McGrath never questions the fact that Brogan never complains about the lack of pay in the FBI, assuming Brogan is simply not the type to complain. Milosevic is younger and unmarried, but he has a love of large SUVs. Milosevic recently bought a new car and, like Brogan, never complains about the lack of pay.

Brogan and Milosevic are the only two agents assigned under McGrath to work Holly's disappearance. Unfortunately, information from the investigation continuously gets leaked to Borke. The identity of the undercover agent in Borke's camp is released and a short time later Jackson is dead. Reacher's part in the murder of Bell is also leaked and soon Reacher is set for execution. It seems every time something big happens in the case, Borke knows about it almost immediately. Eventually, Reacher learns that both Brogan and Milosevic are the leak.

Paul 'Mac' McGrath

Mac was once assistant director of the FBI, but he chose to step down and return to field work at the Chicago office. Mac is a gentle, kind man who is well respected by his agents. Mac is in charge of finding Holly through the Chicago office and reports directly to Webster. Mac also has a private interest in the case. Mac has feelings for Holly, and at the end of the ordeal it is discovered that Holly has feelings for him as well.

Mac goes with the team to Montana to help find Holly. When the opportunity presents itself, Mac goes in to rescue Holly himself. Unfortunately, Mac realizes there is a mole in his office too late to prevent himself from capture. Mac is laid out to be murdered, but Reacher saves him. Mac and Reacher work together to free Holly.



Stevie Stewart, Peter Wayne Bell, and Tony Loder

Stevie, Bell, and Loder are old friends of Borke's who are assigned to kidnap Holly. Bell is a convicted rapist who takes an interest in Holly. During their second night on the road, Bell comes to the old barn where Holly and Reacher are being held captive, with the intention of raping Holly. Holly fights back, but is unable to fight him off because of her injured knee. Reacher is able to break free of his handcuffs and kill Bell. Reacher then escapes the barn to get rid of Bell's body and to hide his part in the death.

Loder is also an old friend of Borke's. Loder is in charge of the kidnapping. Unfortunately, Loder makes several mistakes during the kidnapping, including burning the vehicles he used in the course of the kidnapping. Borke orders Loder to die for his crime and shoots him himself. Stevie is the weakest of the three men involved in the kidnapping. Stevie does not interact with the prisoners very much. Later, on the Fourth of July, it is Stevie's job to drive the car bomb to San Francisco. Reacher and the FBI find Stevie on the highway and fire a single bullet into the truck, causing it to explode, killing Stevie.

Odell Fowler

Odell Fowler is second in charge at Borke's camp, another of Borke's old friends. Fowler takes Reacher for a tour of the camp after his arrival. Borke hopes to send Reacher to the police in order to inform them that Borke and his group are serious about their desire to form their own country. The tour goes badly when Reacher criticizes much of Borke's planning and the conspiracy theories behind the plan. Fowler gets rid of Reacher as quickly as he can. However, Fowler shows up every time there is trouble, including the day Reacher is to be executed for killing Bell. On the Fourth of July, Reacher finally kills Fowler in an attempt to escape and help Holly.

Beau Borke

Beau Borke is a highly intelligent man who has lost his trust in the United States Government. Borke is well read and he has studied much of the history of the country. Borke also believes in many of the strange conspiracies being promoted by militia groups around the country. Borke uses these conspiracies to frighten his followers and to convince them to stick with him. Borke wants to create his own country and to get back at the United States Government for causing his father to lose his farm. Borke's plan is to attract law enforcement to his camp in Montana in order to rescue Holly while Stevie sets off a bomb in San Francisco. This plan is supposed to help Borke and his group secede from the union. Fortunately, the plan does not work and Borke is killed while attempting to murder Holly.



Agent Jackson

Jackson is an undercover agent for the FBI who has been assigned to Borke's camp. Jackson witnesses the building of the special room and the insertion of dynamite between its walls and the walls of the room in which it is contained. Jackson reports his findings to his superior, but is unable to make further contact because Borke alerts him that they are monitoring radio frequencies in and out of the camp. Jackson approaches Holly on her first day at the camp and promises to help her escape. However, before he can, Jackson is found out when the mole in the Chicago office contacts Borke with his name. Jackson is murdered in the woods and Reacher is forced to bury him.

Harland Webster

Harland Webster is director of the FBI. Webster is notified by McGrath the moment they are aware that Holly is missing. Webster is the one who is forced to tell Holly's father the sad news and is left to negotiate with the President over the authority to go in and get Holly out. Webster stays on top of the investigation, taking it slow and methodical. However, when the time comes to go in and get Holly, Webster is refused back up by the President for fear any large action on their part would result in an unfavorable outcome during the election. Webster fights for Holly, however, and goes personally to Montana to oversee the rescue attempts. Webster is also on hand when Reacher and Mac chase down the car bomb Stevie is driving to San Francisco.

General Johnson

General Johnson is the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff. Johnson has recently lost his wife to a sudden and devastating bout with cancer. Johnson would not have made it through the death of his wife without the support of his daughter. Now that his daughter is missing, people are concerned that Johnson will become unstable. Johnson attempts to handle the situation as best as he can, but he is concerned for his daughter's safety and wants to go into Borke's camp with guns blazing. Johnson is a good soldier and he follows the President's orders. However, Johnson is on hand when Mac and Reacher save Holly.



Objects/Places

Dry Cleaning

Reacher is kidnapped because he attempts to help Holly with her dry cleaning when she nearly falls coming out of the dry cleaners.

Crutch

Holly is allowed to keep her crutch after the kidnapping. Holly will later use this crutch as a tool to help her escape from the room where she is being held captive.

Dynamite

Borken uses old dynamite from the abandoned mine to stuff in the walls of Holly's room and keep her father from attacking the camp. Later, this same dynamite is placed in a truck to be transported to San Francisco where it will be used as a car bomb during Fourth of July celebrations.

Old Barn

The first night on the road, Reacher and Holly spend the night in an old barn.

Horse Barn

The second night on the road, Loder locks Holly and Reacher into animal stalls in a horse barn. It is here that Bell comes to rape Holly, but Reacher is able to get free and save her life.

Borken's Camp

Borken has created an isolate camp in the middle of an abandoned mine town in Montana. Borken not only uses the old buildings, but also has created army-like barracks and storage areas.

Abandoned Courthouse

Borken creates a small room inside a larger room on the second floor of the abandoned courthouse near the camp he has created in Montana. The space between the walls of this room and the old walls are stuffed with dynamite in order to keep Holly's father from attacking the town.



Abandoned Mine

Borken uses the abandoned mine near his camp as both storage and a place to hide dead bodies of people he has murdered. Reacher is forced to crawl through a tiny tunnel between the caves first to escape a locked tunnel and second to save Holly.

Borken's Pickup

Loder, Stevie, and Bell drive from Montana to Chicago in Borken's pickup which they later burn. The police find this vehicle and use mud from the wheel wells to find where the truck originated.

Luxury Sedan

Reacher and Holly are first placed in a luxury sedan when they are kidnapped. Later the car is found burned with its owner in the trunk.

White Panel Truck

Reacher and Holly are driven across country in a white panel truck. Later the truck is painted green and filled with dynamite to create a car bomb.

Chicago

Holly lives and works in Chicago. It is from Chicago that Holly is kidnapped.

San Francisco

Borken targets San Francisco for a car bomb during the Fourth of July celebrations because it is one of several locations close to Montana where there is a Federal Reserve Bank. Borken blames the government for his father losing his farm due to a default on a loan. This loss ended in Borken's father committing suicide.

Montana

Borken chooses to build his new government in a remote section of Montana because it is naturally isolated making it easy to defend against attack.

Themes

Conspiracy Theories/Government Distrust

Beau Borken is a young, confused man who watches his father fall apart after losing his farm to the bank. Borken was troubled before this time, but when his father loses his farm and kills himself, Borken decides the government is to blame. Borken gathers together all of his trusted friends and runs away from California in order to regroup and find a way to get back at the government that ruined his family. At the same time, Borken has become a member of a network of groups who believe that the American government is trampling on its citizen's rights and using their authority to undermine innocent people.

Borken arrives in Montana where he finds a group of anti-government groups already entrenched in an isolated area. Borken likes the natural defense of the area and decides he wants to build his new government in this area. Borken spreads conspiracy theories among the followers of the other groups and convinces them that the only way to survive against the American government is to band together and form a new government. Borken kills the leaders of the other groups, although the members of those groups are unaware of this, and takes over their groups. Soon Borken has more than a hundred people under his command. Borken uses fear to keep these people under control.

Conspiracy theory is a theme of this novel because Borken uses outrageous theories to frighten and control the people who make up his new country. Government distrust is tied in with this because it is a distrust of the government that started Borken down this path. It is for these reasons that conspiracy theory and government distrust are major themes to this novel.

Politics

Borken wants to create his own country and he wants to do it in Montana. In order to do this, Borken has to battle against the President of the United States. Borken decides the best way to control the President is to use someone close to him against him. Borken kidnaps Holly Johnson because she is both the daughter of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the goddaughter of the President of the United States. Borken hopes to use these relationships to manipulate these two powerful men into allowing him to succeed from the union.

Holly is not only a daughter and goddaughter, however, but a FBI agent and a respected colleague. Many people want to find Holly and to make sure she is safe. However, it comes to the attention of the President's aid that people sympathize with people such as Borken. Americans are tired of incidences like Waco and do not want to see it



happen again. As such, the President decides that it would be better if the government does not attempt a rescue in Montana to retrieve Holly.

General Johnson and the director of the FBI are frustrated by the President's decision because it is clear that politics are driving the decision. At the same time, they can see that the President cares for Holly and wants them to do all they can to rescue her without making the incident public. General Johnson and the FBI go to Montana to rescue Holly, despite warnings from the President's office to not do anything. Holly is rescued, thanks in big part to Reacher, despite these politics.

Living in the Shadow of a Powerful Father

Holly is the only child of a powerful general who holds the office of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Holly has been a part of politics for a long time, often attending parties that other girls her age had no clue what they were or that they were happening. Holly is also goddaughter of the President of the United States. These powerful people color Holly's life, making it difficult for her to make a career of her own without wondering if her father or godfather had something to do with it.

Holly becomes an FBI agent, not because of her father, but because she wants to prove she can make a difference on her own. When Holly is assigned to the Chicago field office, several officers are assigned to the same office in order to keep an eye on her, although Holly is not aware of their purpose there. When Holly disappears, many fingers are pointed. At the same time, Holly tries to deny to Reacher that the kidnappers have taken her because of her father or godfather. Reacher eventually figures it out for himself; as a result, he can see what a terrible shadow it has been for Holly to live in.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person omniscient. The author allows the reader to see the events of the plot through many eyes, including Holly, Reacher, Borken, and McGrath. This changing view point has the potential of being difficult for the reader to follow. However, the author handles the changing point of view well, never shifting narrating characters in the middle of a scene. The narration remains with one character throughout a whole scene. When there is a shift, the author warns the reader by dividing the narration into sections.

The point of view of this novel works well because it offers many views of the action while also allowing the reader to see the thoughts and emotions of the characters. The changing viewpoints help the reader see things they might not be privy to if the narration were first person or otherwise restricted to one person. The access to the character's thoughts and emotions also adds tension to the plot, allowing the reader to feel the fear and sense of anxiety many of the characters feel as the plot develops. This allows the reader to make a connection with the characters and therefore care whether or not they survive the story.

Setting

The novel begins in Chicago where Holly lives and works. Holly and Reacher are snatched off the street and forced into a car. Soon they are forced into another vehicle where they remain as the vehicle is driven more than a thousand miles to their eventual destination. The novel then travels to Washington DC, where the director of the FBI informs Holly's father, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of her abduction. Finally, the novel moves to Montana, where Beau Borken has created a new nation in a far corner of Montana.

The setting of this novel begins in a big city, which seems appropriate to the fact that Holly is an FBI agent. If the novel had begun in a small town or a remote area, her job and value as a hostage might not have seemed believable. Washington must enter a novel such as this because its politics always seem to be a part of novels such as this, especially when it is taken into account that Borken is attempting to secede from the union because he no longer trusts the American government. Finally, the novel ends up in Montana. Montana is a remote area where it is possible for someone to happen upon a deserted town that is naturally easy to defend. The settings of this novel are highly appropriate to the story line, making the novel accurate enough to be believable.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The novel does not include any foreign phrases and little slang. Most of the characters in the novel are highly educated, therefore most of the language in the novel is precise, if not scholastic. Other characters in the novel are less educated, but their language is still more precise than might be expected. The novel includes a lot of language that is common among military personnel because several of the characters are either members of the military, retired members of the military, or people who admire members of the military and seek to emulate them.

The language in this novel works because it does include military jargon that would be expected in a novel of this type. The language appears to stay true to the characters, even the less educated characters. Although some of the characters appear to be of a society bracket in which they might be expected to speak with more street jargon, their situation places them in a position to speak with a somewhat educated precision. Due to this, the language in this novel works well with the characters and the developing plot.

Structure

The novel is divided into forty-six chapters. Each chapter varies in length, with some covering more than fifteen pages, while others are no longer than a paragraph or two. The novel is written in exposition and dialogue, as well as a great deal of internal dialogue, especially when Holly is alone in the room Borke had built for her.

The novel includes one main plot and several sub plots. The main plot follows the kidnapping of Holly Johnson, her captivity, and her eventual rescue. One of the subplots explains the reasons for Holly's kidnapping and the motivations of the men who orchestrated it. Another subplot follows the budding romance between Holly and Reacher. Yet another subplot describes the political situation around the kidnapping and the frustration Holly's father experiences in trying to save her. All these subplots work to enhance the main plot and come to a satisfying conclusion when the main plot ends.



Quotes

"Nathan Rubin died because he got brave." Chap. 1, p. 1

"Holly had been a stock analyst on Wall Street before applying to join the FBI. Nobody was clear why she'd made the change. She had some kind of exalted connections, and some kind of illustrious father, and the easy guess was she wanted to impress him somehow. Nobody knew for sure whether the old guy was impressed or not, but the feeling was he damn well ought to be." Chap. 5, p. 21

"Life was built on freak chances, however much people would like to pretend otherwise." Chap. 9, p. 44

"Your father is the most important military man in America, right? That's why you've been kidnapped, Holly, for God's sake. These guys don't want Holly Johnson, FBI agent. The whole FBI thing is incidental. These guys want General Johnson's daughter." Chap. 15, p. 81

"But he'd known guys with famous parents. The sons of great soldiers. Even the grandsons. However bright they burned, their light was always lost in the glow." Chap. 17, p. 88

"He swung left onto Constitution Avenue and made it as far as the Vietnam Wall. Then he stopped. There was a fair crowd, stunned and quiet, as always. He looked at them. He looked at himself in the black granite. He didn't stand out. He was in a lightweight gray suit. It was OK. So he let his vision blur with his tears and he moved forward and turned and sat against the base of the wall, sobbing and crying with his back pressed against the golden names of boys who had died thirty years ago." Chap. 18, p. 107

"He turned to face west and stared at the point where the sun had fallen over the horizon. He stood and stared into the infinite dark in that direction like if he stared long enough and hard enough he could focus his eyes five hundred miles away and see Holly." Chap. 22, p. 137

"It was the shower which convinced her. She based her conclusions on it. Some good news, some bad. A brand-new bathroom, cheaply but carefully fitted out in the way a pathetic house-proud woman down on her luck in a trailer park would choose. That bathroom communicated a lot to Holly." Chap. 23, p. 143

"Firing a sniper rifle over a long distance is a confluence of many things. It starts with chemistry. It depends on mechanical engineering. It involves optics and geophysics and meteorology. Governing everything is human biology." Chap. 32, p. 227

"Garber was sitting ramrod-straight at the table in the mobile command post. He had shed his khaki raincoat to reveal an old creased uniform jacket. It was a jacket which bore the accumulated prizes of a lifetime of service. It was studded with badges and



ribbons. It was the jacket of a man who had served forty years without ever making a single mistake."

Chap. 35, p. 253

"He wasn't worried about the ethics of the situation. Not worried about that at all. Thirty years of dealing with hard men gone bad had defined a whole lot of points for him, ethically. He was worried about the buzzards. Unconscious men don't attract them. Dead men do." Chap. 43, p. 330

"He shrugged. Wasn't the end of the world. Just felt like it." Chap. 46, p. 372



Topics for Discussion

Who is Reacher? Why is he kidnapped alongside Holly? Do coincidences as these really exist? Why do the kidnappers not kill Reacher as soon as they get away with Holly? Should the kidnappers have disposed of Reacher? Why does Reacher not escape when he has the opportunity to do so? What is it about Holly that forces Reacher to remain in the captivity of these men?

Who is Holly Johnson? Why is she kidnapped? What do the kidnappers plan to do with Holly? Does this plan work? Why does Holly refuse to be rescued without Reacher? What does this say about their relationship? Is there romance between them or is this a result of their situation? Why does Holly not choose Reacher in the end? What does this say about Holly?

Borken wants to secede from the union. Why? Why does Borken not trust the government? Is there any truth to Borken's beliefs? Is Borken really doing this for a good purpose or is he only power hungry? What evidence can you find in the text to support your answer?

Why does the President not want to rescue Holly? Is this a personal decision or a political one? What does the President mean when he tells Webster to come to him on Monday if there is still a problem? Will there not be a problem on Monday if Webster does nothing? Why or why not?

Why does Borken choose the Fourth of July to enact his plan? What is Borken's plan? What does he hope will happen on that day? Why does Borken send his manifesto to CNN as well as the White House and the UN? What is Borken hoping to achieve with this manifesto? What would have happened if Borken had succeeded?

Who is the mole in Chicago? Why does this person or persons decide to betray Holly? Is this person or persons involved in Borken's new government, or are his motivations personal? How does this mole sabotage the attempts to rescue Holly? Would Holly have been rescued sooner if not for this person? Why or why not?

Why does Reacher believe there is dynamite behind the walls of the room where Holly is being held? Does Borken ever tell him this? What would happen if the building is hit with bullets? Does this happen? Why or why not? Where did Borken get the dynamite? What does he really plan to do with it?