

Digital Fortress Study Guide

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown

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Plot Summary

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown is a novel of deception and betrayal in the nation's most secret and powerful government organization, the National Security Agency (the NSA). Commander Trevor Strathmore believes that a former NSA employee has successfully created an unbreakable algorithm, which threatens the security of the nation and the future of the agency itself.

An ambitious man, Strathmore recognizes the opportunity to turn the situation around to his own benefit. When Strathmore realizes he needs assistance, he calls in the NSA's head cryptographer, Susan Fletcher.

In a race against time, Susan uncovers the astounding truth about the NSA's deputy director as the nation's most classified information is in grave danger of being exposed to the world and the life of the man she loves hangs in the balance.

Susan's fiancé, David Becker phones to tell her that he has been called out of town unexpectedly and their weekend plans will have to be delayed. As Susan waits to hear from David, she receives another call from her boss, Commander Trevor Strathmore, Deputy Director of the NSA. He informs Susan there is an emergency at work and she must report to the Cryptography facility immediately.

When Susan arrives, she finds that Commander Strathmore is the only one working on the Cryptography floor. He tells Susan that a former NSA employee, Ensei Tankado, has designed a program called Digital Fortress that he claims can create unbreakable codes. Susan is skeptical until Strathmore informs her that the NSA's top-secret, multi-billion dollar decryption computer, TRANSLTR, has been working for sixteen hours and is unable to break the code.

Tankado was employed with the NSA on a work visa from Japan. He helped to build TRANSLTR but was outraged when he discovered that the NSA would be able to use the computer to read the emails of private citizens. Tankado saw the NSA's ability to read private emails as a violation of human rights. He quit his job and threatened to go public about the NSA's top-secret computer. Tankado's capture and deportation was widely publicized and his reputation was ruined.

Strathmore tells Susan that the previous month Tankado had called to warn him that he was perfecting an algorithm that could create unbreakable codes. Tankado told Strathmore he would destroy Digital Fortress if the NSA would go public about TRANSLTR. Strathmore did not believe him, so Tankado moved forward by placing a complimentary copy of the program on his website. Every software company in Japan downloaded Digital Fortress but no one can open it without Tankado's pass code, which is being auctioned off to the highest bidder.

To ensure his safety, Tankado left Japan and gave a copy of his pass code to an anonymous third party known only as North Dakota. If anything should happen to



Tankado, North Dakota is to publish the pass code, making it free to everyone. Strathmore informs Susan that he had just received word that morning that Tankado was found dead in Seville, Spain.

In a desperate attempt to discover Tankado's secret partner before the word gets out that Tankado is dead, Strathmore asks Susan to run a tracer on an email account for 'ndakota' that has been set up on an anonymous server.

Susan finds out that Strathmore sent David to Spain. Strathmore believes that Tankado would have had the pass code on him at the time of his death and sent David to retrieve all of Tankado's personal belongings. Susan is enraged that the deputy director would send her fiancé, a private citizen, instead of contacting a government official to do the job. Strathmore tells Susan that he cannot afford to take the risk of anyone finding out about Tankado's death and he sent David, because he needed a private courier that he could trust.

When David arrives in Spain to retrieve Tankado's effects, he has no idea what he is supposed to bring back. He was only given strict orders to leave nothing behind. While at the morgue, David notices that a ring had been removed from Tankado's finger. When he asks the Spanish officer if Tankado was wearing any jewelry, the officer informs him that a Canadian tourist mentioned something about a ring but the officer did not believe the man's story was true.

David calls Strathmore and tells him about the ring. Strathmore orders David to find the ring, telling him it is a matter of national security. David finds the Canadian tourist, who tells him a German and his female escort took the ring. David locates the German and his escort. The woman tells David that she gave the ring to a young teenage girl in the park. David talks to a boy who knows the girl and he tells David the girl was trying to hock the ring to buy a plane ticket home to Connecticut.

David goes to the airport and retrieves the ring from the girl. He later finds her dead and discovers he has an assassin following him. The murderer chases David through the narrow streets of the small village of Santa Cruz and tries to kill him in the church.

David escapes to the bell tower and the killer follows him, thinking he has him trapped. David is able to outwit the assassin, who stumbles down the stairs to his death. David is shot with a stun gun by two government agents who put him in the back of their van along with the body of the assassin.

As David is tracking down the ring in Spain and Susan is running a tracer on the email account that Strathmore had given her, a computer software entrepreneur in Tokyo receives a phone call from an American claiming to be Tankado's partner, North Dakota. The caller tells the business owner, Tokugen Numataka, that Tankado is dead and he can provide him with both pass codes for the same amount of money that Numataka has bid on Tankado's pass code. The caller tells Numataka that he will be in touch. Numataka grows impatient and has his switchboard operator trace the call, which turns out to be Strathmore's personal cell phone.



Greg Hale, a fellow cryptographer that Susan dislikes, comes in while she is tracing the email. When Susan discovers emails from Tankado to North Dakota on Hale's computer, she suspects that he is Tankado's secret partner.

Meanwhile, Phil Chartrukian, an NSA technician discovers that TRANSLTR has a virus. Strathmore tells the technician that he and Susan are running a diagnostic on the computer and orders the technician to leave the premises. Chartrukian defies the commander's orders and goes to the sublevels to shut off TRANSLTR's power. A struggle ensues between Strathmore and Chartrukian and the technician falls to his death. Chartrukian's body shorts out the generator and the main power is lost on the Cryptography floor.

Hale witnesses Chartrukian's death but, when he tries to tell Susan that Strathmore is the one who killed the technician, she does not believe him. Susan thinks Hale is the killer and is afraid for her life. She tells Strathmore that Hale is North Dakota and begs him to let her leave but Strathmore refuses to let her go.

Strathmore confesses to Susan that he has not been entirely honest with her. He explains that he is trying to open Digital Fortress so he can modify the program. He wants to make it possible, without the public's knowledge, for the NSA to access Digital Fortress with a pass code. The public will use Digital Fortress thinking that their messages cannot be intercepted. They will not realize that the NSA will have complete and total access to all their communications.

Hale knows Strathmore's plans. He takes Susan hostage in an attempt to get both of them away from Strathmore and safely out of the building. Susan believes that Hale is going to hurt her. Strathmore knocks Hale unconscious, then ties him up. Believing that Hale is North Dakota, Strathmore tells Susan she needs to search Hale's computer for the pass code.

TRANSLTR begins to overheat and warning sirens begin to blare. Strathmore leaves the room to abort TRANSLTR. Susan is still searching Hale's computer when he regains consciousness. Hale proclaims his innocence but Susan still does not believe him. Then she discovers that North Dakota is a fake alias. Tankado was sending email messages to himself the entire time. There is no third party and Digital Fortress is a ruse.

At the same time Susan makes this discovery, Strathmore realizes that he is unable to abort, because he had bypassed TRANSLTR's filters and allowed a virus into the system. The virus was now heading for the main databank.

Susan rushes to the sublevels to shut off all power to TRANSLTR. Strathmore goes to his computer and begins typing a suicide letter. As Susan is heading down the ladder, she hears a gunshot. She races back upstairs and finds Hale with a gunshot wound to the head. The gun is lying beside him along with a suicide note.

Strathmore rushes in after Susan discovers the body. He drapes his jacket over Susan's shoulders and has her sit down while he goes to shut off the power. While he is gone, a pager goes off in Strathmore's pocket. Susan reads the message and finds that David,



along with several other victims, has been murdered. She realizes that the page is coming from an assassin that Strathmore has hired.

When Susan confronts Strathmore, he begs her to understand. As she tries to get away from him, TRANSLTR explodes and Strathmore is engulfed in flames. Susan escapes and finds herself in the underground corridors of the NSA. She is in a state of shock and believes her fiancé is dead.

The Director of the NSA and his personal assistant bring Susan into the underground chamber where the main databank is located. The virus that Strathmore let into the system is actually a worm that will destroy the main databank's filters, allowing public access to classified government information.

Everyone in the room is trying to figure out the kill-code that will stop the worm. Susan tells them that the pass code is engraved on a ring that belonged to Tankado, who was killed in Spain.

The Director orders a live video be streamed into the room. Two agents in a van begin to brief the room on the events that have been taking place in Spain. When Susan sees David and realizes he is alive, she is ecstatic. David hears her voice and regains consciousness.

David tells everyone in the room that he has the ring. He reads the inscription but it turns out to not be the pass code. Susan discovers a code in Tankado's program that turns out to be a puzzle. Seconds before the main databank's filters are destroyed, the puzzle is solved and the databank is saved.

In the epilogue, Numataka discovers that Tankado was the son he had abandoned at childbirth.



Prologue - Chapter 3

Prologue - Chapter 3 Summary

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown is a novel of deception and betrayal in the nation's most secret and powerful government organization, the National Security Agency (the NSA). Commander Trevor Strathmore believes that a former NSA employee has successfully created an unbreakable algorithm, which threatens the security of the nation and the future of the agency itself.

A man dies on the streets of Seville, Spain. As he clutches his chest and falls to the ground, Ensei Tankado realizes that he has made a horrible mistake. He knows it is too late for anyone to save him. He tries to communicate to the onlookers, begging them to look at his hand. No one understands his message but they notice that on the finger of his left hand is a gold ring with an inscription.

Susan Fletcher is dreaming of being at a bed and breakfast in the Smoky Mountains with her fiancé, David Becker. In the dream, David proposes to Susan and she knows that he is the only one for her. Suddenly, she is awakened by the phone.

David is calling to tell her that their plans for a weekend getaway will need to be postponed a day, because he has to leave town. Immediately, Susan assumes that the University is sending him out of town. David tells her it has nothing to do with the University and that he will call later to explain everything.

Disappointed, Susan waits for hours but never hears from him. That afternoon, the phone rings and she answers, thinking it is David. She is embarrassed when she finds out it is actually her boss, Commander Trevor Strathmore.

Strathmore tells her there is no reason to be embarrassed. "David Becker is a good man," he says. "Don't ever lose him." He then proceeds to tell her that there is an emergency in Crypto and she must report to work immediately.

Susan is depressed that her weekend plans have been delayed and that now she has to go into work. She has no idea what kind of an emergency could be taking place in Crypto and wonders to herself how the day could get any worse.

David stares miserably out the window of the Learjet at the "dead-calm" ocean below. He is unable to call Susan, because the phone on board is out of order. He asks himself why he is doing this but he already knows the answer. There are some men to whom a person cannot say no.

He tries to sleep but he can only think of Susan.

Susan arrives at the National Security Agency's Cryptography Facility in Fort Meade, Maryland where she works as Head of the Cryptography Division. It was here that



Susan had met her fiancé, David Becker. David was working as a professor at Georgetown University where he was well known for his lectures on etymology and linguistics. David had mastered 6 Asian dialects, as well as Spanish, French and Italian. He had a modest income, so he earned extra money doing translating work for government agencies in the Washington, D.C. area.

David had received a message from the NSA requesting his translating services. When David arrived at the Cryptography Division, he was told he would be providing "blind support" to the cryptographers. The NSA believed the message they were trying to break was written in Mandarin Chinese and he was being asked to translate the symbols to the code-breakers as they decrypted the cipher text.

David worked with the cryptographers but the translation was not making any sense. He pointed out that the characters they were giving him were also part of the Kanji language, a similar Japanese writing system. When he translated in Kanji, the message became clear.

As he was leaving the facility, David was told that the Head of the Cryptography Division wanted to speak with him. They met in the NSA's commissary over a popover and cranberry juice. Susan had intended to offer him a position with the Asiatic Cryptography Division but she could tell from his enthusiasm about teaching that he would never leave the university.

The two were instantly attracted to each other and began dating. During their courtship, Susan explained to David what she could about the NSA and how she became a cryptographer. She even taught him a little about cryptography, explaining Julius Caesar's "perfect square" cipher box.

After two years of dating, David proposed to her on a whim as they were vacationing at Stone Manor in the Smoky Mountains. He did not have a ring, but Susan accepted his proposal. Shortly afterwards, David received an unexpected promotion to serve as chairman of the Modern Language Department and in the months that followed, their relationship began to suffer.

Prologue - Chapter 3 Analysis

Ensei Tankado's death sets into motion the events of the story. It is important to note that Tankado's last thoughts are focused on a mistake that he has made. Tankado is trying to get the people around him to look at his hand but their focus is on the ring he is wearing. Tankado's ring becomes a focal point in the story. Ironically, his ring has nothing to do with the message Tankado was trying to send.

Chapter One introduces the three main characters of the story and lays the foundation for the plot. Susan's weekend plans have been foiled by unexpected events. She does not know where her fiancé is going, or why. She is also perplexed by the mysterious emergency at work. Both phone calls are unusual and have drastically affected Susan's original plans. Her thoughts about how the day could get any worse foreshadow



problems yet to be revealed. It is important to note that David is the only one for Susan. Strathmore appears to be fond of him, as well. His words to Susan foreshadow that David could be in serious danger.

In Chapter Two, imagery is used to symbolize David's feelings and set the mood for the story. The "dead calm" ocean gives a sense of foreboding. David is in a situation he did not choose. He is only there as he is unable to say no to someone.

Inexplicable events have circumvented David and Susan's plans, indicating that someone is trying to separate them. The out of order phone isolates David from Susan and foreshadows that he is not going to be able to call her. His thoughts turn to Susan, and he only wants to be with her.

Chapter Three provides backstory about David and Susan. David has provided translating services to the NSA in the past. His abilities prove to be a valuable asset to the NSA. It is important to note that his history with the NSA has been to provide "blind support," meaning that he is not privy to confidential information.

On one of their dates, Susan taught David about "Caesar's Box," one of the fundamentals of code breaking. This information becomes relevant later in the story when David assists Susan as she tries to break an important code.



Chapter 4 - 6

Chapter 4 - 6 Summary

Susan walks into the main room of the Crypto facility, which houses TRANSLTR, the NSA's top-secret decryption computer. The bulk of TRANSLTR is locked in a ceramic silo beneath the floor of the Crypto facility. It is surrounded by catwalks and cables. Power generators are at the bottom and a Freon cooling system regulates the temperature. The hum from the generators gives Crypto's acoustics a "dead, ghostlike quality."

The NSA designed TRANSLTR to break public-key encryption pass codes. Computer programmers had created public-key encryptions when computer users learned that the U.S. government had open access to their email communications. The public was outraged and demanded that their email messages be secure.

In response to the public's demands, computer programmers designed public-key encryptions to scramble email messages. A message could not be unscrambled without a pass code. When the NSA started breaking these pass codes, the codes began getting longer to make code breaking more difficult.

As a result, the NSA created TRANSLTR. When the multi-billion dollar machine was tested, it was able to break a sixty-four-character key in twelve minutes. The NSA's second-fastest computer would have taken twenty years to break the same code.

Commander Trevor J. Strathmore, the Deputy Director of Operations, immediately leaked information that the project was a failure and computer-users began using email in confidence, completely unaware that TRANSLTR was cracking hundreds of codes every day.

Susan finds the Crypto floor deserted but this is not abnormal for a Saturday. The NSA has an unwritten rule that all cryptographic mathematicians are to take Saturdays off to avoid the risk of burn out. Commander Strathmore is alone in his office.

Susan sees Commander Strathmore as a father figure, protecting her from the male-dominated Crypto Development Division. Strathmore is respected by the cryptographers and his superiors as being a "patriot and a visionary." He is described as being capable of looking past moral issues and acting "without remorse in the interest of the common good."

Since Susan's employment with the NSA, Commander Strathmore had managed to work his way up to second-in-command. The only person outranking Strathmore is Director Leland Fontaine, who is described as an elusive figure that is feared by everyone. The two seldom agree on anything.



When Susan enters Strathmore's office, she notices that he looks distressed. Strathmore explains that he has been under the usual pressure from the EFF, (Electronics Frontier Foundation), a powerful civil liberties coalition founded by worldwide computer users that supports free speech online. The EFF, the NSA's greatest nemesis, constantly lobbies against government agencies having the ability to eavesdrop on conversations and online messaging.

Strathmore tells Susan he has been waiting fifteen hours for TRANSLTR to break a code, an unbelievable amount of time for such an advanced machine. Strathmore assures Susan that TRANSLTR does not have a virus and that he believes it is working on an unbreakable code.

Susan is skeptical that TRANSLTR has hit an unbreakable code based on her knowledge of the Bergofsky Principle, which mathematically guarantees that given the time and equipment, any code can be broken. Strathmore counters her argument with Josef Harne's theory of the possibility that an algorithm with a rotating clear text would prevent a computer from recognizing when a code had been broken.

Harne's theory is humanly impossible but Strathmore informs Susan that such an algorithm has successfully been written by Ensei Tankado. Tankado was an NSA cryptographer who worked on the TRANSLTR project and was deported by Strathmore after he nearly created an "intelligence nightmare."

Ensei Tankado's mother had been a victim of radiation during World War II. She died of complications shortly after his birth. Tankado's father abandoned him when he learned that his son was born deformed.

For much of his early life, Tankado harbored hatred towards Americans because of their attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He would often stare at his deformed hands and vow revenge against America.

When he was a child, a computer company designed a special keyboard for handicapped children. Tankado's foster parents allowed him to be part of a test group for these keyboards. It was during this time that he developed an innate ability to work on computers. He earned a scholarship to Doshisha University and became known as the "crippled genius."

As he grew older, Tankado began studying World War II and his hatred toward America faded. He became a devout Buddhist and believed that "forgiveness was the only way to enlightenment." Tankado came to the United States on a visa and was employed by the NSA to work on the TRANSLTR project. He believed, like the rest of the staff, that the machine would only be used to decipher email that had been approved by the Justice Department.

Tankado was outraged when he discovered that the NSA would be able to use TRANSLTR to access private email. Tankado considered this a grave violation of human rights. He quit his job and attempted to contact the EFF, intending to reveal everything about TRANSLTR. The NSA publicly accused Tankado of trying to purchase his



freedom with allegations of a government code-breaking machine. Considered a spy by the media, his credibility was destroyed. He was captured and deported.

Resolute in his capture, Tankado told Strathmore, "We all have a right to keep secrets. Someday I'll see to it we can."

Chapter 4 - 6 Analysis

Chapter Four explains the reason that TRANSLTR was created and introduces the main theme of the story, national security vs. an individual's right to privacy.

The NSA is responsible for protecting the country from terrorist attacks. It is crucial that the NSA be able to intercept messages containing information that threatens the security of the nation. However, it is equally important to not invade an individual citizen's right to privacy. The NSA is constantly battling with the public over its right to intercept communications.

TRANSLTR was created to allow the NSA to break codes and intercept messages without the public's knowledge. Commander Strathmore has managed to keep TRANSLTR a secret but that secret is about to be compromised.

The sublevels of the Crypto floor later become the setting for one of the turning points in the novel and imagery is used to set the tone. The Crypto facility is described as having a "dead, ghostlike quality," foreshadowing events that will take place later in the story.

Chapter Five reveals Susan's relationship with Commander Strathmore and exposes information about his character. Susan sees Commander Strathmore as a father figure. He is a highly respected man, who loves his country and is capable of making difficult decisions with no regrets. He is cool under pressure and firm in his beliefs. These character traits are important to understanding Strathmore's drive and motivation.

Susan admires Strathmore and sees him as her protector. She does not believe he is capable of causing harm and her blind loyalty prevents her from seeing the truth behind what is happening.

Strathmore called Susan into work on a Saturday, because he wants complete secrecy about what is happening at the NSA. His physical appearance indicates that he is anxious and concerned, a direct contrast to his confident personality.

Much of Strathmore's work centers on fighting against the arguments of the civil liberties coalition. If the EFF were to discover that TRANSLTR existed and was breaking hundreds of codes a day, there would be a public outcry. It is Strathmore's duty to keep TRANSLTR a secret.

TRANSLTR has never taken more than three hours to break a code. Strathmore is certain that the computer does not have a virus. He believes TRANSLTR is working on an unbreakable algorithm. It is important to note that his argument is based on a theory



that is humanly impossible. Strathmore informs Susan that he believes the algorithm was written by Ensei Tankado, a brilliant but disgruntled NSA employee who worked on the TRANSLTR project.

This information links the prologue to the story. The reader is aware that Tankado is dead and now learns that he worked on the TRANSLTR project and was deported by Strathmore over an intelligence threat.

Chapter Six provides insight into Tankado's character. Although Tankado had a difficult childhood, he was able to rise above his circumstances. Faith and education assuaged Tankado's hatred and he chose a higher path for his life. Tankado had a successful career but his values would not allow him to advocate something he believed to be unethical.

The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed Tankado's family and caused him to be born deformed. Tankado's hands are significant to the meaning behind the Digital Fortress pass code. His last words to Strathmore foreshadow his plans to one day ascertain that everyone will have a right to privacy.



Chapter 7 - 9

Chapter 7 - 9 Summary

Strathmore tells Susan that he had received a phone call from Tankado the previous month. Tankado had called to warn Strathmore that he was perfecting an algorithm that could write unbreakable codes. He called his program Digital Fortress and told Strathmore that he would not release Digital Fortress if Strathmore would go public about TRANSLTR. Strathmore did not believe Tankado's claim, so Tankado posted a complimentary copy of his program on the Internet.

Tankado protected his creation by encrypting the file within itself. It is impossible to open Digital Fortress without Tankado's pass code. Strathmore shows Susan an article from a Japanese business newspaper announcing Tankado's plans to auction off his program to the highest bidder. Every computer software company in Japan is trying to break into the program and every second they cannot - the bidding price climbs.

The article stated that there was a tremendous amount of interest in Japan regarding Digital Fortress but U.S. software companies were not taking the formula seriously.

Strathmore believes that, because Digital Fortress was created by Tankado, it is a legitimate algorithm and not a marketing ploy. Strathmore downloaded Digital Fortress himself but TRANSLTR has been unable to open it. He knows that if Digital Fortress becomes available to the public, it will be impossible to intercept communications and national security will be compromised.

Susan suggests Tankado could be murdered based on the NSA's affiliation with assassins around the world. Strathmore tells Susan that Tankado was too smart to not protect himself. Tankado ensured his own safety by giving his pass code to an anonymous third party. In the event that anything should happen to Tankado, the third party would release the pass code on the Internet, in newspapers and on billboards, making Digital Fortress free to the world. Strathmore informs Susan that there is no way to convince Tankado to not release the program, because he died that morning in Seville, Spain.

David arrives in a barren area of Spain. As he unlatches the overhead compartment for his luggage, he remembers that he had no time to pack. He had been promised that his trip would be brief.

The pilot hands him a manila envelope filled with local currency worth thousands of dollars. On the front of the envelope are the words, "Keep the change." David questions the pilot as to why he is being given so much money when all he needs is taxi fare. The pilot tells him he is only following orders. David believes that he will only be in Spain a few hours and will soon be returning for his trip to Stone Manor with Susan.



The systems security technician, Phil Chartrukian, stops by the Cryptography facility to pick up paperwork from the day before. He finds the computer terminal that monitors TRANSLTR's internal workings is unmanned and the monitor is switched off. If the Commander finds the Sys-Sec lab is unmanned, the technician who was scheduled to work that day will lose his job.

Chartrukian notices that the curtains to Strathmore's office are closed, meaning the Commander is in. He switches on the monitor and is shocked to find that TRANSLTR's run monitor shows the machine has been working over fifteen hours. Chartrukian knows this could only mean that TRANSLTR has a virus. He immediately pulls up a file log of the last forty-eight hours and scans the list.

Every file that enters TRANSLTR must pass through Gauntlet, a powerful filter designed to reject files containing "unknown" programming. The only way such files can pass through Gauntlet's filters is on the rare occasion that the Sys-Sec technicians run a manual inspection and find the file to be clean. Chartrukian decides to run a virus probe on TRANSLTR before going to Strathmore.

Chapter 7 - 9 Analysis

The original purpose behind Digital Fortress was to blackmail Strathmore into going public about TRANSLTR. When Strathmore did not believe Tankado's claim, Tankado made his program available on the Internet. It is impossible for anyone to open Digital Fortress without Tankado's pass code. Although the Japanese have taken interest in Tankado's program, it is important to note that U.S. software companies claim the algorithm is absurd.

Susan suggests that the NSA hire an assassin to kill Tankado. Strathmore informs Susan that Tankado would not give them that opportunity. Tankado announced that he had a secret partner who would publish the pass code to Digital Fortress should he suffer an untimely death. Tankado's death is an ironic twist to the story.

The barren landscape of Spain is used to symbolize David's isolation. The pilot is unable to offer him any additional information regarding his mission and the large sum of money indicates that his stay in Spain will not be brief.

Chapter Nine introduces a new character and foreshadows conflicts that arise in the story. Chartrukian, a conscientious technician, believes TRANSLTR has a virus and begins to run a virus probe on the computer.

It is the responsibility of Sys-Sec technicians to keep TRANSLTR clean of viruses. The only way a file can bypass Gauntlet is if it has been manually inspected and approved by a Sys-Sec technician.



Chapter 10 - 12

Chapter 10 - 12 Summary

Strathmore tells Susan that the NSA had nothing to do with Tankado's death. He received a phone call early that morning from COMINT, the agency's global reconnaissance division that Tankado died of a heart attack.

Susan questions how Tankado could have died of a heart attack at the age of thirty-two. Strathmore tells her that Tankado's NSA physical showed he had a congenital heart defect. It would not be unlikely for someone with a weak heart, who was under a lot of stress to have a heart attack, especially with the heat in Spain.

Strathmore knows Tankado was traveling alone and believes it is possible his partner may not yet know he is dead. The Spanish authorities have agreed to contain the information as long as necessary.

However, the circumstances could make the NSA appear to be responsible for Tankado's death. Strathmore explains to Susan that it is important they uncover the identity of Tankado's partner before he finds out Tankado is dead.

Tankado had made several public references to his partner, North Dakota. Strathmore tells Susan he ran an Internet inquiry on North Dakota and found an email account for `ndakota@ara.anon.org`.

The letters "ARA" stand for American Remailers Anonymous and the companies that provide these anonymous servers are bound by contract to never reveal the Internet user's identity or location.

Strathmore tells Susan that the account was full of email from Tankado with references to Digital Fortress and his plans to blackmail the NSA. Susan suggests that it could be a decoy but Strathmore is convinced that the emails are real. He needs her to run a tracer on ARA's secure database to uncover North Dakota's real identity.

Strathmore admits that he had not intended to call Susan about any of this but when he tried to run the tracer himself, it kept returning nonsensical data. He had no choice at that point but to call her in, since she was the one who had written the program.

Susan tells Strathmore that if North Dakota's account is in the United States, she will have results within an hour. However, if the account is set up through a university or corporation, it may take longer. Strathmore lets it slip that he knows about Susan's plans to meet David in the Smoky Mountains. He confesses that he was the one who sent David to Spain.

Susan is angry. Strathmore explains to her that he sent David to Spain, because he needed a civilian courier to retrieve Tankado's pass code. Strathmore is certain Tankado



would have had it on him when he died. Strathmore tells Susan that he gave David \$10,000 to do the job but that angers her even more. She believes that David agreed to the money and went to Spain, because Strathmore is her boss.

Strathmore becomes infuriated when Susan asks if NSA Director Leland Fontaine is aware of the circumstances. His reaction startles her, because Strathmore rarely loses his composure and he has never once raised his voice to her. When Strathmore calms down, he explains that Director Fontaine is in a meeting in South America with the President of Columbia. Strathmore did not want the director to cut his meeting short and made the decision to handle the problem on his own. He does not want anyone to know what is going on. He assures Susan that David will be home by evening.

Susan realizes the commander is under a tremendous amount of stress. She is aware of rumors that his wife is leaving him and he is now dealing with a serious problem at work. She apologizes to Strathmore but encourages him to notify the director or the United States President, because the burden is too much for him to bear on his own. Strathmore tells Susan he does not intend to notify the President without the director's knowledge and that he intends to handle the crisis on his own. Susan assures him that he has her support.

A Spanish lieutenant, under direct orders from the head of the Seville Guardia, leads David into the closed morgue. David was given specific instructions to bring back everything Ensei Tankado had with him when he died and to not touch or read anything. Tankado's body is lying naked on an aluminum table and the only items David sees are a passport, a wallet, glasses, shoes and a small duffel bag. The lieutenant tells David the items are all Tankado had with him. The lieutenant offers to give David a motorcycle ride back to the airport. David graciously refuses. He does not intend to ever ride a motorcycle again, because he was almost killed on one in college. David is about to leave when he notices Tankado's deformed left hand. He begins to sort through Tankado's personal effects and tells the lieutenant that something is missing.

Chapter 10 - 12 Analysis

Chapter Ten foreshadows information regarding Tankado's death and his secret partner, North Dakota. Tankado's preexisting heart condition makes his death appear to be related to stress and natural causes. However, despite Strathmore's denial of any involvement, he knows the public may link the NSA to Tankado's death because of the upcoming release of Digital Fortress.

Susan suspects that Tankado's death seems too convenient. She also believes that the anonymous email is a decoy but Strathmore is very persuasive in his arguments. He informs Susan that he did not want to get her involved but he had no choice. He was unable to trace the email account himself and he needs her help. Susan respects Strathmore and trusts what he is telling her to be true. However, when she discovers that he sent David to Spain, she is shocked.



Chapter Eleven reveals the reason David has been sent to Spain. Susan is angry, and she knows that Strathmore was wrong to send a civilian to do a government job, least of all her fiancé.

Strathmore defends his decision. He is trying very hard to keep everything secret, and he resents that Susan is challenging him. Strathmore becomes infuriated when Susan asks if he has notified the director. Strathmore's determination to handle a major crisis alone indicates that he is a prideful man. He does not like to have his authority undermined by anyone. This is the first time he has ever lost his temper with Susan, and she is stunned by his reaction. In addition to the stress Strathmore is dealing with at work, Susan knows that he is having problems at home too. The rumors that his marriage is falling apart become pertinent later in the story. Susan feels guilty. She promises to help Strathmore even though she knows that he should notify the director about what is happening.

David's fear of motorcycles foreshadow that he will be forced to ride one later in the story. David has no idea what he is supposed to bring back but his attention is drawn to Tankado's left hand. He realizes something is missing and begins going through Tankado's personal effects.



Chapter 13 - 15

Chapter 13 - 15 Summary

Tokugen Numataka, a shrewd Japanese businessman in Tokyo reflects on an anonymous phone call he had received three days before. He considers himself extremely fortunate.

He was initially suspicious of the American who was offering to sell him the Digital Fortress pass code. He had already placed his bid on the new algorithm and suspected that the caller was a competitor trying to find out the amount of his bid. The American claimed to be Tankado's silent partner North Dakota. Numataka knows North Dakota's pass code is worthless without Tankado's pass code.

The caller informed Numataka that he would sell him both pass codes for twenty million dollars, the exact amount of Numataka's bid. Numataka told the caller he was taking a major legal risk in making such an offer, as Tankado would never tolerate such treason. The caller had told Numataka that Tankado would no longer be a factor and that he would be in touch.

David sees a small area of bruising directly over Tankado's heart and assumes it came from CPR. He also notices a band of pale flesh on the smallest finger of Tankado's left hand and asks the lieutenant if Tankado was wearing jewelry when he died.

Slightly embarrassed, the lieutenant realizes that the Canadian tourist who called him must have been telling the truth. The lieutenant tells David that the Canadian had phoned in the emergency and was talking about a ring, but he assumed the man was crazy and did not think it was worth mentioning.

Susan sits down at her computer terminal in Node 3, the cryptographer's private, soundproof chamber off the main floor. The room is designed to provide the cryptographers with all the comforts of home, including plush carpeting, a sound system, a well-stocked refrigerator and a kitchenette. The philosophy behind the room's design is to make the employees feel relaxed and to encourage teamwork.

Susan begins to run a tracer on North Dakota's email address. She believes that when the tracer on North Dakota comes back, they will be able to confiscate his pass code. Once David returns with Tankado's copy of the pass code, both pass codes can be destroyed and Tankado's program will be completely worthless.

She notices that Strathmore entered North Dakota's address twice and received Tankado's address in return on both attempts. Susan believes that Strathmore accidentally interchanged the data fields, causing the tracer to search for the wrong account.



While she waits for the tracer to be returned, she begins to feel guilty about her argument with Strathmore. She knows that Strathmore meticulously plans every move he makes and that he works diligently with BrainStorm, an NSA-developed software program that simulates "what-if" scenarios on the computer.

With BrainStorm, the user can enter any hypothetical situation and the program can predict the effects of that situation based on a relational web of acquired data. BrainStorm is used to outline strategies and predict weaknesses in any situation. Susan believes it is likely that Strathmore has numerous plans and strategies in his computer that will change the world. Suddenly, Strathmore rushes in to Node 3 to tell Susan that David had called and there has been a setback.

Chapter 13 - 15 Analysis

A flashback is used in chapter thirteen to introduce a subplot and a new character, Tokugen Numataka. Numataka considers himself fortunate as he has received a tip that will make him very rich.

An American claiming to be Tankado's partner, North is selling both pass codes for his own gain. The man had informed Numataka that Tankado would no longer be a factor. This indicates that Tankado's death was a premeditated murder and not a heart attack.

David assumes the bruising around Tankado's heart came from CPR and directs his focus to Tankado's hands. When he questions the lieutenant, he learns that there was a Canadian tourist who had tried to tell him something about a ring.

The description of Node 3, one of the main settings in the book, is ironic. The room is designed to make the cryptographers feel comfortable and to encourage teamwork. Secrets are discouraged in this room. The setting is in stark contrast to the events that unfold later in the story.

Susan notices that Strathmore received Tankado's email address on both of the tracers he sent. She assumes Strathmore made a mistake and entered the information in the wrong data fields. Chapter Fifteen reveals that Strathmore uses a special computer program to strategically plan events. This information is relevant to the story and reveals Strathmore as a meticulous strategist who carefully weighs the consequences of every situation. The story intensifies when Strathmore announces to Susan that there has been a setback.



Chapter 16 - 18

Chapter 16 - 18 Summary

Commander Strathmore tells Susan that Tankado must have had the pass code engraved on his ring. When he died, he gave the ring to a Canadian tourist who was on the scene at the time of his death. The Canadian described the ring as being inscribed with strange lettering that did not spell anything.

Strathmore believes that Tankado must have thought the NSA was responsible for his heart attack, through poisoning or a slow-acting cardiac arrestor. Strathmore explains that Tankado must have suspected the NSA had uncovered North Dakota's identity, because they would not have attempted to kill him otherwise. In order to ensure the NSA would never have access to Digital Fortress, Strathmore concludes that Tankado gave away his pass code as he lay dying in the street.

Strathmore goes on to explain to Susan that the officer at the scene thought the aging Canadian tourist was senile. He had the man get on the back of his motorcycle so he could take him back to his hotel. The Canadian fell off, cracking his head and breaking his wrist. The tourist was so angry, he refused to let the officer give him a ride to the hospital. Instead, he chose to walk to the nearest clinic.

David had been given orders from Strathmore to find the Canadian and get the ring. David heads to the clinic hoping they will be able to provide him with the Canadian's discharge information, maybe the name of his hotel or at least a phone number where he can be reached.

Strathmore had told David to use the ten thousand dollars to buy the ring if necessary and he would reimburse him later. David did not intend to keep the money Strathmore had given him. David knew Strathmore was Susan's mentor and he felt a one-day errand was the least he could do for the man.

David tried calling Susan several times after arriving in Spain, but he had been unable to reach her. Finally, he decides to leave a message on her answering machine. He tells Susan to call Commander Strathmore and he would explain everything. As David heads over to the clinic, he does not notice there is a man wearing wire-rim glasses watching him from across the street.

Numataka is pleased with himself as he awaits his phone call from North Dakota and muses over the irony of having Tankado's algorithm. Numataka had an opportunity to hire Tankado when he graduated college but despite his credentials, Numataka would not hire him because of his deformity. Numataka lived by the Japanese code of honor and face, imperfection was not tolerated. Numataka knows that with Digital Fortress, he will be able to embed the algorithm into computer chips and mass market them to the world, possibly even to terrorists.



Chapter 16 - 18 Analysis

Chapter Sixteen reveals what is happening in Spain. Strathmore relates to Susan everything David told him on the phone. He has drawn his own conclusions about Tankado's intentions and the inscription on the ring. Susan realizes that David is now going to have to find the Canadian tourist in order to retrieve Tankado's ring.

Chapter Seventeen reveals that David was doing Strathmore a favor for all he had done for Susan. David had no intention to keep the money Strathmore had given him. Unable to reach Susan on the phone, David leaves a message on her machine and wonders where she is. As he walks to the clinic, he does not realize he is being watched by a mysterious man who has been introduced to the story.

It is ironic that Numataka had the opportunity to hire Tankado. Although Tankado was well qualified for the position, Numataka refused to hire him because of his deformity. Chapter Eighteen reveals Numataka as a prejudiced and self-serving man.



Chapter 19 - 21

Chapter 19 - 21 Summary

Susan is concerned about David's safety but Strathmore tells her that David is safe and no one else knows the ring exists. Their conversation is interrupted by Phil Chartrukian who urgently wants to speak with the Commander. Strathmore is irritated that Chartrukian is there on his day off.

Chartrukian is surprised to find that Strathmore has seen TRANSLTR's run monitor and is not concerned that the machine has been running almost sixteen hours. Chartrukian tells Strathmore that he ran a virus probe on TRANSLTR and believes the computer has a virus.

Strathmore tells Chartrukian not to be concerned, that he and Susan are running an advanced diagnostic on TRANSLTR and he had told the Sys-Sec technician on duty not to come in. Strathmore tells him that if the probe brought up anything out of the ordinary it was because he put it there, so Chartrukian can go home.

Chartrukian knows that there is a problem with TRANSLTR and is angry that Strathmore does not believe him. He defies the commander's orders and goes back to the Sys-Sec lab to run a complete array of system assessment software on TRANSLTR.

David goes to La Clínica de Salud Pública, an elementary school that had been converted into a clinic. He finds the place is crowded, and the secretary is trying to process a room full of patients. David assumes the flustered secretary will be more apt to give him the information he needs over the phone so he pretends to be from the Canadian Embassy and calls her from within the clinic. The secretary refuses to give him any information over the phone, because she is too busy.

Rather than going back to the secretary's office and waiting his turn, David picks up the phone to try again. Before the secretary can pick up, he sees a man with a cast on his wrist, lying on a cot.

Numataka receives another call from North Dakota but this time the man sounds anxious. He informs Numataka that there has been a delay in getting the pass code. He tells Numataka that American Intelligence has found out that Tankado's pass code is missing and that they have sent a man named David Becker to find it.

North Dakota assures Numataka that Tankado is dead and explains that Tankado gave the pass code to a tourist before he died. Numataka is outraged. North Dakota promises Numataka that he will have exclusive rights to the pass code and that anyone who sees the pass code will be killed. North Dakota tells Numataka that if David finds the pass code, he has a man who will take it from him and David will be eliminated.



Chapter 19 - 21 Analysis

Chartrukian tries to warn Strathmore that TRANSLTR has a virus but Strathmore discounts the technician's virus probe. He assures Chartrukian that everything is fine and that he and Susan are simply running a diagnostic. Strathmore tells Chartrukian that he told the Sys-Sec technician on charge to stay home and tells Chartrukian he can leave.

Chartrukian is skeptical of Strathmore's diagnostic excuse. He knows from experience that no diagnostic would take that long. Determined to prove to the commander that his virus probe is correct, Chartrukian defies the commander's orders. He decides to run a complete system assessment.

Chapter Nineteen foreshadows conflict between Strathmore and Chartrukian. The technician is insulted by Strathmore's dismissive attitude and is determined to provide proof that TRANSLTR has a virus.

Chapter Twenty reveals David's creativity. He tries calling the secretary to retrieve information, believing she is too busy not to acquiesce. Although he is unsuccessful in his attempt, it appears he may have gotten lucky when he discovers a man fitting the Canadian tourist's description lying on a cot in front of him.

Chapter Twenty-One reveals that North Dakota is aware that Tankado is dead and has given away his pass code. He also knows that American Intelligence has sent David to find Tankado's ring. North Dakota has hired a man to follow David and eliminate anyone who sees the ring. This foreshadows that innocent people will die, and David's life is in jeopardy.



Chapter 22 - 24

Chapter 22 - 24 Summary

David approaches the man on the cot. The man is Pierre Cloucharde, a freelance writer, who believes that David is with either the city or the Bureau of Tourism. He thinks that David has come to persuade him not to write anything negative about his trip. Cloucharde is adamant that his article will reveal everything he has experienced.

David convinces Cloucharde that he is with the Canadian Consulate and is checking on him as part of an informal diplomatic courtesy. David tells Cloucharde that he would like to make a formal complaint to the city and that Cloucharde's testimony would be very valuable. Cloucharde is flattered and David asks him to start with the accident that happened that morning.

Cloucharde tells David that it all began with the young Asian man who had collapsed on the street. Cloucharde tells David that he called an ambulance but could not administer CPR, because he does not know how. Unfortunately, by the time the paramedics arrived, the man was already dead.

David wondered what could have caused the bruising on Tankado's chest if no one had administered CPR. He pushed the thought from his mind and asked Cloucharde about the ring. Cloucharde is surprised to hear that the lieutenant had mentioned the ring to David, because he believed the officer thought he was lying.

Cloucharde tells David that the ring was inscribed with strange writing. The writing was neither Japanese nor English. Cloucharde claims that he was able to get a good look at the ring, because the man kept shoving his fingers in his face, as if he wanted Cloucharde to take it. Cloucharde is offended when David asks if he took the ring.

Cloucharde tells David that he told the lieutenant the man gave the ring to an obese German man who was there with his red-haired female escort. David presses Cloucharde for the German's name but he begins to tire and starts drifting off to sleep. He tells David he does not know the German's name. He tries to recall the woman's name but all he can say is "Dewdrop." Cloucharde drifts off to sleep and an angry nurse chases David out of the clinic.

Susan is annoyed when she cryptographer Greg Hale enters Node 3. Susan does not trust Hale, who received his computer training from the U.S. Marine Corps. His chances for a distinguished military career were thwarted when he accidentally killed a fellow Marine in a drunken fight. After serving his prison sentence, Hale began working for the private sector.

Hale asks Susan why she is working on a Saturday and she responds by asking him the same question. He tells her he has come in to tweak some programs and check his email. He flirts with her, but she cuts him off. Given his background and shallow



personality, Susan does not believe that he is NSA material. Susan was opposed to Hale being hired by the NSA but when Hale discovered a back door to an NSA program, Strathmore insisted it would be better to have him work for the NSA, than against it.

The NSA program was known as Skipjack, an encryption algorithm designed by the NSA to become the nation's standard algorithm. Corporations were frustrated in dealing with the incompatibilities of public-key encryptions. Skipjack was designed to alleviate those issues.

The EFF lobbied against having the NSA design a program that would become the nation's standard, because they believed the NSA would create a program only it could break. To ensure the NSA created a quality program, Congress announced that the world's top mathematicians would examine the NSA's formula before it could be published.

The NSA presented Skipjack and mathematicians all over the world were impressed by the program's quality. However, shortly before the program was to be presented to Congress, Greg Hale found a back door in the program and publicly announced his discovery.

The back door was a few lines of programming that Strathmore had created, making it possible for any code written by Skipjack to be decrypted with a single pass code known only by the NSA. The EFF was outraged and Strathmore vehemently defended his actions to Congress. He argued that it was necessary for the NSA to break codes in order to protect the public. He stated that the public would one day regret its desire for privacy.

David realizes that his situation has become more complicated and feels that he is out of his league. He calls Strathmore to tell him about the German, and the news is not well received. Strathmore tells David that finding the ring is a matter of national security and that he must not fail.

David searches for escort services in the phone directory and finds there are only three. The last one he calls is the only one that employs red-haired female escorts, Inmaculada and Rocío. The man from the escort service suspects that David is a policeman who is trying to bust them for prostitution. He immediately tells David that his company does not provide the type of service he is seeking and hangs up. Frustrated, David tries to figure out what he is going to do next.

Chapter 22 - 24 Analysis

Information regarding Tankado's death is revealed in Cloucharde's testimony. David discovers that no one administered CPR on Tankado. This indicates that something else must have caused the bruising.

Cloucharde denies taking the ring. He informs David that there were two other witnesses present at the scene. He tells David that an obese German man took the ring.



Cloucharde does not know the German's name, but calls his female escort "Dewdrop." The physical description of the two witnesses and the name "Dewdrop" are the only clues David has in finding the ring.

Chapter Twenty-Three introduces a new character into the story. Greg Hale is a highly intelligent but obnoxious cryptographer with a criminal history. Susan does not trust him and knows the only reason the NSA hired him was to keep him from working against them.

Hale had discovered a back door in the Skipjack program and announced it to the world, a major embarrassment for the NSA. Strathmore had discretely added a few lines of programming into the formula that would allow the NSA to have open access to any code written by the program. This was exactly what the EFF had feared would happen if the NSA was allowed to create an algorithm that was meant to become the nation's standard.

Skipjack reveals Strathmore's cunning abilities and foreshadows his plans for Digital Fortress. Strathmore had defended his actions before Congress and stated that the public would one day regret their desire for privacy. Strathmore's beliefs give insight into his character and reveal his motivation.

David realizes he is in over his head but Strathmore refuses to let him quit. He tells David that the ring is a "matter of national security" and he must not fail. David tries to get information from the escort service about the German. He learns that there are only two red-haired female escorts in Seville, Spain and both work for the same escort service. The name Rocío becomes relevant later in the story.



Chapter 25 - 27

Chapter 25 - 27 Summary

Pierre Cloucharde is murdered. The figure hovering over him injects 30 cc of cleaning fluid into his IV tube. He is unable to scream for help, because his mouth is covered. The man in wire-rim glasses slips out of the clinic. He presses a switch on the credit card sized pack attached to his belt. He is using a prototype of the new Monocle computer, which has been developed by the U.S. Navy. The man's glasses are actually the computer monitor. The transparent display allows the user see through the data that appears on the lenses.

Information is entered into the computer by touching contacts that are affixed to the user's fingertips. The technique mimics court stenography and the computer translates the shorthand messages into English. The man begins touching his fingertips together and smiles at the message that appears on his lenses:

"Subject: P. Cloucharde - Terminated"

The man is required to send notification of his kills, but he especially enjoys including the victim's names.

David reflects on his conversation with Strathmore. Strathmore had told him to not call again until he had found the ring, because he was uncomfortable having conversations over unsecured public phone lines.

David believes he has missed something important but does not know what it is. He knows he is not qualified to do the job Strathmore has entrusted with him and begins to wonder why Strathmore is not using a secret agent. David starts thinking about the name Dewdrop. Señor Roldán at Escortes Belén told David on the phone that they only employed two red-haired escorts, Inmaculada and Rocío. Suddenly, David realizes the name Rocío literally means 'drop of dew' and implies purity. David understands that English must have been the only common language Rocío and her client shared. Rocío must have explained the meaning of her name by translating it into English. David rushes off to find a phone. He does not notice that a man wearing wire-rim glasses is following him.

Hale sends Susan an email inviting her to dinner but she refuses. In an attempt to engage her in conversation, Hale tries to find out what Susan is working on. She refuses to answer, so he begins moving toward her computer terminal. Susan is afraid that Hale's curiosity could cause serious problems, so she tells him she is running a diagnostic. Hale is doubtful and offers to help.

Susan insists that she does not need his help. When he insists, Susan stands up to block him. He takes a step towards her and she presses her finger hard against his



chest and firmly tells him to stop. Hale is shocked by Susan's reaction. He realizes that she is working on something serious and he knows it is not a diagnostic.

Chapter 25 - 27 Analysis

Chapter Twenty-Five reveals that the mysterious man following David is the assassin hired by North Dakota. His wire-rim glasses are actually the monitor of the computer the man uses to transmit notification of his assassinations. The Monocle computer is a prototype developed by the U.S. Navy. This indicates that the assassin must have been hired by someone within the United States government. The assassin derives pleasure from killing and likes being able to include his victims' names in his messages.

Strathmore is uneasy about talking on unsecured phone lines. He has ordered David to not call again until he finds the ring. David has a nagging feeling that he has missed something. As he begins walking down the street, he suddenly realizes that the name Rocío literally means, 'drop of dew'. The meaning implies purity, which is ironic considering Rocío's profession. David is being followed by the man in wire-rim glasses, foreshadowing that more people will die.

Susan's feelings that Hale's curiosity could cause serious problems foreshadow events that will happen later in the story. Hale makes Susan nervous and she does not know how to handle him. She decides to stand up to him. Hale is surprised by her firmness and he realizes that something suspicious is going on.



Chapter 28 - 30

Chapter 28 - 30 Summary

David disguises his voice and calls the Escortes Belén again. He pretends that he is a jewelry salesman from Burgos, and the man on the phone believes he has a potential customer. David proceeds to tell Señor Roldán that he found a man's passport in the park and assumed the number on the paper was to a hotel. He is looking to return the passport to its rightful owner. David tells Señor Roldán that he cannot pronounce the German name. He describes the man in the photo as obese. Señor Roldán tells David he can drop off the passport at Escortes Belén, and he will make sure the man's passport is returned to him. David explains that he is downtown with no transportation and will simply leave it at the Guardia precinct. Not wanting the police involved, Señor Roldán tells him that the rightful owner of the passport is having dinner at the Alfonso XIII hotel restaurant with his escort Rocío. David heads to the hotel, still unaware that he is being followed.

Susan considers having Strathmore force Hale to leave. She decides it would be best to leave Hale alone to avoid raising his suspicion. She reflects on Strathmore's ability to stay calm in crises and realizes she sees some of his qualities in David. Susan relies on Strathmore to nurture her career and believes he truly appreciates her love for cryptography. Ironically, Strathmore had called David into the NSA the day they met. A fax taped on Susan's computer for seven months is the only code she has been unable to break. It is a note from David. He had signed it, "My love for you is without wax." David refused to tell her what he meant by "without wax." He simply reminded her that she was the code breaker.

Strathmore comes in to ask Susan if anything has come back on the tracer. He sees Hale and asks him why he is working on a Saturday. Hale tells him he is pulling his weight. Strathmore decides to leave Hale alone. He asks Susan to speak with him outside. Susan locks her computer to prevent Hale from tampering with it. When the screen goes black, Susan steps out of the room with Strathmore. He asks Susan why Hale is there and whether Chartrukian has left. She tells him that Hale is not doing anything important, and she has not seen Chartrukian. Susan tells Strathmore that she has no information on the tracer and asks if he has heard anything from David.

Strathmore tells Susan that he told David not to call until he has the ring. Susan is concerned that David may need help. Strathmore shrugs and tells her that he cannot help David from where he is. David will have to take care of everything on his own. When Strathmore sees how concerned Susan is, he immediately gives her an apologetic look. He tells her that David is fine.

While Strathmore and Susan are outside, Hale pulls out an index card and types Susan's pass code into her computer. Hale had stolen the Node 3 privacy codes by installing a chip in his keyboard to record keystrokes. He would come in early and swap



his keyboard with someone else's. At the end of the day, he took the chip home and copied the first five strokes recorded, which was the user's pass code. He had only taken the pass codes for his own entertainment but was now happy that he did. Hale discovers that Susan is running a tracer but he does not know why. He suddenly feels uneasy and makes the decision to abort her tracer. He figures that whatever she is searching for will have to wait. Hale deletes all his commands from Susan's system activity log and re-enters her security code. When Susan reenters the room, Hale is sitting at his terminal.

David goes to Alfonso XIII, a small four-star hotel. He tells the concierge that he needs to speak with Rocío immediately. The concierge informs David that it is too late. She is with a client and they have retired for the evening. He suggests that David leave a message for her. David goes to the desk in the lobby where the stationery is kept. He slips a blank piece of paper in an envelope and writes Rocío's name on the envelope. He hands the envelope to the concierge. When the concierge places the envelope in the mailbox for Suite 103, David thanks the man and then wanders over to the hotel elevator.

Chapter 28 - 30 Analysis

David is able to persuade Señor Roldán to tell him where he can find Rocío and her German client. It is ironic that he tells Señor Roldán that he is a jewelry salesman, considering that he is trying to find Tankado's ring. The assassin follows David to the hotel.

There is a lot of irony in Chapter Twenty-Nine as several things that are revealed are not as they seem. Strathmore is the one who unintentionally brought Susan and David together. Susan sees the same qualities in David that she sees in Strathmore. She believes that Strathmore nurtures and protects her, because he admires her passion for cryptography. She is oblivious to his true feelings that become prevalent later in the story.

Strathmore is becoming anxious with Hale and Chartrukian in Crypto. He is flippant about David's safety until he sees Susan's concern. He then feigns reassuring confidence that David is fine.

Hale's crafty behavior is also ironic. Hale had stolen the pass codes, because he saw the opportunity as a challenge. When he used the stolen code to break into Susan's computer, he was doing so only out of curiosity. His decision to abort the tracer marks a pivotal point in the story.

The Alfonso XIII is an elegant, four-star hotel with strict policies regarding privacy. David must rely on his cunning to determine which suite Rocío and the German are staying in.



Chapter 31 - 33

Chapter 31 - 33 Summary

Susan is growing more concerned about David. Hale senses her tension and asks if she is having trouble with her diagnostic. She tells him everything is fine but in truth, she does not understand why the tracer is taking so long.

She is surprised when Hale asks her opinion on Ensei Tankado's unbreakable algorithm. Susan tells him she does not believe it and tries to dismiss it as nonsense. Hale quotes a line from Hamlet that insinuates that anything is possible. He tells Susan that he and Tankado corresponded via email and that Tankado had commended him for proving Skipjack had a back door. Susan becomes angry and tells him that the back door was designed so the NSA could decode national security threats.

The two argue over the NSA's right to access private email. Hale tells Susan that she sounds like she has been brainwashed by Strathmore. Susan questions his loyalty to the NSA and he informs her that he intends to leave the NSA. Susan tries to smooth over the argument and calmly explains that the NSA protects the citizens. She tells him that it is the duty of the NSA to guard the gate. Hale asks her, "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" He explains that it is Latin and translates to "Who will guard the guards?" He tells Susan that someone has to keep an eye on those who are meant to protect, to make sure they are not the ones who are dangerous. He then adds that he picked up the quote from Tankado. It was Tankado's favorite saying and how he signed all his letters to Hale.

David goes to Suite 103 and tells the German that he wants the ring. The German slams the door in his face and David takes a second approach, pretending to be the police. The German opens the door to protest when David flashes his squash club card, causing the man to believe it's an ID. David forces his way into the room and accuses the man of having a prostitute in the suite.

David tells him that he will not arrest him if the German agrees to help with some information. David tells the man that the Asian he saw die earlier that day had been murdered and he had been wearing a gold ring. The German denies having the ring and David asks about Rocío. The woman appears in the bathroom doorway and accuses David of lying about being a police officer.

David confesses that he is not a police officer and that he was sent by a U.S. government organization to find the ring. He tells her he cannot give her any more information than that. He tells Rocío that he will pay her for the ring. Rocío tells him she cannot sell him the ring, because she already sold it.

Numataka is angry that he has not heard from North Dakota. He resents not having control over the situation and is beginning to suspect that North Dakota is a hoax.



Numataka decides that he must find out more about the phone calls he has been receiving. He demands that his switchboard operator trace the last call he received from North Dakota.

Chapter 31 - 33 Analysis

In Chapter Thirty-One, Susan's emotions reflect the tension in the story. She is concerned about David and wonders what is taking the tracer so long to bring back the results. Her tension intensifies when Hale casually asks if she has heard of Tankado's unbreakable algorithm. She is shocked to learn that Hale and Tankado have corresponded in the past. This information foreshadows what Susan later concludes about Hale.

Hale's thoughts concerning the NSA are revealed in his argument with Susan. He believes it is possible that Tankado could create an unbreakable algorithm and that it would be wrong for the NSA to have open access to the private citizens' email. Susan disagrees. She believes the NSA has a duty to protect the nation and its citizens. She argues that the NSA would not abuse the power.

The argument foreshadows twists in the story's plot. Hale accuses Susan of being brainwashed by Strathmore and she questions his loyalty to the NSA. Hale tells Susan that he does not intend to stay with the NSA and one day he plans to be gone.

When Hale quotes Tankado's favorite saying it reflects the theme of the story and foreshadows another twist in the plot. It is ironic that David has told the German that Tankado was murdered, as he does not know that yet. It foreshadows what will later be revealed about Tankado's death. When David is unsuccessful in fooling Rocío, he takes the direct approach but finds he has hit another setback.

Chapter Thirty-Three foreshadows twists in the story's plot. Numataka suspects that North Dakota is a hoax and decides to take control of the situation. The tension increases when he orders his switchboard operator to trace the last call he received from North Dakota.



Chapter 34 - 36

Chapter 34 - 36 Summary

Susan's tracer has been running several hours. Hale is outside taking a break when she checks the digital clock on her computer and discovers the tracer had been aborted. She immediately assumes the tracer has a computer bug.

Susan knows that computer bugs can have crippling effects. A simple syntactical error can bring down an entire system. Susan remembers that Strathmore had run the tracer and the data was returned, meaning there was no bug. She concludes that there must be an internal programming flaw. She types in a few commands and discovers that there has been a manual abort.

Rocío tells David that the German wanted to keep the ring but she would not allow him. She explains that she has "gypsy blood" and is very superstitious. She believes that a ring offered by a dying man is a bad sign. Rocío tells David that she wanted to sell the ring but the only person who would take it was a young girl in the park who had no money. Rocío admits that she tried to help Tankado but he did not want anyone's help. She tells David that Tankado kept pushing his hand with its three crippled fingers in their faces, as if he wanted them to take the ring.

David asks for a description of the girl who has the ring. Rocío tells him she was a typical punk with red, white and blue hair, lots of jewelry and a skull pendant in one ear. She insists the girl was not Spanish. Rocío believes the girl may have been English, because she was wearing a British flag t-shirt. When David asks if there is anything else she can remember, the German pats his left forearm and utters an obscenity. David assumes he has taken enough of their time, and the German wants him to leave. Rocío tells David he will never find the girl. She warns him that Seville is a big city and can be very deceptive. As David leaves, he apologizes to the German for interrupting his evening. The German smiles and tells him it was no problem. David is confused by his sudden change in demeanor.

Susan discovers the locking and unlocking entry times on her computer. She realizes Hale had tampered with her computer. She does not know how that is possible, because she never gave him her pass code. Susan resends the tracer. She walks over to Hale's computer. The monitor is dimmed but the computer is not locked. Susan checks for any hint that he may have a copy of her pass code but is unable to find anything. Susan finds he has been checking his email. She discovers an anonymous email folder in his inbound email and opens it. Susan is shocked to find an email to ndakota@ara.anon.org from et@doshisha.edu.

The first message states that progress is being made on Digital Fortress and is almost complete. The message claims the program will set the NSA back decades. Susan opens a second message that states, "Rotating clear text works! Mutation strings are



the trick!" As difficult as it is to believe, Susan knows the emails are from Ensei Tankado and that he and Greg Hale are working together. Susan must tell Strathmore that Hale is North Dakota, but she hears Hale coming back inside. Quickly, Susan backs out of Hale's computer and dashes over to the refrigerator as Hale enters the room. Noticing that Susan is acting strangely, Hales asks if she's okay. Susan tells him she's fine then sees that she never dimmed his computer monitor.

Chapter 34 - 36 Analysis

In Chapter Thirty-Four, the tension rises when Susan discovers that her tracer has been manually aborted. Her first thought is that the tracer may have a bug, a simple programming error that can destroy an entire computer system. This insight foreshadows what will be discovered about the Digital Fortress program.

Rocío's superstition foreshadows her fate. She tells David that Tankado's hand only had three fingers, and he kept thrusting it in their faces. It is ironic that everyone assumed he wanted someone to take his ring. Tankado was trying to communicate with them, and everyone missed his message. The German tried to describe the girl with his words and gestures but David misinterpreted his meaning. The information the German was trying to express becomes evident later in the story. Rocío warns David that Seville can be a deceptive city.

Chapter Thirty-Six reveals that Hale has emails from Tankado to North Dakota on his computer. Susan immediately assumes that Hale is North Dakota and begins to panic. She knows that she must tell Strathmore but Hale enters the room before she has a chance. Tension rises when Susan realizes she failed to dim Hale's computer before he returned.



Chapter 37 - 39

Chapter 37 - 39 Summary

David wanders into the restaurant of the Alfonso XIII and asks the bartender if he knows of any punk rock clubs in the area. The bartender says he does not know of any such clubs in town and asks David if he would like to have a drink.

David hears Brandenburg's Concerto Number 4 being piped into the room, and it reminds him of a concert he had been to with Susan. He orders a cranberry juice. The bartender convinces him to drink it with vodka. David agrees when he thinks about how he will be searching the streets looking for a young girl with wild hair and a British flag t-shirt.

Hale realizes something is wrong with Susan. She insists she is fine. As Hale moves towards her, there is a loud pounding on the door. Hale goes to the door, and Susan rushes to dim the monitor. She sees that Chartrukian had not gone home as he was told. He is in a panic and telling Hale everything. Susan knows she must get to Strathmore.

The German is murdered while she and Rocío are in bed together. Rocío realizes he has been shot in the head and is bleeding all over her. As she struggles to get away from him, she is shot and killed.

Chapter 37 - 39 Analysis

David goes to the bar and orders a cranberry juice, the first drink he shared with Susan. He thinks about what the rest of the night will be for him, which is in stark contrast to where he is, and where he wants to be.

The tension increases in Chapter Thirty-Eight when Chartrukian returns to the story. Susan knows that Chartrukian is telling Hale everything. She knows she must tell Strathmore that Hale is North Dakota. Susan covers her tracks by dimming Hale's monitor while he is outside talking to Chartrukian.

The setting for Chapter Thirty-Nine is ironic. The Alfonso XIII is a four-star hotel that protects the privacy of its guests, yet two of them have been murdered in their bed.



Chapter 40 - 42

Chapter 40 - 42 Summary

Susan tries to rush past Chartrukian and Hale to get to Strathmore but Chartrukian grabs her arm and tries to warn her that TRANSLTR has a virus. Susan frees herself and tells him that he was ordered to go home. Chartrukian begins to argue with her when Strathmore yells at them from his office.

Chartrukian insists that TRANSLTR is infected, and the virus is a threat to the main databank. Strathmore demands to know how a virus could get past Gauntlet. Chartrukian tells him that he ran a full analysis and found mutation strings. Mutation strings are very common in computer viruses and can corrupt data. Susan is not concerned, because she knows that the mutation strings are part of Tankado's program. She believes the mutation strings are harmless. Chartrukian explains that he has discovered that someone has bypassed Gauntlet. Strathmore is enraged. He tells Chartrukian that he was the one who bypassed Gauntlet, and the mutation strings are part of the advanced diagnostic that he is running on TRANSLTR. Strathmore demands the Sys-Sec go home.

Susan believes that Strathmore had to bypass Gauntlet because of the mutation strings. Although bypassing Gauntlet was not normal practice, it was acceptable in this case, because the commander downloaded the file and knew what it was. Susan tries to talk to Strathmore but he receives a phone call. Strathmore knows she is hopeful that it is David and gestures to her that it is not. Strathmore orders Chartrukian to leave immediately and looks at Hale suspiciously. Hale had not said anything during the altercation, which was out of character for him. Hale knows diagnostics do not use mutation strings and Strathmore wonders why he has chosen to remain silent. Again, Susan tries to get Strathmore's attention but he tells her she will have to wait until after his phone call. She has no choice but to return to Node 3 with Hale.

The man with wire rim glasses replaces a hotel master key into the pocket of a maid who has been knocked unconscious. He never heard the maid scream when he struck her, because he lost his hearing at the age of twelve. He types the names of his latest victims, Rocío Eva Granada and Hans Huber, into his Monocle computer. The Monocle computer was a gift from a client.

Meanwhile, David pays his tab and pours out his half-finished drink. He does not understand why Strathmore would send a schoolteacher to handle a case that is a matter of national security. As he walks across the lobby, a man with wire rim glasses steps out of the elevator. David passes him and smiles as he walks out the door and into the street.

Hale knows something is up. The NSA does not have any diagnostics that run for eighteen hours and Strathmore nearly fired Chartrukian for simply doing his job. Hale is



suspicious of Susan's strange behavior. He blocks her as he tries to leave the room and demands that she tell him what is going on. Susan tells Hale to leave her alone and let her go to the bathroom. Hale steps away from the door. Susan walks over to the bathrooms, knowing she cannot go to Strathmore's office until she is certain Hale is not watching her.

Chapter 40 - 42 Analysis

Chapter Forty reveals that Chartrukian has discovered mutation strings. Chartrukian's warning that the mutation strings will corrupt the data foreshadows a major event in the story. Strathmore tells Chartrukian that he bypassed Gauntlet and the mutation strings are part of the diagnostic. He orders Chartrukian to leave.

Strathmore is suspicious of Hale, because he has not said a word. Strathmore is aware that Hale knows diagnostics do not use mutation strings and he wonders why the cryptographer has decided to remain silent. Strathmore does not trust Hale and wonders what he knows.

Susan knows that Gauntlet rejected Digital Fortress because of the mutation strings. She believes that Strathmore bypassed the filters, because he knew what he was downloading. This will prove to be an ironic twist to the story. Susan is unable to tell Strathmore what she knows, because he must take an important phone call.

Chapter Forty-One reveals information about the assassin. The man is only killing people who have seen the ring. The maid was not murdered, because she had nothing to do with Tankado's ring. The assassin would not be able to have heard the maid scream, because he is deaf.

It is important to note that the Monocle computer was a gift to the assassin from one of his clients. The computer was designed by the U.S. Navy, so whoever gave the assassin the computer must work for the government.

It is ironic that David would see his assassin and smile. This builds tension in the story, because David does not know who the man is. The tension increases in Chapter Forty-Two when Hale confronts Susan about the suspicious activity going on at the NSA. Susan refuses to answer him and makes her way to the bathroom to divert Hale. Susan plans to go to Strathmore when Hale is not looking.



Chapter 43 - 45

Chapter 43 - 45 Summary

Midge Milken, the NSA's internal security analyst hands the weekly reports to Director Leland Fontaine's personal assistant, Chad Brinkerhoff as she leaves for the evening. The reports show the estimated cost for TRANSLTR to break a single code. Milken teases Brinkerhoff about his affair Carmen Huerta, the pastry chef who works in the NSA commissary. When Brinkerhoff demands to know how she would know about that, Milken reminds him that there are video cameras, phone taps and freestanding bugs all over the NSA complex. She tells him that his extramarital affair is no secret at the NSA.

As Milken leaves, Brinkerhoff begins to review the reports. The normal mean cost per decryption is \$1000 per code but Brinkerhoff discovers that the report is showing the MCD is a billion dollars. He runs down the hall to stop Milken.

Chartrukian knows that he is right, and Strathmore is wrong. Strathmore should never have bypassed Gauntlet's filters. Chartrukian believes that Strathmore made a mistake and is trying to cover it up by inventing a story about running a diagnostic. Chartrukian is not as concerned about TRANSLTR as he is about the NSA databank, which holds all the classified information for the entire country. The Sys-Secs are responsible for the safety of the databank. Chartrukian refuses to leave Crypto. Chartrukian decides to call Jabba, the NSA's senior Sys-Sec officer, who built Gauntlet. Chartrukian knows that when Jabba learns Strathmore bypassed Gauntlet, he will be furious.

As David walks the streets, he sees a group of teenagers get on a Seville transit bus. One of them has red, white and blue hair. David rushes to catch up with the bus as it pulls away. He runs after the bus. The rear door is propped open, and David grabs the door handle and lands just inside the doorway. David goes over to the teenager with the red, white and blue hair. David realizes that the kid is a boy and then he notices that half the teenagers on the bus have red, white and blue hair. The man with the wire rim glasses watches David get on the bus and knows that Bus Number 27 only has one destination.

Chapter 43 - 45 Analysis

Two new characters are introduced into the story, adding a twist to the plot. The NSA's internal security analyst, Midge Milken gives the weekly reports to Chad Brinkerhoff as she leaves for the evening. When Brinkerhoff discovers that TRANSLTR is working on a billion dollar code, he runs after Milken. This adds tension to the story because, now, two more people are aware that something suspicious is happening. The information Milken reveals about the video cameras, phone taps and freestanding bugs in the NSA complex becomes relevant later in the story, as does Brinkerhoff's affair with Carmen.



In Chapter Forty-Four, Chartrukian makes the decision to call in the senior Sys-Sec officer. Chartrukian's belief that Strathmore is covering up a mistake foreshadows what is about to be discovered.

It becomes apparent in this chapter that TRANSLTR is not the main cause of concern. Chartrukian is afraid the virus will reach the main databank and destroy the nation's classified files, the true threat in the story.

David thinks he has found the girl but it turns out to be another setback. Meanwhile, the assassin is watching from a distance. He knows where the bus is going.



Chapter 46 - 48

Chapter 46 - 48 Summary

Unable to reach Jabba on his phone, Chartrukian decides the only responsible thing for him to do is to shut down TRANSLTR. He cannot shut it down from the commander's private terminal, so the only other option is the manual kill-switch located on one of the sublevels.

Chartrukian hates the sublevels. He thinks about the catwalks, Freon ducts and the 136-foot drop to the power supplies below. He knows he has no other choice. A manual kill is the only option. Chartrukian retrieves the key from Jabba's metal locker.

Milken assumes the figures Brinkerhoff shows her simply mean that TRANSLTR had not broken any codes, because Strathmore had failed to prepare the weekend run. Like everyone else, Brinkerhoff knows Milken has a low opinion of Strathmore ever since the Skipjack project. Still, even Milken knows that Strathmore is no slacker, especially when it comes to TRANSLTR. Milken agrees that Strathmore would not shirk his duty and begins studying the data sheet more carefully. She discovers that TRANSLTR has been working on the same code since 11:37 PM the night before.

Crypto is the only area of the NSA that Milken cannot access via sound or video monitors. Milken decides to pull Strathmore's private elevator log. She finds that he has been in his office since the previous morning and has not used the card to access the main door.

Brinkerhoff tells Milken that Strathmore must have everything under control but Milken says it is their job to follow-up on the data reports. Milken tells Brinkerhoff that she wants Strathmore to know they are watching him. She wants to prevent Strathmore from creating another Skipjack fiasco. She dials Strathmore's office and hands the receiver to Brinkerhoff.

Brinkerhoff tells Milken that Strathmore assured him on the phone everything is running fine. Strathmore told Brinkerhoff that TRANSLTR has been breaking codes every six minutes but Milken knows Strathmore is lying. Brinkerhoff suggests that Milken's reports are incorrect. Milken becomes defensive. She tells Brinkerhoff that she runs all data twice and in the two years she has been running the reports, her information has never been wrong. Brinkerhoff tries to make light of the situation but Milken is adamant that Strathmore is lying, and she wants to know why. Like her data, Milken's suspicions are always accurate. She is determined to find out what is going on.

Chapter 46 - 48 Analysis

Chartrukian is unable to reach Jabba and he knows that his only other option is to manually abort TRANSLTR. His fears of the sublevels foreshadow a pivotal point in the



story. Milken's dislike for Strathmore also becomes important to the story. Everyone knows that Milken blames Strathmore for the Skipjack fiasco that cost the NSA credibility with Congress.

Crypto is the only area in the NSA that Milken cannot access with video or audio. Strathmore had insisted that Crypto be completely isolated. Director Fontaine made sure that Milken at least had access to approach stats and basic information on TRANSLTR. When Milken pulls Strathmore's private elevator log, she discovers that he has been there since early the previous morning. She decides that they need to check in on him. She does not want Strathmore to make another mistake like he did with Skipjack. This foreshadows Strathmore's plan. Milken knows that Strathmore is lying to them about TRANSLTR. She is determined to get to the bottom of things. This increases the tension in the story.

Chapter Forty-Eight also gives insight into Milken's character. She is a very accurate and intuitive person, who does not easily give in. These traits prove to be important to the story line.

On the other hand, Brinkerhoff is a much weaker character. He regrets having called Milken back in and wishes that he would have never said anything. He prefers to turn the other cheek and is rather sheepish in his behavior.



Chapter 49 - 51

Chapter 49 - 51 Summary

The teenager on the bus explains to David that every fan of punk rocker Judas Taboo has dyed their hair red, white and blue in honor of the first anniversary of the punk rocker's suicide. Hopelessly, David tries to get off the bus by pulling the driver-alert cord but it has been disconnected. As the bus travels down a country road, David asks one of the teenagers where the bus is going. The kid just laughs at him.

Chartrukian knows he is not authorized to go down to the sub-levels but the only one on the Crypto floor who might see him is Hale. He decides to take the risk. When Chartrukian opens the trap door to the service entrance, he compares it to the gateway to hell.

From Node 3, Hale watches Chartrukian open the trapdoor and ease down the ladder to the sublevels. He knows Chartrukian is planning a manual abort of TRANSLTR. Hale admires Chartrukian for what he is doing but knows that a manual abort will set off emergency actions from the main switchboard. Hale does not want the Sys-Sec technicians investigating Crypto. He heads to the trapdoor to stop Chartrukian. Milken calls Jabba. Normally, Jabba would be at his workstation where he can keep an eye on the NSA's underground databank. Instead, Jabba is taking a break in the commissary. She tells Jabba that her report shows TRANSLTR has been working on a code for eighteen hours but Strathmore denies that there is a problem. Even though Milken does not directly accuse Strathmore of lying, Jabba knows that is what she is implying. Milken is adamant that her data is correct.

Jabba assures Milken that Strathmore would notify him immediately if there was any problem with TRANSLTR. He concludes that Strathmore's wife must have told him not to come home and that is why he has been in his office for thirty-six hours. Milken had also heard that Strathmore and his wife were having problems, and she begins to wonder if she may be overreacting. Jabba tells Milken to write up a work order, and he will look at her machine on Monday.

Chapter 49 - 51 Analysis

The reason for the red, white and blue hair is revealed, and David realizes he will never find the girl with the ring. He tries to get off the bus but the driver-alert cord has been disconnected. He has no choice but to ride the bus to its final destination.

Chartrukian's thoughts as he enters the sublevels foreshadow his impending doom. Although Hale admires Chartrukian for his courage, he does not want to take the risk of having Sys-Sec technicians investigating Crypto. Hale decides to stop Chartrukian. This indicates that Hale is hiding something.



It is important to note that Jabba is not watching the databank. This indicates that he is missing something. Jabba is not concerned about Milken's report and tells her that her data is wrong. He promises to look at it on Monday. Jabba makes an off-hand comment about Strathmore and his wife having problems. It is no secret that Strathmore is having marital problems, and Milken begins to wonder if she is overreacting.



Chapter 52 - 54

Chapter 52 - 54 Summary

The Number 27 bus line ends at Club Embrujo, a punk dance club in the suburbs. David was about to call Strathmore and tell him he had failed. However, he decides there is a good chance the girl may be at the club. He figures he may as well try to find her while he is there.

David does not see anyone wearing a British flag t-shirt, so he finds his way to the outdoor patio. Clearing empty beer bottles from an unoccupied table, he sits down to take a break. Several miles away, the man in wire rim glasses hails a taxi to take him to Club Embrujo.

Numataka is getting a massage in his penthouse office when the switchboard operator enters the room. She tells Numataka that the phone number he had asked her to trace was from the United States but the exact location has not been determined. Numataka relaxes and tells the operator to let him know as soon as she has more information.

Susan is pacing in the bathroom, trying to figure out Hale's ultimate plan. Knowing she must get to Strathmore, she peeks out of the bathroom to see if Hale is watching. Suddenly, she hears voices from the sublevel catwalks through the ventilation shaft. Susan recognizes Chartrukian's voice. Chartrukian is arguing with someone about a virus. He insists that they call Jabba. Susan hears struggling. Chartrukian screams to be let go. Suddenly, there's a horrified scream and then silence. The lights in the bathroom flicker out. Susan finds herself surrounded by total darkness.

Chapter 52 - 54 Analysis

David almost gives up on his search but decides he has a good chance of finding the girl at the club. The assassin knows where David is. He takes a taxi to Club Embrujo.

Numataka relaxes when the operator tells him the phone number is being traced back to the United States. He knows he is getting closer to finding out who North Dakota is. He tells the operator to let him know when she has more information.

Chapter Fifty-Four reveals something sinister taking place in the sublevels. Susan does not see anything. She only hears what is happening. She recognizes Chartrukian's voice as he insists that Jabba be called in about the virus. Susan hears Chartrukian scream. It is obvious something has happened to him when he stops screaming, and the power goes out.



Chapter 55 - 57

Chapter 55 - 57 Summary

David gets into an altercation with a punk rocker named Two-Tone, who picks a fight with him for sitting at his table. During the argument, the teenager tells David that he is there every night. David realizes that Two-Tone may know the girl he is looking for. David ends the argument and orders two beers.

David offers to pay the kid for any information he can offer. He describes the girl that he is looking for. David notices from Two-Tone's facial expression that he knows who she is. Two-Tone warns David that she is Eduardo's girlfriend. Two-Tone warns David that if he comes near the girl, Eduardo will kill him.

Milken goes into the conference room across from her office to get a glass of water from the cooler. She pulls back the blinds to look at the view. This was the only office in the NSA complex that had a clear view of Crypto, which was deliberately hidden on three acres wooded acres. Milken had tried to convince Director Fontaine to make the conference room his office but he refused. Director Fontaine preferred to have his office in the front of the building, not in the rear. Milken panics when she discovers that the glowing Crypto dome is completely black.

Panicked and disoriented, Susan feels her way to the Crypto floor and finds TRANSLTR is no longer lit up. All the lights are out. As she eases her way to the trapdoor, she can smell ozone in the air. A mist is coming up from the vents and the generators are humming. Crypto is running on auxiliary power. Through the mist, Susan sees Strathmore standing on the platform. She calls to him from the ladder but Strathmore does not respond. Susan follows his gaze and sees Chartrukian's burned body lying on the main generator, six stories below. Susan becomes frightened when she sees Hale hiding in the shadows of the staircase.

Chapter 55 - 57 Analysis

David meets a teenage boy who knows the girl he is looking for. This indicates that David is getting closer to finding her. It is ironic that Two-Tone warns David about the girl's jealous boyfriend. Eduardo is not the one David needs to be concerned about.

Chapter Fifty-Six gives a brief insight into Director Fontaine's character. He is a man that refuses to be on the back end of anything and will not even allow his office to be in the rear of the building. Tension rises when Milken discovers there is no power in the Crypto facility.

Chartrukian is dead. This marks a pivotal point in the story. Susan sees Strathmore staring down at Chartrukian's body in shock. She then sees Hale hiding in the shadows and immediately misinterprets what has happened.



Chapter 58 - 60

Chapter 58 - 60 Summary

Two-Tone tells David the girl's name is Megan. She had been at the club earlier trying to sell the ring for a plane ticket back home to Connecticut. He tells David that no one at the club wanted it. Megan decided to go to the airport hoping to find a tourist who would buy the ring from her.

David finds out that Megan will be flying out on a red-eye flight at 2 AM. He has fifteen minutes to get to the airport. Two-Tone tells David to take a taxi. The bouncer tells David it will take twenty minutes for a taxi and forty-five minutes for the next bus. David sees a young Italian couple on a motorcycle and offers them four hundred dollars for a ride to the airport. The boy takes the money and hands David the keys to his motorcycle.

Strathmore helps Susan to the Crypto floor and tells her the main power is out and they are running on auxiliary power. He explains that TRANSLTR takes precedence over all other systems, which is why the lights and doors are not working. Susan begs Strathmore to abort the run. She tells him that Hale is North Dakota. Strathmore asks if the tracer pointed to Hale. Susan tells him that she had not received the results of the tracer, because Hale aborted it. She explains how she found Tankado's emails on Hale's computer. Strathmore tells Susan that Tankado would never trust Hale. The idea was absurd. Susan points out that Hale gained Tankado's trust during the Skipjack fiasco. Susan begs Strathmore to call security. Instead, Strathmore locks the trapdoor to the sublevels, imprisoning Hale. Neither Susan nor Strathmore hear the footsteps leading back to Node 3.

Two Tone heads back into the club. Before he reaches the dance floor, someone grabs him from behind. In the mirrored corridor, Two Tone sees the reflection of his attacker, a man with wire rim glasses and a scarred, pockmarked face. The assailant pins Two Tone's arms behind his back and demands to know where the American went. Two Tone tells him he is heading to the airport to find Megan. Two-Tone tells the man that the American does not have the ring. When Two-Tone admits that he saw the ring, the assassin breaks his neck.

Chapter 58 - 60 Analysis

David learns that Megan was trying to sell the ring to go home. He does not have much time to get to the airport to stop her. When David tries to pay a young Italian couple for a ride to the airport, he is shocked when the boy takes his money and hands him the keys to his motorcycle. This is ironic as David swore he would never ride a motorcycle again after an accident he had in college.

Susan, Strathmore and Hale are trapped in Crypto. Susan tells Strathmore how she has come to the conclusion that Hale is North Dakota. Strathmore is skeptical but decides it



would be best to keep Hale locked in the sublevels below. Neither of them hears Hale returning to Node 3. Susan begs Strathmore to abort the run and call security but Strathmore refuses. This is highly irregular behavior and indicates that Strathmore is still hiding something.

This is the first conversation the assassin has with a victim. It is also the first physical description of the assassin. The mirrored corridor is important in the setting. It allows Two-Tone to see his killer. It also serves the murderer. The assassin is deaf, so he has to be able to read his victim's lips.



Chapter 61 - 63

Chapter 61 - 63 Summary

Milken calls Jabba and tells him that Crypto is completely without power. She knows Crypto runs on auxiliary power and demands to know what is going on. The only explanation Jabba can give her is that TRANSLTR would be hoarding all the auxiliary power.

Jabba believes Milken is overreacting and tells her he will look into the problem. He assures her there is no way that TRANSLTR could have a virus unless Strathmore wrote the virus himself and bypassed Gauntlet's filters. Milken is shocked to learn that Strathmore has the ability to bypass Gauntlet.

Strathmore does not want to contact security to take Hale away because Sys Secs will uncover data about TRANSLTR's endless run. Strathmore knows that will cause even bigger problems. He wants to make sure all traces of Digital Fortress have been deleted before calling anyone. Susan understands. Hale would probably threaten to tell the world about Digital Fortress. They needed to erase the proof so Strathmore could play dumb.

Strathmore wants to erase records showing that he bypassed Gauntlet, as well as all of Chartrukian's Sys Sec analysis and Run-Monitor records. He tells Susan to go back to Node 3 and erase all of Hale's correspondence with Tankado. He orders Susan to not erase the hard drive as he wants to look at Tankado's program. Susan does not think it is wise to unlock the algorithm but Strathmore insists.

Strathmore forces open the doors to Node 3, and Susan slips into the room so she can get to work. She wants out of Crypto and knows that Strathmore will not let her go until she finds Hale's pass code. Strathmore tells her it will take him 20 minutes to delete files in Sys-Sec. Then, he will go to his terminal and abort TRANSLTR. Susan tells him that he had better abort TRANSLTR, because she will be trapped in Node 3 until the power comes back on.

David goes to the airport only to find he just missed the last flight. He tries to find out if a girl fitting Megan's description was on the flight. The woman behind the counter refuses to give him any information. David asks the airport custodian if he has seen anyone fitting Megan's description but the man is no help. David heads to the bathroom while he tries to figure out what to do next.

Chapter 61 - 63 Analysis

Milken's fears are confirmed. Jabba has told her that TRANSLTR must be hoarding all the auxiliary power in Crypto. She is shocked to discover that Strathmore has the power



to bypass Gauntlet and concludes that he has allowed a virus into the system. This foreshadows what is about to be discovered.

Strathmore explains to Susan that he does not want anyone in Crypto until all traces of Digital Fortress has been erased. Susan understands and agrees to help Strathmore destroy any evidence of the program. She still believes that Hale is North Dakota and that he will tell everyone about the unbreakable algorithm. By destroying all evidence of Digital Fortress, Strathmore will be able to claim ignorance.

Susan knows Strathmore will not let her leave until she finds the pass code on Hale's computer. She does not think Strathmore should try to open Digital Fortress but he insists. Susan is trapped in Node 3. She does not know that Hale is inside.

David believes that Megan has taken the last flight out of Seville. He does not know what to do.



Chapter 64 - 66

Chapter 64 - 66 Summary

Susan feels that they have been lucky to find and trap North Dakota inside the NSA but she is uneasy about how long their luck will hold out. She worries that David will be unable to find Tankado's pass code.

She notices the smell of sweat and cologne in the room. She realizes she is trapped inside Node 3 with Hale. He moves toward her and a struggle ensues. Susan elbows Hale in the nose as she tries to get away from him. She cannot get out, because she is unable to open the doors. Hale goes after her again, throws her on the floor and pins her down. Susan cannot tell if the look in his eyes is fear or anger. She is numb with terror.

Brinkerhoff does not believe Milken when she tells him that Strathmore bypassed Gauntlet. He does not believe it can be done. Milken explains that Strathmore made Jabba put in a switch to bypass Gauntlet after Strathmore uncovered a plot to bomb a Hebrew school in Los Angeles.

TRANSLTR had decrypted an intercepted code twelve minute before the bomb was set to detonate and three hundred schoolchildren were saved. However, Strathmore had intercepted the code six hours before the bomb was scheduled to go off. The file had been encrypted with a new public-key algorithm that Gauntlet did not recognize, so it kept rejecting the file. Jabba worked nearly six hours to adjust Gauntlet's filters. Strathmore was so furious that he had Jabba install a bypass switch so that it would never happen again.

Milken believes Strathmore bypassed Gauntlet without realizing the file was a virus and that he is trying to cover up his mistake. Brinkerhoff is doubtful. Milken tells Brinkerhoff that she is going to run a TRANSLTR queue list to determine if Strathmore has bypassed Gauntlet. The queue list prints to Director Fontaine's printer, and she insists that Brinkerhoff give her the key to retrieve the report. Brinkerhoff refuses to give Milken the key. He walks away from her. Milken decides to blackmail him by running video of his affair with Carmen over the monitors.

Seeing the men's bathroom is being cleaned, David walks over to the ladies bathroom and knocks on the door. No one responds, so he enters the room. A young blonde enters the bathroom and starts yelling at him. The girl is wearing plaid pants, a white blouse, and she is carrying a red duffel bag. David is shocked by her profanity. Taking a second look, he sees she has puffy, bloodshot eyes and the flesh of her left forearm is swollen and blue with a reddish irritation. David assumes the girl is taking intravenous drugs. He realizes there is little he can do to help the girl. He warns her to be careful as he leaves the bathroom.



Chapter 64 - 66 Analysis

The tension in the story increases when Susan realizes she is trapped in Node 3 with Hale. The possibility that the look in Hale's eyes could be fear foreshadows what Hale is truly feeling. Susan is too terrified to understand what is happening.

Chapter Sixty-Five provides the back story to a bomb threat Strathmore had intercepted and reveals the reason a bypass switch was installed in Gauntlet.

Milken is adamant that Strathmore has allowed a virus into the system and is trying to cover up his mistake. She can run a report that will prove she is right but the report runs to a printer in Director Fontaine's office. When Brinkerhoff refuses to give Milken the director's office key, she blackmails him.

Ironically, David meets a young girl in the airport. She does not match Megan's description and he assumes from her puffy eyes and swollen, irritated forearm that she is on drugs.



Chapter 67 - 69

Chapter 67 - 69 Summary

Hale is sitting on top of Susan. She thinks he is going to hurt her but instead he buttons Susan's blouse and begs her to help him. Hale claims that he saw Strathmore kill Chartrukian. He knows his life is in danger as Strathmore is aware that Hale witnessed the murder.

Susan believes that Hale is using his Marine training to turn her against Strathmore. Hale insists he is telling the truth and that both of their lives are in danger. Susan knees Hale in the groin then shoves the meeting table through the glass doors and escapes through the broken glass.

Brinkerhoff caves in to Milken's blackmail and hands her the key to the director's office. Milken goes into the director's office to retrieve the printout and teases Brinkerhoff by insisting on reading the report by the window. She finds that Strathmore did bypass Gauntlet and shows the report to Brinkerhoff.

Director Fontaine has returned home early from South America. He catches Milken and Brinkerhoff in his office reading the report. He is furious.

The young girl follows David out of the bathroom and apologizes for yelling at him, then asks for money. She tells him she lost her plane ticket and has no cash. She needs money to get home.

David asks why she does not call her parents. She tells him she is unable to reach them. Seeing the girl is wearing expensive clothing, David asks why she does not use a credit card. She tells him that her father canceled her credit card, because he thinks she is on drugs. She claims she is not.

David offers to charge the girl's airline ticket for her, and the girl is thrilled. He points out her forearm, and confronts her about denying her drug use. She tells him that she had scrubbed off an obscenity a friend had written on her arm in Magic Marker. The reason her eyes are red and puffy is because she had been crying.

David is able to make out the faint lettering on her arm. He realizes that the German was trying to tell him what the girl in the park had written on her arm. At a closer look, David sees faint traces of red and blue dye in the girl's hair. He asks if she wears earrings. Confused, the girl pulls a skull pendant clip-on out of her pocket.

Chapter 67 - 69 Analysis

Susan misinterprets Hale's intentions. She does not realize that he is truly scared and thinks he intends to harm her. She believes that Hale is lying. This is ironic, because



Hale claims to have witnessed Strathmore push Chartrukian to his death. Susan is able to get away from Hale and breaks out of Node 3.

Brinkerhoff caves in to Milken and gives her the key to the director's office. The report proves that Milken is right. Strathmore did bypass Gauntlet. Brinkerhoff and Milken are shocked when Director Fontaine walks in and catches them in his office.

The girl runs after David and asks him for money to buy a plane ticket home. On closer inspection, David realizes the girl is Megan. He finally understands that the German was trying to describe what the girl had written on her arm.



Chapter 70 - 72

Chapter 70 - 72 Summary

When David realizes that this is the girl he has been looking for he excitedly tells her she has something he needs. He offers to pay her for it. When David pulls out his wallet, the girl gets the wrong impression. She pepper sprays him and runs off.

Numataka asks his switchboard operator if she has a phone number yet. She tells him they are still working on it but the number is a cellular phone out of Washington, D.C.

Susan runs into Strathmore's office to get away from Hale. She calls for the commander but gets no response. Determined to get out of Crypto, Susan rushes over to Strathmore's terminal in an attempt to abort the TRANSLTR run.

Strathmore walks into the office and demands to know what she is doing. Susan tells Strathmore that Hale is not locked in the sublevels and that he just attacked her in Node 3. She insists they need security immediately, and she is aborting TRANSLTR. Strathmore grabs her hands and pulls her away from the computer. This is the second time in one day that Strathmore has acted out of character.

Immediately, Strathmore regrets his outburst. He does not want to tell Susan what he has been doing but he does not want her to leave. He notices the keypad to his private elevator is lit. The elevator runs off power from the main complex. The elevator drops below the Crypto dome then moves laterally through an underground tunnel to the main complex sublevels.

Susan rushes over to the elevator and begins pushing the buttons. Strathmore tells her that she needs a password to use the elevator. He tells her to have a seat. Strathmore closes the door, blocks it with a chair and pulls a gun out of his desk drawer. He tells Susan they are safe in his office, and the gun will protect them from Hale. He tells Susan that he has to tell her something. Afterwards, she can decide whether or not she wants to leave.

Chapter 70 - 72 Analysis

David overreacts when he realizes the girl is Megan. She misinterprets what he wants and pepper sprays him. It appears that David may have missed his opportunity.

The subplot is reaching a climax as Numataka discovers that North Dakota has been calling from a cellular phone in Washington, D.C.

Strathmore discovers that Hale is not trapped. He is about to reveal his secret to Susan. He will not allow her to leave, nor will he let her abort TRANSLTR. As he blocks the door to his office and pulls a gun out of his desk, Susan reluctantly sits down. It is important

to note that his personal elevator has power from the main complex. However, Strathmore will not give Susan the pass code to open the elevator doors. The elevator is her only escape.



Chapter 73 - 75

Chapter 73 - 75 Summary

The young girl tries to run away from David but he calls her name as she struggles with the door. Realizing she never told the stranger her name, she stops and goes back. She keeps her distance as she is still afraid of him. She wants to know how he knows her name.

As Director Fontaine makes himself a cup of coffee, Milken explains everything that has been happening and why they are in his office reading the report. Fontaine is angry that the two of them have assumed TRANSLTR has a virus, simply because Strathmore has bypassed Gauntlet. He is shocked to learn that there is no power in Crypto but grows furious when Milken tells him she called Jabba and not Strathmore. Milken tells Fontaine that Strathmore is denying there is anything wrong. The director tells her that there is no reason to not believe him. He orders both of them out of his office.

Brinkerhoff believes Fontaine must be hiding something, because he would never turn a blind eye to such suspicious behavior. Fontaine tells Brinkerhoff to not let Milken leave. Fontaine had heard that Strathmore's wife was leaving him. Lately, Strathmore had been working a lot of hours and acting peculiar. Fontaine became concerned and decided to keep tabs on Strathmore himself by putting a tap on his phone, his e-mail, his interoffice correspondence and his brainstorm. He found that Strathmore was working on an intelligence scheme that would change history. Director Fontaine had no intentions of interrupting the commander's plan.

Strathmore cannot let Susan go until he retrieves Hale's pass code but Susan demands to be let out. He realizes he must tell her everything. He confesses that his work has been his life and that it has destroyed his family. His only hope is to retire with pride. He has grown frustrated in trying to protect the nation because the citizens accuse the NSA of violating their rights.

He admits that he did not originally believe Tankado's claim of an unbreakable algorithm but became convinced after reading several of Tankado's emails to North Dakota. He realized that Tankado's use of mutation strings to create a rotating key-code was genius. If Tankado were to sell Digital Fortress to a Japanese software company, it would destroy the NSA. After considering several options, Strathmore decided that rather than try to stop Digital Fortress, the NSA should access it. The NSA could make changes to Digital Fortress so the program would end up working for them instead of against them.

By using the pass code, Strathmore would be able to make modifications to the program. He could then replace Tankado's file with the altered version without anyone suspecting anything. The NSA would then release a security leak that TRANSLTR exists. The public would rush to switch over to Digital Fortress to protect their privacy.



Strathmore tells Susan that he is the only one who knows of the plan. He did not want to brief the director until after Digital Fortress was in place.

Strathmore tells Susan that he wanted the entire plan to be inconspicuous. He was now concerned that Tankado's death could cast suspicion on the NSA. Strathmore had to continue to let TRANSLTR work on the code to make sure that Digital Fortress was unbreakable. Susan decides to stay and help him. Strathmore tells her he will cover her while she searches Hale's terminal for the pass code. Strathmore tells Susan that there is a good chance that David may not find Tankado's copy. He explains to Susan that it is crucial they get Hale's pass code and switch the algorithm before Tankado's pass code falls into the wrong hands. Susan asks if Strathmore would actually shoot Hale. He tells her that he would not but he does not want Hale to know that.

Chapter 73 - 75 Analysis

Megan realizes that David knows her name. She does not know how this is possible because she never gave him her name. Reluctantly, she goes back to him.

Director Fontaine is angry with Brinkerhoff and Milken for snooping in his office and for not believing Strathmore when he told them everything was fine. Brinkerhoff wonders why Director Fontaine is not more concerned about the suspicious activity going on in Crypto.

What Brinkerhoff does not know is that Director Fontaine has been keeping close tabs on Strathmore himself. He discovered that Strathmore was working on an incredible intelligence scheme and he had no intentions on ruining the commander's plans. The irony is that Director Fontaine has been out of the country. He does not know what has been happening in Crypto over the last twenty-four hours.

In Chapter Seventy-Five, Strathmore reveals his plans for Digital Fortress to Susan. He is nearing retirement, and the only thing he has is his work. He admits that his marriage is falling apart, and his only hope is to retire with pride. He explains that he has battled the public his entire career and has grown frustrated that the people accuse the NSA of being the enemy. He wants to be able to provide the NSA open access to personal email, and he sees Digital Fortress as an opportunity to do just that.

The irony of his plan is that it is very similar to Skipjack. His career was nearly ruined over the Skipjack fiasco and he is trying to redeem himself by recreating the same plan in a different program. Strathmore is not aware that the director knows what he is doing. He believes that he has been able to keep his plan secret until this point.

Susan still questions Tankado's death. When she asks Strathmore if he had anything to do with it, Strathmore denies any involvement. He convinces Susan that Tankado's death does not serve the NSA's interests and could actually be detrimental to the agency. Susan believes Strathmore and agrees to help him. She is uncomfortable about the gun but Strathmore assures her he is only carrying it to scare Hale. Strathmore's denial that he would shoot Hale foreshadows what is about to happen.



Chapter 76 - 78

Chapter 76 - 78 Summary

The man in the wire rim glasses watches David and Megan from outside the airport terminal while his taxi sits idle. He sees Megan help David to a chair, then hands him the ring from her pocket. David studies the ring, then pays the girl. They talk for a few minutes. After awhile, Megan picks up her duffel bag and heads across the concourse. The assassin is satisfied. He believes his job is nearly completed.

Susan begins to have second thoughts about going into Node 3. She is afraid that Hale may still be in there. She knows Hale's only options are to escape Crypto or go to prison. She believes he could be capable of anything. As they reach the bottom of the stairs, the silence of Crypto is broken by a high-pitched beeping. It turns out to be Strathmore's pager. Strathmore had purchased the pager from a local store. He wanted to be able to receive his most important messages without the NSA's knowledge. The incoming message revealed more bad news from Spain but the sender was not David. It was from someone else that Strathmore had sent to Seville.

Meanwhile, a surveillance van commissioned by the NSA speeds along the streets of Seville. The two men had received emergency orders from a high ranking officer in Fort Meade. They had been sent on a mission to find someone.

Jabba receives another call on his cell phone. He assumes it is Milken and ignores the call. A minute later, an announcement is made over the intercom for the chief Sys-Sec to contact the main switchboard for a message. He cannot believe how persistent she is.

Chapter 76 - 78 Analysis

David finally has the ring, and Megan will be able to return home. However, the assassin is watching from outside the terminal, foreshadowing that the evening is not quite over.

Susan's tension about Hale foreshadows that they will soon run into him. The silence is broken by Strathmore's pager. The backstory reveals that he purchased the pager from a local store to prevent the NSA from having access to his messages. This information is ironic, considering that he wants the NSA to have open access to everyone's email. It also reveals that Strathmore has sent someone besides David to Spain, foreshadowing that there is more to Strathmore's secret.

In a surprising twist to the plot, chapter seventy-seven reveals new information about a mobile surveillance van that has been commissioned by a high-ranking officer at the NSA. The agents' mission is to find 'someone' in Seville.

Jabba chooses to ignore his phone and the page, because he thinks Milken is being paranoid. He still believes that nothing is wrong.



Chapter 79 - 81

Chapter 79 - 81 Summary

Hale attacks Strathmore in the darkness, and the Beretta falls to the floor. Terrified, Susan does not know what to do. Susan calls out to Strathmore and immediately Hale is upon her. He grabs her in a headlock and presses her face against his chest. Hale holds Susan hostage and demands that Strathmore let him out. Hale will not give in to Strathmore, telling him that he saw the commander kill Chartrukian. He knows that he will kill him, too.

Strathmore denies killing Chartrukian but Hale does not believe him. He asks Strathmore if he killed the young Sys Sec to protect his secret, Digital Fortress. Hale warns Strathmore that TRANSLTR is overheating. He tells Strathmore that he needs to call in the Sys-Secs.

Strathmore tells Hale that all he wants is the pass code Tankado emailed to him. Hale claims he does not know what Strathmore is talking about. Susan tells Hale she went into his account after he aborted her tracer and saw Tankado's email herself.

Hale knows there is no way he can convince either of them otherwise. Desperately, he pleads with Susan to believe him when he tells her that Strathmore killed Chartrukian. Susan refuses to believe him, and Hale accuses Strathmore of brainwashing her with lies. He boldly accuses Strathmore of planning to write a back door to Digital Fortress and realizes from Strathmore's sudden silence that he has struck a nerve.

Strathmore attempts to negotiate with Hale. Hale demands Strathmore give him the gun. He will take Susan to the commander's private elevator so the two of them can escape, leaving Strathmore behind. Hale tells Strathmore he will never tell anyone of his plans to modify Digital Fortress unless Strathmore goes after him. In that case, he will reveal everything.

Strathmore considers Hale's plea bargain but does not trust him to remain quiet about it. He makes the decision to call Security as Hale begins dragging Susan to the staircase that leads to Strathmore's office. Strathmore phones Security and tells them Hale has killed a Sys-Sec employee and is holding another employee hostage. He also tells them he wants power routed from all external sources to Crypto. Hale is stunned.

David tries calling Strathmore from the airport but is unable to get a line out. He goes back into the bathroom to flush his burning eyes with water. In the reflection of the mirror, David notices Megan's duffel bag on the floor from a partially opened stall door. She does not reply when he calls her. He pushes the door open and finds the girl has been shot in the forehead.

A man steps up behind David and tells him the girl is dead. He tells David that his name is Hulohot. Hulohot asks for the ring, while holding a gun to David's head. David jumps



out of the way, and a bullet strikes the wall behind him. Dodging bullets, David runs to the taxi outside. The driver refuses to let him in, because he is waiting for his customer with the wire rim glasses. David jumps on the motorcycle and speeds off. Hulohot pulls the driver out of the cab and jumps in the drivers seat, chasing after David.

Chapter 79 - 81 Analysis

The tension increases in Chapter Seventy-Nine. Strathmore's pager had given away their position. Hale jumps out of the darkness and tackles Strathmore to the ground. Susan is terrified and calls out to the commander. Suddenly, Hale grabs her and will not let go.

Hale is stunned by the turn of events. His attempts to negotiate his way out of Crypto have been thwarted. Strathmore has turned the tables on him. He cannot convince Susan that he is innocent. Strathmore has called Security, accusing Hale of murdering one employee and holding another hostage. Hale does not know what to do.

The tension increases when David discovers that Megan has been killed, and he comes face to face with the assassin. David takes off on the motorcycle, and the assassin chases after him in the stolen taxi.



Chapter 82 - 84

Chapter 82 - 84 Summary

Hale panics. He has no pass code to give Strathmore but, if he releases Susan, he risks getting shot. Hale drags Susan with him to the stairs, promising he will not hurt her. He continues to tell Susan that Strathmore is a dangerous killer but Susan refuses to believe him.

Hale starts up the stairs with Susan when suddenly he hears a thud behind him. He was certain Strathmore was at the foot of the stairs but he cannot see anything in the darkness. He hears another thud and realizes the commander is behind him. Hale retreats backwards down the staircase and is knocked unconscious by the butt of Strathmore's gun.

Strathmore comforts Susan and tells her he fooled Hale into thinking he was at the top of the stairs by throwing his shoes onto the landing. Susan thinks that Strathmore has foiled his plans for Digital Fortress to save her. He tells her he faked the call to Security and assures her that his plans for Digital Fortress have not been compromised.

David knows his motorcycle will never outrun the taxi. He must make it to the hangar where the Learjet is waiting for him. David is stunned when he finds the hangar is empty. David slams on the brakes and hits an oil slick in the hangar. At the same time, the taxi's brakes lock, and the car spins out of control, crashing through the corrugated metal at the back of the hangar. David manages to escape through the hole in the wall and races off on the motorcycle.

Soshi Kuta, Jabba's assistant has been trying to reach him. She demands to know why he never answered his phone or her page. She tells him there is a serious problem with the main databank.

Chapter 82 - 84 Analysis

Hale panics and Strathmore is able to confuse him in the darkness. He takes the opportunity to knock Hale unconscious.

Susan blames herself for what happened. She believes that by allowing Hale to take her hostage, the commander had no choice but to risk his plans for Digital Fortress and call Security to save her life. Strathmore assures her that everything is okay because he faked the call to Security.

This scene proves that Strathmore is not even going to allow the most dangerous situation to prevent him from moving forward with his plans.



David races to the hangar believing the Learjet will be waiting for him. He is shocked to realize that the plane is gone. He has been abandoned in Spain. He has no choice but to try and outrun the killer.

The main plot is reaching a climax. Soshi Kuta, Jabba's assistant, is introduced into the story. She has been trying to reach Jabba. She briefs him on what is happening, and he realizes that the main databank is in serious trouble.



Chapter 85 - 87

Chapter 85 - 87 Summary

Susan and Strathmore drag Hale into Node 3 and bind his hands and feet with printer cable. Susan begins searching Hale's computer for the pass code. Strathmore tells her it is important that she find the pass code in case David is unsuccessful. If Tankado's pass code falls into the wrong hands before they are able to modify Digital Fortress, the entire plan will be ruined.

Suddenly, warning horns from the sublevels start blaring and a yellow siren light begins spinning over Crypto. TRANSLTR has overheated. Strathmore has no choice but to leave Node 3 and perform a manual abort.

Hale begins to regain consciousness, and Susan pulls Strathmore's gun on him. She demands he tell her the pass code. Hale insists he has no pass code and that he is not North Dakota. He explains that he copied the emails out of Strathmore's account. He tries to tell Susan that there is a tap on Strathmore's account. Hale explains that the tap is how he received access to the commander's email and read Strathmore's brainstorm.

Hale points out that allowing the NSA total access is dangerous as the technology is forever, and a future government may not have the people's best interests at heart. He tells Susan that he had every intention of stopping Strathmore and was in Node 3 all day watching Strathmore's account. Hale admits that he was planning to reveal all the information, including Strathmore's emails to the press.

Susan is shocked by what Hale is telling her but then realizes it cannot possibly be true. Hale tells Susan that he aborted her tracer because he thought she was looking for him. Hale tells Susan that Strathmore pushed Chartrukian to his death when the technician threatened to call the Sys-Secs. Strathmore knew that would ruin his plans. Susan accuses Hale of killing Tankado. She tells Hale that Security is not coming, because Strathmore faked the call. Hale is terrified. He tells Susan that Strathmore will kill him, because he knows too much. He swears he is innocent.

In an attempt to call his bluff, Susan goes back to her terminal to see if her second tracer had turned up any results. The information on the screen shows NDakota = ET@doshisha.eu. Tankado and North Dakota are the same person. What Strathmore had been watching were emails Tankado was sending to himself using an anonymous remailer. Tankado wanted Strathmore to read the email so Strathmore would think what he was seeing was real. Susan realizes that TRANSLTR must have a virus. At the same time, she hears Strathmore cry out from his office.

Susan finds Strathmore slumped at his desk, defeated. Tankado has made a fool of him. Strathmore had bypassed Gauntlet and let a virus into TRANSLTR as he believed



the mutation strings were part of Tankado's algorithm. Everything is now crystal clear. North Dakota is not a person. Ndakota is an anagram. The letters spell out Tankado. Digital Fortress is a hoax. Strathmore is unable to abort the program.

Susan suggests forcing TRANSLTR to shut down by cutting off the remaining power. The virus could then be removed and TRANSLTR could be reformatted. Suddenly, she realizes that TRANSLTR does not store information. It sends results to the NSA's main databank. Horrified, she realizes that the virus will attack the nation's most classified information.

On the bottom of Strathmore's computer monitor is a message:

"Tell the world about TRANSLTR

Only the truth will save you now...

Enter pass code"

Tankado had created a secret code that could deactivate the program. He was blackmailing the NSA to publicize the truth about TRANSLTR but never intended the plan to go so far. Susan tells Strathmore he had no way of knowing that Digital Fortress was a virus. They still have a chance to make things right. As she heads to the sublevels to shut off the remaining power, she tells Strathmore that he is a survivor.

David tries to lose Hulohot's taxi by cutting through Santa Cruz, the oldest section of Seville. The village has no roads, only narrow walkways between the buildings. Dawn is breaking, and David can see the cathedral and the Giralda tower as he speeds in to the square.

Chapter 85 - 87 Analysis

Strathmore leaves Susan alone with Hale when TRANSLTR begins overheating. Hale is awakened by the sirens and begins to plead with Susan to believe him and to let him go. She is convinced he is lying. Hale reveals that he has been spying on Strathmore by piggybacking on a tap that had been put on Strathmore's account. The reader knows that this tap was put on the account by Director Fontaine. Hale admits that he copied Tankado's emails out of Strathmore's account and was planning to use them as evidence against Strathmore when he exposed Strathmore's plan for Digital Fortress. This explains what Hale meant when he told Susan he did not plan to stay with the NSA.

Susan still does not believe Hale. She finds the tracer has returned. Tankado was North Dakota. The entire thing was a hoax used to fool Strathmore. She is stunned. Strathmore has discovered that Digital Fortress is a hoax, and there is no North Dakota. The irony is that Tankado was able to fool him into believing North Dakota was real by using his own name as an anagram.



The virus was heading to the main databank, and the only way to stop it was to use Tankado's pass code. Tankado had not intended for things to go so far. He expected to be alive to provide the pass code that would deactivate the program.

Susan believes she can perform a manual abort on TRANSLTR and stop the virus from hitting the main databank. She tells Strathmore that he had no way of knowing Digital Fortress was a virus. This is ironic, because Chartrukian lost his life trying to convince Strathmore that it was a virus and was threatening the main databank. Susan reminds Strathmore that he is a survivor. Her words foreshadow what Strathmore is about to do.

The scene in Chapter Eighty-Seven is advantageous for David. Imagery is used to foreshadow the events that are about to happen. The breaking dawn symbolizes the promise of a new day. It is important to note that David focuses on the cathedral and the Giralda tower, indicating where the chase is heading.



Chapter 88 - 90

Chapter 88 - 90 Summary

David has no idea who is chasing him or why the man would want to kill him. He wonders what is so important about the ring. Just as his motorcycle runs out of gas, he sees that Hulohot has abandoned the taxi and is hiding in an alleyway. David drops the bike as Hulohot fires a shot, grazing David's side.

David wonders the maze of streets trying to escape his killer. He cries for help but his voice is weak and inaudible. He finds himself at a dead end. Hulohot moves toward David. With nowhere to run, David closes his eyes and braces himself for the shot that will end his life. The bells in the Giralda begin to toll, signaling the sunrise mass. Families swarm from their homes and crowd the streets. Hulohot is unable to find David amongst the crowd of worshipers and screams out in frustration.

To avoid detection, David lowers his head and follows the crowd in hopes of finding his way out. The massive crowd is too difficult to wade through, and David finds himself being carried by the masses into the cathedral.

Strathmore is aware that he will be completely disgraced by the scandal. He withheld information from the director and compromised the nation's security. His plans were foiled, and people had died. There was no way he could live with the disgrace. He thinks of Susan and his feelings for her. There is so much he has not told her. His infatuation with her had destroyed his marriage. He realizes there is only one way out. He begins typing a suicide note on his computer.

Chapter 88 - 90 Analysis

David is shot and finds himself at a dead end. As the assassin approaches on foot, David realizes he has nowhere to run. He wonders what was so important about the ring that it was worth killing for. His last thoughts are of Susan as he prepares to die.

It is ironic that the bells in the Giralda tower begin to toll as David prepares to die. The Spanish families pour into the streets for sunrise mass, and Hulohot loses David in the crowd. The massive crowd is too difficult for him to wade through, and David has no choice but to follow the worshipers in the church. It becomes apparent that David will be trapped inside the cathedral.

Chapter Ninety reveals that Strathmore's infatuation with Susan is the cause of his marital problems. He knows that there is no way he can live with the disgrace that the events have brought on him. It is ironic that he thinks of Susan calling him a survivor as he begins to type a suicide letter on his computer. This foreshadows that Strathmore has another sinister plan.



Chapter 91 - 93

Chapter 91 - 93 Summary

David believes the killer has followed him into the church. He knows he is an easy target as he is wearing a khaki blazer, and everyone else is dressed in black. David tries to hide by kneeling on the floor and lowering his head. However, when the congregation rises to take communion, David must stand up. He knows he is at risk of being seen by Hulohot.

Susan was in the sublevels when she hears a gunshot. Knowing the commander is distressed, she immediately assumes the worst and rushes back up the stairs. A surge of steam pushes her through the trapdoor and billows up from the lower levels. She rushes past Node 3 on her way to Strathmore's office when she sees that Hale's arm is lying still on the floor. His other arm is draped over his head. Susan steps in for a closer look. Hale is holding the Beretta in his hand and has a gunshot wound in his head. On the floor beside him is a suicide note confessing that he is responsible for the deaths of Tankado and Chartrukian and that he had planned to sell Digital Fortress.

The final words are the most devastating:

"Above all, I'm truly sorry about David Becker. Forgive me, I was blinded by ambition."

Strathmore runs up behind Susan, sees Hale and asks what happened.

Amidst the worshipers waiting to take communion, Hulohot spies a man in a bloodstained khaki blazer. He knows that David will not escape this time and is anxious to send a message to his American contact that he has killed him.

Hulohot pushes his way through the congregation to get a sure shot. He reaches his man and fires two muffled shots into his back. He then swings the body into the pew and rolls the man over. The man is not David. The victim was a banker named Rafael de la Maza. In his hand is the money David paid him for his black blazer.

Chapter 91 - 93 Analysis

The setting in Chapter Ninety-One is ironic. David is hiding from his killer in a place that is meant to be a sanctuary. Symbolism is used in the black clothing of the worshipers as a sign of impending death.

Chapter Ninety-Two reveals that Strathmore's suicide note was not intended for him. He used the suicide note to pin all the blame on Hale. He shot Hale and made it look like a suicide, then waited for Susan to find the body before appearing on the scene. Susan is distraught when she reads the note and comes to the line about David. In this sentence, Strathmore intends to make Susan believe that Hale is responsible for David's death.

Hulohot is sure he has David when he comes up behind the man in the khaki blazer. He is furious when he realizes he has been outsmarted again.



Chapter 94 - 96

Chapter 94 - 96 Summary

Milken decides to go to Crypto and find out for herself what is going on but Brinkerhoff stops her. She insists that he let her go but he tells her to let the director handle it. Brinkerhoff wanders over to the window and pulls back the curtain to look out at Crypto. He is shocked to see swirling steam and flashing lights. He calls out to the director in a panic.

David is at the altar, wearing the black suit jacket he purchased from a man in the church. He hopes the man heeded his warning and not decided to take his khaki jacket. As David is about to sip the wine, he sees in the reflection of the chalice a figure moving quickly towards him. David charges forward, knocking over the priest and rolling down the stairs into the clergy's entryway. David hears screams from the church, and someone running after him. He races to get away and finds himself in the cardinal's study. The cardinal stares at David in astonishment and drops the bottle of communion wine on the floor. David demands he show him the way out. The cardinal points to a door that leads to the courtyard.

Susan is sitting on the couch in Node 3 with Strathmore's coat wrapped around her. She is in complete shock. The last line of the suicide note has confirmed her fears that David is in danger, and she is confused by the turn of events. Greg Hale did not sign the suicide note. He simply typed his name at the bottom of the page. Strangely, the dazed Strathmore is once again in control, heading down to the sublevels to shut off the power.

Strathmore tells himself that his deplorable actions were the only solution. He is simply doing his duty. All is not lost. There is still time to shut down TRANSLTR, and he will be able to use the ring to save the main databank. In Strathmore's mind, Hale was trouble and his death would save the NSA from another scandal.

Strathmore's thoughts are interrupted by a phone call from Numataka, demanding the pass code. Strathmore tells Numataka that there is no pass code, there is no North Dakota and that Digital Fortress is an encrypted virus. He tells Numataka the deal is off, then hangs up and turns off the ringer.

Strathmore had carefully chosen Numatech, because he knew they would most likely win the pass code auction. He also knew that Tokugen Numataka hated Americans and their control of the world's software market, so there would be no suspicions that Numatech was in any way associated with the U.S. government. Now, Strathmore's dream of having a back door to an unbreakable algorithm has been destroyed.

Strathmore had hired Hulohot, a Portuguese mercenary, to kill Tankado and retrieve the pass code. The plan was foiled when witnesses arrived on the scene before Hulohot



could search the body. Strathmore knew he could not risk sending Hulohot to the morgue. However, by sending David Becker to Seville, he would be able to fulfill two dreams, instead of just one.

Chapter 94 - 96 Analysis

Brinkerhoff realizes that Crypto is in a perilous state and that action must be taken immediately. He alerts the director.

David narrowly escapes his killer. The imagery of the cardinal dropping the bottle of communion wine on the floor symbolizes that blood is about to be spilled.

In Chapter Ninety-Six, Strathmore's motivations are revealed and one of the subplots is resolved. Numataka has successfully traced North Dakota's phone number back to Strathmore's cell phone and he demands to have the pass code. Strathmore must tell Numataka that there is no pass code and Digital Fortress is a hoax.

Strathmore had intended to create a back door to the Digital Fortress program. He needed to be certain the company that acquired Digital Fortress would never be suspected of having ties to the United States government. Numatech was a perfect candidate because of Tokugen Numataka's hatred for Americans and their control of the world's software market. Strathmore knew that Numatech would most likely win the pass code auction. He wanted to guarantee the company would have exclusive rights to Digital Fortress.

Strathmore hired a Portuguese mercenary to assassinate Tankado in order to obtain his pass code. However, witnesses arrived on the scene before Hulohot was able to retrieve Tankado's pass code. Strathmore knew there was too much at risk to send Hulohot to the morgue to retrieve Tankado's belongings. That was when he made the decision to send David Becker to Spain.

Strathmore believed by sending David he would not only be able to obtain Tankado's pass code, but he could also have David assassinated. With David out of the way, Strathmore would be able to develop a relationship with Susan.

Strathmore convinced himself that he had no choice but to kill Greg Hale as well. Hale knew too much and would expose Strathmore's plan. The suicide note pinned everything on Hale and would save the NSA from another scandal.

Strathmore is willing to accept that his plans for Digital Fortress will never be realized. He believes he still has time to shut off TRANSLTR and will be able to use the pass code to save the main databank.

Strathmore is not aware that he has made a mistake in realizing his plan by lending his jacket to Susan. This chivalrous act of Strathmore's will turn out to be the key to his demise.



Chapter 97 - 99

Chapter 97 - 99 Summary

Fontaine runs into the conference room. He stares out the window in disbelief at the Crypto dome. Immediately, he calls Strathmore's office to find out why TRANSLTR has not been shut down. The interoffice phone is out of order, so the director tries to reach Strathmore on his personal cell phone but no one answers. Fontaine is furious. He knows that TRANSLTR is overheating and about to explode.

David's jacket catches on the door as he escapes the cathedral. He is thrown off course. As his eyes adjust to the sunlight, he sees a flight of stairs before him. Without knowing where he is headed, David jumps over the rope blocking off the stairwell and runs up the steps. He realizes too late that he is heading up the Giralda tower, right into another dead end.

Hulohot is on the patio trying to determine which way David has gone. Suddenly, he notices the shadow of a man blocking one of the bell tower's apertures. He turns and runs up the Giralda stairs.

Milken explains to Fontaine that TRANSLTR is locked in an endless loop. She informs him that the report shows Strathmore has tried four times to abort the program. The phone rings, and Fontaine immediately assumes it is Strathmore. Brinkerhoff hands the phone to Milken. Jabba is calling to tell Milken that something is going on with the main databank. Milken warns Jabba to take the situation very seriously.

Chapter 97 - 99 Analysis

In Chapter Ninety-Seven, Director Fontaine has realized that the situation in Crypto has reached dangerous levels. Fontaine does not know that Strathmore has shut off the ringer to his phone after speaking to Numataka. A critical point in the story is foreshadowed by Director Fontaine's remark that TRANSLTR is overheating and Crypto is about to explode.

David realizes too late that he is heading up the bell tower and will be trapped in a dead end. The narrator uses imagery when he describes the top level of the bell tower as a "confined cell." When David peers out from the bell tower to see where Hulohot is, his shadow is cast on the patio below. Hulohot sees David's shadow and immediately runs up the stairs of the bell tower.

In Chapter Ninety-Nine, Milken reveals to Director Fontaine what has been happening with TRANSLTR. Milken knew all along that she was right about Strathmore. Jabba's phone call confirms her suspicions.



Chapter 100 - 102

Chapter 100 - 102 Summary

Hulohot knows that David is trapped in the bell tower and believes that he has an advantage over his victim. He suspects there is a good chance that David does not know that he has been followed into the tower. Hulohot sends a premature message from his Monocle computer that David has been terminated. He is surprised to find that David is nowhere to be found.

David hears Hulohot coming up the bell tower and quickly descends several flights of stairs before climbing out one of the tower's openings. He is hanging on the outside of the tower when Hulohot rushes past. David pulls himself back in and falls onto the stairs. Hulohot feels David land on the staircase below and rushes down the steps after him. He approaches Hulohot cautiously. He notices the strange glasses but does not take the time to investigate them. David realizes the assassin is dead. He takes a few minutes to inspect the ring and is able to read the inscription, which is not in English. He wonders why this ring has evoked such bloodshed.

As he begins to walk away from the tower, a van pulls up and two men in military fatigues step out. They address David by name and demand that he come with them. Frightened, David begins to back away. Before he can turn to run, he is shot in the chest.

Strathmore regrets Chartrukian's death but feels the technician left him no alternative. He finds it ironic that Chartrukian had been right all along about the virus. Strathmore reaches the generators and sees the charred remains of Phil Chartrukian laying on the coolant fins. He had tried to block Chartrukian on the landing when the Sys-Sec threatened to call Jabba. They struggled, and the Sys-Sec lost his balance and fell to his death. When Strathmore saw that Hale had witnessed Chartrukian's death, he knew Hale would have to die.

Strathmore manages to shut off the power. He accepts that his plans for Digital Fortress have failed and sets his focus on Susan. He feels he has earned her, and she will now turn to him for comfort. Susan is waiting for Strathmore to return when the power shuts off, and everything goes black and silent. She is startled by something vibrating against her chest, then realizes Strathmore's pager is in the pocket of his jacket. Someone is sending a message to the commander.

Chapter 100 - 102 Analysis

Hulohot becomes overconfident in his pursuit but David is successful in outwitting the assassin once again. Hulohot's premature message concerning David's fate will have a profound effect on Susan.



It appears that David is successful. He has the ring, and Hulohot is dead. However, the story takes another turn when two military men in a van approach David. Ironically, David is shot as he tries to escape.

This chapter reveals the disturbing arrogance of Strathmore's character. He sees the irony in Chartrukian's death but does not allow himself to take full responsibility for it. His dreams for Digital Fortress have been destroyed but now he decides to focus on Susan. He is sure that David will die and that Susan will turn to him for comfort.



Chapter 103 - 105

Chapter 103 - 105 Summary

Strathmore thinks he has been able to turn off the power before the lowest processors can ignite. As he walks confidently into Node 3, he believes his dreams of Susan will soon be realized.

He is stunned when Susan meets him with a cold glare. Overcome with grief and unable to speak, she drops Strathmore's pager at his feet and runs out of Node 3. Strathmore picks up the pager and scrolls through the list of messages announcing the termination of each of Hulohot's victims. David Becker's name is the last message received.

Susan tries to escape through Crypto's main exit but she is still trapped. Strathmore grabs her from behind and begins to plead with her. Susan tries to get away but his grip on her is too strong. He confesses her love for her and begs her to stay with him.

Suddenly, TRANSLTR begins making a hissing sound and the machine begins to tremble. Strathmore releases his hold on Susan and begins to scream. The processors have ignited. Susan realizes that the man she once considered a hero is nothing more than a murderer. She is filled with fury. She hears David's voice in her mind and struggles to free herself from Strathmore's grip. Susan tears herself away and runs for the stairs to Strathmore's office as TRANSLTR explodes. The commander perishes in the fire.

Chapter 103 - 105 Analysis

The main plot has reached its climax. Susan finally realizes that Strathmore is responsible for everything, and she believes that he had David killed. The processors ignite, symbolizing the end of everything Strathmore has been working towards. He begs Susan to forgive him and confesses his love for her but it is too late. Susan's respect for Strathmore is destroyed. She is able to escape into his office as TRANSLTR explodes. Strathmore is dead.



Chapter 106 - 108

Chapter 106 - 108 Summary

Fontaine, Brinkerhoff and Milken witness the explosion from the conference room window. The roof is intact but the shell of the Crypto dome is filled with fire and black smoke. Fontaine tells Milken to get a crew to Crypto immediately.

Susan regains consciousness and finds herself on the floor behind Strathmore's desk. The fire casts the only light in the room is the fire and the Plexiglas walls are smoldering. She knows the smoke from the silicon chip is deadly. Strathmore's private elevator is encased in concrete and is powered from the main building. It is her only means of escape but she needs the five-letter pass code to open the doors.

Susan knows Strathmore is dead but she can still hear him calling her. She types in her name, and the elevator doors slide open. Susan finds herself in the Underground Highway below the NSA facility. Brinkerhoff is driving a golf cart through the corridor and is surprised to find her alive. She is too upset to tell him everything that has happened. Brinkerhoff helps her onto the golf cart and takes her to the end of the corridor where they meet Director Fontaine. Fontaine types an entry code, and the three enter the command center for the NSA databank.

Chapter 106 - 108 Analysis

Fontaine, Brinkerhoff and Milken watch helplessly as Crypto explodes. It is important to note that the roof of the building is still intact. The three assume that no one has survived the blast but Susan is in Strathmore's office. Susan is still alive. It is ironic that Strathmore's infatuation with Susan ends up saving her life. Susan is safe but in a state of shock. She still thinks that David is dead and is too distraught to talk to anyone. Brinkerhoff and Director Fontaine bring her into the command center.



Chapter 109 - 111

Chapter 109 - 111 Summary

There are several computer workstations in the command center that face a large video wall. The technicians are racing around frantically. Jabba is standing on a raised workstation in the center of the room. He explains to everyone that they are not dealing with a virus but a worm. He asks if anyone can explain the ransom note that appears on the screen. Susan recognizes the words and tells them that it is from Ensei Tankado. She explains that Tankado wants the NSA to go public about TRANSLTR.

Jabba tells Director Fontaine to give Tankado what he wants. TRANSLTR has been destroyed, so it makes no difference now. He is shocked to learn that Tankado is dead. Jabba's assistant Soshi, brings him a printout showing what the worm is programmed to do. Jabba explains to everyone that the worm is programmed to target the main databank's security filters, making all classified government information accessible to the world. Jabba knows that shutting down the databank will cause life-threatening intelligence blackouts but insists that they have no choice. They must shut down the main databank.

Jabba pulls up a computer-generated diagram and begins to explain to everyone in the room that a five-tier level of defense protects the databank. He tells them that in one hour all five shields will be gone and the NSA's data will be public domain. Director Fontaine tries to figure out another solution but Jabba points out that the only other solution is Tankado's kill-code. Susan informs them that Tankado gave away the kill-code in Spain right before he died. She thinks of David and breaks down. Jabba tells the Director that there are two hackers trying to break into the NSA databank at that very moment. When they discover the filter is down, they will spread the word to other hackers. Director Fontaine looks to Susan, hoping she will be able to help. He sees that she is in a state of despair. Fontaine makes the decision not to shut down and calls Milken.

Chapter 109 - 111 Analysis

Jabba can use Tankado's pass code to deactivate the worm but is shocked to discover that Tankado is dead. Soshi reveals to Jabba what the worm is programmed to do.

The threat of Digital Fortress has been realized. The nation's classified information is in danger. The worm will destroy the filters to the main databank if it is not deactivated. Without Tankado's pass code, the only option is to shut down the main databank, causing an intelligence black out all over the world. Director Fontaine takes the risk and decides not to shut down the main databank. He knows that Susan is unable to help but he has a plan.

Chapter 112 - 114

Chapter 112 - 114 Summary

Jabba warns the Director that they are about to lose shut-down capability. Milken races into the room and tells the Director that the switchboard is patching through the video he requested. Fontaine turns his attention to the video wall. On the screen are the two American agents Fontaine had sent to Spain to cover Hulohot.

Fontaine had believed Strathmore's plan would work and knew that Tankado would have to be assassinated. However, he did not approve of Strathmore's decision to hire Hulohot for the job. Fontaine did not believe that Hulohot was trustworthy and may even keep the pass code for himself. Fontaine wanted to make sure someone kept an eye on Hulohot.

The two agents brief Director Fontaine on their operation. They had witnessed Hulohot's assassination of Tankado and contacted Director Fontaine in South America when Hulohot was unable to search the body. They stayed on Hulohot as he began following a private citizen. Director Fontaine realizes that Strathmore had hired a private citizen to prevent the NSA from getting involved.

Agent Smith uses the video camera to show everyone that Hulohot is with them. The images on the screen are of two men, both motionless. One is Hulohot and the other is David Becker. Agent Smith informs Fontaine that Hulohot is dead. Neither agent knows what the item is that they are to be looking for. Fontaine demands the two agents search the bodies of both men until they find the pass code.

Jabba believes the director has failed. He orders the technicians to start shutting down the main databank. Soshi tells him it is too late; they do not have enough time. Susan looks up at the screen and sees David's body lying on the floor of the van. She begins to cry hysterically and calls after him.

Chapter 112 - 114 Analysis

Fontaine was aware of every aspect of Strathmore's plan and supported it. He only became involved when he realized that Strathmore had hired Hulohot to assassinate Tankado. The two military men in the van were part of the NSA's global reconnaissance and had been assigned by Fontaine to follow Hulohot's movements.

The agents that Fontaine assigned to Hulohot reveal that they have been following him from the beginning. They do not know what they are looking for or why Hulohot began trailing a private citizen. Director Fontaine recognizes that David Becker was part of Strathmore's plan. Strathmore did not want the NSA getting involved. Fontaine does not realize that Strathmore had ulterior motives for choosing David Becker.



The technicians are out of time. They will not be able to shut down the main databank. The agents are searching Hulohot and David for the pass code. Susan sees David on the screen and believes they have killed him. She is inconsolable.



Chapter 115 - 117

Chapter 115 - 117 Summary

David hears Susan's voice and regains consciousness. Agent Smith explains that Hulohot had sent his transmission about David a little early. The blood Susan sees is nothing more than a flesh wound from Hulohot's gun shot. Agent Coliander explains that they shot David with a stun gun and pulled him in off the street. David looks into the camera and proposes to Susan. He holds his hand up to the camera to show he has Tankado's ring.

Jabba tells David to read the inscription carefully. He explains that most kill-codes have a penalty clause to prevent trial-and-error guessing. An incorrect entry will accelerate the cycle and more than two entries will lock them out completely.

David tells them the inscription reads "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes." Susan does not believe it is the pass code. She knows that kill-codes do not use spaces. Susan also knows that Tankado liked things clean and simple. He would not create a pass code that would require the removal of spaces.

Fontaine tells Susan that Tankado would not have given away the ring unless he thought he had been murdered. Fontaine believes Tankado wanted to prevent the NSA from ever having the code. Agents Coliander and Smith announce that they do not believe Tankado knew he was assassinated. They explain that Hulohot had shot him with a trauma bullet in the chest, sending Tankado into cardiac arrest. The agents filmed the assassination. Tankado never looked around for his assailant, which is instinct in someone who has been shot.

There are only twenty minutes left before the worm reaches the main databank. Fontaine orders the agents to run the film. On the film, Tankado grasps his chest and falls to the ground. Hulohot starts to approach him as he types a premature transmission on the Monocle computer that Tankado is dead. When Hulohot sees others rushing to help Tankado, he disappears. The Canadian rushes off to get help while the German and a red-haired woman try to assist Tankado. Tankado is holding up his hand, gazing at his fingers and his ring. He looks at the German, nods and then dies. As the police begin to arrive, the German and the woman leave the scene. The camera focuses on Tankado, and the ring on his finger is gone.

Chapter 115 - 117 Analysis

Susan is ecstatic when she discovers that David is not dead after all. David shows Susan that he has Tankado's ring. Susan and Director Fontaine disagree about the inscription on Tankado's ring. Fontaine does not believe Tankado would have given away the ring unless he knew he had been assassinated.



The agents explain they have footage proving Tankado did not know he was murdered. Director Fontaine orders that they show the film. The film reveals the details of Tankado's death. Hulohot had sent a premature message before Tankado was dead. The scene shows Tankado pushing his hand towards the German and Rocío. It appears that he wants them to take his ring but Tankado is actually staring at his fingers.



Chapter 118 - 120

Chapter 118 - 120 Summary

Director Fontaine believes the film proves the ring is engraved with the kill-code. Susan and Jabba disagree with him. They argue that Tankado may have wanted the NSA to go public about TRANSLTR but he would never intend to endanger the nation's security by exposing the classified databank. Fontaine argues that there could be no other reason Tankado would give away the ring.

Jabba agrees that Fontaine is right. He types in the inscription, omitting all spaces. When Jabba hits enter, everyone realizes the entry was a mistake. A message appears on the screen that the entry is incorrect and that the kill-code is numeric. The worm begins to accelerate. Director Fontaine orders Jabba to shut down the databank but Jabba informs him it is too late. Meanwhile, the footage of Tankado's death is on an endless loop. Susan begins watching the incident for clues.

Soshi shows Jabba and Susan a printout of orphans, extra lines of programming normally removed when a program is debugged and compiled. Susan knows that Tankado would never leave bugs in his program and begins to recognize four-bit alpha groupings. She believes the encryption could be a code. Susan recognizes the blocks of four are similar to Enigma, the most famous code-writing machine used by the Nazi's. She realizes that Tankado has left a clue. David begins to help Susan, asking if there are sixteen groupings of four. He tells her to multiply sixteen by four. She realizes there are sixty-four letters and suddenly realizes what David is saying.

Chapter 118 - 120 Analysis

Fontaine convinces Jabba that the inscription on Tankado's ring must be the kill code. They realize after the entry is made that the ring is not inscribed with the kill code. The error code reveals that the kill-code is numeric. The worm accelerates and time has run out for the technicians to shut down the databank. Susan realizes that there must be another clue in the footage of Tankado's death. Susan sees a code in Tankado's program. She knows that he was a perfectionist and would not allow errors in his program. Tankado had studied World War II thoroughly. The fact that he used a code similar to Enigma is no accident. David recognizes the pattern.



Chapter 121 - 123

Chapter 121 - 123 Summary

Susan realizes there are eight rows of eight, making a perfect square. She recognizes the code as Caesar's box, one of the most basic forms of code writing. With six minutes remaining, the message is revealed. The text reads, "Prime difference between elements responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Susan explains that it is a puzzle. Susan tells the room that the solution must be a number. Everyone begins to ponder what is the difference in question.

Chapter 121 - 123 Analysis

David had recognized the pattern as Caesar's box. Susan had explained Caesar's box to David when they first started dating. Susan realizes the text forms a square grid and must be read from top to bottom. Tankado had used the answer to a trivia question regarding Hiroshima and Nagasaki as his kill-code. The relevance to Tankado's question lies in his family's history and his deformity. Tankado's puzzle has stumped everyone in the room.



Chapter 124 - 126

Chapter 124 - 126 Summary

Hackers from all over the world begin to appear, trying to force their way into the system. The technicians are trying to shut down the main databank as the others try to solve the puzzle.

David points out that elements must refer to chemistry, not politics. He tells everyone to consider chemical elements in order to solve the puzzle. Soshi agrees, noting that one of the bombs used plutonium and the other used uranium. She points out that they need to know the difference between the two. Susan and Soshi surf the Internet to look for the answer.

Assuming that Tankado was referring to the difference between the supercritical mass, Jabba prepares to type in the difference between uranium and plutonium that Soshi finds on the Internet. Susan stops him. She explains that there are too many things to consider in the difference between the two. They cannot be certain that Tankado was referring to supercritical mass. Susan realizes that Tankado is asking for the prime difference, and that the solution must be a prime number. With two minutes remaining, Soshi finds that she was wrong. Both bombs used uranium. Plutonium is not part of the equation. Susan points out that Tankado was crippled as a result of those bombs, and he would not make an error in reference to them.

Soshi finds on the Internet that the Nagasaki bomb used a neutron-saturated isotope of uranium 238, while the Hiroshima bomb used a different type of isotope. Jabba assumes the difference must be in the atomic weights. Susan warns that they need an exact figure, and the footnote states there is a 12% margin of error.

Chapter 124 - 126 Analysis

David uses his language skills to point out that the key word in the puzzle is elements. Soshi's knowledge of the bombs gives them another clue. She and Susan begin searching the Internet for answers. Everyone is using their unique talents to decipher Tankado's question. The fact that Tankado was crippled as a result of the bombs is a key point. The difference between the isotopes used in the two bombs is the answer to the puzzle.



Chapter 127 - Epilogue

Chapter 127 - Epilogue Summary

With only seconds remaining, Susan continues to watch the footage of Tankado's death. She notices that his hand is outstretched, showing the three fingers of his deformed hand. At the same time, David remembers the two isotopes are U238 and U235. In unison, David and Susan shout that the number is three, a prime number. Susan types in the number three as the kill code and hits enter. Suddenly, a message appears that the kill-code has been confirmed. The firewall begins to reappear. Jabba announces that the hackers were only able to retrieve fragmented information.

David and Susan agree to meet at Stone Manor. Susan wakes up in Stone Manor. There is a love note from David on her chest. It is signed "Without wax." Susan begs him to tell her what it means but David refuses.

During the Renaissance-era, Spanish sculptors would use wax to patch flaws in their statues. Statues not patched with wax were called "sin cera" or, "without wax." The English word "sincere" derives from this phrase. David tells Susan that he has resigned from his position as department chair and will resume teaching in the next semester. Susan tells him that she has decided to publish a book on cryptography. David places a diamond solitaire on her finger and proposes again.

Numataka discovers that Ensei Tankado was his son. The Osaka customs office was able to determine from birth records and adoption papers that Numataka was the man's only surviving relative. Enclosed in the envelope is Tankado's golden ring.

Chapter 127 - Epilogue Analysis

Susan and David solve the puzzle at the same time. The difference between the two isotopes used in the bombs was the same number of fingers Tankado had on his left hand. While everyone else was focusing on his ring, Tankado was focusing on his deformity. Susan was successful in protecting the main databank from the hackers. She and David are now able to take the vacation they had been planning.

The meaning behind the phrase "without wax" is explained. David refuses to tell Susan what it means because he believes she may be disappointed. It is the mystery that intrigues her. With everything behind them now, Susan and David are able to move forward with their life together.

The epilogue provides an ironic twist to the story. Tankado's father had rejected him at childbirth. Unwittingly, Numataka had rejected his son a second time when Tankado applied for a job at Numatech. Numataka had reflected on the irony that he was about to own the program Tankado had created. In a bizarre twist of fate, Numataka discovers

that Tankado was his son. The only keepsake he now has is the ring inscribed with what was believed to be the pass code to Digital Fortress.



Characters

Ensei Tankado

Born crippled because of his mother's exposure to radiation during the attacks on Hiroshima, Ensei Tankado spent much of his early life vowing revenge against America. Shortly after his birth, Tankado's mother died of complications related to childbirth and his father abandoned him because of his deformity. At the age of twelve, Tankado discovered he had an innate ability to work with computers and eventually earned a scholarship to Doshisha University where he was known as the "crippled genius."

Tankado studied World War II and his knowledge tempered his feelings for Americans. His hatred faded and he became a Buddhist. At age twenty, he received a visa to work for IBM and three years later, he moved to New York where he wrote his own software. His genius ability to write encryption algorithms attracted the attention of the NSA and Tankado began working in the Cryptography Department.

Tankado had worked on the TRANSLTR project and like his fellow coworkers, was under the impression that the computer would be used to decrypt only communications approved by the FBI. When Tankado learned that the NSA would be able to use TRANSLTR to decrypt any message, including those of private citizens, he was outraged and quit on the spot. Tankado vowed to go public about the NSA's top-secret computer and was captured and deported, his good name destroyed by the press.

Tankado designed Digital Fortress and marketed the program as a mathematical formula capable of writing an unbreakable code. He soon had software companies all over the world coveting his creation. Tankado knew the NSA would be intrigued by the program, which was actually a ruse. He believed he would be able to use the program to blackmail the NSA into going public about TRANSLTR. Tankado's premature death sets into action all the events that unfold in the novel.

Commander Trevor Strathmore

Commander Trevor Strathmore is the Deputy Director of the NSA. He is highly respected by his employees and his superiors as being "a patriot and a visionary". A man dedicated to his country and his principles, Strathmore is revered for his strong sense of duty and the ability to make wise decisions in complicated situations.

Strathmore's dedication to his work and his obsession with Susan Fletcher destroys his marriage and clouds his judgment. After coming under severe criticism following the Skipjack scandal, Strathmore desperately wants to restore his good name and retire with honor and integrity.

When he becomes convinced that Ensei Tankado may have succeeded in creating an unbreakable code, he devises a plan to use the program to benefit the NSA. Blinded by



pride and ambition, he fails to see that the program is a hoax and is willing to justify the deaths of innocent people for what he considers the overall good of the country.

Strathmore is a prideful man who strategically plans his actions. Strathmore abuses his position of power to achieve his own personal goals. Strathmore's pride and ambitious desires destroy him and everything that he has worked so hard to achieve.

Susan Fletcher

One of the main characters in the book, Susan Fletcher is a beautiful and intelligent cryptographer who is deeply in love with her fiancé and truly committed to her job. She believes that the NSA is working for the safety and security of the American people and takes great pride in her work.

Susan's biggest weakness is her unwavering faith in Commander Trevor Strathmore. She holds Strathmore in such high regard that she fails to see his shortcomings. Her trust in him leaves her vulnerable to deception and betrayal.

David Becker

David Becker is a handsome, well-liked university professor and linguistics specialist. He had met Susan when he was called in as a translator for the NSA. David finds himself in over his head when he agrees to go to Spain for Susan's boss Commander Trevor Strathmore. David's charm and quick thinking save him from several close calls in Spain as he tries to retrieve the ring that had belonged to Ensei Tankado.

Greg Hale

Greg Hale is a former Marine who was immediately discharged from duty when he killed a fellow Marine in a drunken brawl. After exposing the back door that Strathmore had created in the Skipjack program, the NSA hired Greg Hale believing that it would be better to have him on the inside working for them, rather than on the outside working against them.

When Susan uncovers what she believes is email correspondence between Hale and Tankado, she immediately assumes he is Tankado's partner. Not considered a trustworthy person by his fellow coworkers, Hale's innocence in the story is an ironic twist.

Phil Chartrukian

Phil Chartrukian is the young Sys-Sec technician who tries desperately to warn Strathmore that TRANSLTR has a virus. Determined to prove that the system is in danger, Chartrukian defies the commander's orders to leave the facility. In the turning



point of the story, Greg Hale witnesses a struggle between Strathmore and Chartrukian that ensues on the sublevels of the Cryptography floor. Chartrukian plummets to his death and Strathmore allows Susan to believe that Hale is the one who murdered Chartrukian.

Hulohot

Hulohot is the Portugese mercenary hired by Strathmore to assassinate Tankado and retrieve the ring. Hulohot, who is deaf, uses a Monocle computer given to him by Strathmore to communicate the termination of his victims. Hulohot trails David Becker all over Seville, Spain as he tracks down Tankado's ring.

Tokugen Numataka

Numataka is a savvy Japanese businessman and owner of Numatech, Inc., a Japanese software company. Numataka is the highest bidder in the auction for the Digital Fortress passkey. He becomes intrigued by an anonymous caller, claiming to be Tankado's silent partner, who offers to sell Numataka both passkeys for the price he has bid for one.

Jabba

Jabba is the NSA's chief Sys-Sec technician, responsible for protecting all NSA computer systems from viruses. He knows Midge Milken dislikes Strathmore and believes she is overreacting when she calls him about TRANSLTR. He tells her that her data is incorrect.

Director Leland Fontaine

Director Leland Fontaine is head of the NSA. He has privately been keeping a close eye on Strathmore and believes that the deputy director is about to unveil a great plan. He has no idea that Strathmore has been deceived.

Chad Brinkerhoff

Chad Brinkerhoff is Director Leland Fontaine's personal assistant. While reviewing the data handed to him by Midge Milken, he discovers that TRANSLTR has been working on a billion-dollar code.

Soshi Kuta

Soshi Kuta is Jabba's assistant. She is the one who informs Jabba that the security of the main databank is in danger.



Pierre Cloucharde

Pierre Cloucharde is the Canadian tourist who witnessed Tankado's death. It was assumed that Cloucharde took Tankado's ring. David finds out from Cloucharde that there was another witness at the scene who took the ring.

Rocío Eva Granada

Rocío is the female escort who was at the scene of Tankado's death. She had given the ring to a young teenage girl in the park.

Hans Huber

Hans Huber is Rocio's German client who was at the scene of Tankado's death. Believing that Tankado wanted someone to take his ring, Hans removed it from Tankado's finger.

Two Tone

Two Tone is the teenager at Club Embrujo, a punk club, who tells David that Megan is the name of the girl he is looking for.

Megan

Megan is the teenage girl who has the ring David is looking for. He purchases the ring from her at the airport.

Midge Milken

Midge Milken is the NSA's internal security analyst. She discovers that Strathmore has bypassed Gauntlet and allowed a virus into TRANSLTR. Ruthless in her efforts to unveil Strathmore's mistake, she runs a data report showing that not only has Strathmore bypassed Gauntlet but that he is unable to abort TRANSLTR and stop the virus from spreading to the main databank



Objects/Places

NSA

The NSA (National Security Agency) is a government organization that gathers global electronic intelligence data and protects all classified U.S. information.

EFF

The EFF (Electronics Frontier Foundation) is a civil liberties coalition founded by a worldwide group of computer users to support free online speech.

COMINT

COMINT is the global reconnaissance division of the NSA that uses satellites, spies and wiretaps to intercept conversations and send them to the NSA for analysis.

Crypto

Crypto is the nickname for the Cryptography Department of the National Security Agency.

Sys-Sec Lab

Sys-Sec is the department of the NSA that monitors systems security for TRANSLTR and the main databank.

Gauntlet

Gauntlet is a filter used to scan files and protect TRANSLTR from viruses and unknown programs.

TRANSLTR

TRANSLTR is the NSA's decryption computer that is capable of breaking any code within minutes. The NSA denies to the public that the computer exists.



Main Databank

The Main Databank is the underground computer that stores all classified government documents and information.

Digital Fortress

Digital Fortress is the program created by Ensei Tankado and marketed as a mathematical formula that could create unbreakable codes.

Skipjack

Skipjack is an algorithm created by the NSA's team of cryptographers that would allow any code written by the Skipjack program to be decrypted with the use of a password known only to the NSA.

Monocle Computer

A Monocle Computer is a credit card-sized computer device developed by the U.S. Navy to transmit messages by using contacts fixed to the user's fingertips. The messages are entered in shorthand, similar to court stenography and then translated into English.

Seville, Spain

Ensei Tankado was murdered in Seville, Spain. David Becker is sent to Seville to retrieve the pass-key for Digital Fortress.

Tankado's Gold Ring

Ensei Tankado wore a gold ring, which was taken at the time of his death. It's believed to be inscribed with the pass-key for Digital Fortress.

Numatech, Inc.

Numatech is the Japanese company in Tokyo that has bid the highest amount in the auction for Tankado's pass-key.



Themes

National Security vs. An Individual's Right to Privacy

The main theme of this novel deals with the controversial issue of national security and an individual's right to privacy. Susan Fletcher works as a cryptographer for the NSA, a government organization responsible for intercepting intelligence and protecting the citizens of the United States. Susan believes that she works for an organization that has the country's best interests at heart. She does not believe that the NSA would ever use its power against the American people. Susan agrees with her boss, Commander Trevor Strathmore, that the NSA should be permitted total access to all communication in order to protect the country from terrorist attacks.

Susan's colleague and former NSA employee, Ensei Tankado, vehemently disagreed. Tankado had worked on the NSA's top-secret decryption computer, TRANSLTR. When Tankado discovered that TRANSLTR would be used to access the email of private citizens, he was infuriated. He quit his job and threatened to expose TRANSLTR to the press. Commander Strathmore had Tankado captured, shamed and deported. In an attempt to blackmail Strathmore into going public about TRANSLTR, Tankado claimed to have invented a program that could write unbreakable codes.

The most profound argument regarding both sides of the issue is exposed in an argument between Susan Fletcher and fellow cryptographer, Greg Hale. Hale points out to Susan that private citizens would never be able to plan a revolt against a totalitarian government that has total access to all forms of communication.

Ambitious Pride

Commander Trevor Strathmore is a prideful man, who suffered a severe blow to his career when it was exposed that he had created a back door to an NSA-designed encryption program that was to become a national standard. This controversy caused a public outcry and Strathmore had to defend his case before Congress, arguing that one day the public would regret its demand for privacy.

Strathmore believes that the government must have access to all communications in order to protect the country from terrorist attacks. He resents that the public views the NSA as the enemy. Strathmore's main objective is to create a way for the NSA to have total access to all forms of digital information without the public's knowledge.

When Strathmore is convinced that Tankado has created a program that can write unbreakable codes, he sees an opportunity to turn the program around and make it work for the NSA, instead of against it.

Strathmore's ambitious pride consumes him. He plots to assassinate Tankado, obtain the pass code, create a back door to the program and sell the modified program to a



Japanese-software company. Strathmore discovers that his scheme also presents the opportunity to have Susan's fiancé murdered. Strathmore's infatuation with Susan had destroyed his marriage and he believes that with David out of the way, he will be able to have Susan, as well. Strathmore's ambition becomes his downfall and destroys not only his dreams, but him, as well.

Revenge

Ensei Tankado's mother was a victim of radiation after the bombing of Hiroshima. She died of complications shortly after his birth. Tankado was born deformed because of the radiation and his father, unable to accept his son's imperfection, abandoned him. For much of his childhood, Tankado had sworn revenge on the country that destroyed his family and left him deformed.

As he grew older, Tankado became an avid student of World War II and his hatred for America began to wane. Eventually, Tankado became a Buddhist and he believed that forgiveness was the only path to enlightenment.

A renowned genius, Tankado acquired a work visa and moved to America. Employed by the NSA, Tankado worked on the TRANSLTR project. When he discovered that the NSA's top-secret computer would be used to access personal email, Tankado was outraged. He quit his job and vowed to expose the NSA's top-secret computer to the public. Commander Strathmore could not take that risk. Strathmore had Tankado captured, defamed and deported. Tankado vowed to Strathmore that one day he would see to it that everyone had a right to privacy.

In an attempt to blackmail Strathmore into going public about TRANSLTR, Tankado claimed to have created an unbreakable algorithm called Digital Fortress. Strathmore did not believe Tankado, so he decided to raise the stakes by marketing the program to generate public excitement.

Strathmore took the bait. He had Tankado assassinated so that he could obtain the pass code that would give him access to Tankado's program. Strathmore had no idea that the program was a hoax.

As Tankado lay dying on the streets of Seville, Spain, he realizes he has made a terrible mistake. Tankado knows exactly what Digital Fortress is programmed to do and he had expected to be around to stop it before things got out of hand. Tankado realizes too late that his desire for revenge will precipitate catastrophic events.

Style

Point of View

The point of view in this novel is multiple third person narrative. This point of view is episodically limited, allowing the narrator to provide varying viewpoints of different characters. This point of view helps to create a suspenseful and fast-paced narrative. The changing character viewpoints enable the reader to experience events as they happen. This type of narrative works well in *Digital Fortress*, where several events are unfolding simultaneously in different locations throughout the story.

Exposition is used throughout the story to provide the reader with insight and detailed information regarding computers, intelligence and cryptography. This method is used to help the reader understand the significance of events taking place in the story.

Setting

The novel is set in three different locations. The main character, Susan Fletcher is tracing an email account at the National Security Agency (the NSA), in Fort Meade, Maryland. The NSA is a government organization that is responsible for intercepting intelligence and protecting U.S. classified information.

The cryptography facility houses the government's top-secret decryption computer, TRANSLTR. Deputy Director Trevor Strathmore believes that TRANSLTR has hit an unbreakable code. The program, *Digital Fortress*, is actually a worm that Strathmore has allowed into the system. The worm is programmed to destroy the filters that protect the nation's main databank, exposing the government's most classified information to the world.

A good portion of the story also takes place in Seville, Spain. Ensei Tankado, the man who created *Digital Fortress* was killed in Spain. Believing that Tankado would have the pass code on him at the time of his death, Strathmore sends Susan's fiancé, David Becker to Spain to retrieve Tankado's personal effects.

David discovers that Tankado was wearing a ring that had been removed from his hand when he died. Strathmore believes the ring is inscribed with the pass code. He orders David to find the ring. David searches all over Seville for Tankado's ring, unaware that he is being pursued by an assassin.

A smaller portion of the story is set in Tokyo, Japan. Tokugen Numataka, a savvy business owner of a Japanese software company, has bid on the pass code to *Digital Fortress*. Numataka receives a phone call from someone claiming to be Tankado's partner, North Dakota. North Dakota promises to sell Numataka the pass code to *Digital Fortress*, giving Numataka's company exclusive rights to the coveted program.



The final setting of the novel is in the command center of the NSA, where the nation's main databank is housed. It has been discovered that Digital Fortress is an elaborate hoax. Now, after the deaths of several innocent people, Susan Fletcher must break the code to Digital Fortress before the filters are destroyed and public access is gained to the nation's most classified information.

Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is specific and concise. Numerous events unfold throughout the story, and the character viewpoint changes from chapter to chapter. The narrator's precision keeps the story moving.

Computer and Intelligence terminology is clearly explained for easy understanding. Much of the backstory is dealt with in the first few chapters, or as soon as a situation is introduced. Early placement of these details gives the reader a thorough understanding of the events that are unfolding and guards against narrator intrusion as the action progresses.

There is a lot of foreshadowing in the story. Imagery and symbolism are also used to create the mood and increase tension in the novel.

Structure

This novel consists of a prologue, one hundred twenty-eight chapters and an epilogue. Each of the numbered chapters averages about two to three pages in length. Most of the chapters end as cliffhangers, building suspense throughout the novel.

The novel is about the head cryptographer of the NSA, who is called into work when the decryption computer hits an unbreakable code. She learns that the program has been created by a former employee of the NSA who is now dead. Her boss has sent her fiancé to Seville, Spain to retrieve the pass code that will open the program. Her boss is planning to create a back door in the formula that will allow the NSA total access to any code written with the program. He then intends to sell the program to a Japanese software company. The cryptographer discovers that the program is a hoax. It is actually a worm that will destroy the filters to the main databank, creating public access to the government's most classified information.

The novel is fast-paced with a lot of action. The brief chapters and constant scene cuts make this novel a quick and suspenseful read.



Quotes

"It is said that in death, all things become clear; Ensei Tankado now knew it was true."
Prologue, page 1

"He [Strathmore] seemed to have an uncanny ability to see past the moral perplexities surrounding the NSA's difficult decisions and to act without remorse in the interest of the common good." Chapter 5, page 24

"There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Strathmore loved his country. He was known to his colleagues as a patriot and a visionary...a decent man in a world of lies." Chapter 5, page 24

"Every night the young Tankado stared down at the twisted fingers holding his daruma wish-doll and swore he'd have revenge - revenge against the country that had stolen his mother and shamed his father into abandoning him." Chapter 6, page 31

"'We all have a right to keep secrets,' he [Tankado] said. 'Someday I'll see to it we can.'" Chapter 6, page 33

"It was his dedication that amazed her - his allegiance to his principles, his country and his ideals. Come what may, Commander Trevor Strathmore was a guiding light in a world of impossible decisions." Chapter 11, page 54

"Please accept this humble fax. My love for you is without wax." Chapter 29, page 109

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" Chapter 31, page 119

"Tell the world about TRANSLTR. Only the truth will save you now." Chapter 86, Page 265

"Still, Susan couldn't believe that Tankado would have allowed this to happen. He was a pacifist. He didn't want to wreak destruction; all he wanted was to set the record straight. This was about TRANSLTR. This was about everyone's right to keep a secret. This was about letting the world know that the NSA was listening." Chapter 86, Page 267

"Yes, he [Strathmore] thought. I'm a survivor - but survival is nothing without honor. I'd rather die than live in the shadow of disgrace." Chapter 90, Page 277

"Prime difference between elements responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Chapter 123, Page 354



Topics for Discussion

Discuss national security and an individual's right to privacy. Under what circumstances does the government have the right to intercept private conversations? Where do you draw the line?

Why did Tankado create Digital Fortress? What were his intentions? Was he right or wrong? How so?

What does Strathmore want to do with Digital Fortress? What are his intentions? Is he right or wrong? How so?

Discuss Tankado's early childhood. What effect did the events of his past have on his life? What makes Tankado's life ironic?

What does Susan think of Commander Trevor Strathmore? What does she think of Greg Hale? Do Susan's opinions cloud her judgment? In what way?

What is the significance of the ring? What does the inscription mean? Explain in detail.

What is the pass code? Who figures out the pass code, and how do they figure it out? What is the connection between the pass code and Tankado?