

# **The Gun Seller Study Guide**

## **The Gun Seller by Hugh Laurie**

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## Plot Summary

The Gun Seller by Hugh Laurie is the story of an Englishman named Thomas Lang. It begins when Thomas Lang is asked to assassinate a man. Despite his attempts to distance himself from the situation, Thomas gets pulled into the center of a conspiracy so convoluted that he has no idea who to trust or how to get out alive. Thomas soon finds that he must choose between doing the right thing, which will most likely end in his death, or condemn others to death in order to save himself.

Thomas Lang, a retired British military man, is approached with a request to preform an assassination on a man named Alexander Woolf. Lang refuses and decides to go and warn Mr. Woolf that his life is in danger. Lang meets Woolf's daughter, Sarah Woolf, and tells her about what he knows although she is skeptical. Lang returns home but is soon fetched to the Ministry of Defence by an old military friend of his named David Solomon. Once they are at the Ministry of Defence a man named O'Neal accuses Lang of conspiracy to murder. Lang can't tell them anything solid about the man that had approached him for the murder but they let him go with the understanding that they are going to have someone following him.

Lang sees the man following him that had tried to get him to agree to the assassination of Mr. Woolf. Lang is able to back track and discretely follows the man to the work place of Sarah Woolf. Lang attacks the man and is shot by Sarah Woolf who explains that this is her father. Lang isn't badly hurt and soon goes home. Alexander Woolf calls Lang and asks that he have lunch with him. Woolf explains at the meeting that there is a helicopter, called the Graduate, that is a prototype and gun sellers are trying to get the government to buy it but need it to be openly tested in a terrorist situation to prove that it is viable. Since they need to know when and where to test it the gun sellers are creating the situation they need. Lang is unconvinced but agrees to think about it.

When Lang heads home he is ran off the road and kidnapped. He is able to get free but before he can escape the building Alexander Woolf, who had been kept a few rooms away, is shot and killed. Lang begins to look into the things that Woolf had told him and finds that Woolf was telling the truth. The American CIA is involved headed by a man named Russell P. Barns. Barns kidnaps Lang and takes him to the financial force behind the Graduate named Naimh Murdah. Murdah is holding Sarah Woolf hostage and says he will kill her if Lang doesn't do what they ask and ensure that they have a group of terrorist to test the Graduate on. Once the Graduate is successfully tested the Pentagon will supposedly sign a large contract for the helicopters that will result in large amounts of money for those backing it. Lang reluctantly agrees to save Sarah.

Lang is inducted into a group called the Sword Of Justice. The Sword Of Justice goes to Casablanca and takes a building hostage. The faction believes they are freeing their fellow freedom fighters and know nothing of the Graduate. At the last moment Lang is able to take Murdah hostage and hold him on the roof while the Graduate flies in. Armed with a Javelin British surface-to-air missile, Lang is able to take out the Graduate with

Russell P. Barnes behind the wheel. After the situation is resolved the sales of the Javelin go up more than forty percent.



# Part 1: Chapter 1-3

## Part 1: Chapter 1-3 Summary

The Gun Seller by Hugh Laurie is the story of an Englishman named Thomas Lang. It begins when Thomas Lang is asked to assassinate a man. Despite his attempts to distance himself from the situation, Thomas gets pulled into the center of a conspiracy so convoluted that he has no idea who to trust or how to get out alive. Thomas soon finds that he must choose between doing the right thing, which will most likely end in his death, or condemn others to death in order to save himself.

When chapter one begins Thomas Lang is in a struggle with a man named Bob Rayner. Thomas is able to get free and hits Rayner over the head with a statue. A woman comes down the stairs and Thomas grabs her from behind before she has a chance to scream. The woman is shaken but Thomas explains that he was there to stop this man from killing her father Alexander Woolf. The woman, Sarah Woolf, isn't convinced that Thomas is telling the truth and soon she calls the police. While waiting for the police Thomas explains that someone tried to hire him to kill her father but he turned down the job because he isn't the kind of person who kills people. Thomas stays and gives the police a fabricated story that he and Sarah rehearse despite the fact that she doesn't believe Thomas' story. Thomas leaves on his motorcycle thinking of Sarah Woolf.

As chapter two starts Thomas has returned to his flat and is recalling the events that lead him to the house of Mr. Alexander Woolf. While Thomas was in Amsterdam acting as a bodyguard a man had approached him in a bar and offered him a large sum of money to kill Alexander Woolf. Thomas declined and then decided to go and warn Mr. Woolf. Thomas goes off to sleep but when he awakens he finds that a friend from the British military, David Solomon, has let himself into the flat. Solomon helps Thomas get dressed and that they must go but refuses to tell Thomas where they are heading only that Thomas appears to be in trouble.

Once in the car they drive to the building where the Ministry of Defence is located and Thomas is taken to the office of Mr. O'Neal. O'Neal asks Thomas several questions and offers to have him arrested for conspiracy to murder. O'Neal explains that Bob Rayner wasn't an assassin but was Mr. Woolf's own personal body guard. O'Neal explains about fifty thousand US dollars that had been transferred to Thomas' bank account four days ago added to the request for Woolf's assassination. Thomas didn't know anything about this and begins to relate everything he knows to O'Neal. O'Neal is unconvinced but agrees to let Thomas go for the time being.

In chapter three Thomas goes back to his flat and finds Sarah Woolf waiting on him with a gun. Thomas tries not to mention anything about the gun but Sarah begins to ask him questions about him wanting to kill her father and why she shouldn't shoot Thomas. After this is said the Ministry of Defence men that have been following Thomas around enter the room. O'Neal and Solomon soon show up and the phone rings. After Solomon



talks with the man on the phone he says that Sarah Woolf is to be taken to Russell P. Barnes at the American Embassy. Sarah demands to know what is going to be done with Thomas since he tried to kill her father. It is at this point that O'Neal tells her that her father is being looked at for his trafficking of illegal drugs by both the United States government and the Ministry of Defence.

## Part 1: Chapter 1-3 Analysis

The main character is Thomas Lang and the story is told from his point of view. The author doesn't reveal the main character's name until the start of chapter two. Thomas Lang will be an interesting character that will appear to be very self absorbed but will continue to do things that put his own life in danger in order to do the right thing.

Sarah Woolf has made an impression on Thomas Lang. He will admit in the later part of the story that he has fallen in love with her although for much of the story he will explain to himself why he couldn't possibly love her since he doesn't know her. It will be Thomas Lang's feelings for Sarah Woolf that get him caught up in much of what happens.

There is a mystery man that offered Thomas the job of killing Alexander Woolf. In the coming chapters Thomas will find the man. Finding the man that contracted him to kill Alexander Woolf will complicate things more than solve any questions. The Ministry of Defence claims that they are looking at Woolf for trafficking drugs but in the next few chapters Alexander Woolf will have a chance to openly refute this to Thomas. Sarah will also claim that this is impossible. The truth of the accusations won't be explained fully until much later in the book.

O'Neal is a character that tries very hard to act as if he is in charge. It will become evident in the story that O'Neal has no real idea of what is going on and that he is being manipulated. The first time that Russell P. Barnes is introduced in the story is the end of chapter three when he calls O'Neal at Thomas' flat. As the story continues the plot will reveal that Barnes has a very important role in the story and that his involvement in the events that unfold is crucial. Solomon is a character that the reader doesn't know much about at this point. His true loyalties won't be confirmed until the end of the story.



# Part 1: Chapter 4-6

## Part 1: Chapter 4-6 Summary

Chapter four starts off with Sarah Woolf leaving to meet with Russell P. Barnes and O'Neal leaving. David Solomon stays behind and he and Thomas go out for a beer. Solomon tells Thomas about Woolf's involvement with drugs and they think that it might be the CIA that wants Woolf dead.

Thomas goes home but can't sleep because he's thinking about Sarah Woolf. Thomas knows that he can't possibly be in love with her because they only met a couple of times. Thomas gets dressed the next morning and heads to the bank to check on the strange money. The money was transferred in cash and the name on the slip was a fake. The name, although fake, points Thomas in the direction of a business man that might give out references for assassins. The man is no help but once outside the office Thomas is suddenly sees the man that approached him in Amsterdam and asked him to assassinate Alexander Woolf.

Chapter five has the nameless man following Thomas but Thomas is quick and is able to loose the man and get back behind him. Thomas follows the man to an art gallery. There Thomas sees Sarah Woolf. Sarah starts for Thomas and behind her is the man that Thomas had been following. Thomas attacks the man and has him in a hold intending to break his neck when Sarah pulls out a gun and shoots Thomas. He tells her that he is on her side but things are already beginning to go dark for Thomas. Sarah is looking angry and the last thing that Thomas hears before he goes unconscious is Sarah telling him that the short man in the suit is her father, Alexander Woolf.

Thomas awakens in a hospital room with a nurse asking him how he feels. Thomas' first visitor at the Middlesex Hospital is Solomon. Thomas explains that he found the man that had asked him to commit the murder and followed him. Thomas tells Solomon that it was Alexander Woolf himself that had asked for the assassination. O'Neal soon shows up and Solomon explains the situation and the identity of the man that wanted Woolf dead. Thomas believes that Woolf did this to slow down others that might want Woolf dead knowing from Thomas' past history that he would refuse the offer. Thomas demands to know who told O'Neal that Thomas was the one that was going to be committing this murder and O'Neal finally explains that it was the American CIA.

As chapter six begins Thomas decides to check himself out of the hospital. Before he goes he visits another patient in the hospital who is recovering from a head injury, Bob Rayner. Solomon had told Thomas that Rayner was in the same hospital and that Rayner had been kicked out of the Royal Welch Fusiliers for stealing. Thomas leaves Rayner some grapes and checks himself out of the hospital. When Thomas gets back to his flat his phone rings and Mr. Woolf asks him to meet him somewhere.



Thomas arrives at the Italian restaurant and soon there after Alexander Woolf arrives holding a brief case with Sarah Woolf with him. Sarah gives a small short apology for Thomas getting hurt. While they sit and eat Alexander Woolf tries to answer a few of Thomas' questions. Woolf says that he has never been involved in any respect with illegal drugs and Sarah explains that she had an older brother that died of a drug overdose. Alexander goes on to explain that the reason that he asked Thomas to kill him was to see what kind of man that Thomas was. Alexander has also looked hard into Thomas' background and believes that Thomas is the kind of man to help them. Alexander begins to explain about war and things that are going on that no one really knows about. Thomas looks at them both and realizes that they are true conspiracy nuts. Alexander Woolf pulls out photographs from his brief case and hands them to Thomas. The photos are that of a helicopter but it is small and black and had a sever looking gun system attached. The helicopters are being looked at being purchased by the Pentagon but the people that are making them need a to see it in action against a real world terrorist operation. Since they can't wait for such an occasion to just happen the people that manufacture the helicopters are going to create a situation. Thomas isn't sure how to react to all of this. They explain that the helicopter is a Urban Control and Law-enforcement Aircraft or UCLA and so has been given the prototype name the Graduate.

## Part 1: Chapter 4-6 Analysis

Sarah Woolf has left to meet Russell P. Barnes. It won't be disclosed what happened and what they talked about until much later in the book. The meeting that Sarah and Mr. Barnes have will have extreme consequences for the Woolfs and Thomas Lang. At this point in the plot Russel Barnes hasn't been seen very much. In the coming chapters he will appear much more and the reader will get a better idea of who he really is and his role in the story. Both Sarah and her father state that the drug accusations are false. Thomas does feel sorry for their loss but the truth of where the rumors about the drugs originated won't be explained until later in the book. Thomas saw Sarah using the phone while they were eating. The phone conversation isn't told to the reader but later on the reader will learn that the phone call was to Russell P. Barnes.

Finding the man that hired him to kill Alexander Woolf should have answered many of Thomas' questions. As the story continues there will be more questions raised and few of them answered. Solomon seems to know much of what is going on but it will soon be evident that Solomon is unaware of much that is going on in the story just at Thomas is. Solomon will be a steady rock for Thomas as things begin to quickly unravel for him.

Bob Rayner was first seen in the story when he and Thomas were in the middle of a physical fight. Thomas very nearly killed Bob Rayner and at this point the reader has seen Bob Rayner appear again. Bob Rayner, although never having any dialogue in the story, will play a very important role and help Thomas out later on in the story. There will be other characters like this in the story as well that have very few, if any, lines that will impact Thomas.





Thomas is unconvinced after seeing the photo's of the helicopter, the Graduate. The truth of Alexander's statements will soon be revealed. By agreeing to meet with Alexander Woolf, Thomas has inadvertently put himself in the middle of a war that he knows nothing about. After being propelled into this conspiracy the reader will become aware of how quickly Thomas is able to think and react to new and dangerous situations.



# Part 1: Chapter 7-10

## Part 1: Chapter 7-10 Summary

Thomas is driving down the road on his motorcycle in chapter seven after leaving the restaurant and the Wolfs. Thomas is thinking over everything that Alexander said when Thomas' motorcycle is suddenly ran off the road by another vehicle. Thomas is knocked unconscious after the wreck and wakes up tied to a table. There are two men and the first to speak is obviously American. Thomas tells the men that his neck is broke but they explain that his neck won't matter much longer. The man demands to know what Thomas and Alexander Wolf had talked about. Thomas tells him as much as he can trying to appear appeasing but trying to keep anything pertinent to himself. The man, who Thomas has mentally named Groomed, says that Wolf is a bad guy who has brought thirty-six tons of cocaine into Europe in the last four months. Groomed leaves the room and tells the other man to stand watch and not leave Thomas alone for a moment. After he is gone Thomas realizes that there are only two people in this building or Groomed would have told him to get somebody. Thomas, knowing that his neck is definitely not broken begins to think of a plan.

Chapter eight begins with Thomas lying there on the table. He calls for the man left in the room with him and says that he has to use the bathroom. The man tells Thomas to go ahead and piss his pants but Thomas explains that he doesn't need to pee and after he craps in his pants that both of them will be stuck in the room with the smell. The man gets down in front of Thomas' face to tell Thomas that he had better not crap his pants. With the man this close to Thomas' face Thomas is able to bring his knee up and in a series of short moves gets the man's neck in between his legs and kills him. The straps on his hands take a while to get loose but soon Thomas is free. Thomas gleans what he can out of the dead man's pockets finding nothing of immediate value but a gun. Thomas begins down the corridor holding the gun trying various doors. Soon Thomas comes to a room where he finds Alexander Wolf tied to a chair. Thomas kneels down to look at Wolf and realizes he is standing on many of Wolf's teeth. As Thomas is untying Wolf the door handle begins to turn. Thomas turns towards the door and there are shots fired. Thomas dives to the floor and Wolf has stood up and falls backwards as Groomed enters the room holding a gun. Thomas shoots quickly and kills Groomed. Thomas goes to Alexander and finds that he has been shot. Wolf's last words to Thomas are "Are you a good man?"

Thomas searches the rest of the building and finds that it is empty and has been for some time. Thomas leaves and goes to a bed and breakfast to hold up and heal. Thomas spends that time thinking of the Wolf family, guns and everything that has suddenly fallen to him and the whether or not he was a good man.

As chapter nine begins, Thomas, now healed, has made his way to the lobby of the American Embassy and is requesting an audience with Russel P. Barnes and explains that his name is David Solomon. Thomas is shown to Barnes' office and as they sit and



talk Thomas asks about Graduate Studies, as he had heard some Americans call it. Barnes is very calm and asks what exactly what Thomas wants to know. Thomas feels like he may be getting somewhere when suddenly Barnes explains that obviously the Ministry of Defence is better suited to finding out these bits of information since they have enough money to employ two David Solomons. Thinking quickly Thomas explains that his name is Terrance Glass and that he owns an art gallery where Sarah Woolf works but that she hasn't been seen for days. Russel wants to know why "Terrance" has gone to all this trouble and Thomas explains that he is in love with the young Sarah Woolf. When asked how he knew the term "Graduate Studies" Thomas explains that Sarah has a file containing that name in her office and he had heard Russell P. Barnes name mentioned in her conversation regarding the Graduate Studies. Russell Barnes, somewhat convinced of Thomas' story, sends two men with Thomas to the art gallery with the intention of fetching the file that Sarah Woolf keeps in her office.

Russell sends two men with Thomas to fetch the file. One is named Mike and is obviously less than thrilled about the line of work in which he has found himself. Once they reach the art gallery and Thomas is out of the car Thomas, feeling less trapped, explains that he isn't Terrance Glass and that there is no file named Graduate Studies. Mike, the blond that works at the art gallery, and the real Terrance Glass are all extremely confused. Mike has little choice but to take his partner back to Russell P. Barnes and explain what has happened. Once they are gone Thomas takes the blond, Ronnie and Thomas explains as much to her as he can with the hope that she will be able to help him find Sarah Barnes. Once Ronnie has an idea of what is going on she tells Thomas that it is a good thing that he didn't give the men the Graduate Studies file. Thomas corrects Ronnie explaining that he had made it up and no such file exists. Ronnie smiles and says that there is in fact such a file of Sarah's and that Ronnie has seen it.

As chapter ten begins Ronnie has agreed to help Thomas try to find the Graduate Studies file and ultimately where Sarah Woolf is. Ronnie hasn't found the file in Sarah's office and so they decide to go back to Alexander Woolf's house on Lyall street. When they turn onto Lyall street Thomas sees that there are men in the house. Thomas has Ronnie park up the street where she can't be seen by the men in the house. Before he starts toward the house Ronnie gives him a rape alarm. Thomas tries to refuse it but she explains that it is so loud that if she hears it she will know to come running in the car. Thomas takes it reluctantly and heads toward the house.

Thomas quickly comes up with a story and after fast talking, acting irritated with the men and their performance in their job thus far, whatever their job is, Thomas is able to quickly get up stairs to Sarah's room leaving the two thugs downstairs utterly confused. Once in Sarah's room Thomas doesn't find much to indicate where Sarah is, only that she has left in a hurry. Thomas begins down the stairs and finds that the two men left to wait for Sarah are now focused on him and are ready to pull guns. Thomas calmly puts his hand into his pocket and hits a small button. The noise that comes from the little toy that Ronnie had given him was so loud that the two men immediately put their hands to their ears and Thomas races out to meet Ronnie who speeds around the corner.

## Part 1: Chapter 7-10 Analysis

The last words that Woolf says are asking Thomas if he is a good man. Those words will come into the story again as Thomas is forced to make decisions. It will become apparent that the right choice isn't always easy for Thomas to see. There will be times when Thomas' own motivations and reasoning will be questioned by the reader. There will be discussions and plans that the reader is unaware of that won't be explained until later in the story. These lapses will make the reader unsure of what is happening but will be understood after the acts are done.

Ronnie has had little to do with the story up to this point. After this she becomes a pivotal character. Ronnie will prove to be loyal to Thomas and will help him and Thomas will help her although it will be in much different ways. Thomas never tells Ronnie that he has feelings for Sarah Woolf.

The man named Mike seems to be simply a hired man that can't have much to do with the story. As the plot thickens there will be a larger part in the story for Mike in regards to the impact that his life, and death, have on Thomas. Although it is never fully explained it seems that it is Mike's death and the way he will be treated after his death that have a great impact on the decisions that Thomas makes. Despite this pivotal role that Mike plays he actually is seen very little in the book and Thomas won't know anything about Mike past their two encounters.

Russell P. Barnes appears to be in charge of things at this point. In the following chapters the reader will meet the man that is the financial backer of the Graduate helicopter and the plan to use it publicly. The financial backer, Naimh Murdah, will have many characteristics shared with Russell Barnes and very different at the same time. Both will be ruthless men that are driven by the desire for money. Sarah Woolf is missing at this moment but Thomas will soon find that she is in the clutches of Barnes and Murdah.



# Part 1: Chapter 11-14

## Part 1: Chapter 11-14 Summary

Ronnie takes Thomas back to her place as the story resumes in chapter eleven. They discuss the fact that they haven't found the file but Ronnie did find Sarah's diary. In the diary is an entry that says "CED OK." The entry appears several times but neither of them know who or what CED could stand for or why it is OK. Ronnie begins to get ready for her boyfriend and Thomas leaves promising to call her.

Thomas decides not to go home but instead goes to the Ministry of Defence and waits for Mr. O'Neal to come out of the building. When O'Neal appears Thomas begins to follow him and they end up at a crummy strip club. Thomas waits for a moment watching O'Neal and decides that O'Neal isn't there for anything other than the show and sits down beside him. O'Neal becomes angry demanding that he is meeting someone here and asks Thomas to leave. Thomas begins to ask about Graduate Studies and after getting no answer from O'Neal, he explains what he believes Graduate Studies to be. Graduate Studies being different things to different people. To one group it is creating and selling new military aircraft and very illegal. To another it is the creation of a terrorist group to show the new aircraft in action by killing people and thus making much money. Woolf found out about the second group and couldn't keep quiet. For this reason Woolf was discredited, accused of drugs, bankrupted and killed. O'Neal doesn't say anything and then Russell P. Barnes walks into the room.

Chapter twelve begins with the three men at the table. O'Neal tries to explain the difficulty of the situation to Thomas when Barnes tells him to go home. O'Neal is upset at being sent away but does as he is told. Barnes takes Thomas for a drive. The driver is the Mike who had accompanied him to the art gallery the day before. Barnes tells Thomas to get out of the car so the two of them can take a walk. After Barnes is out of the car Mike, now known as Mike Lucas, covers his mouth slightly and tells Thomas to be careful. Mike swears he doesn't know what is going on but knows that it is really bad.

Thomas and Barnes walk for a while and then Barnes tells Thomas that he is correct about his thoughts about the Graduate Studies. Barnes explains that there is money being profited and jobs being created and all that helps everyone out. Barnes claims that this is all a good thing and Thomas replies that Barnes needs his head examined. Thomas begins to walk away from Barnes when two of Barnes' bodyguards appear and stop Thomas. Barnes insists that people die everyday and so dying for a purpose should be just as good as dying from a heart attack. Thomas realizes at this point the extent of Barnes' instability. Barnes looks at his two bodyguards and says "Murder." Thomas doesn't know what the single word meant but he is thrown into the car, face forced into the floor with a foot on top of his head and they drive for a considerable amount of time. At the end of the drive they are at a mansion that could pass for a palace.



Chapter thirteen places Thomas inside the mansion in a large room. A man walks into the room and says the word "Murder." Thomas is very confused until the man says "Naimh Murdah." It is at this point that Thomas realizes the man's name is Naimh Murdah. Murdah is cheerful and admits that he is in fact an arms dealer. Murdah soon begins talking about Graduate Studies. Murdah admits that he is the one that has financed the helicopters referred to as the Graduates and that he has friends that are relying on the production of these new products. What Murdah is now in the process of doing is sponsoring a terrorist act so that this new prototype can put on a show that the news crews will openly document. When Thomas asks what this has to do with him Murdah says that Thomas will be the one to carry out the terrorist act for them.

Thomas sits for a long while and then asks what will happen if he refuses. Murdah calls over Mike Lucas. Mike comes over and Murdah takes Mike's gun and explains to Thomas that he has two people's lives to think about. Thomas' life and that of Sarah Woolf. To prove how serious and deadly the situation is Murdah, in a smooth swift motion, points the gun to Mike Lucas' neck and pulls the trigger twice. Murdah explains that the reason for killing Mike was simply to prove that he could and that there will be no consequences for the action and he can do it as many times as he likes if Thomas doesn't do exactly what they want him to. The drive back to his flat Thomas thinks about Mike Lucas and the risk he had taken to warn Thomas to be careful.

Chapter twelve begins with Thomas walking up to his flat building and finding his motorcycle back in front of his home and Ronnie asleep at the wheel of her car. Ronnie comes into Thomas' flat and they have a cup of tea. Ronnie explains that her and her boyfriend, Philip, have broken up. Ronnie asks if she can sleep with Thomas tonight and eventually they go up to bed and lie together. They remain fully clothed and occasionally ask each other what they are thinking about.

The next morning after breakfast and Ronnie calling in to work with her car having trouble, the two of them walked through the park. Over lunch Thomas tells Ronnie about Murdah's offer and the terrorist act. Ronnie begs him not to do it but Thomas insists that if he doesn't then both he and Sarah will die and someone else will be forced to do it later. When they walk to the car after lunch Ronnie's ex-boyfriend Philip shows up and offers to fight Thomas. Ronnie is able to convince him that Thomas is an artist and that they are discussing work. Philip becomes embarrassed and apologizes and gives Ronnie a ticket asking her to come away with him for the weekend so that they can work on their relationship. The ticket is for Prague, Czechoslovakia. Philip leaves and Ronnie and Thomas stand there discussing the new Czech Republic. Ronnie gasps looking at the ticket. The national airline of the new Czech Republic is abbreviated by the letters CEDOK, the letters they had found in Sarah's itinerary diary.

## **Part 1: Chapter 11-14 Analysis**

Niamh Murdah has been introduced into the story and the plot. The thought of Russell P. Barnes being in charge had been intimidating however the reader never actually sees him kill anyone. It appears that Barnes is the one that orders the deaths but never



actually pulls the trigger. Murdah kills Mike Lucas just to prove to Thomas that if he wants to kill Sarah Woolf that he can. In many ways this will make him much more frightening. Thomas describes Murdah as a man that possesses a sheen from the money that he has lived with. Murdah appears to be charming and sociable but at the same time has an acute lack of conscience in regards to the welfare of his fellow man. Money and power will prove to be the driving force for Murdah. Murdah has been introduced but won't be seen again until the end of the story.

O'Neal has proven to be a person that is being used. He has no full idea of what the Graduate Studies entails. The next time that Thomas has a chance to talk to O'Neal it will become apparent that O'Neal is in over his head and will be forced to avoid as much of the situation as he can in order to save the Ministry of Defence's reputation. Solomon will soon come into the loop and work to help Thomas. Despite the gravity of the situation Solomon will remain calm and steady and very seldom will his emotions betray his calm demeanor.

Sarah Woolf is thought to be a victim at this point in the story. It will be Solomon who helps Thomas learn that the situation that befell Alexander Woolf was in part to be blamed on his daughter.

There are still several important characters that haven't been shown in the story yet. In the next set of chapters there will be the Sword Of Justice introduced. They are the terrorist group that are supposed to create the necessary situation for the Graduate. This group will prove to be one that has been easily manipulated from the front. They will consider themselves a "revolutionary movement" but are seemingly naive. They won't stop to question much along the way and it will prove to be one of the hardest parts for Thomas to be paired with a group of people that are ignorant of the full consequences of their actions.



# Part 1: Chapter 15-16; Part 2: Chapter 17-18

## Part 1: Chapter 15-16; Part 2: Chapter 17-18 Summary

Chapter fifteen starts with Thomas in Prague. Prague is where Sarah Woolf was and Prague is where the Americans had sent Thomas for the beginning of "Operation Dead Wood" meaning the plot to set up a terrorist situation in order to test their state-of-the-art helicopter weapon. Thomas spent the few days before leaving for Prague with Ronnie drinking tea and holding hands after Philip had abandoned her with the excuse of having business to attend to.

Once in Prague Thomas begins to be trained for his part in Dead Wood. Thomas will talk to his different instructors and with shock and dismay realizes that none of them truly know what Dead Wood or the Graduate Studies are about. Thomas is the only one that knows the focus of the operation. Barnes arrives a few days later to check on Thomas. Thomas listens to Barnes talk for a time and then demands to see Sarah telling him that she is the reason he agreed to any of this. Thomas tells him that if Sarah isn't alright then he has no reason to cooperate any further. Finally Barnes agrees to take him to see her.

They arrive at a boat and Thomas sits and talks to Sarah who has been crying for some time and looks like she has lost weight. Sarah talks about her dad and the fact that he was a good man. Thomas tells her that everything is all alright but he knows that this is a lie.

Chapter sixteen begins with Thomas beginning his job in operation Dead Wood. They send him out to find his own place to live and Thomas soon finds a land lady that has a large dirty room. The next day Thomas goes out looking for a cafe with a Coca-Cola shade over the table as he had been instructed. After finding the right cafe the person that meets Thomas is Solomon. Solomon has been given the job of being Thomas' trainer for the remainder of his stay. Thomas thinks about telling Solomon everything but soon decides that it might be best for the moment to keep certain details to himself. Solomon, Thomas and two other men drive to a farm house and find a young American man named Ricky naked, having been tortured for a long time and is soon to be put to death accused of being a terrorist.

By dawn Thomas is back in Prague but he didn't go to bed. Thomas knew the police were coming to his place and would be there in just a few hours. They drag Thomas out of his apartment and take him to the station and throw him in a cell with two other men. Thomas is kept in the cell for ten days. When he is released one of the men that he had been in the cell with drives up and offers him a ride. The man introduces himself as Greg and Thomas introduces himself as Ricky.





Chapter seventeen has Thomas already inducted into the Sword Of Justice. They have been together for several months and by the middle of December are heading to Switzerland to shoot a Dutch politician. The leader of the group is Francisco. The others in the group are Latifa, Bernhard, Cyrus, Hugo, and Benjamin as well as the American terrorist Ricky, also known as Thomas Lang. The Sword Of Justice go to Switzerland to shoot Dirk Van Der Hoewe. Dirk is a very fat politician and is at the Switzerland ski resort on vacation with his family from his job as Dutch Deputy Minister of Finance. While the Sword Of Justice go through their plan to work out all the possible errors Thomas notes Solomon and his nearby location unknown to the Sword Of Justice.

Chapter eighteen has Solomon and Thomas talking. Thomas explains that it is Ricky, meaning Thomas, who will pull the trigger. Solomon asks a few more questions about how they got the gun into Switzerland. While they are talking Thomas thinks of all the reasons that Solomon could have for not telling him anything about Sarah Woolf. The next day Thomas gets in position for their plan to shoot Dirk Van Der Hoewe. Thomas waits for the perfect shot and squeezes the trigger.

## **Part 1: Chapter 15-16; Part 2: Chapter 17-18 Analysis**

Thomas has taken on the job of shooting the Dutch politician. What isn't known at this point is that he isn't really going to kill the man. It is at this point that the plot begins to thicken and become hard to keep up with. The Americans, referring to Murdah and Barnes, want to keep an eye on the Sword Of Justice faction without tainting their own hands. To do this they have the Ministry of Defence, meaning O'Neal and Solomon, keep an eye on Thomas. Since the Sword Of Justice knows nothing about being used they don't know Thomas' real name or know that he is meeting with Solomon. Later in the story Thomas will discover that the Sword Of Justice is being financed by Murdah himself. Having Solomon keep an eye on Thomas will prove to be a fatal flaw for the Americans since Solomon is an old friend of Thomas' and trusts him. Solomon will also show that he has some initiative and will begin to take some matters into his own hand. The conspiracy was obviously known to both Thomas and Solomon shown by the fact that Thomas picked his shot and the angle so carefully. Later in the story the American's will congratulate Thomas on his fine shot. It will be at this point that it becomes apparent that Solomon believes their job is to infiltrate terrorist and little more.

Thomas will talk about the way that the others in the Sword Of Justice act. It will be clear that Francisco is cool and calm but later on in the story when things become hectic it will be Francisco that begins to look for leadership from others. The pressure will begin to get to each member of the Sword Of Justice as what they do becomes increasingly dangerous. It will be Benjamin that realizes that Thomas is an impostor although he won't understand the full scope of what is going on.

Thomas tells Barnes that Sarah Woolf is the reason that he has agreed to help. Soon the truth of Sarah will come to light. It will appear at this moment that Thomas' feelings for Sarah change to some degree although he apparently doesn't give up on her completely.



## Part 2: Chapter 19-22

### Part 2: Chapter 19-22 Summary

In chapter nineteen it is seen that the Sword Of Justice doesn't leave Switzerland immediately. Thomas explained to them that if they did it would make them look suspicious. The next few days they watched the news and the rumors of who it was that was responsible for the horrible attack on the politician on holiday. Thomas is in his room and has been drinking when a man comes and fetches him to a meeting with Solomon. Dirk Van Der Hoewe is sitting in the room. Dirk wasn't as fat as he had first appeared. Dirk had been wearing a large amount of body armor to prevent the mild bullet that Thomas had chosen from doing any damage. Hoewe had agreed to lay low for some time in order to not blow Thomas' cover with the Sword Of Justice. Hoewe leaves Solomon and Thomas alone in the room. Solomon tells him that the American's are happy with his performance thus far and wish Thomas to continue on his current course. Solomon then asks Thomas what his relationship with Sarah Woolf is. Much to Thomas' shock he answers that he is in love with her. Solomon produces pictures of Sarah. Sarah is in the pictures holding tightly onto a man and laughing. The man in the picture is Russell P. Barnes.

Chapter twenty enters with Thomas having told Solomon everything. Solomon listens and says very little knowing that if the purpose of Graduate Studies is to sell guns then both Thomas and Solomon are the ones that are selling the guns. They discuss the possibilities that Sarah is playing Barnes or that Barnes is playing Sarah or that they are in love with each other. Despite all the thoughts they have very few solid answers and none of them are very good. Thomas goes back to his room and finds Latifa there. Thomas feels like he is past the point of caring for anything. Thomas and Latifa sleep together.

Time passes and Thomas is ridding in the car with Fransisco. Thomas asks where the money comes from and Fransisco reluctantly tells him what he knows. Ultimately Fransisco knows that the money comes from a man named Michael Lucas. The thought that Murdah took Mike's life and now was going to ruin what was left of Mikes name makes Thomas angry.

Chapter twenty-one starts with the Sword Of Justice having a break before their next hit. They go to London and each go their own way for their leave. Thomas has a plan and sets it into action first by going to see Philip Barraclough, Ronnie's boyfriend. Once in Philip's office Thomas explains who he is, that he isn't an artist like Ronnie had told him and that despite the fact that nothing had happened between the two of them before that now Thomas and Ronnie were in love. At this moment Ronnie arrives and calls Thomas Darling and embraces him. Philip is angry but is standing still when Thomas asks him for a favor. Philip is astounded at being asked for a favor but before he can answer Ronnie begins to chastise Thomas for asking. Thomas and Ronnie begin to argue openly with Ronnie getting angry and before long Philip is hopeful that if he



agrees to help it will be enough to split them up. Thomas asks Philip to track some money for him to see if they can find where it goes and where it comes from.

After leaving Philip Thomas goes for a meeting with O'Neal and explains in detail what is going to happen. O'Neal tries to threaten police on Thomas but knows that this will only get the Ministry of Defence closed down. O'Neal reluctantly gives Thomas the addresses that Thomas asks for and leaves. The address is that of Mr. Bob Rayner. Thomas goes to see Rayner and asks him for an item. Rayner says he can get it but that it will cost. Since it is Murdah's money that is fine with Thomas.

Chapter twenty-two begins with Thomas going to the bank and withdrawing his fifty thousand into traveler's cheques. Shortly after getting his affairs in order Thomas runs into Sarah Woolf. Sarah and Thomas go off to talk to each other. They talk for a long time and finally Thomas asks about Russell Barnes and just how well Sarah knows him. She pretends not to know what he is talking about. The last hope that Thomas had held onto was gone as Sarah stood there lying to him. Thomas accused her of calling the people that came and killed her father. Sarah admits that she did what Russell told her to do but Russell told her that her father wouldn't be hurt and that in return they would get a large sum of money.

Alexander Woolf had a company that had received a government contract and made millions upon millions. Once they were in the inner circle Woolf heard ridiculous rumors of military experiments and things that couldn't possibly be true. When Woolf had jokingly said something about the rumors to one of his military contractors over the phone the line went dead and all of the Woolf contracts were terminated and then blacklisted. Upon investigating the rumors Woolf discovered he finds that much of what he heard was true. When Woolf wasn't silenced he was bankrupted, accused of illegal drug activity, and then killed. Sarah had been approached by Russell P. Barnes because she, unlike her father, was so terrified of the thought of being broke that she agreed to help stop her father.

Sarah begs Thomas to take her and leave, just run away and pretend as if nothing is happening. Thomas explains that other people will die if he leaves. He tells Sarah that he and her have to do the right thing.

## **Part 2: Chapter 19-22 Analysis**

Thomas tells Sarah that they have to do the right thing. In the last chapter Sarah will have one final part before Thomas is able to tell her goodbye. It appears after she openly lies to Thomas that he is no longer in love with her, but much of that is never fully stated and left to the readers interpretation. Sarah has been so afraid of living without money that she was willing to grasp at any straw handed to her to remain in the lifestyle that she was accustomed. It appears that she never thought of the possibilities of what would happen if she agreed to Russell Barnes' terms. What becomes of Sarah Woolf after the story will not be explained.



Bob Rayner has been seen again in the story. This is the last time that Bob Rayner will make an entrance but he will be mentioned again in the story when Thomas uses the item that he went to get from Bob. Thomas had learned from Solomon that Bob Rayner had been in trouble for taking items from the military. It will be this action that proves very useful to Thomas.

Ronnie has again shown that she was willing to help Thomas. The information that Thomas got from Philip will be explained to a great degree towards the end of the story. Murdah also hasn't been seen in the story for some time although Thomas spends a great deal of time thinking about him. Murdah will resurface at the end of the story.

Sarah asks Thomas to run away with her and leave everything. Although they have different reasons it will be seen later on in the story that Solomon likewise asks Thomas to just leave things and run. Thomas will turn both of these people down. Solomon is a very controlled person and this will be one of the few times that the reader will see Solomon show a great deal of emotion.



## Part 2: Chapter 23-26

### Part 2: Chapter 23-26 Summary

Chapter twenty-three finds the Sword Of Justice in Casablanca. They have traveled there with the intention of taking over an American consulate building. The members of the Sword Of Justice are becoming increasingly irritable as they get closer to the day that they are scheduled to attack the building. Thomas meets with Solomon and they discuss what is planned and where each member of the Sword Of Justice is going to be and what role they play. After Thomas tells Solomon the plan Solomon tells him he is being sent home. Thomas laughs and says that makes perfect sense. Solomon then begs Thomas to get out while he can and just go home. Solomon offers to take him out of the country and make sure that the consulate knows the plan so that nothing will happen. Thomas knows that he is in deeper trouble by the minute but refuses to run away and leave people to die. Thomas then realizes that Solomon had an idea of what Barnes was doing and what Sarah Woolf was doing but said nothing to Thomas. Solomon didn't know about the helicopter but knows that some military piece of equipment with high security clearance was brought into the country a few hours ago. There were two men with the equipment. One was identified as Barnes and the other was Murdah.

Solomon drives Thomas back to the city as Thomas tells him what he will need. Solomon gives Thomas two packages that were in the car.

Chapter twenty-four begins with the Sword Of Justice's plan in action. Within a few moments each member has acted out his or her part and they have taken the building and hold a total of eight hostages. One of the prisoners is Mr. James Beamon, he representative of the United States government in Casablanca. The Sword Of Justice waits for the first phone call into the consulate. A news crew calls and asks if they have a statement to make to the press but Francisco is waiting out for CNN to give a written statement. After a few hours there is a phone call and they ask to speak to Ricky. Thomas goes up and answers the phone in his phony American accent. It is Russell P. Barnes on the line. Barnes is outside watching Thomas through binoculars. He asks Thomas when he is coming out and Thomas tells him that he isn't coming out. After a moment Barnes realizes how serious Thomas is. Barnes tells him that if he doesn't walk out he will be carried in a group of little bags. Not far from Barnes is a car with Murdah and Sarah Woolf. Sarah gets on the line and tells Thomas that she is waiting for him. Thomas prays to himself that this plan will work and hangs up the phone.

Chapter twenty-five finds that Francisco and others are still holding up after having waiting most of the night in the consulate. CNN showed up and he gave Latifa their statement to give to the press. Latifa is fussing with her hair and Thomas takes the letter from her and fixes her face so that she will be ready for her news appearance. Thomas then hands her back the envelope from his pocket. When the sun is beginning to come up there is another phone call from Barnes demanding to speak to an American. When



Ricky gets on the phone Barnes tells him that he has fifty minutes to get out of the building. Thomas leaves the room but before he can get far he is stopped by Benjamin. Benjamin is cussing him and has been listening in on the lines and heard the conversation between Thomas and Barnes and knows that his real name isn't Ricky. Thomas is able to render Benjamin unconscious without doing any major damage to him. Thomas leaves Benjamin with Latifa and walks outside where he is searched and frisked by numerous men before Barnes and Murdah come to talk to him. Barnes tells Thomas that he did a good job and leaves. Sarah Woolf steps out of the car and embraces Thomas and hands him something between their bodies. Thomas tells her goodbye and turns pointing a gun at Murdah.

Chapter twenty-six has had a time laps and Murdah and Thomas are on the roof of the consulate building. Thomas explains that he had followed Murdah's money for a day and found that there are in fact twenty-six people other than Murdah who want the Graduate to be a success. Thomas tells Murdah that now his life is at stake just like every other life in the building. Murdah insists that the helicopter won't come since he is on the roof.

The rest of the Sword Of Justice gets to the roof and announce that they have won and that they are being sent a helicopter to fly anywhere they want to go. Thomas begins to try and explain to them the truth of why the Sword Of Truth has been employed and where the money has come from. Thomas gets the packages that he pulled from Solomon's car. Inside the packages are the pieces to assemble a Javelin British surface-to-air missile compliments of Rayner. Benjamin is threatening to kill Thomas. Thomas announces that they are all dead if he puts the Javelin down. Suddenly the sound of something is flying toward them and it is the Graduate. Murdah begins to scream and claw at his handcuffs until his hands bleed. The helicopter makes a pass before Thomas can shoot. The Graduate shots Benjamin into small pieces all over the roof. Thomas shoots the Graduate before it can make another pass.

The message that CNN reads has been written and prepared by Thomas Lang and explains who is behind the Graduate Studies and the Sword Of Justice attacks. Solomon tells Thomas that Sarah Woolf is safe and that Mr. Murdah is being taken care of. He begins to tell Thomas about Russell P. Barnes when Thomas explains that it had been Russell that was flying the Graduate when it was shot down. When Thomas returns to England he finds Ronnie waiting for him.

Over the next several months the sale of the Javelin surface-to-air missile went up more than forty percent.

## **Part 2: Chapter 23-26 Analysis**

Thomas went from caring greatly about Sarah Woolf to being willing to let her go. Thomas had learned who she was over a period of time and grew less and less enamored with her. At that same time Thomas was able to call on Ronnie over and over again for different things and she was willing to show up and help each time. They didn't



have a physically romantic relationship but Thomas and Ronnie did form a bond. This bond will be rather strong and it will be Ronnie that is waiting for Thomas when everything is done.

The fate of those in the Sword Of Justice faction isn't expanded upon. It seems that they have done and planned enough that they can't go unpunished but their punishment isn't revealed. Likewise Solomon only explains that Murdah has been rounded up. Murdah had seemed to think that his life was so important that his presence in the consulate building would be enough to stop the others involved in the financial success of the Graduate from agreeing to go forth with the attack. When it becomes clear that the Graduate is going to attack regardless the demeanor of Murdah changes drastically and he becomes frantic with the desire to save his own life. The long term effect of this on the character would be interesting to see but isn't revealed in the story.

The purpose of the Graduate demonstration was simply to sell the gun, or helicopter in this case. The name of the story was the Gun Seller but it becomes clear that Murdah isn't the only gun seller in the story. Each character played a role in selling a weapon. At the end of the story there is a note that the sale of the Javelin went up more than forty percent. This itself implies that Thomas was a gun seller or promoter.



# Characters

## Thomas Lang

Thomas Lang is the main character in the story. He is retired from the British military. Thomas is very well trained from his days in the military and takes on odd jobs that employ his unique talents. Thomas only works enough to get by and is quite content to float through life with no real ambition. He isn't interested in finding money or love and appears to be happy living alone and letting the world pass him by to a large effect. Thomas is the main character in the story and everything that the reader sees will happen from Thomas' point of view.

Thomas has a very tainted opinion of love and will talk about it as if there is no way that a relationship can work out between a man and a woman because of the very different desires that a man and a woman will have. Despite his convictions on the futility of love Thomas will fall in love more than once in the story and will sleep with a third woman. Thomas appears to be a scoundrel in many respects but it becomes evident throughout the story that Thomas has deep convictions that will eventually force him to put his own life in danger to save others.

Thomas' character is flawed in many respects and isn't a white knight in shining armor but this will make him all the more believable. These flaws in his makeup will also be what makes his determination and willingness to do the right thing all the more heroic.

## Russell P. Barnes

Russell P. Barnes isn't continually seen in the book but he is a pivotal character. Russell in many respects will seem to be the face for the "bad guys" in the book. Russell P. Barnes works for the American CIA. It will be Russell's men that kill Alexander Woolf and attempt to kill Thomas Lang on one occasion. Russell will continue to have a larger impact on the story as the reader progresses. Although Russell isn't the financial benefactor for the state-of-the-art helicopter referred to as the Graduate, he will be a pivotal player in it's promotion. It appears that Russell has a lot at stake in regards to the Graduate and seems to have set up much of the terrorist movement called the Sword Of Justice that the Graduate is scheduled to demonstrate on.

Russell has money, influence, and power. It will be these three things that attracts Sarah Woolf to Russell Barnes. The extent of their relationship won't be discussed in the book but it appears that they were romantically involved. Sarah will state later in the book that Russell swore to her that her father, Alexander Woolf, wasn't going to be killed and that he intended to give them both a large sum of money. While the reader never actually sees Russell P. Barnes pull a trigger on a gun he is clearly to blame for multiple deaths in the course of the story.





## **Naimh Murdah**

Naimh Murdah is a billionaire and the financial force behind the creation of the Graduate helicopter and the push to get it tested. It is Murdah that will finance the Sword of Justice terrorist faction in order to have a reason to test it openly for the Pentagon. Naimh Murdah explains to Thomas Lang that everyone dies and so it shouldn't matter when or how. Murdah will kill one of his own men in front of Thomas Lang and let him die on his rug to prove that he has the power to do so.

## **Alexander Woolf**

Alexander Woolf is the owner of Gain Parker Inc, a company that makes springs, levers and other such mechanisms. When Woolf gets a government contract he soon finds that things aren't completely legal. In an effort to have him discredited the American CIA begin a rumor that Woolf is tracking illegal drugs and when that doesn't work they have him killed. It is Woolf that initially gets Thomas Lang involved.

## **Sarah Woolf**

Sarah Woolf is the daughter of Alexander Woolf. Sarah has lived her life being rich and when her father is ostracized by the American government and they face poverty Sarah strikes a deal with Russell P. Barnes that will get her father killed. Thomas Lang will fall in love with Sarah but upon finding out what she is truly like will leave her.

## **David Solomon**

David Solomon was in the army with Thomas Lang. Solomon works for the British Ministry of Defence. Solomon will prove to be one of the few people that helps Thomas when he becomes entangled with the Sword Of Justice and the CIA.

## **Ronnie Crichton**

Ronnie is a friend of Sarah Woolf's and will meet Thomas Lang originally to help him locate Sarah. Later on in the book Ronnie will fall for Thomas. When Thomas returns to London it will be Ronnie that is waiting for him.

## **O'Neal**

O'Neal works for the Ministry of Defence. Although he tries to portray the feeling of being in control it is obvious that he himself is taking order from the American CIA. He will appear much in the front of the show but will be seen little after Thomas Lang delves into the Sword Of Justice.



## **Ricky**

Ricky is a young American that is supposedly killed after being accused of being a terrorist. After Thomas sees the young man he will take on the name Ricky while he is in the Sword Of Justice organization telling everyone that he is from Minnesota.

## **Michael Lucas**

Michael Lucas works for Russel P. Barnes and Mr. Murdah. Michael will try to warn Thomas to be careful. Murdah will shoot Michael and let him die in the floor. Later in the story it will be Michael's name that Murdah uses to move money around for the Graduate.

## **Bob Rayner**

Bob Rayner is the body guard of Alexander Woolf and will be assaulted by Thomas Lang who believes at the time that Rayner is an assassin. It will be Bob who sells Thomas the Javelin surface-to-air missile that shoots down the Graduate.

## **Philip Barraclough**

Philip Barraclough is Ronnie's boyfriend. It will be Philip that helps Thomas figure out where the money comes from for the Sword Of Truth and the Graduate project.



# Objects/Places

## The Graduate

The Graduate is the name given to the state-of-the-art helicopter that is going to be used to open kill a group of terrorist. It is this helicopter that is at the center of the conspiracy that Thomas Lang is forced into. The helicopter is faster than any other helicopter and has amazingly fierce gunfire power. Thomas Lang will shoot the helicopter down while Russell P. Barnes is flying it.

## American CIA

The organization that Russell P. Barnes works for. It will be this organization that is responsible for the Graduate conspiracy and for the death of Alexander Woolf.

## The Sword Of Justice

The Sword Of Justice is the terrorist faction that Thomas Lang infiltrates as he is ordered by the CIA and Naimh Murdah. The Sword Of Justice will be responsible for assassination attempts and for attacking an American consulate building in Prague.

## The Javelin

The Javelin is the weapon that Thomas Lang uses to shoot down the Graduate helicopter. Thomas Lang gets the Javelin from Bob Rayner. The Javelin is a light-weight surface to air missile.

## Ministry Of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is the British organization that David Solomon works for. It is this organization that pulls Thomas Lang in for questioning about the attempted murder of Alexander Woolf.

## Lylla Street, Belgravia

This is the address that Thomas Lang is at when the book begins. This is the residence of Alexander Woolf and his daughter Sarah.



## Switzerland

The Sword Of Justice will go to Switzerland in order to assassinate a politician. It will be Thomas Lang that pulls the trigger.

## Middlesex Hospital

Thomas Lang is admitted into the Middlesex Hospital after Sarah Woolf shoots him in the armpit. It is here that Thomas Lang begins to understand that he is being lied to and set up from multiple places.

## CNN

The news organization that reports on much of the activities done by the Sword Of Justice. CNN news will be the ones that read Thomas Lang's report of the events that happen concerning the conspiracy and the Graduate helicopter and those involved.

## Scots Guard

The military group that Thomas Lang is retired from. Lang will have to use many of the skills he acquired while in the Scots Guard to stay alive. It was while in the military that Thomas Lang met David Solomon.

## Operation Dead Wood

The code name picked by the Americans to designate the plot to stage a terrorist operation. The plan is for the Graduate helicopter to be publicly demonstrated on this terrorist group in view of the media.



# Themes

## Actions Define Who You Are

The Gun Seller focuses on the view point of Thomas Lang. Lang is willing to describe himself as someone who is not concerned with getting ahead in life and is content to live seemingly at poverty level. When Lang meets Woolf and learns about the helicopter referred to as the Graduate it is here that Woolf asks Lang, "Are you a good man?" Woolf will ask Lang this again later in the story before Woolf is killed. Thomas never says that he is a good man and he appears to believe he is not necessarily a good man. Despite his own feelings about himself Thomas, from the very beginning of the story, is willing to put his own life in dangers way to try and do the right thing.

Thomas is asked to assassinate Woolf and refuses. That alone wasn't enough for Thomas. After refusing to kill Woolf, Thomas Lang will decide to go to Woolf's house and try to protect Woolf and his daughter. Later in the story Thomas Lang has been pulled into a deep conspiracy and is being forced into a situation where he knows that he will be killed. Sarah Woolf, Woolf's daughter, will ask Thomas to run away from her. It is here that Thomas admits that he can't because he needs to do the right thing.

There are other characters in the book that appear to be other than what they are. The American CIA members that are shown are in positions that should have been that of protecting people but are concerned with making money and willing to kill people in order to do it. This will put them clearly in the category of the villains. There are other characters in the story that will seemingly switch sides before the reader clearly understands where their loyalties lie.

## Desire for Money

The desire for money will be the driving force behind the conspiracy that eventually envelopes Thomas Lang and all the others that he comes in contact with. Thomas himself doesn't desire money being seemingly unaffected by it past desiring the basic essentials that he needs. Thomas will meet up with a friend of his early on in the story to discuss the things that are going on. While getting ready for this meeting Thomas will explain that his friend has a great love for money while he tends to look down his nose at Thomas for not trying to get ahead in life.

The person in the story that is responsible for the covert operations in which Thomas Lang has become connected is named Naimh Murdah. When Thomas first meets Naimh Murdah, Thomas explains that Murdah has a sheen that has been caused by the money that Murdah has. Although Murdah is considerably rich and is in no danger of losing his wealth, he murders people around him without remorse in order to get himself more money.



There are 26 other characters in the book that the reader never meets but is told via Thomas Lang that they all hold a share in the helicopter venture. Thomas Lang will ask Murdah towards the end of the story if he thinks these twenty-six people will call off the attack simply because Murdah's life is at stake as well as the other hostages. It becomes clear very quickly in the story that these people are willing to take the loss of whomever is necessary to further their own financial advances.

Sarah Woolf's desire for money could very possibly be what gets her own father killed. The author doesn't expand on the ramifications of her actions in regards to her father's demise. Thomas Lang will state at one point in the story that he is in love with Sarah despite the fact that he doesn't really know her. After Thomas is able to get to know Sarah he will seemingly lose some of these feelings and he and Sarah will part company.

## Love

There are many subplots in the story and the author uses many different kinds of love and situations where the characters show their feelings for each other. Thomas Lang appears to have a very low opinion of a romantic relationship between a man and a woman stating that they both want such different things and that is the reason it seldom works out. There are a great many reasons that Thomas Lang originally becomes involved with Woolf but what will eventually force him to accept a part in the conspiracy controlled by Naimh Murdah is the love that Thomas feels for Sarah. Thomas wants to save Sarah, protect her, although he admits it to be odd since he had only met her a few times. It won't be until the last few chapters that Thomas realizes that she is a liar and has openly used him. Thomas' ideas about Sarah appear to change although it seems he still cares for her. The reader is never told that he doesn't love her any more.

Thomas will also come into contact with Ronnie Crichton. Ronnie will provide Thomas with much help in his attempt to find out what he is actually becoming involved with. While the two aren't romantically involved they seemingly connect and it will be Ronnie who is waiting on Thomas at the end of the story. Thomas will say that while he was flying to meet Ronnie that he was getting ready to love somebody. The feelings that Thomas has for his friend, David Solomon, will also come into view and Thomas will explain that David is a true friend and for this reason Thomas will attach a title of love to David in regards to their relationship.

The author makes a differentiation between love and sex during the story. The couples in the story that the reader knows have had a romantic relationship will end. Ronnie has a boyfriend, Philip, and although the reader doesn't witness them having sex it is heavily implied that this is what much of their relationship is built on. Ronnie will be quite ready to end this relationship. Thomas will sleep with a woman named Latifa who is a member of the Sword Of Truth but they won't have a connection beyond that. There is also the unconfirmed thought that Sarah Woolf was sleeping with Russell Barns for the promise of money and safety. While the exact actions they participated in is unknown it is clear that neither had a true affection for the other.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in the first person from the point of view of the character Thomas Lang. It is in past tense and is limited. This point of view will place the reader along side of Thomas Lang as he tries to figure out what is happening. There will be times when the reader will have to wait to figure out what is going on in the story since the only point of view that the reader has is that of Thomas Lang. The reader won't know the name of Thomas Lang until the beginning of chapter two. The main character won't call himself by name or introduce himself to anyone for sometime and so the reader will be left to wonder for a time.

Since the reader is following the tale of Thomas Lang in the order of events as they happen the point of view will help the reader to understand Thomas' frame of mind and his reaction to the events that happen. There will be moments when Thomas will take action or have a plan that the reader isn't told about. For instance at the end of the story Thomas switches an envelope that is going to CNN news. It is unknown to the reader at the time that he has switched it or what was in the envelope. It won't be until the envelope is being read live that the reader will understand the plan that Thomas had had in place.

There will be dialogue in the story that explains some of what is going on but the author relies heavily on exposition. Some of the detailed explanations that are given will be given in paragraphs with no dialogue as the character, Thomas Lang, begins to discover them. One example of this is when Thomas Lang finds out why it is that Alexander Woolf has been discredited and killed. Although this is a major part of the story that has taken up much of the book, it will be explained over the course of several paragraphs grouped together. Other information the reader won't be told about until after Thomas has learned about them.

## Setting

The story is fictional but the setting and time are both modern and real. Much of the story will take place in England where the main character, Thomas Lang, is from. Although the setting will be focused here the author will move the characters through different countryside including Switzerland and Prague with regular mention of America.

The setting will prove effective in the believability of the story. The setting will also help in making the plot understandable. The helicopter that has been invented and dubbed the Graduate is easily pictured and believable. The factions that are introduced are also believable since the author uses the CIA and the Ministry of Defence.

Since the setting is well known the author won't use much time explaining scenery to the reader other than what is necessary to understand the layout of the situation that



they characters are in. The author will spend brief periods of time focusing on items that will prove to be pivotal later in the story. The last setting that is depicted in the story will take place in Norfolk England where Thomas will reunite with Ronnie. The setting is easily understood and adds to the plot of the story.

## Language and Meaning

The language in the story is very informal with slang words and phrases common in England. Even if these words and phrases aren't phrases the reader is familiar with the meaning is readily understood. The dialogue in the book will differ slightly from character to character depending upon ethnicity and education. The main character is forced to talk differently at different parts in the book. For a time when Thomas Lang is infiltrating the Sword Of Truth faction he will be known as Ricky, an American from Minnesota. There is a difference in Thomas' speech and mannerisms during this point in time but the reader will see these marked differences from the view of Thomas.

There is a lot of time that passes during the story. At times the main character will explain what has happened during the passing of time but other times it is simply understood that an unnamed amount of time has passed. There aren't always descriptions of what happens during these laps in time. At one point in the story Thomas takes Murdah hostage and brings him to the top of a building. The reader sees Thomas take the gun and sees Murdah's reaction but then there is a break in the paragraphs and the next section simply begins with them on the roof and no explanation as to the events between the two scenes.

The language used during the explanation of the helicopter referred to as the Graduate the language will often be very detailed and specific to the mechanisms used in the machine. While these explanations can be hard to understand the main character will also be confused and so will receive extra explanation that the reader will be able to glean. The language and meaning is overall effective and will add to the effect of the spy scenario.

## Structure

The book consists of 339 pages and is divided into two parts. The two parts of the book are divided into twenty-six chapters. The first part contains sixteen chapters and the second contains ten chapters. The length of the chapters is based on events rather than the number of pages that it spans. The chapters will be as little as nine pages long but some will contain more than twenty. In each chapter the author will use double spacing between paragraphs to denote a change in scene or a laps in time.

In addition to the story the author has included a guide for the book intended for reading groups. The questions in the back are essay like questions and are open ended. There is also a section where there was an interview with the author, Hugh Laurie. These questions are directed toward the origin of the book and the reason that Hugh Laurie



decided to write it. It will give the reader further insight into the creation of the characters and the situations that befall them.

The main plot of the story revolves around the helicopter, the Graduate, and Thomas Lang's attempt to stop those that want to use it to murder people. While this will take up the majority of the story there are several other subplots that have been included in the story. The main character, Thomas Lang, has a low opinion of romance but falls in love with Sarah Woolf although he doesn't know her. His infatuation with her will be played out as well as a growing affection for Ronnie. There will also be other characters that the reader will see in the story that have profound impact on the main character, such as David Solomon and Russell P. Barnes. These characters will add small subplots but will be quickly solved and will connect back to the main plot.



## Quotes

"Someone is trying to kill your father,' I repeated. 'I don't know who, and I don't know why. But I'm trying to stop them. That's who I am, and that's what I'm doing here.'" Part 1: Chapter 1: Page 13

"You, Mr Lang, were asked to perform an assassination. With or without your consent, money was transferred to your bank account. You present yourself at the target's house and very nearly kill his bodyguard." Part 1: Chapter 2: Page 32-33

"What will sell this machine,' he said slowly, 'to the Pentagon, and to fifty other air forces around the world, is the sight of it in action against a major terrorist operation.'" Part 1: Chapter 6: Page 90

"That was it. Yup. No 'you mean the scheme whereby an unspecified group of people conspire to sponsor a terrorist action with the aim of boosting sales of anti-terrorist military equipment?'" Part 1: Chapter 9: Page 119

"What Mr. Barnes is saying, Lang, is that you have stumbled upon an operation of considerable complexity here. There are ramifications about which you know absolutely nothing, yet you have, by your actions, made things extremely difficult for us." Part 1: Chapter 12: Page 157

"Prague was where Sarah had gone, and Prague was where the Americans were sending me for the first stage of what they insisted on calling Operation Dead Wood." Part 1: Chapter 15: Page 190

"One thing, and only one thing, was obvious from all of this. Dead Wood was not being improvised, and these people hadn't just sat down the day before with the Ladybird book of international terrorism. This train had been running for many months before I was dragged aboard." Part 1: Chapter 15: Page 193

"It is the middle of December now, and we are about to travel to Switzerland-where we plan to ski a little, relax a little, and shoot a Dutch politician a little." Part 2: Chapter 17: Page 222

"The man in the photograph, with his arm round my mistress of the dark tower, making her laugh-filling her with laughter, filling her with pleasure, filling her with bits of himself, for all I know-is Russell P. Barnes." Part 2: Chapter 19: Page 250

"Murdah shot Mike Lucas through the throat, and that was one of the wickedest things I'd ever seen, in a life not unmarked by the seeing of wicked things. But when Murdah decided, for reasons of convenience, or amusement, or administrative neatness, to bear false witness against the man he'd killed-to take away not just his physical life, but his moral life too; his existence, his memory, his reputation; using his name, blackening it, just to cover his own tracks-so that he could hang the blame for what was to come on a



twenty-eight-year-old CIA man who went a little funny in the head, well, that was the point when things started to change for me. That was the point when I started to get really angry." Part 2: Chapter 20: Page 262

"I had been shot, beaten, knocked off my bike, imprisoned, lied to, threatened, slept with, patronized, and made to shoot at people I'd never met. I had risked my life for months, and was hours away from having to risk it again, along with a lot of other lives, some of which belonged to people I quite liked." Part 2: Chapter 22: Page 278

"If, on the other hand, you went abroad in order to take over an American consulate building with automatic weapons, so that you could hold the consul and his staff to ransom, demand ten million dollars and the immediate release of two hundred and thirty prisoners of conscience, and then leave by private jet, having mined the building with sixty kilos of C4 plastic explosive-if that's what you nearly put in the Purpose Of Visit box on the immigration form but didn't, because you're a highly-trained professional who doesn't make slips like that-then frankly you can do without the staring and pointing stuff from the kids on the street." Part 2: Chapter 23: Page 290

"A helicopter that is smaller, faster, and better-armed than anything you have ever seen in your lives. It is going to come here, very soon, and take us all off the roof of this building. It is probably going to take the roof as well, and the next two floors, because this is a machine of unbelievable power." Part 2: Chapter 26: Page 329

"The Sword Of Justice is, in reality, being financed by a western arms dealer, in conjunction with renegade elements of the American CIA." Part 2: Chapter 26: Page 337



## Topics for Discussion

Titles of books can often be misleading. Discuss the title "The Gun Seller" and why this title is appropriate. In what ways is it inaccurate? Explain the reasons the book was named "The Gun Seller."

Thomas Lang admits that he doesn't know Sarah Woolf but loves her anyway. Later in the story when Sarah asks him to leave with her he says that in another place and time it might have worked out for "a year." Thomas never says it would have worked long term. Speculate on why he feels this way. Is it accurate to call what Thomas felt for Sarah Woolf love? Explain. Did Thomas stop loving Sarah? Explain why or why not.

Two of the characters that play a very short part in the story add a very important piece for Thomas. Explain the significance of Michael Lucas and Ricky, the American terrorist. Why does the fact that Murdah's is ruining Lucas' name matter to Thomas? Speculate on the effect that seeing Ricky about to die had on Thomas before and after Thomas took the name Ricky while in the Sword Of Justice.

Alexander Woolf approached Thomas Lang for an assassination job to see if Lang would take it. Is this move classified more genius or dangerous? Explain different ways it could have gone wrong and speculate on why Woolf felt it was necessary.

When a character dies in a story and has final words they often are important and are recalled. Explain the possible significance of Woolf asking Thomas Lang "are you a good man" just before he dies.

David Solomon appears early on in the story and takes an active role in the following events. Describe Solomon's role in the story and what he adds to the main character, Thomas Lang. Roughly explain how would the story have been different without him?

Naimh Murdah tells Thomas Lang that everyone dies. This appears to be his reasoning for it being acceptable that people are going to die in his demonstration of the Graduate helicopter. When Thomas Lang has Murdah handcuffed to the roof Murdah suddenly becomes crazy ripping at the handcuffs and screaming to shoot the helicopter. What does this reaction say about Murdah? Speculate on the reasons that Murdah had been rather calm and then suddenly began to go crazy?

Thomas is asked to run away more than one time by both Sarah Woolf and David Solomon. Thomas could have, in theory, told the Sword Of Justice group about what was going on. Explain the reasons that Thomas felt it was necessary to stay and remain undercover. Was it necessary to shoot the helicopter out of the sky to stop the entire project? Explain.