

London Bridges Study Guide

London Bridges by James Patterson

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Plot Summary

London Bridges, published in 2004 and set in the present, is a fictional account of Alex Cross, FBI Special Agent and his search for a madman named the Wolf. The Wolf threatens to bomb New York City, London, Paris, Frankfurt and Tel Aviv if his multi-billion dollar ransom demand is not met. He bombs a small town in Nevada right off the map to prove his point.

The Wolf enlists the help of an old antagonist of Alex Cross's, the Weasel, by beating him bloody, hanging him naked by his ankles and shaking him senseless.

The book brings back protagonist Alex Cross, a former Washington, DC homicide detective and now FBI Special Agent. Alex is in the middle of a much-needed vacation, during which he flies to Seattle to visit his young son and then stops in San Francisco to see his girlfriend, Jamilla. He is still in the airport at San Francisco when he is approached by two Federal agents and told he must fly to Nevada immediately.

Alex arrives in Sunrise Valley, Nevada, or what used to be Sunrise Valley; a massive explosion has decimated the town, leaving nothing but sand, sage and scrub. The agents soon learn that a man was spotted filming the explosion with a video camera. He is someone Alex knows: a vicious psychopath named Geoffrey Shafer, also known as the Weasel.

Back home in DC, Alex and his FBI colleagues, along with CIA and Homeland Security staff, are called into a conference room at FBI headquarters to view the film they've been sent of the Sunrise Valley bombing. Suddenly the phone rings and the Wolf identifies himself. He insults them, boasts of his superiority and hangs up. Soon it is learned that there have been two more bombings - one in England and one in Germany. This time people are killed. When the Wolf calls again, he tells them that the next targets are New York, London, Washington and Frankfurt. He warns them not to investigate him and not to inform the public or he will attack immediately.

The FBI, CIA, Homeland Security, FEMA and the Domestic Emergency Support Team are mobilized to identify and stop the Wolf. A huge investigation is set up, one of the largest in history, employing both mobile and fixed surveillance. Knowing that the Weasel is involved, Alex desperately searches his files for clues, trying to recall everything he knows about him. When surveillance of the Weasel's psychiatrist shows someone visiting her in a wheelchair (the Weasel had been known to use a wheelchair as a disguise), Alex bursts into the psychiatrist's apartment; but he finds only an actor, not the Weasel. It was a trap. Now the Wolf knows that they ignored his warning not to investigate him.

After killing the CIA director, Thomas Weir, in a daring and ingenious plot, the Wolf calls again. He tells Ron Burns, the director of the FBI, that he was lucky, that he had been the original target. The Wolf warns them not to disobey him again and gives them his

price to go away: a combined total from each city of over two billion dollars and the release of 57 Middle Eastern political prisoners - all within four days.

Alex pursues leads all over the world in a desperate attempt to track down the Wolf before he can make good on his evil threat. From Guantanamo Bay to Riyadh, from London to Paris, Alex endures what he considers the incompetence and blasy attitude of slow-moving bureaucrats who just get in his way. Meanwhile the Wolf manages to stay a step ahead of him, blowing up bridges in New York City and London as well as a bridge and an entire neighborhood in Paris.

Just outside of Nice, France, Alex follows a Mercedes CL55 in a breakneck race down a winding mountain road. When the car catapults over the mountain and crashes onto the highway below, Alex thinks he has caught the Wolf; but the dead man turns out to be Martin Lodge, the head of Scotland Yard.

Back in New York City, down streets and over rooftops, Alex and Nat chase a man they think is the Wolf, a man who has just had plastic surgery. They watch him fall from a rooftop and die in the alley, but it turns out that he is not the Wolf.

In another twist, Alex discovers that his family has disappeared. He then receives an email from Martin Lodge's widow, Klara, claiming to be the Wolf and saying that his family will soon be returned.

Alex strains the relationship between the FBI and the CIA, talking to everybody from junior analysts to the new CIA director, James Dowd. Dowd tells Alex that, while investigating the murdered CIA director Weir, it was learned that a Russian, Anton Christyakov, had been recruited by the CIA and brought out of Russia in 1990, when he was transported to England to meet with agents, including Martin Lodge. Christyakov was then moved to Paris, where he reunited with his family. In 1994, when his home was blown up and his family killed, Christyakov blamed the CIA. He is known to squeeze a black rubber ball his son had given him whenever he is angry or upset.

Alex goes to see Tolya Bykov, the man at or near the top of the Red Mafiya. After a useless meeting with him, he leaves the house and notices something about one of the bodyguards: he's squeezing a black rubber ball. Alex chases him down and jumps into the car he has started, punching and breaking his nose. The man bites down on something and Alex realizes it's poison. The man convulses and dies in the seat of the expensive car. Alex retrieves the ball as a trophy, telling himself that the Wolf is finally dead.

Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2

Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

The novel opens in Salvador, Brazil with Geoffrey Shafer, the psychopathic killer better known as the Weasel, enjoying his six-bedroom villa on the beach. He has been up to his old tricks, hunting and killing prostitutes on the dark, narrow streets of the old city - and no one seems to care. At two in the morning he returns to his villa with a dark young beauty named Maria. He notices movement in the bushes. Suddenly three men attack him and beat him unconscious. After telling Maria she did a good job by bringing him to them, they shoot her dead.

When the Weasel comes to he is hanging upside down by his ankles from the ceiling of his own bedroom, which has mirrors everywhere. He is naked, bruised and bleeding, with his hands cuffed behind his back. Maria is hanging beside him, dead. His captors' leader tells him about various methods of torture and then demonstrates them in agonizing detail. One of them involves grabbing the Weasel's shoulders and shaking him violently until he convulses. When he is finally cut down, the Weasel begs to know what his captors want. The leader tells him, "I found you. And I'll find you again if I need you." Then he identifies himself: he is the Wolf.

Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

London Bridges opens in Salvador, Brazil at the villa of one of the antagonists, Geoffrey Shafer, also known as the Weasel. The author, James Patterson, shows the Weasel living sumptuously in a city that doesn't care that its young prostitutes are disappearing. There hasn't been one mention of their abduction and murder in the newspapers. Shafer thinks that what he's heard about the people must be true: "When they weren't actually partying, they were already rehearsing for the next one." We know immediately what kind of man this is by his lifestyle; he brings home a 13-year-old prostitute, Maria, with the obvious intention of torturing and murdering her.

The Weasel, a cruel psychopathic killer who enjoys watching others suffer, is an old enemy of the main character, Alex Cross. It is interesting, therefore, that we see his capture and subsequent torture in almost the first scene in the book. As cunning, dangerous and despicable as the Weasel is, we understand that there is one who is even more cunning (he can find the Weasel anytime he wants to), more dangerous and more despicable (he is well-versed in torture and doesn't mind employing it). Thus early in the story, the author introduces the Wolf as a treacherous villain.

Part 1: Chapters 3, 4 and 5

Part 1: Chapters 3, 4 and 5 Summary

Frances and Dougie Puslowski are hanging clothes to dry under the blue skies of Sunrise Valley, Nevada when they see a full convoy of U.S. Jeeps and trucks come bouncing up the dirt road toward their mobile home park. Dressed in full battle dress, the soldiers begin screaming at the residents that they must evacuate; everyone has to leave their houses now. "Now, people!"

Frances runs into the trailer to gather their two young girls, ages two and four. While inside she checks her phone, which mysteriously doesn't work. Outside she hears her frightened neighbors questioning the soldiers and being told, "You hear me? Now!" When she hears a gunshot, she runs to the screen door to see her husband lying dead on the ground. As she vomits in front of her daughters, a soldier kicks open the screen door and screams at her to get out unless she wants to die, too, because he'd just as soon shoot her as talk to her.

Meanwhile, on board a small cargo plane, none of the men knows why the small town of 315 souls is targeted for extinction; they just know that they're being paid well. They've each received their individual pieces of the puzzle but they don't even know each other's names.

The munitions expert has made a BLU-96, a Daisy Cutter bomb, which was originally designed to clear forests and jungles for military landing zones. Some sick dude realized it could wipe out people just as well so here he was, flying over the Tuscarora Mountain range toward Sunrise Valley. The bomb was being assembled right there on the plane. The Daisy Cutter will leave nothing but scorched earth below, a burn mark in the desert.

In the Bel Air section of Los Angeles, the Wolf watches a live video transmission of the evacuation. He talks to the scene as it unfolds, telling the soldiers to take it easy; no one is to be hurt. He becomes agitated and squeezes the black handball in his fist rapidly when he sees a civilian pull a gun on a soldier, knowing what will happen to him. When the man is killed, the Wolf calls him an imbecile.

As the black and white image shows the plane gliding toward the town, he calls the men inside "angels of death" and thinks himself an artist. He watches as the bomb is pushed out the payload door, plummets toward Sunrise City and detonates 100 feet above the ground. As he watches, the bomb levels everything within 500 yards. "This is just a warm-up. My payback," says the Wolf.

Part 1: Chapters 3, 4 and 5 Analysis

James Patterson has constructed his novel in an unusual manner: each chapter is only two or three pages long. Therefore, each summary and analysis segment covers several chapters.

In chapters three through five, the author introduces the Wolf's diabolical plan to blow up an entire town. The Wolf first evacuates the town using fake soldiers who herd the citizens onto trucks at gunpoint, reminiscent of the roundup of Jews in Nazi Germany. Unfortunately, one of the residents pulls a gun to resist and is shot dead on the spot.

The Wolf, watching via live video transmission, is displeased and squeezes an old black handball fiercely. This ball will reappear frequently through the book and will play an important role in the end. Patterson's use of an airplane dropping a bomb is reminiscent of wartime and immediately depicts the Wolf as a dangerous enemy.

Part 1: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

Part 1: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 Summary

Alex Cross is vacationing, his first break in over a year, on the West coast. He stops in Seattle to visit his nearly three-year-old son, whom he hasn't seen in four months. Alex Jr. lives with his mother, Christine, in Seattle, while Alex lives in Washington DC. The parents are involved in what Alex calls a "friendly" custody struggle.

Father and son hold hands as they stroll around the Wallingford area, where Christine and Alex Jr. now live. Little Alex shows his Dad his mother's vegetable garden; then they go to the park, the zoo and Green Lake. The boy can't understand why Alex always has to go away, although Alex tries to explain as best he can. It breaks his heart that he can't be with his son every day. He takes Alex Jr. back to Christine and after more hugs and pictures for Nana Mama and the kids, he returns to his rental car, knowing that it will always hurt to leave his son.

Next Alex flies to San Francisco to spend time with Homicide Inspector Jamilla Hughes, whom he has been seeing for about a year. They became close when they worked together on a murder investigation. As he rushes to the smiling, clapping Jamilla and sweeps her up in a bear hug, he is approached by a man and woman in dark suits, who flash their FBI badges at him. They introduce themselves, confirm Alex's identity and, after Jamilla walks away, inform Alex of the Sunrise Valley bombing. He's wanted on the scene "like, an hour ago." Alex shakes his head in incredible disappointment as he informs Jamilla, telling her how sorry he is. He tries to hug her but she backs away, waving goodbye to him sadly.

Alex flies in a private jet from San Francisco to a small town in Nevada and from there he catches an FBI helicopter to what was once Sunrise Valley. He sees smoke but no fire; there's nothing left to burn. Why would anyone go to the trouble of destroying this little hole-in-the-wall town? He learns that the residents, except for one who'd been shot, had been evacuated by what appeared to be U.S. Army Guardsmen. They'd been driven 40 miles away and left there. By the time the Nevada State Police found the townspeople, the trucks were long gone. Alex wonders what happened: *Chemical warfare? War? Is that possible? Of course it is.*

Feeling that this is the scariest thing he's ever seen in his years as a police officer, Alex dons a chemical protective suit, including gas mask and gear; but after he sees Army officers without theirs, he quickly removes the suit. Then he discovers that two rock climbers had seen a man using a video camera to film the explosion. One of them took pictures of the man and of the evacuation.

The local police refuse to turn the pictures over to Alex until their chief, running late because of a hunting trip, arrives. Once in possession of the Canon PowerShot, Alex reviews the pictures of the evacuation and finally sees the man who filmed the

explosion. His back was to the camera, but with each shot it was obvious that he expected the explosion. Then the man walked toward the photographer and his face became clearly visible. Alex can't believe it; he *recognizes* him. He's been chasing him for years. He is a vicious psychopath named Geoffrey Shafer, better known as the Weasel.

Alex had first encountered Colonel Geoffrey Shafer in Washington three years before, after Shafer had murdered more than a dozen people, mostly poor and black. Alex tells another agent, Fred Wade, how the Weasel had murdered his own wife in front of their children in a London market. As Alex phones the information in to Washington, he notices that, in one picture, the Weasel climbs into a red Ford Bronco and in another picture, he is driving away, with the license plate showing. Had the Weasel made a mistake? Maybe it was part of the plan.

Part 1: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 Analysis

In these chapters the main character, Alex Cross, is introduced. Much of the novel is shown through his first-person account. The author works to establish Alex as a sympathetic character from the beginning. He is shown visiting his young son in Seattle and his heartbreak at having to leave him is genuine. Things go from bad to worse for Alex when he goes to San Francisco for some much needed R&R with his girlfriend but is immediately interrupted by FBI agents who tell him he's needed - now.

Also in these chapters, Alex is once more introduced to his old nemesis, Geoffrey Shafer, the Weasel. When he flies to the bombed-out town, the most frightening scene he's ever encountered, Alex is shown pictures of a man who had videotaped the whole thing. He recognizes him as his old enemy the Weasel, who was introduced in a previous Alex Cross novel.

In this, the tenth in a series of Alex Cross adventures, the reader is given no description of Alex Cross. Although the author drops a few veiled hints throughout the novel about Alex's ethnicity, what he looks like is never made clear.

Part 1: Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18

Part 1: Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 Summary

The Wolf is still in Los Angeles, where he's broken into the home of Fedya and Yelizaveta Abramtsov; the Mafiya gangster and his wife are away. He is reveling in the confusion of the FBI and other U.S. officials regarding the bombing. The Wolf thinks of Fedya's house as his own because without him, the Abramtsovs are small-time punks with nothing.

When the couple arrives home and demands to know who he is, he introduces himself. Fedya then realizes he's a dead man and as he turns to run, the Wolf shoots him in the head and neck. The Wolf orders the wife, Liza, to sit on his lap. He tells her that he likes her but he has no choice because she and Fedya stole his money. Then he asks her if she knows *zamochit* and as she screams, he begins with her little finger.

Back in the Nevada desert, it is pitch black, freezing cold and disorienting. Alex tries to formulate a plan. As he wanders in the rubble, questions and comments swirling around in his head, one question stands out: why only one body? Why spare the others?

Ginny Moriarity waves him over and informs him that the Bronco used by the Weasel has been found at the airport in Wells.

As they fly in the helicopter over the desert toward the airport, Alex thinks back to three years before, when Shafer had kidnapped Alex Jr.'s mother, Christine. Neither Christine nor Alex knew that she was pregnant with their son at the time. Although she'd been rescued, Christine was never the same after that. Alex blames the Weasel for the custody struggle.

Alex is mulling Shafer's possible connections as the helicopter approaches the airport. He sees a small jet taking off, even though the airport was shut down. The helicopter pilot says that it's a Learjet 55 and that they'll never catch it. As they land, Alex gets the news that the jet is off radar, vanished off the face of the earth.

Meanwhile Shafer drives a dark blue Oldsmobile through the desert, thinking about the smoothly working plan and the backup contingencies in place. He's learned that Alex has shown up and wonders if that's part of the Wolf's plan, too. He stops in Fallon, where he'd been instructed to call for the next set of instructions. The Wolf informs Shafer that he was spotted and photographed near Sunrise Valley. Wondering how this could have happened, the Wolf tells him that it was part of the plan; the photographer works for him. Then he tells Shafer to go have some fun, to kill somebody: "That's an order," the Wolf says.



Almost 24 hours after the bombing, Alex is frustrated by the lack of information and leads. Not one of the survivors knows anything and nothing unusual was noted before the bombing. No one has taken credit for the crime.

Alex decides to go home to Washington, where he finds Nana, his older children, Jannie and Damon and the cat, Rosie, on the front porch. After Alex shows them the pictures of their beloved little Alex Jr., Nana cooks them a delicious meal and tops it off with ice cream for dessert. Jannie shows her Dad a pen and ink drawing she's made of her heroines, Venus and Serena Williams. They watch the Wizards on TV and then the kids wander off to bed. Alex enjoys family time; this day was much better than yesterday.

Alex climbs the stairs to his attic office, where he reviews his file on Sunrise Valley. He calls Jamilla but has to leave a message, which he hates to do. Later he receives a phone call from Fred Wade, who tells him that a receptionist in a Best Inn in Fallon was raped and murdered two nights before. They've obtained a description of a guest who may have been Colonel Shafer.

After a restless night, Alex gets up at 4:30 a.m., signs permission slips for the kids to go on a field trip, then slips out to go to work without waking them. When he arrives at the Hoover Building, he meets with about a dozen others in the Strategic Information and Operations Center on the fifth floor.

Lots of crisp white shirts and striped ties surround the table; Alex wears jeans and a navy windbreaker that reads "FBI TERRORISM TASK FORCE." He feels that he's the only one dressed correctly that day. His partner for the morning is Monnie Donnelly, a superior analyst and good friend. After hours of discussion of both domestic and foreign (al Qaeda and Hezbollah) terrorist groups, the formal assignments are given out. Alex doesn't receive one, which makes him wonder if he'll be hearing from FBI director Burns soon.

Suddenly every pager goes off simultaneously. The message reads: TWO SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES MISSING AT KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE IN ALBUQUERQUE. CONNECTION TO SUNRISE VALLEY SITUATION BEING INVESTIGATED. WILL KEEP INFORMED.

Part 1: Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 Analysis

The author continues to show the coldhearted cruelty of the Wolf as he invades the home of a Red Mafiya couple who, he believes, have stolen money from him. He shoots the man in cold blood and after ordering the wife to sit in his lap and asking her if she knows *zamochit*, he proceeds to break her bones, starting with her little finger. Once again we see the sadistic behavior of which the Wolf is capable and are given a hint of his possibly Russian ethnicity.

In this chapter, the author reveals why Alex and his young son's mother, Christine, are no longer together and why Alex holds such a grudge against the Weasel. We get only a glimpse: before Christine and Alex knew that she was pregnant with Alex Jr., Shafer

kidnapped her. Patterson doesn't reveal what happened to her in captivity, but it's obvious that it was so traumatic that it ruined the relationship between Alex and her.

When Alex returns home to Washington, DC, he is shown to be a family man, a good guy, someone with whom the reader can easily identify. He lives with his grandmother, Nana Mama, the strong matriarch who raised him and his two oldest children, whom Nana helps him raise. This is where he is happiest and he wonders why he doesn't learn his lesson and stay here. The author illustrates Alex's character in this way instead of simply stating that he is family-oriented.

Part 1: Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24

Part 1: Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 Summary

That night, the same group of FBI operatives is called back to the conference room. Alex realizes that things are getting serious when half a dozen CIA agents in suits, carrying briefcases, join them, along with six hitters from Homeland Security. FBI Director Ron Burns enters the room with CIA head Thomas Weir and Homeland Security chief Stephen Brown.

Burns informs the group that, although they were contacted two days before the Sunrise Valley bombing, they were given no indication as to where, when or even what "the violence" was to be. They have been contacted every day since and today, each of them received a video of the bombing, which Burns shows them. It begins with the trucks arriving in Sunrise Valley and shows the man who was shot in the street, the convoy driving off with the frightened citizens and the bomb tumbling through the sky, followed by the explosion. Burns tells them that they are expecting a phone call within the next few minutes. They wait in silence until finally, the phone rings.

Director Burns explains that the call will be conducted via speakerphone and that the group is permitted to listen (he says that they are very big on rules). The call is answered and the speaker identifies himself as the Wolf; the hair on the back of Alex's neck stands up immediately. Alex knows that the Wolf is a ruthless killer and has pursued him for nearly a year.

The Wolf taunts them, telling them that he is honored to talk to so many self-important people. He calls the CIA "liars" and forces the group to speak in unison, agreeing that they understand how important it is to listen to him. He shows he's in total control. Then he hangs up.

Alex doesn't expect him to call right back; he knows the Wolf's just playing with them. After waiting awhile in the conference room, Alex goes back to his office and wonders what the Wolf is up to. And how is Geoffrey Shafer connected? He pulls up data on the Weasel and puts an old girlfriend - the Weasel's therapist, Elizabeth Cassady - under surveillance. He's then called to a meeting in the crisis room.

Alex learns that there have been two more fire bombings in Western Europe. One was in Northumberland, a town of nearly 400 near Scotland, where the people *weren't* evacuated. Whole families were wiped out. Alex and others watch in stunned silence as a film from Scotland Yard, taken by a local policeman, is shown. The other bombing was in Lubeck, Germany, a secluded farming area. Eleven college students who resisted were killed. No contact has been made so far; all they know is that the violence is escalating.



Alex returns to his review of the Weasel's thick file. He takes notes on Dr. Cassady's notes on Shafer. She notes that he is attractive, articulate and somewhat restless, with considerable presence. He is grandiose in describing his past accomplishments and admits to a desire to engage in sadomasochistic sexual behavior. Dr. Cassady notes that Shafer seems to be attending the sessions for the purpose of seducing her and that it's working.

After 16 visits, Dr. Cassady no longer noted any of Shafer's personal feelings that led to their affair; finally she stopped taking notes altogether. Alex is speechless at her lack of professionalism.

Later that night, Alex is again called to the crisis room, where he's told that a call is expected from the Wolf. When he calls he first asks to speak to Mahoney, whom he tells to leave the room because he is too unstable. The Wolf then demands that the Hostage Rescue Team not be mobilized and that there be no further investigation; he insists that the group respond that they understand. He identifies the next targets: New York, London, Washington and Frankfurt. The Wolf warns that, if a word goes public about him, he will attack immediately. Then he's gone, without having given them any timeframe.

The President of the United States meets with the heads of the FBI and the CIA and several intelligence experts. They hold a videoconference with the German chancellor and British prime minister. No one has anything concrete on the Wolf; they think he's former KGB and in his late 40s, but no one knows for sure. They do know that there can be no negotiations with him and that he must be hunted down and terminated.

Part 1: Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 Analysis

Tension builds in this chapter as Alex meets with the heads of American security: the directors of the FBI, the CIA and Homeland Security. The Wolf starts playing head games with the leaders by sending them the film of the bombing of Sunrise Valley. Then, after gathering them together, calling them and insulting them, he hangs up, thereby demonstrating that he is in charge. Later that night, he kicks it up a notch by commanding the group to meet again, phoning them, singling out one man and ordering him from the room, making demands and again, hanging up without providing many specifics. The author uses the age-old plot of good versus evil; the good, in the person of Alex Cross, must find and destroy evil, as personified by the still unknown man who calls himself the Wolf.

Washington DC is an obvious choice of venue for this international thriller in which a madman seeks to bring the world powers, particularly the United States, to their knees.

Part 2: Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32

Part 2: Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32 Summary

The Wolf walks the streets of downtown Washington, DC and plots more murders, while lamenting the fact that all large cities are becoming boring, antiseptic places. He thinks that no one will ever understand him or his extraordinary level of paranoia; he knows that it's his Achilles heel, but it drives him to win at all costs.

He squeezes the little black ball and plans another lesson for the government. Driving toward FBI Director Burns' home in the suburbs, the Wolf asks himself if the Burns family should die. Would that be the most effective lesson? Since he isn't sure, he thinks that the answer is probably no; besides, there's another target, another grudge to settle. *"Revenge, a dish best served cold."*

At the same time, Alex is becoming increasingly frustrated with the process-obsessed Federal government. He sees the prescribed protocol - the FBI will oversee the investigation and FEMA will be in charge of consequence management - as neat, orderly and *unworkable*. When he meets with the Domestic Emergency Support Team in the Hoover Building, the discussion is led by Robert Campbell McIlvaine, Jr., who's been coaxed out of retirement by the Director because he's so good at what he does. All agree that this is not a false alarm.

The second session, which deals with consequence management, is run by FEMA. The ability of health care providers to deal with a big blast in Washington and New York is called into question and the dangers of a sudden evacuation are discussed. As for suspects, the list is whittled down to al Qaeda, Hezbollah, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad or a freelance group. Against the orders of the Wolf, the largest investigation in history has begun.

Later that evening, while studying Geoffrey Shafer again, Alex remembers that Shafer had used a wheelchair disguise recently while traveling back to the States from England. He hopes the clue will put them a step ahead of the Weasel.

Making his way through Union Station in a collapsible wheelchair, the Weasel likes the feeling of being valuable, of being somebody. He has good military contacts in Washington DC and London and is glad that the Wolf has given him the opportunity to do some damage. He despises Americans and wants to hurt them.

The Weasel meets with a contact, an assistant to a higher-up in the FBI, who tells him that no one listened to the Wolf's warning not to investigate and that Agent Cross is

assigned to Shafer. In response to this news, Shafer calls a woman and tells her that he has scut work for her that will pay \$50,000 for an hour of her time.

Shafer meets Captain Nicole Williams in a mall food court. He's concerned that she has let herself go and gained so much weight since the last time he saw her. But she's very good at her specialty and has always delivered what was asked of her. He explains her mission: to fly past an office building in a helicopter and shoot through the window. When he informs her who is going to die, she doesn't lift an eyebrow, just doubles her price.

Alex is hopeful that they've gotten a break in the case. They believe that the Weasel is in the underground garage of Dr. Elizabeth Cassady's apartment building. He's watched as he enters her penthouse apartment in a wheelchair. Racing to ring the bell of 10D, Alex calls out, "FBI, open the door" and Dr. Cassady does so. When Alex sees the wheelchair come into view, he aims his gun; but the man isn't the Weasel. He's an actor, he explains and was paid handsomely to go to the doctor's apartment. He tells Alex that the Colonel says hello; since Alex is there, it's obvious that he ignored the explicit instructions not to investigate.

Nikki Williams is impressed by the dazzling audaciousness of the plan. She is picked up by the MD-530 and is told by the pilot that they will set down for 40 seconds at Rock Creek Park so that she can get on the copter's skid. She thinks to herself, *In and out of harm's way in less than nine minutes. He'll never know what hit him.*

At his desk, Alex is feeling edgy and ragged at missing the Weasel. He knows now that Shafer has somebody on the inside who had warned him. Suddenly an ear-splitting alarm sounds in the building. His pager signals a terrorist alert; he hears voices yelling for him to go to the window. He looks out and sees two men in fatigues running across the inner courtyard. As agents converge on the figures, they surrender and lie face down on the ground. Then Alex watches as a helicopter drifts around the Hoover Building, hovers for a moment and then banks sharply away and out of sight. Seconds later he hears that someone's been shot upstairs.

The MD-530 slides between the office buildings, avoiding radar and confusing the casual observer like someone playing hide-and-seek. Nikki Williams spots her target, FBI headquarters and sees two men in suits watching the diversion below. When she sees one of the men try to push the other away, she pulls the trigger. The helicopter escapes easily and soon sets down in Virginia. As Nikki jumps from the skid and salutes the pilot, he extends his right arm and shoots her twice. Those were his orders, his piece of the puzzle.

Part 2: Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32

Analysis

The author shows the Wolf's paranoia and escalating madness in this chapter as he walks the streets of Washington DC; with the spread of capitalism and multinational

businesses all cities, to him, have the same boring sameness. He sees only the crime. He observes that major crime has spread as well. Strange that a man who blows up whole towns, tortures and murders, is disturbed that crime follows capitalism.

The Wolf also thinks that no one understands him, a common cry of the criminal mind. There is a hint here of the reason for his paranoia and criminal acts, a mention of Paris, a foreshadowing of things to come. Once again there is a reference to the little black ball - a key to everything about the Wolf. His thought, *Revenge, a dish best served cold*, is a foreshadowing and the theme of this man's entire purpose in this story.

Also shown in this chapter is Alex's frustration, which will continue to mount throughout the novel, with government bureaucracy. The author highlights the weaknesses and failings of a government with too many departments that rarely cooperate with each other.

It's interesting here to note the nicknames given the Wolf and the Weasel. Wolf calls up an image of a wily, intelligent predator, one who stalks and kills, one to be feared and respected. Weasel, on the other hand, brings to mind a cunning rodent, one to be despised, who causes damage but is primarily a nuisance. The author gives Geoffrey Shafer, the Weasel, no excuse for his depravity. He is simply a man without a conscience who appears to enjoy hurting others. He's shown here using a wheelchair as a disguise - truly despicable - and enjoying it. When he hires an old acquaintance for an assassination, he notices that she has "let herself go" and wonders if she'll be able to do the job. Thus the reader is led to dislike this man even more.

The Weasel's cunning is further demonstrated when he hires a physically impaired man to fool Alex and throw him off. When he arranges for his old friend, the overweight sharpshooter he hires for the assassination job, to be murdered immediately afterward, the Weasel's cold, merciless side is reinforced.

Part 2: Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39

Part 2: Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 Summary

Alex is disturbed by the rumor that FBI Director Burns has been shot dead but no one can confirm anything. He's relieved to get a call to go to the second floor, where he's led by guards to holding cells he didn't know existed to interview two prisoners. Alex sees two frightened black men in cammies who stink and need haircuts and shaves. He makes it clear to them this is a homicide investigation; he is their lifeline and they'd better tell him every detail.

Alex learns that they are drifters, Army veterans who live near Union Station. They had been hired by someone with an English accent who paid them \$200 to do what they'd done. Alex reports this to two senior agents and asks them if Ron Burns had been killed. They tell him that the murder victim was in fact Thomas Weir, the CIA Director.

Chaos reigns as word gets out about Weir's killing. Then the body of a woman with a Winchester rifle is found in the woods of northern Virginia. In the crisis room, the Wolf makes contact again. He informs the grave-looking Director Burns that he's a lucky man because the bullets were meant for him. The Wolf says that Captain Williams is dead because she didn't listen. She was to tell no one about her mission but she'd told her husband; now he's dead, too.

Then the Wolf informs them of his price to go away: a grand total of 2 trillion 150 billion dollars plus the release of 57 political prisoners, all from the Middle East. He gives them four days to meet his demands. Finally, he says that Burns should keep looking over his shoulder because he is going to die before this is over.

When Burns asks Alex for his assessment, he describes the Wolf as a creative, obsessive planner with a need for complete power who organizes and delegates well. Most of all, he's vicious and enjoys watching people get hurt. Alex thinks the Wolf is giving them plenty of time to think about what could happen because he knows it will be difficult to raise the money and because he's preying on their minds. Alex also thinks that the Wolf is lying about the assassination attempt; he believes that Weir was the intended target. If so, it's the best clue they have. Where would Weir have come across the Wolf? It's a question they have to answer in a hurry.

Meanwhile, the man who'd placed the Wolf's most recent phone calls exits the lobby of the Four Seasons hotel; he'd been instructed to make the calls from there. As he walks out, he makes certain that the concierge desk and the doormen see him. Tall, bearded and wearing a cashmere coat, he strolls along M Street, watching as police cruisers speed toward the Four Seasons. He enters a white van and sits in the back seat beside another man, who asks him if it went well. When he answers in the affirmative, the man



pulls out a Beretta and shoots him in the right temple. Now the police and FBI have a description but no one alive who matches it.

Alex is skeptical about the caller's description and questions why he'd used a hotel phone instead of the usual cell phone. When he arrives home that night, he's surprised to see Dr. Kayla Coles visiting with Nana. Nana insists that it's just a social call, but Kayla explains that Nana had been feeling a little faint again so Dr. Coles had stopped by as a precaution. Nana insists that she's fine but will go in for tests if it will make everyone happy.

Alex likes Kayla but has always been a little intimidated by her. When Nana tells Alex to sit down and join them, Kayla says she must go. After she leaves, Nana says that she thinks Kayla comes around to see Alex; he admits that the thought has occurred to him, but he wonders why she leaves when he gets there. Nana thinks that maybe it's because Alex doesn't invite her to stay or because he gawks at her. When Alex asks Nana if she's sure she's okay, she replies that she's 83, more or less; how okay can she be? "You're not getting any younger yourself," Nana tells Alex as she goes to bed.

Not everyone is headed for bed. The Weasel, urged on by his baser desires and following orders from the Wolf, goes hunting in the poorer sections of Washington, DC. He checks out a petite black girl for awhile and then picks her up. He repeats what she says about her breasts: *They're all mine*.

Not long after, Alex arrives in a familiar neighborhood, feeling as though he is back in homicide. He is investigating a murder with an old buddy from the DC Police Department, John Sampson. They find the body of a young prostitute on the third floor of a garbage-strewn row house. She's naked, with her hands tied behind her back and a plastic bag stuffed in her mouth. Both breasts had been sliced off and her face had been attacked. Alex runs through the checklist and knows that he's seen exactly this kind of murder before. The Weasel is back, Alex informs John; but that's not the worst of it.

Part 2: Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 Analysis

The author depicts the Weasel using poor, black Army veterans as a diversion, knowing full well that they could be killed or at least jailed for what they do. He pays them \$200 and knows that to them, this is a great deal of money. The Weasel's preying upon them ties in with his frequent murders of poor black prostitutes, as shown in horrifying detail in this group of chapters.

When CIA Director Thomas Weir is killed, the Wolf tells FBI Director Burns that the killer was, in fact, aiming for Burns. A mistake? Perhaps, but Alex wonders. The reader has to wonder, too; so although clues are being dropped along the way, many unanswered questions and red herrings remain in this mystery.

Also in these chapters, Dr. Kayla Coles, another potential love interest for Alex, is introduced. She's a strong, independent woman, the kind to whom Alex is attracted, but she also intimidates him a little. He gets tongue-tied around her. The reader is also

given a glimpse into Nana's feisty character and Alex's constant worry over her health when she informs him, "You're not getting any younger yourself."

Part 2: Chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45

Part 2: Chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 Summary

Alex and John Sampson go to a bar after the homicide investigation. He tells Sampson about the Sunrise Valley tape but not about the threats or ransom demands, which bothers Alex a lot. They talk about Sampson's married life and how he's really happy for the first time; Sampson tells Alex that he should try it. Finally Alex confides in him about the threat against Washington and the ransom and warns Sampson that he can't tell anyone, including his wife.

Although he feels guilty about telling Sampson, Alex thinks that he didn't have a choice. He feels burned out; his nerves are frayed. Twelve hours toward their deadline have passed and Alex feels as though his head will explode. The last time he felt this way was during the Weasel's last killing spree in Washington.

As Alex enters his house at two in the morning, the phone begins to ring. He snatches it up but hears only a hang-up. Then it rings again and there is another hang-up; then it happens again. Alex takes the phone off the hook and stuffs it into Nana's oven mitt. He hears a sound and turns around to see Nana standing there. She demands to know what's going on; he tells her as much as he can.

The next day Alex is paired with Monnie Donnelly again. They're told to gather information on Colonel Shafer and on the mercenaries he uses in the attacks. Monnie already knows a lot about it and fills Alex in as she retrieves more data. Most Special Forces are legitimate, although they operate in a legal netherworld. They aren't subject to the US military code of conduct. While they are subject to the laws of the countries in which they serve, some of those countries have poor judicial systems, if any. Most mercenaries today work for PMCs, or Private Military Companies.

Monnie discovers that the Weasel works for Main Force International, with offices in London, Washington and Frankfurt. He was arrested with over a million pounds on him while trying to "free" diamond mines from the populace. Somehow he had escaped but there are no details, no follow-up. Alex guesses that the Wolf chose the Weasel because he's good at getting out of tight spots; Monnie thinks that the Wolf picked him because Shafer gets under Alex's skin and Alex is close to the FBI Director.

That afternoon, Alex is on his way to Guantanamo Bay, where over 700 detainees are being held in connection with the war on terror. He goes to Camp Delta and is escorted to the psychiatric ward, where he is introduced to a Saudi Arabian prisoner. The man claims he is innocent and says he was brought there 227 days ago from a teaching job in Newark, New Jersey.

Alex says he'll help him if he can, but that he must tell him everything he knows about the Wolf. The man tells Alex that he had worked in security for the Saudi Arabian royal

family and had traveled with them to the US. Although he had decided to remain in the US, he still had friends in security back home. His friends told him of a Russian who had spoken with dissidents in the royal family and was looking for capital to finance a big operation that would hurt the US and Western Europe; a doomsday scenario had been discussed. It was his impression, the man says, that the Russian was a woman with the code name of Wolf.

Alex returns to Washington and meets with FBI Director Burns and Tony Woods. When Burns asks him if the Saudi was telling the truth, Alex says that he thinks they should let the man go because he had told them what he'd been told. He should either be charged or let go. Burns sighs and tells him that the President says that they can't make a deal when it comes to the Wolf. Somehow they have to find him in the next two days.

Alex rises at five the next morning and has breakfast with Nana. When he tells her that he has something to talk about, she tells him that she's fully awake; he knows that *he'd* better listen to *her*. Nana says that she was born in this house and she's not leaving but they agree that the children should go to Aunt Tia's, just in case. Then she insists on fixing a decent breakfast.

The Wolf is in the Middle East at a little fundraiser in a tent city in the desert, 70 miles southwest of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. No one knows for certain if this is really the Wolf; wasn't the Wolf supposed to be female? He stands apart before the meeting, talking to no one. When the meeting is called to order, the Wolf informs the group that they should all rejoice because everything is going according to plan.

One mujahid asks how they can know this, aside from simply taking the Wolf's word for it? The Wolf smiles and assures them that it can be verified in newspapers and on television and radio, then asks each of them if they are willing to make another donation. When he reaches the Arab troublemaker, the mujahid says that he needs more; the Wolf's word isn't enough. In response, the Wolf raises his hand and shoots the man on the spot. Then he asks if anyone needs to hear more; there is only silence. The Wolf says "Allah Akbar" and thinks, *God is Great and so am I*.

Part 2: Chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 Analysis

Alex is shown here as needing to confide in someone. He tells John Sampson, an old friend from his DC police force days, about the Weasel's return to town and about the disturbing Sunrise Valley bombing tape. It bothers Alex that he can't tell him more. Alex's very human, fallible side is then revealed when he says more than he should during their conversation. Will Sampson keep the information secret? Can he really be trusted? The reader begins to feel that no one is above suspicion.

Because this book is the tenth in a series, the author provides little physical description of many of the characters in this book; characters who have been previously introduced are often not described again. Obviously Patterson hopes that the reader will fill in the missing information by going back and reading the previous novels in the series.

As Alex works with one of his partners, Monnie Donnelly, to investigate the Weasel, she shares her insight as to why the Wolf chose Shafer to work for him. She thinks it's because the Wolf knows that the Weasel gets under Alex's skin and that Alex is close to the director of the FBI. This is another reference to past Alex Cross novels. Alex's friendship with Ron Burns is given passing mention in this novel and Burns himself is not described. While the reader sees little or no direct contact between Cross and Burns, there is evidence to suggest that their friendship must have been introduced in previous books.

Alex flies to Guantanamo Bay to interview a detainee whom he hopes knows something about the Wolf. Patterson handles this reference with kid gloves, giving the reader just enough facts to tie it in with the story, without expressing any political opinion. He says only that Guantanamo Bay is an interesting and historical place.

Alex's worries for his family's safety increase after he receives several hang-up calls in the middle of the night. Nana's courage and strength of character are shown when she refuses to leave her home but agrees that the children should be sent away for awhile. She expresses her concern for Alex too by telling him that he needs a good breakfast.

When the Wolf (or is it really the Wolf?) meets with a group of leaders from the Middle East, the reader wonders if perhaps he is allied with a terrorist group. His cold, calculating, need-to-be-in-charge nature is shown once again when he shoots a dissenter in cold blood and thinks that *God is Great and so am I*.

Part 2: Chapters 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52

Part 2: Chapters 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 Summary

On his drive to work, Alex's cell phone rings. He learns that Geoffrey Shafer has been spotted in New York City, visiting an apartment under surveillance because of al Qaeda activity. Alex races to Andrews Air Force Base and boards a Bell helicopter bound for the Downtown Manhattan Heliport; from there he's rushed to the FBI offices in lower Manhattan.

Michael Ainslie, the senior agent in charge, briefs Alex about a terrorist cell that is staying in a small brick building near the Holland Tunnel. It's not clear if Shafer is still at the apartment. The terrorists are members of al-Jihad who are posing as a relief charity called Afghan Children Assistance. The FBI has found indications of terrorist planning: chemicals and mixing apparatuses in a self-storage space near the Holland Tunnel and a pickup truck owned by a cell member that has been modified with heavy-duty springs. Raids of the Holland Tunnel walk-up and the storage facility are planned.

Although the Wolf had warned them not to do this, how could they not? So an HRT force and a SWAT team from NYPD have taken over the top floor of a TriBeCa meatpacking plant near the Holland Tunnel. HRT is pushing to go in. Alex wonders what he would do if it were his call; he knows that it could be a test. Surveillance has several shots of the front of the building and has done thermal imaging in an effort to detect Shafer. Alex is told that two big shots on the Homeland Security "hit list" are in the building. Neither was on earlier surveillance tapes and neither had not been known to be in the country.

At 2:30 a.m., Alex joins a two-man sniper team in the brownstone across from the targeted apartment. They are holed up in a ten-by-ten room, waiting. *Go. No go.* Alex decides to go down to the street.

Three o'clock comes and goes as Alex waits with an HRT around the corner from the apartment. Technically he's not supposed to be there, but Ned Mahoney had smoothed the way. At four o'clock he gets strapped into a black flight suit with full armor and is given an MP-5. The HRT guys know his stake in getting Shafer.

Then amazingly, they are given the green light. As they rush toward the building, Alex hears snipers breaking windows. Helicopters appear and men "fast-rope" down while others climb up the building. He hears explosive charges at the doorways; no negotiations here. Alex finds a bearded man with a rifle and subdues him. He sees a woman run across the living room and yells for her to stop but she doesn't; she runs right out an open window. He hears her scream and then nothing. The building is secure, but where is the Weasel?



Ainslie meets Alex on the stairs and tells him that Washington wants him involved with the interrogations. Alex chooses two young men and questions them alternately through an interpreter; then he picks out a woman and adds her to the mix. Alex uses rationalization, projection and minimization interrogation techniques. Whenever Alex leaves the room, CIA officers question the suspects. Alex asks them about both Shafer and the Wolf. Nothing works. These people are tough, experienced and highly motivated; they believe in something.

The next terrorist Alex interviews is older and speaks English. He is willing to talk about Shafer. He tells Alex that Shafer had been there, but they had feared that he might be an American agent. Shafer told them that he had access to tactical nuclear explosive devices, which makes Alex shudder. The terrorist says they believed he meant suitcase nukes.

When Alex plays his game of give and take and implies that it may be possible to send the cell home, the terrorist admits that he didn't get the impression that Shafer had nuclear weapons in his possession. He says that he thought they'd been set up by Shafer, that he knew they were under surveillance. Alex is afraid he's right; it was a trap, a test. The man then tells Alex that Shafer escaped through the basement, which connects to a building to the south.

As Alex pushes through the crowd toward his ride, a kid calls out, "Dr. Cross, over here. Dr. Alex Cross!" Alex walks over to him and the kid says, "You were warned . . . by the Wolf!" Alex takes him down and the kid screams that he's just a messenger; he was paid by some English guy to give Alex the message.

Part 2: Chapters 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 Analysis

In this exciting group of chapters, the reader is carried along as Alex joins the HRT and SWAT teams when they converge on a known terrorist cell. The Weasel was spotted going into the cell's apartment building but not coming out. Tension mounts as the author describes Alex waiting hour after hour for the order to go in, then donning a black flight suit with full armor in anticipation of "blowing that creep away."

Alex is in the thick of the action during the attack, describing men blowing out doorways, climbing the side of the building and sliding down ropes from helicopters. Some terrorists are captured, some are killed and one woman jumps out a window to her death. Alex is asked to interview the survivors but learns only that Shafer has escaped again; the Weasel even taunts him through a student who's been paid to tell Alex, "You were warned."

Part 2: Chapters 53, 54, 55 and 56

Part 2: Chapters 53, 54, 55 and 56 Summary

In New York, Wolf walks on Manhattan's East Side, thinking of the world leaders with whom he's dealing as predictable, pathetic weaklings. He returns to his penthouse apartment, one of several he owns around the world and calls a senior agent from the New York FBI office. She tells him everything the Bureau knows about him and what they're doing to find him. He screams, "This is what I'm paying you for? I should kill you instead." Then he laughs and says it's a joke, but warns her to stay away from bridges.

Bill Capistran has been hired by the Weasel to blow up the 59th Street Bridge, also called the Queensboro Bridge. He and two other men in white painters' overalls are amazed at how easy it is to plant the charges; there is virtually no security. They had worked with two students from Stony Brook University, one from Iran and the other from Afghanistan, to develop a way to blow up the bridge using several small charges at different points along the foundation. As he walks out onto the support structures, he sings "The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feeling' Groovy)."

Meanwhile, the Wolf's four-day deadline passes and nothing happens. Major news networks and papers have learned of a threat, but they don't know what cities are threatened or who is doing the threatening. After years of yellow and orange alerts from Homeland Security, no one takes the rumors too seriously.

Alex is home for the Memorial Day weekend, sleeping, when he receives a 3 a.m. call to go to the Hoover Building for the Wolf's next call. At 3:43 the Wolf calls, full of smugness and disdain. He tells them that he hates them and all that America stands for. Then he reminds them of his instructions not to investigate his whereabouts and says that he watched that "poor girl" fall out the window. He reminds them of the missed deadline and says, "Now watch what I can do."

At 3:40 a.m. the Weasel sits on a bench in the riverfront park on Sutton Place and 57th Street and watches the East River, thinking about what a messed-up country the United States has become. He presses a button on his cell phone at 3:43. Microseconds later, a message from hell is delivered to New York City and the world when an explosion rips through the 59th Street Bridge. Rivets pop and old steel structures snap. Tarmac crumbles and concrete fractures. Cars and trucks plummet into the river below. Shafer gets up from the bench and goes to get some sleep. He knows that things are just getting started. He's on his way to London; *London Bridge*, he thinks. All the bridges of the world are falling down.

Part 2: Chapters 53, 54, 55 and 56 Analysis

Patterson continues to reveal the arrogance of the Wolf as he shows him walking a New York City street thinking about dealing with "incredible weaklings" - the leaders of the

free world. He is there because he can't miss the "deadline." He talks to an FBI informant and the reader sees more of his incredible cruelty when he screams at her that he should kill her, then tells her he's only joking. A foreshadowing of his motives is revealed as he tells the informant to stay away from bridges, saying, "Bridges are very dangerous places. I know this from past experience."

When the Weasel hires someone to blow up the 59th Street Bridge, the reader is given a clue about the Wolf's future target. Patterson injects a little humor here as the bomber, Bill Capistran, hums the "59th Street Bridge Song" by Simon and Garfunkel as he works.

Part 3: Chapters 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62

Part 3: Chapters 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62 Summary

As the Wolf heads toward Montauk, Long Island in his black Lotus at a speed of over 100 miles an hour, he talks to the American president, the German chancellor and the British prime minister on one of his cell phones. He tells them the call can't be traced; his tech people are better than theirs. When the prime minister says that they need more time, the Wolf hangs up on them, relishing his show of disrespect.

Then, knowing that they're waiting for him, the Wolf calls back, using a second cell phone. He taunts them by saying that they're weak and powerless and asks who put people like them in power. The prime minister tells the Wolf that it's he who has a choice to make because they can't put the package together so quickly. They will make a deal, if they must, but they need more time, the prime minister says. The Wolf tells them that he'll think about it and disconnects.

In London, disguised as a 70-ish businessman named Randolph Wohler, the Weasel deplanes at 6:05 a.m. As ordered, he heads for a small house near Hyde Park to visit his children, twin daughters and an older son, who live with his late wife's sister. He threatens to kill his sister-in-law if she doesn't make the twins stop crying. He also tells her to pass along a message that no one is safe, not even the police and their families. When the Weasel asks the twins about their brother Robert, they don't answer, so he screams the question again. He tells them to kiss him but they refuse. Because he's not permitted to kill them, he sweeps the precious porcelain dolls that belonged to their mother off the mantel and sends them crashing to the floor, saying, "In memory of your mother!"

Alex Cross arrives in London feeling that nothing makes sense and that he can't catch his breath. They're past the deadline and living on borrowed time. After a short nap, he goes to New Scotland Yard and is taken to the office of Detective Superintendent Martin Lodge, who takes Alex to a meeting with M15, M16, a few from the Special Branch, the prime minister's chief of staff and the usual crowd from emergency services. Alex groans inside and wants to yell, "We're past the deadline - they're blowing up things!"

The Wolf arrives at a beach house outside Montauk and enters through the back door to meet with his associates in the Red Mafiya; they are gathered in the library/sitting room. He explains that the governments have asked for an extension and tells them that, if they act now and blow up the cities, they lose as well. The Wolf then calls the world leaders and gives them another two days: but the price has doubled. His associates cheer after he hangs up on the leaders.

As the Wolf leaves the group, he promises that the models will arrive shortly. He heads for the Long Island Expressway, picks up his cell phone and presses a few numbers.



Even from far away, he can hear the beach house explode. *Zamochit!* It is a beautiful thing.

In London, Alex hears about the 48-hour extension and about the Long Island bombing and wonders what it all means. He and a friend from Interpol, Sandy Greenberg, meet at the Cinnamon Club, a restaurant on Great Smith Street. They discuss the case, then lighten up and talk about personal things. Alex tells Sandy that he's seeing someone that he likes a lot. She teases him about how far away she lives and then asks Alex if he is truly over Maria, his first wife. Alex admits only to himself that he may never find closure until he solves Maria's murder; so he just tells Sandy that he's smitten with Jamilla. Half an hour later, she drops him at his hotel on Victoria Street, promising him that she's on the case.

Geoffrey Shafer trudges through Little Lebanon, wondering what has happened to his city. He sees Middle Eastern coffee shops and grocers and smells ethnic cuisines. He watches as two elderly men smoke tobacco through a water-filtered hookah. When he reaches Henry Seymour's apartment, he is disturbed by the man's appearance. He has lost 30 pounds in the last few months and his once thick, black hair has become thin, gray tufts. The two men had fought together in Desert Storm and as mercenaries in Sierra Leone. Henry applauds when Shafer gave him his piece of the puzzle; he says that he's always wanted to blow up London.

Part 3: Chapters 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62 Analysis

The Wolf continues to play with the leaders of the free world, calling them weak and asking them how they ever got elected, then hanging up on them, his favorite thing. When he calls back, he's surprised when the British prime minister stands up to him, telling him that he is the one who must make a choice because they will raise the money but need more time.

The author shows us that, although the Wolf would love to blow up the cities, he also wants the money, which is why he considers what the prime minister has to say. We continue to see his unrelenting ruthlessness when, after meeting with several Red Mafiya associates at a luxurious beach house, he promises them beautiful women, leaves and, once far enough away, blows up the house, killing them all. Now there are few alive who have seen his face.

The Weasel is portrayed once more as the rotten, despicable villain that he is. He is even cruel to his own children. When he shows up at their home unexpectedly, they exhibit nothing but fear. He threatens their aunt with death unless they stop crying. Even as he leaves, he destroys what little is left of their mother, whom he had murdered years before. He knocks to the floor several porcelain dolls that had belonged to her, yelling, "In memory of your mother!" Could anyone be more hateful?

Finally, more bombing is threatened, this time in London.

Part 3: Chapters 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69

Part 3: Chapters 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 Summary

Alex is in another meeting with police and other government officials. He is told of what will happen in every contingency. If there is any warning of an attack, the airwaves will be turned over to the government for public broadcasts. Text messaging will be available, as will bullhorns and public address speakers. The people will be told if there is any warning. The mood is grim as maps and emergency materials are distributed. Martin Lodge whispers to Alex that a call has come in from the Wolf. Suddenly there is an explosion in the building.

Alex makes it downstairs to the site of the bombing and sees unbelievable chaos. The Scotland Yard sign in front has been blown away. A black van's remains are imbedded in the sidewalk; there is only a hole where the Broadway entrance to the building had once been. Alex goes back up to the crisis center to watch the tape, which shows armed police outside the building on Broadway. Then a black van, driving at a high rate of speed, crashes into the barrier at the entrance. There's a fiery explosion. Martin Lodge remarks that no one was hurt and that maybe the Wolf has a heart. Alex hears a voice say, "He doesn't have a heart. He just has a plan." It was Alex's voice.

With Martin Lodge and three of his detectives, Alex takes a van to an estate near Heathrow Airport. Lodge explains that a suspect with a missile launcher has been spotted on the roof of a private home. The house is rented by a Pakistani and is a few hundred yards from the runways at Heathrow. Halting all flights into Heathrow is being discussed. They are watching two monitors that show the rooftop from opposite angles. One man appears and then another, carrying a missile launcher. Suddenly two shots ring out. The men have been hit, but not by the Special Forces snipers.

The deadline is just hours away and no one knows what's happening. Alex feels that things have descended into total madness; they are observers of absurdity. He takes a walk near Westminster Abbey and examines the history on display. Traffic is light; people don't know what's happening, but they know it isn't good. Alex calls home but nobody answers.

There are no attacks as the deadline passes. He calls his kids at his aunt's house, then finally reaches Nana; she'd gone for a walk with Kayla. Alex goes back to the hotel and dozes for a few hours until the phone rings and Martin Lodge is on the line. Sitting bolt upright, Alex asks, "What happened? What has he done?"

Martin explains that he is in the hotel lobby and wants Alex to come to his house for breakfast and meet his wife and family. He tells Alex all about his Czech wife, Klara and his three children, Hana, Daniela and Jozef. Alex spends a pleasant morning with them



as they serve him a traditional Czech breakfast of *kolace*, *rohliky*, *turka*, *parek* and *michana vejce*.

Alex returns to his hotel room, where there is nothing to do but obsess about the Wolf. He decides to take a walk but soon has the feeling that he's being followed. He checks in at Scotland Yard, but there is still no word from the Wolf. Alex walks past 10 Downing Street to Trafalgar Square and then back to his hotel, still unable to shake the feeling that he's being followed. He calls his kids and then talks to Nana, who is still by herself. She says it's oddly peaceful, but she misses everybody. So does he.

Fully dressed, Alex falls asleep across his bed but is awakened by the phone at 4 a.m. A voice claiming to be Martin Lodge tells Alex that they need to go to the Houses of Parliament and that he'll meet Alex on the sidewalk outside the Strangers' Entrance. As Alex walks over, a man steps from the shadows and points a gun at his heart. It's Geoffrey Shafer, who tells Alex that he's dreamed of this moment. Alex doesn't think, just reacts; he charges Shafer like a bull, knocking the gun away. They struggle and although Alex hurts Shafer, he won't go down. Then Shafer pulls a knife, but Alex is able to step away and grab his gun. Shafer rushes toward Alex and Alex shoots him. As the Weasel lies dying, Alex tries to get him to identify the Wolf. The Weasel's last words are "Go to hell."

London Bridge is falling down...Henry Seymour drives an old white van through the early morning darkness, welcoming death. He parks as close as he can to the Westminster Bridge, then gets out and leans on the parapet as he watches the heavy traffic. Henry thinks about how he loves Big Ben and about his boyhood in Manchester; he watches the tourist buses. He remembers a poem by (he thinks) Wordsworth about the view from Westminster Bridge and thinks that someone should write a poem about him and all the other poor bastards on the Bridge. At 5:34 a.m. the Bridge, ignited by the van, blows apart at its center. The Wolf calls Scotland Yard and tells them he keeps his promises. He tried to build bridges but they keep tearing them down; and it's only the beginning.

Part 3: Chapters 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 Analysis

As Alex sits in a contingency meeting in London, he feels the desperation of the situation. Obviously there can be no real contingency; major cities like London and New York can't be evacuated. A nuclear bomb detonated in cities their size will kill thousands, if not millions. The reader feels Alex's fear for these people and his helpless frustration. A bomb suddenly explodes right outside Scotland Yard and by the time Alex returns to the crisis center, several people are already watching a videotape of the explosion. There is no explanation as to who obtained the tape, where it came from or how they got it so fast.

More hints of Middle Eastern ties are presented as Alex is called to a building near Heathrow Airport, where two Middle Easterners with missile launchers have been spotted on a rooftop. Before the British snipers can take aim, however, the men on the

roof are mysteriously shot; no one knows by whom. The author continues to weave an elaborate pattern of intrigue and deception that seems impossible to unravel.

When the deadline comes and goes, Alex feels that they are living in madness. Then Martin Lodge invites Alex to his home for breakfast, where he meets Alex's Czech wife and their three children. Is this just a pleasant break from the madness or is the author introducing more intrigue?

When Alex is awakened in the middle of the night by a phone call he thinks is from Martin Lodge, telling him to meet him outside the Houses of Parliament, Alex heads over and on the way, someone steps from the shadows and points a gun at Alex's heart. It is Geoffrey Shafer. After a fight to the death scene, the Weasel is finally defeated. Alex sends him straight to hell and good wins out. After a seemingly endless round of losses, the author gives the reader some hope; but Martin Lodge is strangely absent and Alex doesn't seem to notice.

Then the reader learns where the book gets its title. London Bridge is literally falling down as the Wolf calls to say he keeps his promises.

Part 4: Chapters 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76

Part 4: Chapters 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 Summary

On a test track located 60 kilometers south of Paris, the Wolf invites an old friend, one of the few people who know him by sight, to take a ride in his Porsche-powered prototype Fabcar. Ilya declines, saying that he doesn't like the noise or the speed. The Wolf insists, telling him that he'll never forget the ride. They race around the track as the Wolf exults in the noise, the vibration and the g-forces. When the ride is over, he jumps out and shouts. His friend is pale and shaking. The Wolf tells him that he's sorry, but that he knows what happened in Paris. Then the Wolf shoots his friend and walks away.

Later the Wolf visits a farmhouse southeast of the track. He sits in the kitchen in the dark. Soon Artur Nikitin, a former KGB agent, arrives alone, as instructed. The Wolf tells him that he wants to blow a big hole in Paris and cause lots of trouble. He promises Nikitin enough money to walk away and do as he wishes. After receiving his piece of the puzzle, Nikitin promises to do the job and says that he doesn't like the French anyway.

Alex returns to Washington and, despite orders to go straight to the Hoover Building, he goes home. He spends the evening with his kids, who are back at home and with Nana. As he plays the piano on the sun porch, he hears a knock at the door. It's Ron Burns with two agents.

Director Burns invites himself in and tells Alex that everything has changed. He says that Tom Weir, the murdered CIA Director, did have some connection with the Wolf after the Wolf left Russia. Something involving the two of them had happened in France a long time ago; a mistake was made. Alex demands to know what mistake and says that they have to stop playing games with him. Burns assures him they don't know.

The Director goes on to say that the Wolf has made contact again and has changed some of the rules. He's given them 96 hours before a doomsday scenario occurs and has changed some target cities: they are Washington and London but also Tel Aviv and Paris. He wants \$4,000,000,000 and the release of the political prisoners; but this time, he's gone public and has given everything to the press. There will be panic around the world.

After breakfast with Nana, Alex leaves for Paris. On the plane he reads CIA files about a KGB agent, supposedly the Wolf, who lived in Paris years ago and may have worked with Tom Weir. What was the big mistake that had happened?

Alex arrives in Paris to find that things seem to be running smoothly. In a high level meeting, an army general tells Alex that they haven't ruled out the possibility that the violence is part of the jihad, of Islamic terrorist attacks and that the Wolf is merely a



fictional creation. Alex doesn't say a word. He thinks to himself: this is why I'm here? This is what they believe? The general tells him to keep an open mind. Alex tells him that he does have an open mind but that he's dealt with the Wolf before and knows that he is not a religious man; he is no jihadist.

That night, Alex walks around the city and sees French soldiers, tanks and Jeeps in the streets; Paris is in a state of siege. He dines at a relaxing restaurant, which helps him unwind. Then he continues walking, wondering what the tie is between the Wolf and Tom Weir and what the Wolf's thing is with bridges. When he arrives back at his hotel, Alex calls his kids. Jannie answers with "Bonsoir, Monsieur Cross" and Alex wonders if she's psychic. They question him about Notre Dame and the Hunchback and the gargoyles, trying to keep things light, then tell him that they miss him. When Alex hangs up, he realizes that he is in a city under a death threat.

The next morning Alex is assigned a partner, Etienne Marteau, a detective with the French National Police. He suspects that he's been assigned more to watch Alex than to work with him. Alex speaks to Ron Burns' office about going home. His request is denied by Tony Woods, who reminds Alex that Weir and Wolf probably met in Paris.

As Alex wades through police files, he feels that his progress is slowed by Marteau, who takes frequent cigarette and coffee breaks. When Alex learns that the Wolf is expected to call, they gather in the crisis center and soon hear his derisive voice. The Wolf tells them that this deadline is a final one. They can investigate openly if they like, but the money must be paid on time and the prisoners of war must be released or there will be tens of thousands of murders.

The French National Police have intercepted several calls from the phone of a known arms dealer who specializes in Red Army hardware and who has made sales to radical Islamic groups. Alex and Marteau pore over the transcript of a conversation between the arms dealer and a terrorist with ties to al Qaeda. Based on the conversation, Alex doesn't believe that there will be any contact with higher-ups on the ground there; he thinks that they don't have a clue about the larger plan. Marteau says that he'll pass that on, but Alex doubts that he will. Suddenly Alex thinks, "I am all alone here...the ugly American."

Part 4: Chapters 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 Analysis

After taking a former KGB man for a ride in his sports car and nearly scaring him to death, the Wolf shoots him in cold blood to eliminate one more person who recognizes him. Then he goes to a farmhouse outside Paris to meet with another former KGB agent. The Wolf gives him his piece of the puzzle: the former agent is to blow a big hole in Paris. The Wolf also tells him that Paris is very special to him; that, in another life, he had lived there for two years. This provides another hint about the Wolf's motives for all the bombings and hatred. The reader wants to know what happened in Paris - what was the big mistake?



Alex goes home, not to the Hoover Building, as ordered, but to Nana and his children, who have been brought home by their Aunt Tia. Defying his boss's orders shows that Alex is a man on the verge of total burnout. Yet as he plays the piano on his sunporch at eleven that night, Alex's boss comes to get him. Ron Burns explains that something did happen in France involving murdered CIA director Weir and the Wolf. Burns says that they have 96 hours before a doomsday scenario occurs and that Tel Aviv and Paris have been added to the Wolf's list. So Alex is sent to Paris.

Alex isn't sure what kind of reception to expect in Paris. Why is this? Given the recent cool relations between France and the US, we assume that the French government may not receive an FBI man with open arms. Alex does find that the command center in Paris works better than the ones in London and Washington because it is simpler and smaller. However, the French still believe that there's a good chance that the jihad is behind everything. Alex tells them he's dealt with the Wolf before and that the Wolf is not a religious man.

After a relaxing, low-key dinner, Alex walks the streets of Paris and wonders what happened there to transform the Wolf into a vindictive killing machine. He returns to his hotel and reaches out to his children by telephone. As children often do, they understand more than he gives them credit for and bombard him with questions, trying to keep everything light; trying to help. Once more the author gives his readers a slight breathing spell in this high-powered, fast-paced thriller.

Alex is assigned a partner by the French police but feels frustrated because the clock is ticking. The Wolf calls again, full of derision and loathing. Alex feels like the ugly American, all alone.

Part 4: Chapters 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82

Part 4: Chapters 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82 Summary

As Alex walks to the Prefecture de Police, obsessed with the twisted mind behind all of this, there is a flash and he suddenly sees a motorcycle heading toward him on the sidewalk. He jumps into the street, arms wide, balanced to jump to either side. Then he notices that no one else seems concerned. He recalls being told that motorcycles are popular in Paris and that riders often use the sidewalks to avoid heavy traffic. He wonders if he's losing it.

Alex then heads to L'Hotel Beauvau to give a talk about the Wolf. He informs the group of French police and army officials of his background and credentials and then tells them how long he's been tracking the Russian. He realizes that, even though they are willing to listen, they are steadfast in their belief that Islamic terrorists are the true source of the threat to the four targeted cities. When he returns to his cubicle at police headquarters, he finds that he has a new partner.

She is Maud Boulard, an *agent de police* who tells him that they will be working in the "French police way." They visit known Red Mafiya hangouts and talk to Russian thugs she knows. Afterward she insists on having a leisurely lunch; Alex is furious but doesn't show it. When they leave and walk down the street, a white limousine pulls up next to them and they are ordered to get in. When Maud refuses, she is shot dead. Then Alex is ordered into the car.

The limousine speeds off and they change cars a few blocks away. A Russian informs him that he knows Alex has two children and that it's show and tell time. He aims a Beretta at Alex's head and says that they're taking him to see the Wolf. Then he pulls a hood over Alex's head so that he can't see where they're going. When they arrive at a small stone farmhouse in the country, the hood is removed and they're met by two armed guards. One, a large man with a white beard, orders Alex inside and informs him that he is the Wolf.

The man with the white beard tells Alex to sit down in a dark, airless room with an unlit fireplace. He tells him that it's important that everyone realize the seriousness of the situation. When Alex tells him that they do understand, he punches Alex in the jaw, causing Alex to fall backwards and hit his head. Two armed guards help Alex up.

Again the bearded man explains how serious the situation is and says that, like the stupid woman in Paris, no one understands that they are going to die until the moment it happens. He tells Alex that the money must be paid in full and the prisoners released. When Alex asks why the prisoners must be freed, the white-bearded man hits him again, saying, "Because I say so!" He then retrieves a heavy black valise, opens it and explains that it's a suitcase bomb with the same yield as Hiroshima. He says that the former Soviet Union used to manufacture them by the truckload and that there are one



or more of them in every target city. Then he tells Alex to take one back, to consider it a gift. "Hurry, Dr. Cross," the man with the white beard says.

Alex is driven back to Paris and left in the crowded parking lot of a shopping center, his hands cuffed to the valise. The car roars off. Alex feels slightly dizzy. Two policemen appear and he explains to them who he is, asking them to call the directeur de la securite publique. The place is evacuated, except for official personnel, while Alex sits and waits. A bomb-sniffing dog comes in, freezes within five feet of the valise, then growls. Alex is frightened and has a hard time imagining being vaporized. A bomb technician cuts the handcuffs off and Alex runs to a van, realizing that if the bomb detonates, he's still in the hot zone. When the valise is opened, they learn that the bomb is real and in working order. However, Alex is told that there is no trigger; it can't blow up. His captors just wanted to scare him. "It worked," Alex says.

Knowing that the bomb had everything necessary for a nuclear explosion and worried about radiation poisoning, Alex can't eat that night. He thinks about Maud Boulard and her red hair splayed out on the sidewalk, about the casual brutality of the Wolf. *They have nuclear weapons. A holocaust is going to happen.* Alex calls his kids and tells them about all the things he didn't see that day but nothing about what really happened. Then he calls Nana and tells her the truth about how it felt to sit on a sidewalk attached to a nuclear bomb. This was probably the worst day of his life.

Part 4: Chapters 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82 Analysis

Alex's frustration and tension begin to build again. Patterson shows just how edgy he is when he overreacts to a motorcyclist coming at him on the sidewalk. No one else notices it but Alex automatically goes into fight or flight mode.

When he is assigned yet another partner, Alex can barely contain his anger. Her insistence on doing everything the French way, including a long, leisurely lunch, is almost more than he can tolerate. He must have felt remorseful when he saw his new partner lying dead on the sidewalk.

Once again, the author builds tension and a feeling of imminent danger as Alex is kidnapped and taken to meet with a man who calls himself the Wolf. The reader doesn't know for sure, however, if this really is the Wolf. Also, what could be more terrifying than being handcuffed to a nuclear device? Patterson uses the fear of nuclear destruction, common to everyone on the planet, to great effect.

It's interesting to note that Alex, who protects his children from knowing what actually happened to him, tells his grandmother everything. He is shown to be a strong yet vulnerable human being, one who needs the love and caring of his mother figure.



Part 4: Chapters 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 and 88

Part 4: Chapters 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 and 88 Summary

It is 10 hours and 45 minutes until doomsday. When Alex arrives at his small office the next morning, he is surprised to see Martin Lodge. Martin explains that he is there to provide an update on the situation in London.

The morning meeting includes a brief analysis of the suitcase bomb. It is authentic but it has no neutron emitter, no trigger and probably not enough radioactive material inside.

Martin then speaks to the group in French. He explains that, for the most part, the people of London have been splendid; there has been little rioting. Tel Aviv is accustomed to crises and is handling this one well. Most of the ransom money has been raised, but Tel Aviv will probably not agree to make a deal. Someone whispers in Alex's ear that there's an emergency and he's needed, so he reluctantly leaves the meeting.

Soon Alex is inside a speeding police cruiser, its siren disturbing the peaceful, deserted streets of Paris. He is told that an arms dealer is in custody, a Russian with a white beard. Alex is taken to La Crim, where he climbs a rickety staircase to the fourth floor, enters a room and immediately recognizes the white-bearded man.

The arms dealer is Artur Nikitin. He shouts at the police that they have no right to hold him and pretends not to know Alex. Alex throws a hard uppercut to his jaw and tells Nikitin that, after his bombs kill thousands, he'll be tried as a terrorist and executed and that no one will care. Nikitin denies everything until a policeman throws him across the room; he hits his head on the wall and falls. He finally admits to knowing something but claims that al Qaeda is behind everything. Alex tells him to prove it and Nikitin says that he will, that he'll make them all believers.

When Alex arrives back at the Prefecture, Martin hurries him upstairs to the crisis room, where they watch a raid on a row of monitors. A French RAID team is descending on a small townhouse. Because some of the police are miked and carrying cameras, they're able to watch the entire raid as it transpires. Alex sees that several people are killed and is relieved when some are taken alive.

Later that afternoon, an army colonel addresses a packed room in the crisis center. They have identified the prisoners: an Iranian, a Saudi, a Moroccan and two Egyptians, all members of an al Qaeda cell. He is sorry, but it's doubtful that they have captured the Wolf.

At 5:45 the next morning, Alex, along with several others, files through the tall iron gates of the Ministere de l'Interieur building for a meeting with the DGSE. He climbs the staircase and notices the plodding footsteps and occasional nervous cough. Within the hour, it was possible that Paris, London, Washington and Tel Aviv would be bombed and thousands would die. Live scenes played on the dozen or more TV monitors in the main

hall. Alex admits to Etienne that he doesn't know what's happening. Maybe they have managed to capture the main terrorist cell, or perhaps the Wolf realizes how hard this would be to pull together. Suddenly Etienne sees President Debauney.

Aramis Debauney strides to the front of the room and announces that the money has been raised and will be transmitted five minutes before the deadline. He thanks all those who have worked so hard and promises them that the Wolf will be captured.

After the money is transferred, they all watch as the deadline approaches. When the deadline passes, they continue to watch the monitors but nothing happens and there is no call from the Wolf. Then after 10 minutes pass, an explosion rocks the room.

Part 4: Chapters 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 and 88 Analysis

In these chapters, the countdown begins. Alex reminds the reader, "Ten hours and forty-five minutes to doomsday." He is relieved to learn that, although the suitcase bomb is authentic, it contains no neutron emitter, no trigger and probably not enough radioactive material inside. Some good news for a change!

Alex is called out of a meeting to see a captured Russian arms dealer. He immediately recognizes the white-bearded man and takes the opportunity for a little payback. In a high-intensity thriller such as this, the wise author will build tension to a degree, then defuse it somewhat with humor, relaxation or a scene such as this, in which Alex is able to "get back at" a villain. In this novel, the reader is kept off balance because there are many antagonists and we're never sure which one is the Wolf.

Tension mounts too as once again, two snipers are spotted near Heathrow on the rooftop of a building rented by Palestinians. They are taken out, but not by government forces. Is this another tie-in to the Middle East or just another red herring?

With the deadline upon them, Alex learns that the money has been raised; but 10 minutes after it is wired to the Wolf, an explosion rocks the building. By this time, the reader is riding a wild roller coaster of emotions.

Part 5: Chapters 89, 90 and 91

Part 5: Chapters 89, 90 and 91 Summary

The bombs go off in a three-block area near the Louvre. Although the museum suffers only minor damage, the rest of the area is almost completely destroyed; houses are flattened and thousands are killed. A small bridge across the Seine is also decimated: another bridge gone.

Alex thinks about those supremely arrogant people, not just the Wolf but those in government and in the media, who think that they can predict what will happen. They don't know; nobody knows. Alex feels that, as a species, humans aren't getting smarter, only crazier. The Wolf has won. Alex can't bear to think about what will happen next.

He returns to Washington DC to find his kids and Nana at their Fifth Street home. He cooks dinner, *langoustines roties brunoises de papaye poivrons et oignons doux* and they use the good silver, cloth napkins and lace tablecloth normally reserved for special occasions. They have brownies and ice cream for dessert. Thank God, he is back home in America.

The next day, Alex takes the kids to St. Michaels, Maryland to visit the Chesapeake Maritime Museum, where they watch shipwrights working on a skipjack restoration. After lunch at the Crab Claw Restaurant, they embark on a skipjack charter. Alex is taking Nana's place as guest lecturer; she had declined to come along and he hopes she's okay. The sailing cruise provides Alex with some much-needed R&R. On their way back, Jannie tells Alex that it was the best day of her life - and she isn't exaggerating too much. He replies "Same here" and isn't exaggerating at all.

When they arrive home that evening, Alex recognizes Dr. Coles's old van in front of the house and hurries in, worried that something has happened to Nana. As he rushes in, Nana calls out that there's no need to be alarmed; she and Kayla are just kicking back. He denies being alarmed and she teases him, then waves her hand and asks him to tell her all about their trip.

Alex kisses Kayla on the cheek and notices that she's lost weight. He tells her that she always looks good to him, then frets that he puts his foot in his mouth whenever he talks to her. Nana teases Alex some more and he feels like he's really home. They go out to the sun porch and Alex plays "An American in Paris" on the piano. Later, he walks Kayla to her van and she leans in and kisses him, telling him that she'd been wanting to do that for a long time. She says it's "interesting." Interesting.

Part 5: Chapters 89, 90 and 91 Analysis

Alex learns that a three-block area near the Louvre has been destroyed, along with a portion of a bridge over the Seine. He questions anyone's ability to predict what will

happen and thinks that, as a species, we aren't getting smarter, only crazier. The bad guys have won. His thoughts reflect those of many people who view the world as spinning out of control and feel unable to stop it.

So Alex goes home to be with his family. A recurring theme throughout this book is the importance of family and loved ones. The reader sees that, no matter what Alex does, he is always thinking of his family and can hardly wait to get back to them. He takes his kids on a day cruise and gets some much needed R&R with them. When they return he finds Kayla Coles at home with Nana. The astute reader recognizes a certain amount of sexual tension between these two and anticipate a possible future relationship between them.



Part 5: Chapters 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99 and 100

Part 5: Chapters 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99 and 100 Summary

Alex goes back to work and finds that he's still assigned to the case because he's "relentless." He remains in touch with Martin Lodge, Sandy Greenberg, Etienne Marteau and intelligence in Tel Aviv and Frankfurt. There are no leads and someone is out there with \$4,000,000,000; in addition, the political prisoners were released. Then Alex reads something that intrigues him enough to drive out to a back road in Lexington, Virginia to visit Joe Cahill. Joe invites Alex into his country home and offers him coffee and crumb cake.

Joe tells Alex that everything he knows about the Wolf is documented; his involvement almost ended his career and he can't help him. Alex is mystified that no one knows who Joe is. Something bad happened in Paris, but nobody seems to know what. Joe says that he doesn't know anything either. Even though Joe and his partner were the Wolf's controls once he got here, Joe says that he never met him.

Alex insists that Joe and his old partner can be of assistance to them, even if Joe never met the Wolf (although Alex is unconvinced that he didn't). He shows Joe a picture of Nikki Williams and says that they know that she once worked for Joe and his partner. Alex thinks that Joe hired her to kill Weir; he also thinks that Joe works for the Wolf. Joe tells Alex he's wrong and orders him to leave; their talk is over. Alex tells him that it's just getting started.

Alex makes a call from his cell phone. Soon agents swarm the house and arrest Joe Cahill. Joe is transported to a safe house in the Alleghenies, where he is bound and gagged and left in a room to think about his past and his future. The CIA injects him with an experimental truth serum in the hope that it will get them some answers.

Joe behaves as though drunk when Alex asks him questions about the Wolf. He doesn't have many answers. Joe says he's never met him or seen him; he only got his piece of the puzzle. Maybe Tom Weir saw him, or the Brits. He claims that his partner, Corky Hancock, got the Wolf out of Russia. There was bad blood between Hancock and Weir.

Alex goes to the Wood River Valley in the central Idaho Rockies to search for Corky Hancock. The local senior agent takes him for a drive to check out Hancock's house, a large river rock exterior set on five or ten acres of land, with a barn bigger than Alex's house. Hancock is out hunting, so they stake out the house and watch very carefully for his return.

The scene shifts and Alex receives approval to go to Seattle to visit his son. Christine is home waiting with Alex Jr. in her arms, which surprises him. He's even more surprised when she kisses his cheek as he takes Alex.

Alex and his son spend a fun day together, visiting the Fremont area, eating an organic lunch, buying a kite and flying it at Gas Works Park and then checking out the sculpture garden. Then little Alex asks Alex when he's coming home.

When he gets Alex Jr. back before six, as promised, Christine is dressed up and waiting. She tells little Alex to give his Daddy a hug because he has to go back to Washington and they have to go to see Theo. Alex wonders who Theo is. As Alex Jr. hugs him goodbye, the little boy keeps whispering, "Please don't go away, Daddy. Please don't go."

Later that evening, Alex meets Jamilla at the Kingfish Caf . Over dinner, he tells her how hard it is for him to leave his son. Jamilla asks if his mother doesn't treat him well; Alex explains that not raising the boy himself just goes against everything he believes and has been taught. Jamilla says that Alex escapes into his work and he agrees. Then he suggests that they get out of there.

Alex and Jamilla go back to the Fairmont Olympic where he's staying. Jamilla stares at the Italian Renaissance dycor of the impressive lobby. They go up to his room on the tenth floor and fall on the king-size bed with the gold-and-green-striped comforter and slowly begin to unbutton each other's shirts. Alex becomes lost in the moment, lost in Jamilla and that is exactly where he needs to be. Moments later, the phone rings. Alex knocks it to the floor and covers it with a pillow.

Part 5: Chapters 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99 and 100 Analysis

Now that things seem to be over and the ransom has been paid, the author throws a curveball. Alex is still on the case and finds a paper connection that leads him to visit Joe Cahill, a former CIA agent, whom he accuses of working with the Wolf. However, even with truth serum, the interrogation doesn't reveal much more than they've already guessed. So they stake out Joe's old partner's place in Idaho and wait. Alex wonders once more about what went wrong in Paris.

The author then provides a break in the action as the scene shifts to Seattle, where Alex goes to visit his youngest son; once again, we see Alex's sorrow at having to leave the boy. After this sad encounter, Patterson spices things up with a romantic scene between Alex and his long-distance girlfriend, Jamilla, giving Alex time to catch his breath before the next onslaught.

Part 5: Chapters 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 and 106

Part 5: Chapters 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 and 106 Summary

The next morning, Alex and Jamilla share a cab to the airport and take separate planes - he to the Idaho Rockies, she to San Francisco. Surveillance tightens around Corky Hancock's house, his acreage and the barn. Four mobile teams are on him and aerial surveillance has been added.

In a local movie house, Alex attends a meeting that is headed by William Koch. Koch tells them that either Hancock knows they're there or he's careful by nature. They've come up with nothing. They're tired of waiting and plan to go in at twelve hundred hours.

At the appointed hour, the FBI swarms over Hancock's house. He's in bed with his girlfriend, a lovely Asian girl. He shouts at them but doesn't seem surprised they're there. Hancock is injected with the truth serum but it doesn't work well. He gets high and just sits back and goes with it; they get very little information from him. A thorough search of his house and surrounding area turns up nothing. Even his computer is extra secure. A hacker finally finds a file inside an encrypted file that contains regular communication with a couple of banks in Zurich, where Hancock has over \$6,000,000. So off to Zurich Alex goes, promising to bring Jannie a suitcase full of Swiss chocolate, the least he can do after missing most of her ninth year.

Alex arrives in beautiful, clean Zurich - shade trees, white or sand colored buildings, trolley tracks and life-size fiberglass cows painted with Alpine scenes - and meets with Sandy Greenberg outside a Swiss bank. They enter the bank, which has highly polished wood paneling and modern art on its walls. They meet with the bank president and Sandy gives him a signed warrant with the account number. The president tells them that everything has already been arranged. Alex thinks, so much for the secrecy and security of Swiss banks.

Alex, Sandy and two of her agents look through all of Hancock's transactions in the bank's basement. His account had grown from \$200,000 to slightly over \$6,000,000; the latest deposits total \$3,500,000 and were made in four installments this year. The source of payment is an account in the name of Y. Jikhomirov. There are more than 100 pages of records dating back to 1991, the year the Wolf had been brought out of Russia. Alex didn't believe in coincidences anymore. The withdrawals from the Jikhomirov account show payments for air travel (including private jets), various hotels around the world and wire transfers to America, South Africa, Australia, Paris and Tel Aviv. The trail of a Wolf? One entry that catches Alex's eye is for the purchase of four expensive sports cars from a dealership in Nice.



Alex and Sandy go to lunch at Veltliner Keller and enjoy *zuppe engadinese*, *veltliner topf* and a good wine.

Their next stop is Riviera Motors in Nice. After presenting their credentials, they are joined by the manager, who is dressed in a fashionable, expensive gray suit. They inform him that this is a murder investigation.

The manager tells them that the cars were purchased by M. Aglionby, who had an estate on Cap-Ferrat, just east of Nice. As they drive along the winding cliff road, Sandy points out that some of the most memorable shots in *To Catch a Thief* were filmed up here. Half a dozen backup cars and vans follow the pair. As they pass the Aglionby estate, Alex marvels and wonders, "How much is enough?" It's a four-story Mediterranean-style mansion with white detailing, gleaming balustrades and porticos, shutters and probably thirty rooms. They reconnoiter at a hotel up the coast, where the decision is made by local police to use the estate bordering the Aglionby estate to pose as gardeners and household help, starting tomorrow. To this Alex and Sandy respond, "We're going in tonight - with or without your help."

Part 5: Chapters 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 and 106

Analysis

After capturing Cahill's partner, Hancock and getting nothing out of him, a thorough search of his encrypted computer files reveals communication with a Swiss bank and the knowledge that he has a great deal of money. So Alex heads to Zurich. The bank account transactions lead to a car dealership in Nice, which leads to an estate on Cap-Ferrat, just east of Nice. The author continues to suggest that the Wolf loves expensive racecars.

The pace is picking up and tension once again builds as the end is in sight.



Part 5: Chapters 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113

Part 5: Chapters 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113 Summary

For a change, everything happens quickly that afternoon and evening. Interpol backs Alex's and Sandy's decision to go in that night. Snipers cover every door and window. Alex and Sandy, the FBI, Interpol and the French army and police all strap on war gear. When the signal comes to go in, Alex and Sandy run to the house right behind the first wave assault team. Upstairs they find French soldiers leading men and women, most in their underwear, out of the bedrooms. The interrogations begin immediately. Where is the Wolf? Who is Aglionby? Aglionby's daughter tells them that she's having a party; her father is a respected banker and is away on business. The Wolf wins again, Alex thinks.

They proceed to search the amazing estate and start to take it apart, piece by piece. It's filled with expensive antiques and artwork. *All of it financed by the Wolf?* The house's occupants are taken to the billiards rooms and asked if anyone will speak for the group. Does anyone know the Wolf? When no one volunteers, it is decided to separate them and begin the interviews. Alex wanders outside and down to the boathouse, which he discovers has been converted to a garage that houses more than 30 expensive sports cars and luxury sedans. He's standing between the boathouse and the water when all hell breaks loose.

Bari Naffis has his piece of the puzzle and isn't about to cross the Wolf, even if it means blowing up a model in the house with whom he's just slept. The bastard has eyes in the back of his head. When he receives a radio signal from the main house, he jumps from bed and hurries to a prearranged position north of the estate. He sets up his missile launcher, knowing that three other killers are doing the same thing and waits for the signal in his earphones. When it comes, he squeezes the trigger, strikes the estate and reloads.

Alex hears loud, whooshing noises and then sees fiery explosions everywhere. As he runs toward the house, he's surprised as a Mercedes sedan roars from the boathouse toward the main road. Without stopping to think, Alex jumps into a police car and chases it. He follows it toward the Basse Corniche, toward Monaco, down the winding slopes. As they enter Nice he begins to close the gap, but the Mercedes roars through town and onto the N7, a higher road that heads back toward Monaco. As they wind back up the cliffs, Alex begins to lose the sedan so he accelerates, wondering how much longer he can keep this up.

He gains on the Mercedes and wonders if he's suicidal. Suddenly the Mercedes skids across the highway, strikes the mountain, swerves and caroms off the rocks again, then takes off into the sky and falls toward the sea. By the time Alex reaches the wreckage



far below, French police and an ambulance have arrived. He runs toward the car and flashes his credentials at the police so they let him through. As he kneels near the overturned wreckage he recognizes the driver trapped inside, crushed by metal everywhere below the shoulders. Martin Lodge is alive and seems to want to say something, so Alex leans in close. Martin whispers that it's all for nothing; he's not the Wolf and he never saw him. Then he dies.

The Lodge family is taken into protective custody in case the Wolf decides he feels like killing somebody. Alex flies to London the next day and meets with Lodge's superior. Alex tells him that none of the mansion's occupants seem to know anything about the Wolf or Martin Lodge; but there is a new wrinkle.

Apparently Lodge's wife, Klara, is Klara Cernohosska, not Czech but Russian. Martin was on the team with Cahill, Hancock and Thomas Weir that brought a defector named Edward Morozov out of Russia; but there was no Edward Morozov. The man was actually an unidentified KGB defector whom they think was the Wolf. Klara left Russia with Morozov; she had been an assistant to a KGB chief and was the FBI's main source of information in Moscow when she relocated to England and married Lodge. She won't talk to them, but she may talk to Alex. *Why would she trust him, if he met her only once?* He has no idea.

The Lodge family is being kept on a heavily armed compound in a converted farmhouse 120 miles west of London. Alex has dinner with the family in a cramped bunker located belowground. After the children are sent to do their homework, Alex sits with Klara. She asks him what Martin said; Alex tells her that he simply said that he wasn't the Wolf. Alex begins negotiations. Klara wants safe passage out of England for her and the children, new identities and money to live on. Alex tells her that she has to give them the Wolf. Does she know who and where he is? What did Martin tell her? Klara says that Martin told her everything.

Part 5: Chapters 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113 Analysis

The French police, army, Interpol and FBI invade the mansion near Nice, but all they find are a group of innocent jetsetters partying. Fortunately Alex goes outside for a walk down to the converted boathouse before the house explodes. The Wolf strikes again. Then Alex takes off on a high-speed chase after someone whom he hopes is the Wolf. The author surprises everyone when he reveals that Martin Lodge, the trusted superintendent of the London Met, is the driver. As he dies in the twisted wreckage, he reveals nothing about the Wolf.

In yet another plot twist, the reader discovers that Martin's wife, Klara, isn't Czech but Russian. Not only that, but she was brought out of Russia with an unidentified KGB defector whom they believe was the Wolf. The author now starts to pull together all the hints and clues that have been dropped through preceding chapters and begins to weave in more information, encouraging the reader to turn the pages even faster.

Part 5: Chapters 114, 115, 116, 117, 118 and 119

Part 5: Chapters 114, 115, 116, 117, 118 and 119 Summary

The Wolf flies his own plane from New Hampshire into Teterboro Airport in New Jersey. He drives into New York City, a city he hates, to a doctor's office on 63rd Street. The nurse on duty, who is also acting as the receptionist, tells him that there are forms to fill out. He replies that he will fill out nothing and pushes past her to find Dr. Levine in the small, cold operating theater.

There are just the three of them there, at his insistence. The office has been closed to other patients. He tells the doctor that he doesn't want to be there more than a few hours so she should begin; he is ready. When she says that that's not possible, he tells her that he won't need anesthesia. She responds that the procedures, including a face, neck and brow lift, liposuction and jaw and cheek implants, will be unbearably painful. He tells her that he's known worse pain and to begin or else. When she bristles and asks, "Or else, what?" he says that that covers much territory. Can she endure pain, or can her children, Martin and Amy, or her husband, Jerrold?

He never screams or makes a sound, not once. The surgeon and nurse can't comprehend it. The pain during the rhinoplasty is the worst, as large chunks of bone and cartilage are removed from his nose. At the conclusion Dr. Levine tells him not to stand but he does anyway. She orders him not to blow his nose for a week, or, for the sake of others, to drive. He goes to his briefcase, telling them he's getting her money. He staggers slightly and catches sight of his swollen, deformed face in the mirror. He pulls out a Beretta with a silencer and shoots the nurse in the face. As he turns to the doctor, he asks her if there are any last bits of advice she wishes to impart; then he shoots her through the heart while telling her that the children will be better off without her.

He sits in his Range Rover, thinking that now no one knows what he looks like and laughs. This is his piece of the puzzle.

Alex and Ned Mahoney watch the Wolf - or the man believed to be the Wolf - as he emerges, laughing, from the brownstone and observe that he looks like a ghoul. They had gotten there just 60 seconds before and almost missed him again. Alex informs Ned that Klara is somewhere in northern Africa. She told them that the Wolf has had a tracking device under his shoulder blade since he came out of Russia; that's how Martin had managed to stay alive. Mahoney speaks into his headset and gives the go ahead to close in, warning that the Wolf is extremely dangerous.



As the Range Rover stops at a light, dark sedans pull up on either side and a third blocks the intersection. Gunfire erupts from a white Hummer in front of the Range Rover. As Alex and Ned battle his bodyguards, the Wolf escapes, running down Fifth Avenue. As they follow him into a glitzy department store, he throws a grenade and blows out picture windows in the front; black smoke is everywhere. Alex never loses sight of the Wolf, determined to get him this time. The Wolf grabs a little girl and threatens to kill her but they keep coming at him. They fire at him but he's wearing a bulletproof vest; he drops the little girl and runs out the nearest side door.

Alex and Ned chase the Wolf out onto 55th Street, but he runs inside a ten-story building. When they follow him into the building, they find a dead security guard and lights flashing on all the elevators. They run up the stairs and finally get to the roof, emerging into the sunlight. The Wolf steps out from behind a water tower and orders them to put down their guns. When a policeman emerges from a trap door opening, he fires, but the Russian charges the cop, picks him up and throws him off the building. He races to the other side of the roof and Alex thinks that he's going to jump to another rooftop. Then they see a helicopter coming for him. As the Wolf becomes airborne, Alex fires four shots.

The Wolf seems to be running on thin air then starts to drop, his fingers reaching for the roof. Then he falls without a sound. He hits hard, his mangled body stone cold dead on the pavement in an alleyway. Ned whoops and claps and dances and Alex says, "We won, we finally won, Neddy."

Part 5: Chapters 114, 115, 116, 117, 118 and 119 Analysis

In this group of chapters, Patterson pulls a fast one on the reader. A character he calls the Wolf goes in for a grisly and torturous face-lift - without anesthesia - then murders the surgeon and nurse who attended him. A tension-filled chase follows as Alex and Ned Mahoney follow him through the crowded city streets and department stores of New York City and up to a rooftop, where he plunges to his death below. Alex tells Ned, "We won; we finally won."

It would seem a fitting end to the Wolf's life, but something about this just doesn't feel right. It's too easy. Besides, this guy just doesn't "feel" like the Wolf; the astute reader will pick up on this. Besides, there are still five chapters left. This is what is called the anti-climax.

Part 5: Chapters 120, 121, 122, 123 and 124

Part 5: Chapters 120, 121, 122, 123 and 124 Summary

The next morning Alex flies back to Quantico in a Bell helicopter with Ned and his crew; he can think of nothing but getting home. He'd told Nana to keep the kids out of school because they'd be celebrating. When he sees his house, he begins to feel almost normal. No one is on the porch, so he decides to surprise them. He goes inside and finds the table set for lunch; lights are on but he doesn't see anybody. He runs upstairs, yelling, "I'm home. Where is everybody?" No one answers.

Alex looks everywhere and starts making phone calls; they'd been expecting him. He feels sick as he finally calls the Hoover Building. The FBI's technical people arrive and tell him that they've found male footprints outside and fresh dirt tracked into the house, but no other clues. Alex spends a sleepless night, but there's no contact, no word. He realizes that this is his worst fear, to be alone because those you love are in danger. *We lost.*

The email comes on the fifth day. Alex thinks that he might vomit as he stares at the words. The writer says that she's not as cruel as he thinks she is; the cruel ones are his own United States and Western Europe. She, Hana, Daniela and Jozef owe him something. She pays her debts. His family will be returned but if she ever sees him again, he will die. It was signed, Klara Cernohosska, Wolf.

He can't let it go; he can't and he won't. Alex tests and strains the new cooperative relationship between the CIA and the Bureau. He gets Ron Burns to put more pressure on the CIA. He goes to CIA headquarters over a dozen times. He talks to everyone, including the new director, James Dowd. He tells him that he wants to know everything they know about Thomas Weir and the KGB agent he'd brought out of Russia; was that possible?

One day Alex is called into Burns' office, where Dowd is waiting for him. Dowd tells him that a Russian, Anton Christyakov, was recruited and brought out of Russia in 1990. This man was the Wolf. He was taken to England, where he met Martin Lodge and later moved to a house outside Washington. Finally he was taken to Paris, his city of choice, where he was joined by his family: mother and father, wife and two young sons, ages nine and 12. They lived two blocks from the Louvre, on one of the streets that was destroyed a few weeks before.

Christyakov's family was attacked, possibly on the Parisian bridge that had been bombed. They were all killed except for Christyakov. He blamed the governments that brought him out of Russia and especially blamed the CIA and Tom Weir; they, in turn, blamed the Russians. Although Christyakov was known by Mafiya leaders, they are



dead now. Dowd tells Alex that Christyakov was close to his sons and that may be why he spared Alex's family. He also tells him that the Wolf squeezes a rubber ball given to him by one of his sons. The Wolf is said to favor beards and is celibate now. *I am going to get him*, Alex thinks to himself.

Six weeks later, Alex and Ned Mahoney travel to New York to see Tolya Bykov, head of the Red Mafiya gangs in New York. They arrive unannounced at the Bykov compound with a search warrant. There are bodyguards everywhere. Alex speaks to Bykov through an interpreter, asking him about the Wolf. He states that he knows "Peter and the Wolf" but no other Wolves. Alex tells him they aren't going to leave, that the CIA and FBI will be in his face and business until they find him. Bykov laughs and tells Alex that he's funnier than Chris Rock. Alex walks out; he hadn't expected much from this first visit. He'll be back - again and again.

Alex leaves the compound and as he's walking with Ned and laughing about the interview, he suddenly spots something. Alex yells, "It's him!" and takes off after a bodyguard standing under a large evergreen tree, squeezing an old black ball. He has a beard and his eyes look into Alex's. Then the man starts to run and jumps into a red convertible. Alex tumbles in after him and hits him, first a powerful punch to the nose and then square on the jaw. He looks at Alex with empty yet intelligent eyes. Inhuman, Alex thinks.

The man congratulates Alex for knowing about the ball and recognizing him. Then he gives a strange half smile and bites down on something. Alex tries desperately to pry his mouth open, but the Russian's eyes become wide and full of pain. His mouth opens as he roars and begins to convulse. He gags and claws at his throat for several minutes, then dies in the front seat of one of his expensive sports cars. Alex retrieves the rubber ball as a souvenir, then heads for home. He repeats to himself, "*The Wolf is dead. I saw him die*" until he believes it.

Part 5: Chapters 120, 121, 122, 123 and 124 Analysis

Patterson saves his biggest surprise until the end. Alex goes home, exulting in his victory, repeating to himself, "We won." He can hardly wait to see his family but in a chilling scene, he races through the house and finds it empty. His family is gone. Once again, the reader is off on a roller coaster ride of emotions, wondering if Alex will ever get a break. When he receives an email after five days of waiting, telling him that his family will be returned, it's signed by Klara - the Wolf. Can this be true? Is the Wolf really a woman?

Alex is relentless. He can't let it go. He goes to Ron Burns in the FBI and talks to everyone in the CIA, including the new head, James Dowd. They finally unearth some information that identifies yet another suspect, Anton Christyakov, whom they think is the Wolf. Another piece of the puzzle is revealed as the reader learns that Christyakov's family was attacked and killed in Paris and that he blamed the governments of the U.S. and England. Alex is told about the black rubber ball and why the Wolf carries it:

because his son had given it to him. With this explanation, we learn why the Wolf has done what he has done: for revenge. The loss of his family turned the Wolf into a sick, vengeance-seeking killer. The reader is left to decide if this was justified or if it was just an excuse to wreak havoc on innocent people.

When Alex and Ned travel to New York unannounced to see Tolya Bykov, a top Red Mafiya leader, they hope to learn more about the Wolf. As they are leaving, Alex sees the black rubber ball in the hand of a large, bearded man. He chases him down, follows him into a flashy red sports car and tries to subdue him. Once again, however, the Wolf is too cagey. He bites down on a poison capsule and dies. Alex retrieves the symbolic rubber ball as a trophy but is uneasy about it; he wonders if he's taking trophies now, too.

Good wins out over evil; the protagonist vanquishes the antagonist. Or does he? Because the Wolf's identity has been called into question so many times and because this story is part of an ongoing series of Alex Cross novels, the reader is left to wonder if we have indeed seen the last of the Wolf.

Characters

Alex Cross

Alex is the main character of the book. He is in his early forties, six foot three, two hundred pounds and athletic. His mother died of lung cancer when he was nine years old; his father, a heavy drinker, died the year before. He went to Washington, DC to live with his grandmother, Regina Cross Hope (Nana Mama), who at the time was an English teacher and assistant principal. After earning a Ph.D. in psychology from Johns Hopkins University, with a concentration in abnormal psychology and forensic psychology, Alex goes into private practice. After struggling to make a living for three years, he joins the Washington DC Police Department in Homicide and Major Crimes, working as a profiler. Now he is a Senior Agent with the FBI.

Alex is also a widower, having lost his wife, Maria, to a drive-by shooter. When she was killed they had two toddlers, a girl, Janelle (Jannie) and a boy, Damon, now 10 and 12. He has a third child, Alex Jr., who lives with his mother in Seattle and whom Alex visits every few months. Alex is torn because he doesn't have custody of the little boy, whom he loves dearly.

Alex likes to play Gershwin and classical music on the piano. He still lives with his grandmother, Nana Mama, who raised him; she now helps care for his two older children. He is on a much-needed vacation for a visit with his little boy and for some R&R with his girlfriend when he is called back by the FBI to investigate a mysterious bombing

Geoffrey Shafer

Also known as the Weasel, he is a vicious psychopath and murderer. As an army colonel working inside the British embassy he appears to be a respectable citizen, but in the three years since Alex Cross has known him, he has killed more than a dozen people, mostly poor, black prostitutes. He's described by his psychiatrist as very attractive, articulate and somewhat restless, with considerable presence. He is grandiose in describing his accomplishments and admits to a desire to engage in sadomasochistic sexual behavior. This behavior has escalated into the murders of his sexual partners.

Shafer killed his wife in front of their children, twin girls, Tricia and Erica and a boy, Robert, in a Safeway in Chelsea, England. He believes they are better off without their whining, sniveling mother. He is shown in one scene of *London Bridges* as he visits his children (under orders from the Wolf not to kill them) and threatens their aunt, his dead wife's sister, with death if she doesn't make the girls stop crying. He terrifies them and as he leaves, he knocks their mother's collection of porcelain dolls from the mantel, smashing them to pieces. Shafer was found in Salvador, Brazil by the Wolf, where he

was hanged by his ankles, beaten bloody and then shaken senseless. After hours of torture he was told, "I found you and I'll find you again if I need you." Thus begins his working relationship with the Wolf, in which he kills and maims just for the fun of it.

The Wolf

He is a big, powerful-looking man who favors beards and squeezes a black rubber ball when he is angry or upset. Russian and a former KGB agent, he is driven by an intense paranoia, the certainty of an untimely death. In *London Bridges* he is eventually discovered to be Anton Christyakov, who was recruited and brought out of Russia in 1990 and then transported to England. He was finally moved to a city of his choosing, Paris, where he reunited with his family: mother, father, wife and two young sons, ages nine and 12. In 1994, his family was attacked and killed on a bridge in Paris over the Seine. The FBI suspected the Russian government but the Wolf blamed the CIA, Tom Weir and all the governments involved in his defection. His rage moves him to commit violent acts of revenge.

The Wolf joins the Red Mafiya and rises quickly through the ranks. He was close to his sons and it is thought that perhaps this is why he spared Alex's family. The black rubber handball that he squeezes when upset or angry was given to him as a birthday present by one of his sons. He is very fond of fast, powerful sports cars and owns several of them, which he drives with expert but wild abandon. He is thought to be celibate. He is the deadliest nemesis Alex Cross has ever faced. He blows the town of Sunrise Valley, Nevada off the map, then threatens to blow up New York City, London, Paris, Frankfurt and Tel Aviv. To show his ability to do so, he blows up bridges in New York City, London and Paris as well as a three-block area of Paris.

Jamilla Hughes

Five feet nine inches tall and solid, Jamilla is a San Francisco homicide inspector and Alex Cross's love interest. According to Alex, she "is good at making things right." She lives on the West coast and although she loves and wants to be with Alex, she loves her city and her job, too and isn't quite sure what to do about it. She has the kind of exuberant spirit that allows her to get away with grinning, jumping up and down and clapping her hands over her head in a public place.

Regina Cross Hope/"Nana Mama"

Somewhere in her eighties, but no one knows for sure exactly where, she is Alex's feisty grandmother and mother figure. She is a former English teacher and assistant principal who raised Alex after his mother died when he was nine years old. Now she helps him raise his two older children in Washington DC

Christine Johnson

Once engaged to Alex Cross, she is the mother of his son, Alex. When they were engaged to be married and unknown to them, expecting Alex, Geoffrey Shaffer - the Weasel - kidnapped her during a family vacation in Bermuda. Alex and his best friend found her in Jamaica. She was emotionally scarred and things were never the same after the rescue. She moved to Seattle, where she works as a teacher.

Alex Jr.

He is Alex Cross's almost three-year-old son. His father describes him as a smooth talker and an even smoother operator. His mother says that he's a gifted child with high intelligence and creativity. Little Alex wonders why his father always has to leave after he visits the boy in Seattle. His favorite toy is Moo, a spotted black-and-white cow.

Janelle "Jannie" Cross

Alex's 10-year-old daughter, she wears crocheted sunhats and braids. Her heroes are Venus and Serena Williams. Her mother was killed in a drive by shooting that has never been solved.

Damon Cross

He is Alex's 12-year-old son and looks the part. Sean John T-shirt, straight-leg jeans, Hiptowns. His mother was killed in a drive by shooting that has never been solved.

Dr. Kayla Coles

She is Nana Mama's doctor and friend. With a sweet, pretty face and a disposition to match, she is close to six feet tall and has recently lost weight, leaving her fit and trim. Alex thinks she has tremendous spirit and can light up a room. Kayla works too hard and still makes house calls. Although he likes her, Alex has always been a little intimidated by her. They've known each other since they grew up together in the neighborhood. She was one who got out, got an education and then came back to give back. Kayla started Homecare Health Project, which brings doctors into the homes of the sick in the Southeast.

Ron Burns

As Director of the FBI, he is the one to whom the Wolf speaks by phone when the group gathers for the Wolf's calls. He is told that he was the original target when Tom Weir was killed.



Thomas Weir

The Director of the CIA, he is killed by an assassin as ordered by the Wolf.

Tony Woods

He works in the FBI Director's office. He informs Alex and other agents that a village in Northern England was bombed, killing 400 and that 11 college students died in a German village bombing.

Stephen Bowen

He is head of Homeland Security.

Ned Mahoney

The head of the Hostage Rescue Team and a friend of Alex Cross's, Mahoney is ordered to leave the conference room by the Wolf.

Monnie Donnelley

An FBI agent, she is one of Alex's partners. She is a superior analyst and a good friend from his days at Quantico. She is at the first FBI meeting with Alex when he returns from Sunrise Valley. She loves the excitement of the hunt. Her best guess (tongue-in-cheek) as to the identity of the bomber is aliens.

Burt Manning

He is one of the five executive assistant directors at the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Frances Puskowski

An inhabitant of Sunrise Valley who is hanging clothes to dry when a battalion of US soldiers invades her town and orders everyone into army trucks to be hauled away.

Dougie Puskowski

Frances's husband, he is on disability from the Cortey Mine and trying to get used to the domestic scene. He's depressed and grumpy and argues with the soldiers who try to evacuate him. When he pulls a gun, he is shot dead.



Agent Jean Matthews

She is one of the agents who interrupts Alex in the airport when he arrives there on vacation to spend time with his girlfriend, Jamilla.

Agent John Thompson

Thirty-something and blond, he is one of the agents who interrupts Alex in the airport when he arrives there on vacation to spend time with his girlfriend, Jamilla.

Fred Wade

A local FBI agent assigned to investigate the Sunrise Valley destruction, he asks Alex what's going on.

Ginny Moriarity

She is a local FBI agent assigned to investigate the Sunrise Valley destruction. She lets Alex know that they've found the Weasel's Ford Bronco at a nearby airport.

Fedya Abramtsov

A Russian Mafiya wannabe, he also wanted to lead the life of a movie-star type in Beverly Hills. The Wolf thought of Fedya and his wife's mansion as his own because they had stolen from him. Fedya is killed by the Wolf.

Yelizaveta Abramtsov

She is Fedya's wife and is also Russian. She has an Americanized nickname, Liza and is very pretty. The Wolf commands her to sit in his lap and proceeds to break her bones, starting with her pinkie.

Captain Nicole Williams

A former Army captain, she is a professional sniper and hit woman with whom Geoffrey Shafer, the Weasel, had worked in Angola. She's very good with a rifle and can be relied on to deliver what is asked of her; but has "let herself go" and put on a lot of weight. The Weasel hires her to fly in on a helicopter and kill Thomas Weir, the CIA director.



John Sampson

He is an old friend of Alex's from his days in homicide at the Washington DC Police Department. While investigating the death of a prostitute with Alex in a poor section of Washington, Alex informs him that the Weasel is back in town.

Michael Ainslie

He is the FBI senior agent in charge of the New York office. He is tall, reed-thin and good-looking, with loads of experience in the field, but he looks like he would be more comfortable on a tennis court.

Bill Capistran

Twenty-nine years old, slim and sinewy, he has a bad attitude and anger management problems. He played lacrosse at North Carolina State before joining the Marines. After a three-year stint, he'd been recruited to do mercenary work for a company out of Washington. He's hired by Geoffrey Shafer to blow up the 59th Street Bridge.

Martin Lodge

Detective superintendent of the Met (London Metropolitan Police), he keeps the Anti-Terrorist Branch, called SO13, running smoothly. He was trained at Hendon as a constable but came up through the ranks and was moved into SO13 because he speaks several languages. He has been with the Met for 11 years.

Sandy Greenberg

Tall, attractive, chic, a little gawky, witty and very funny, she is one of Alex's closest friends. She works for Interpol and is one of the smartest cops he has ever known. He meets her for dinner one evening when he is in London.

Henry Seymour

Once healthy with a head of thick black hair, his locks are now thin and graying with tufts of frizz. The Weasel approaches him with a plan to blow up one of London's bridges.

Artur Nikitin

Tall and with a thick white beard, he is a big Russian bear of a man. He's a former KGB agent who works as an arms dealer. The Wolf hires him to blow a big hole in Paris.



Etienne Marteau

A detective with the French National Police, he is assigned to Alex as a partner while Alex is in Paris. He's a small, wiry man, cooperative and competent on the face of it, but Alex suspects that he's been assigned to watch Alex more than to work with him.

Maud Boulard

She replaces Etienne Marteau as Alex's partner. Thin with an aquiline nose, sharp features and shiny red hair, she reminds Alex of Marteau. She informs him they will be working in the "French police way." She is shot dead when she refuses to be abducted into a white limousine.

President Aramis Debauney

The president of France looks to be in his mid-50s. He is a compact man with slicked-back silver-gray hair and a pencil-thin mustache. He wears wire-rimmed glasses. The president announces to the group that the ransom has been raised and will be transferred just before the deadline.

Joe Cahill

A former CIA agent, Alex visits with him for possible leads to the Wolf after the ransom has been paid. He is suspected of knowing more about the Wolf than he tells. He once worked with Nikki Williams and Alex accuses him of hiring her to kill Weir. He is arrested and injected with truth serum.

William Koch

Senior FBI agent in Idaho, he's in charge of the surveillance in Idaho around Corky Hancock. He's tall and gangly, impressive in his own way and wears chambray shirts, jeans and scuffed cowboy boots. He plays the local guy to a T but he is nobody's fool.

Corky Hancock

A former CIA agent gone bad, he's 64 years old and hasn't aged well. He was Joe Cahill's partner who supposedly got the Wolf out of Russia and was directly involved in the murder of Tom Weir.

James Dowd

The unexpected choice for CIA Director, he had been a New York lawyer. He'd started in the New York City police department and had then gone into private practice. According to rumors, there were things that they didn't want to know about his years in private practice.

Tolya Bykov

He heads the Red Mafiya gangs in New York. He'd been a Mafiya head in Moscow and was their most powerful leader to come to America. He looks old and tired, with small beady eyes in a pockmarked face rolling with fat. Grossly overweight, his breathing is labored and he has a hacking cough.

Objects/Places

Salvador, Brazil

London Bridges opens in Brazil's third largest city; it is said of its people that, when they aren't actually partying, they're already rehearsing for the next one. The Weasel is found in Salvador by the Wolf, who strings him up by his ankles and tortures him in order to persuade him to assist the Wolf in his deadly bombing plot.

Sunrise Valley, Nevada

This tiny 300-inhabitant town in the desert is chosen by the Wolf to be blown off the face of the earth. All the terrified residents except one, who disobeys and is shot, are evacuated by what they think are US soldiers. They are taken 30 miles away and left there to hear their town explode.

Zamochit

A Russian Mafia torture technique meaning "the breaking of the bones." The Wolf employs this on Yelizaveta Abramtsov, the wife of Fedya Abramtsov, a man who stole from him.

Mico

This is a dark Brazilian monkey. Just before he's kidnapped and tortured by the Wolf, the Weasel chases a mico that's trying to enter his villa in Salvador.

FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, one of many agencies involved in the investigation of the Wolf's bombings.

HRT

HRT is and acronym for Hostage Rescue Team.

MD-530

An MD-530 is a military helicopter used by Nikki Williams in her assassination of Thomas Weir. Fast, highly maneuverable and stable, she'd fired thousand of rounds from MD-530s in the military.

Mercenaries

The so-called "dogs of war," they are mostly former soldiers from Special Forces: Delta Force, Army Rangers and SEALs or SAS if they're Brits. Although most are legitimate, they operate in a legal netherworld and are not subject to the U S military's code of conduct or laws. Although they are subject to the laws of the countries in which they serve, most of those countries have poor judicial systems, leaving them pretty much on their own.

PMC

PMC is an acronym for Private Military Company. Most mercenaries work for them now, earning from \$3,000-\$20,000 a month. Some larger companies have their own artillery, tanks and fighter jets. The Defense Department currently has over 3000 contracts with US-based PMCs, with contracts valued at over \$300 billion.

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Gitmo, as it's called, is a place where over 700 detainees are being held in connection with the war on terror. It is an interesting and historical site.

Mujahid

The term for a fighter, a warrior for Islam is mujahid.

Allah Akbar

Meaning "God is great," it is quoted by the Wolf to the Arab dissidents who finance him in his efforts to bring down the US and Western Europe.

TriBeCa

A New York City neighborhood, it is the location of a meatpacking plant near the Holland Tunnel. It is where an HRT assault force and a SWAT team wait to raid a suspected al Queda cell.

Thermal Imaging

Used in surveillance, it picks up heat variances and hot spots and enables surveillance to see through walls. The New York FBI uses it to spy on a terrorist group in an apartment building that Geoffrey Shafer is seen entering.



Suitcase Nukes

These are small, compact nuclear bombs. Built by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, one of them is about the size of a large valise. It is easy to operate, can be concealed anywhere and can even be carried around on foot. The Wolf claims to have several and handcuffs Alex to one just to prove it.

Cinnamon Club

A London restaurant on Great Smith Street, built on the site of the former Old Westminster Library. It serves a fusion of Indian and European cuisine that can't be found in the US. Alex meets there with a friend from Interpol.

Kolace, rohlíky, turka, parek and michana vejce

A traditional Czech breakfast of pastries with cream cheese centers, rolls, Turkish-style coffee, sausages and scrambled eggs. This is served to Alex at Martin Lodge's house.

La Crim

This is the infamous La Crim from countless movies and police stories, which include several about Inspector Maigret. Alex and Nana read these stories together when he was a boy.

RAID

French for "Recherche, Assistance Intervention et Dissuasion." The French version of HRT and SWAT, they are good at what they do, skillful at both death and destruction.

DGSE

This is the French equivalent of the CIA.

Roties brunoises de papaye poivrons et oignons doux

Prawns with papaya, peppers and onions, it's the meal Alex fixes for his family when he gets home from France.

Fremont area of Seattle

One of the places visited by Alex and Alex Jr., it features older buildings, vintage clothing and furniture shops and character in its architecture and style.

Veltliner Keller

This is a fine restaurant in Zurich where Alex has lunch with Sandy Greenberg after they examine the bank account of Corky Hancock. It opened in 1551.

Zuppe Engadinese and Veltliner Topf

Barley soup and a casserole; this is the lunch that Alex and Sandy have at Veltliner Keller in Zurich.

Themes

Good vs. Evil

In *London Bridges*, as in many of the Alex Cross novels by James Patterson, the lines are clearly drawn between good and evil. Alex is portrayed as a good person, one who, although not perfect, always tries to do what's right and who can be depended upon to play fair. Patterson has him being called "The Last Southern Gentleman" by the *Washington Post Magazine*, which praises him for his work in Homicide. Alex works in a soup kitchen and offers his services as a therapist for free there.

Alex's enemies, on the other hand, are clearly evil. The Weasel, for instance, is the epitome of evil. Right from the start of the book, he is shown living in decadence in a city in Brazil that doesn't seem to care that he's been murdering prostitutes. He brings home a 13-year-old prostitute with the intent of torturing and murdering her. In every encounter with Geoffrey Shafer, the author shows him to be a cruel, merciless psychopath who murders and maims just for the fun of it.

Patterson portrays the Wolf as evil to the core too; but with the Wolf, the reader is given an explanation as to what caused him to become a ruthless killer. He lost his entire family in an attack in Paris and blamed the incident (albeit possibly mistakenly) on the countries that brought him out of Russia: the United States and Great Britain. The reader is never told for certain if, in fact, the Russian government was behind the attack, although this is hinted at; the event is frequently referred to as "a big mistake." In any case, the slaughter of his family is the reason given for the Wolf's drive for revenge. However, nothing justifies the cruel and heartless manner in which he wreaks vengeance. Thus he is shown to be evil.

Another interesting aspect of good and evil in this novel is that, in several plot twists, the reader finds that good and evil cannot always be easily discerned in every person. Several characters who are first portrayed as good - Thomas Weir, the CIA Director and Martin and Klara Lodge, as examples - have in fact been working with the Wolf on the side of evil.

Happily in the end, good does win out over evil, at least for a while; but the author leaves the reader with questions. What happened to the \$4 billion; will it ever be recovered? What about all those "political prisoners" who were released? Will Klara live in quiet obscurity with her children or resurface later as a terrorist? Was that really the Wolf who was killed? These questions leave the door open for many more Alex Cross novels.

Family

James Patterson portrays Alex Cross as a family man - one who loves his children dearly and misses them terribly when he is away. Every chance he gets, Alex returns

home so he can relax, enjoy his family and forget the frustrations and tensions that come with his job. He is heard to say, "Home sweet home again. Why didn't I just learn a lesson and stay there?"

Alex is shown to have a close relationship with the woman who raised him, whom he refers to as Nana Mama. She is actually his grandmother, but he went to live with her when his mother died of lung cancer when he was nine years old (his father had died the year before). The reader sees in several scenes how much Alex worries about his grandmother. Twice when he arrives home and finds Kayla Coles' (his grandmother's doctor) van parked outside, he rushes in, afraid that something has happened to Nana Mama. He denies his worry, but no one believes him.

Another example of his love for the old woman is his openness to receiving both her teasing and her admonitions. She tells him that he's not getting any younger himself; he laughs and calls her a constant pain in the butt. She meddles in his love life, saying that Kayla probably leaves as soon as Alex shows up because he doesn't ask her to stay or because he gawks at her. Nana tells Alex that Kayla could be the one for him and she adds, "Don't argue with me. She scares you and that might be a good thing."

Alex's love for his kids is also obvious. He is heartbroken that he has lost custody of his and Christine's son, Alex Jr., because of his dangerous job. Each time he must leave little Alex after a visit, his misery is evident. Before he goes, Alex Jr. whispers, "Please don't go away, Daddy." When he drives away, watching his son get smaller and smaller in his rear view mirror, Alex says, "I could still feel Alex's little body pressing against mine. I can still feel it now."

His relationship with his two older children is also healthy, as shown by their teasing, lighthearted manner with each other. Their love and concern for him is evident, as shown during the phone conversation with Jannie and Damon when they ask him questions about Notre Dame and the gargoyles in an effort to get his mind off the death and destruction caused by the Wolf. When he comes home and takes them on a sailing adventure, Jannie tells him, "Best day of my life. I'm not even exaggerating too much." He replies, "Same here. And I'm not exaggerating at all."

Government and Politics

In Patterson's *London Bridges*, his main character, Alex Cross, works for the FBI as a senior agent. He is sent all over the world to work with heads of state, government officials and police departments. Alex is shown traveling to London and Paris, as well as Guantanamo Bay and Zurich.

Because Cross works for the FBI, the reader gets a glimpse into what he thinks and feels about the workings of government. Since Alex is portrayed here as the good guy and he works for the FBI, it can be safely assumed that the author is portraying the United States in general and the FBI in particular, as a force for good.

However, Alex's frustration with the bureaucracy and inner workings of government is apparent. The author depicts the difficulty of getting several agencies and even the departments within each agency, to work together. "Welcome to the process-obsessed Federal government and its completely bizarre way of doing things." In this time of crisis, however, they do cooperate as the Special Forces from the FBI and the CIA, as well as HRT and SWAT, work together to track down the Wolf and those who work with him.

Although this is a work of fiction and the author uses only fictional characters as the heads of state and agencies, he attempts to show the various agencies and departments in a factual light.

Style

Point of View

James Patterson's *London Bridges* is told in both the third person and the first person point of view. Alex Cross, who works as a senior agent for the FBI, narrates the first person point of view. The third person point of view is provided from multiple viewpoints; the story is told through the eyes of several different characters, as needed. These different viewpoints alternate back and forth from chapter to chapter.

In the opening two chapters (the prologue), the story is told in the third person through the eyes of Geoffrey Shafer, the Weasel. The reader knows what Shafer experiences and what he thinks, from his plan to torture and kill the young prostitute to his own horrible torture by the Wolf: "The Weasel just wanted to die now. He was hanging upside down from the ceiling of his own master bedroom."

In the third chapter, the point of view changes to an omniscient, or overall, viewpoint in describing the evacuation of the panic-stricken citizens of Sunrise Valley, with a focus on two particular citizens, Frances and Dougie Puslowski. In chapter four, the viewpoint switches to that of the pilot of the plane that drops the bomb; in the fifth chapter, we read the Wolf's point of view.

By the sixth chapter, when Alex Cross arrives on the scene, he tells the story in the first person. "When everything started, I was blessedly out of the loop, on a four-day vacation to the West Coast, my first vacation in over a year." Each successive chapter is presented from the viewpoint of the character who happens to be "on stage" at the moment, interspersed with Alex's first-person account. In this way, the reader knows more about what is happening than the main character does because we are privy to what is going on in several characters' minds.

Setting

Written in 2004 and set in the present, *London Bridges* is set all over the world. The primary location is Washington, DC, where protagonist Alex Cross is a senior agent for the FBI and works out of the Hoover Building. However the novel opens with the Weasel in Salvador, Brazil, jumps to Sunrise Valley, Nevada for the bombing of that town and then shifts to Los Angeles, where the Wolf watches a live video transmission of the blast. From there it moves to Seattle, where Alex visits his young son and then to San Francisco, where he flies to see his girlfriend, Jamilla. After a trip to Nevada to inspect the bombsite, Alex flies home to Washington, DC. to be with his family in the house on Fifth Street and to go to his office.

From there the settings of *London Bridges* jump around, depending on either where Alex is sent or where the Weasel or the Wolf are at the moment. Alex goes to



Guantanamo Bay; New York City; London; Paris; Lexington, Virginia and the Idaho Rockies in his quest to identify the Wolf.

In the meantime, the Wolf travels to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to meet with leaders of terrorist cells, then on to New York City and Paris. He sends the Weasel first to New York City to blow up the 59th Street Bridge, then to London to blow up Westminster Bridge and finally to Paris, where he destroys both a bridge and three square blocks near the Louvre.

James Patterson chose Washington DC as the main setting for his Alex Cross novels because, in his own words, "There are so many things that can realistically happen there. Alex can go anywhere from international intrigue, to something going on with the government. Plus, I personally really like Washington, it's an interesting, cool city."

Language and Meaning

The language used in *London Bridges* is primarily English, but because the story is international in scope, a number of phrases from other languages are also featured. *Zamochit*, a Russian word that means the breaking of the bones, is used by the Wolf before he employs this torture method on the wife of a man whom he's killed for stealing from him.

When Alex visits Martin's family, Klara fixes breakfast while the children teach him several Czech words for the food: *kolace*, *rohliky*, *turka*, *parek* and *michana vejce*, meaning pastries with cream cheese centers, rolls, Turkish-style coffee, sausages and scrambled eggs. The reader is given a clue here that things may not be as they seem when the children admit that this is the only Czech they know. If their mother is truly a Czech native, why haven't the children learned more of the language?

Alex comes home from France and fixes his family a meal of *roties brunoises de papaye poivrons et oignons doux*, which means prawns with papaya, peppers and onions. They have brownies with ice cream for dessert because, as Alex observes, they are in America, after all.

The reader also learns a small amount of Swiss when Alex and Sandy eat at Veltliner Keller in Zurich. They dine on *zuppe engadinese* and *veltliner topf*, barley soup and a casserole.

Structure

London Bridges is divided into five parts plus a prologue. The prologue consists of the first two chapters, in which the Weasel is introduced. The reader experiences his capture and torture through his eyes and learns of the frightening superiority of the Wolf, who tells the Weasel, "I found you and I can find you again."

Part One opens in Sunrise Valley, Nevada at a trailer park. Dougie and Frances Puslowski are hanging clothes to dry when men whom they believe to be U S soldiers descend upon them, brandishing rifles and ordering them to evacuate their homes "Now!" After a bomb leaves only a hole in the desert where the town used to be, we see Alex Cross as he visits his young son in Seattle and then flying to San Francisco to see his girlfriend; once there, he is immediately ordered to Nevada to investigate the bombing. Also in Part One, the Wolf addresses the heads of the agencies that have convened at his command, taunting them after they watch a video he's sent them of the bombing.

Part Two begins with the Wolf walking the streets of Washington, DC and follows Alex as he desperately tries to run down a lead on the Weasel, whom he knows is involved. The Wolf steps up the action by having Thomas Weir killed and the Weasel mutilates and murders a prostitute in Washington. After flying to New York City and raiding a terrorist cell, Alex waits for the Wolf's deadline but nothing happens. The Wolf then calls again, tells them that he warned them not to investigate, then blows up the 59th Street Bridge.

In Part Three, the Weasel visits London and terrorizes his children; Alex tries to stay on his trail and follows him there. Meanwhile the Wolf blows up a luxurious beach house on Long Island that is full of Red Mafiya leaders. He then orders the Weasel to arrange the bombing of the Westminster Bridge in London. Alex later fights and kills his old nemesis, the Weasel, beside the Houses of Parliament.

Part Four opens near Paris, with the Wolf taking an old friend for a ride in one of his race cars and shooting him. Then he hires a former KGB man to blow a big hole in Paris. Alex flies home to be with Nana and his kids, rather than going straight to the office as ordered. He is shown here nearly burned out from frustration with the elusive Wolf and the madness of the system. After some R&R, Alex flies to Paris and once again feels like he's running in place when the French police treat him like a nuisance. He's kidnapped and handcuffed to a suitcase bomb, then dropped off in a busy mall; the bomb proves to have no trigger device. Time is running out as the deadline approaches for New York City, London, Paris, Tel Aviv and Frankfurt. The ransom money is raised with five minutes to spare but the Wolf still destroys an area near the Louvre and a Parisian bridge, just because he can.

In the last part of the novel, Part Five, Alex finds a paper connection that leads him to a Swiss bank and eventually to a car chase down a mountain near Nice, where it's discovered that the head of the London Met, Martin Lodge, had worked for the Wolf. His wife, Klara, isn't Czech as previously believed, but Russian and also has connections to the Wolf. Someone whom we're led to think is the Wolf goes in for major reconstructive surgery on his face - without anesthetic. He then kills the doctor and nurse and leads Alex and others on a chase through the streets of New York City, finally falling to his death from a 10-story building. Alex goes home to discover that his family has been abducted and Klara takes credit, signing her email, "the Wolf." His family is returned after five days and he vows to get the Wolf once and for all. The new head of the CIA tells Alex about Anton Christyakov, who was brought out of Russia in 1990 and

introduced to Martin Lodge, then located in Paris. Christyakov's entire family was attacked and killed there and Christyakov habitually squeezes a rubber ball his son had given him. After leaving the house of a Red Mafiya head, Alex sees a large bearded man squeezing a rubber ball; he pursues him, but the man swallows a poison pill before Alex can stop him and dies. Alex retrieves the rubber ball as a trophy and feels uncomfortable about it, but can hardly wait to get home to his family. *The Wolf is dead. I saw him die*. He keeps telling himself this until he finally believes it.

James Patterson writes the Alex Cross novels in very short two- and three-page chapters. He says that he set out to make the books the fastest-paced things he could put on paper. He wanted to differentiate the series from what was already out there, so the short chapters were something he purposely decided to do.

Quotes

"You did a good job, Maria. You brought him to us." He turned to one of his men. "Kill her." Prologue, Chapter 1, pg. 5

"This is just a warm-up. Just the beginning of something great. My masterpiece. My payback." Part 1, Chapter 5, pg. 20

Then he and Christine disappeared inside and I was on the outside, alone, walking back to my rental car with my hands stuffed deep in my pockets, wondering what it was all about, missing my small son already, missing him badly, wondering if it would always be as heartbreaking as this, knowing that it would be. Part 1, Chapter 6, pg. 24

Revenge, a dish best served cold, thought the Wolf, squeezing his rubber ball again and again. Part 1, Chapter 25, pg. 82

Some of the more devil-may-care guys from the Hostage Rescue Team, which is just about all of them, call this kind of dangerous operation "five minutes of panic and thrill. *Their* panic, *our* thrill." Part 2, Chapter 48, pg. 149

"Bridges are very dangerous places. I know this from past experience." Part 2, Chapter 53, pg. 167

I bent down over (the Weasel). "Who is the Wolf? Where is he?"

"Go to hell," he said and then he died and went there instead. Part 3, Chapter 68, pg. 218

Wordsworth had written of the view from Westminster Bridge: "Earth has not anything to show more fair." Part 3, Chapter 69, pg. 220

"Everything has been promptly arranged." Part 5, Chapter 103, pg. 330

"We won. Dammit, we finally won, Neddy." Part 5, Chapter 119, pg. 376

We lost. Part 5, Chapter 120, pg. 379

The Wolf is dead. I saw him die.

I kept telling myself that until I finally believed it. Part 5, Chapter 124, pg. 391

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the reactions of the people in Sunrise Valley, Nevada as they are herded at gunpoint from their home. Why would Dougie pull a gun on the soldiers?

Why did the Wolf evacuate the town in Nevada and then blow up a town in England with the people still in it?

Alex is told by Martin Lodge, who is setting a trap for him, that he will meet him beside the Houses of Parliament. Why doesn't Alex question the absence of Martin Lodge when he is jumped by the Weasel?

Could a private individual ever run an operation as large and complex as the Wolf did? Could he or she obtain powerful nuclear weapons? Explain your answer.

Would the Wolf really have used nuclear weapons to blow up the capital cities of the world if his demands had not been met? Why or why not?

A man the author portrays as the Wolf goes in for reconstructive surgery and is killed in a fall. What was the true identity of this man? Does the author "play fair" in leading his readers to believe that this is the Wolf?

Why does Alex Cross have to keep telling himself over and over that the Wolf is dead after he saw him die?