

The Overton Window Study Guide

The Overton Window by Glenn Beck

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Plot Summary

The Overton Window is a thriller by television personality Glenn Beck. In this novel, Noah Gardner is pulled into the drama of a patriot group by a beautiful woman. Noah's father would like to convince the apathetic young man that his new found lover is a troublemaker who has only used him as a means to an end. Noah, however, sees through his father's spin on the situation and decides to continue fighting with his new love despite all the evidence to the contrary. The Overton Window is an interesting view into the mind of hard core patriots, the god-like mentality of the public relations world, and the fear that commands them all.

Noah Gardner is an apathetic young man who has simply gone with the flow all his life. Noah never really chose his path in life. It was handed to him by his ultra-powerful, wealthy father. However, the day Noah sees Molly Ross in the break room at his office, his whole world shifts on its axis. Noah goes to meet Molly at a political meeting simply with the hope of getting to know her better. However, Noah quickly finds himself in the middle of a battle that goes much deeper than he ever could have imagined.

Molly appears happy to see Noah at the meeting, but they quickly get into a conflict when Noah misjudges how seriously Molly takes her political beliefs. A short time later, someone pulls a gun and Noah finds himself being beaten by a cop after saving one of Molly's friends from getting a baton on his head. When Noah arrives at the police station, he is called in to be questioned. Noah's lawyer quickly shows up and tells him he has pulled in multiple favors to get the charges dropped. However, Noah throws a wrench in the process when he realizes that the man who pulled the gun at the venue is one of the cops. This leads to the lawyer managing to have all the people arrested with Noah released.

Noah gives Molly and her mother a ride home. Molly and Noah talk for a while and begin to build a bond. For this reason, Noah agrees to allow Molly to spend the rest of the night at his apartment. The following day, Noah wakes to discover Molly has come and gone out of the apartment. They go for a walk and Molly asks Noah to break into his father's PR office and get information on a meeting Noah's father had with many well placed government officials the day before. Noah reluctantly agrees. In the process of finding this information, Noah and Molly realize that Noah's father is trying to help the government begin some sort of conflict in order to get laws passed that will infringe on yet more of the American citizen's rights.

Molly takes Noah back to her apartment where she introduces him to many of her friends and co-patriots before drugging him and leaving him behind. When Noah wakes, he is taken to his father's office where he learns that Molly set him up and has been using him all along. Angry, Noah goes in search for Molly only to discover that her mother has been poisoned, most likely by someone in the employ of Noah's father. For this reason, Noah helps Molly leave New York by sneaking her through security at the airport. Together, Noah and Molly fly to Las Vegas where Molly has learned a former lover and friend has been working with an undercover FBI agent. As Molly and Noah



approach the area where Molly's friend is, they are chased by the police. Noah jumps out of the car to give Molly time to escape. As Noah waits for the cops, a nuclear weapon discharges in the distance.

Noah is tortured and interrogated by men he soon learns work for his father. Noah's father threatens to kill him if he does not agree to work with him. Noah agrees, but he secretly continues to help Molly and her patriots.



Prologue and Part 1: Chapters 1-10

Summary

Prologue

A man is in the desert with a stack of papers. He frantically begins to make a phone call, trying to convince the person at the other end that he has seen a facility that someone is building in secret for some big event. The man is shot before he can finish his entire story.

Chapter 1

Noah Gardner walks into the break room at the public relations firm where he works and sees a beautiful woman with whom he instantly falls in love.

Chapter 2

The woman, Molly Ross, is hanging fliers for a political rally that night. Molly is at first cold to Noah, making him more determined to get to know her. Before he knows it, Noah has committed himself to attend the meeting advertised in Molly's flier.

Chapter 3

That evening, Noah attends a meeting between his father, the head of the public relations firm, and several obscure government employees. The meeting is about the government's desire to hide a leaked document that makes the government look as though they are singling out certain demographics as terrorists. Arthur Gardner, Noah's father, becomes annoyed with one of the attendees and quickly puts him in his place.

Chapter 4

Noah leaves the meeting to make multiple phone calls to invite several people to the second half of the meeting. Noah accidentally discovers that one of these calls is to the next United States Treasurer. Noah then burns the list as instructed.

Chapter 5

Noah wanders through the hallway and looks at many of the momentos of the best campaigns of the firm. A few of them clearly impacted the opinions of the American people and the government in ways unfathomable to most Americans.

Chapter 6

Noah is in a taxi cab trying to make it to Molly's rally when the driver pulls the car onto the sidewalk. This prompts an anonymous law enforcement group to pull both Noah and



the driver from the car and interrogate them. Noah simply walks away when it is established that he has not been arrested, leaving the driver behind to face whatever consequences there might be.

Chapter 7

Noah walks toward the part of town where the rally is even though it has begun to rain. Noah even continues after a car splashes him with muddy water. Noah hopes the rally will not be crowded so he will have time to talk to Molly, but he is frustrated to discover the venue is overflowing.

Chapter 8

Noah knows he should turn around and go home, but instead he walks into the bar and searches the crowd for Molly. When Molly finds him, she goes in search of a clean, dry shirt for Noah. When she returns, Molly is with a very large man called Hollis. Noah is intimidated, but the man proves to be harmless.

Chapter 9

Noah changes his shirt and comes back to the table to find Molly in the company of another man who is clearly someone with whom she was once romantically involved. Noah is once again intimidated. However, when he meets this man, Danny Bailey, he immediately feels that he is not a threat.

Chapter 10

A woman takes the stage and begins to talk about how the current government is not what the founding fathers intended it to become. This woman believes that government infringes on the American citizen's rights and that a perfect example of that is the tax code and the IRS. When Noah makes a comment about the speech, Molly becomes angry, informing him the speaker is her mother.

Analysis

The prologue suggests that a terrorist attack is on the horizon. The reader is unclear as to whether this is a clear threat or not until the man is shot in cold blood while talking to a reporter on the phone. This sets a certain tone for the novel, suggesting that something big is about to happen.

The first few chapters of this novel introduce the main character, Noah Gardner. Noah is an apathetic young man who has never really investigated his own beliefs, let alone chosen a path and taken it. However, this seems to change when he sets eyes on Molly Ross and immediately decides he is in love with her.

Molly is the complete opposite of Noah. Molly chose her path in life a long time ago, following her mother's strong beliefs in the destruction of the American governing



system. Molly invites Noah to a rally of her patriotic group and, much to her surprise, he agrees. The oddity of this situation is highlighted when Noah, after meeting Molly but before going to her rally, attends a meeting at his father's public relations firm with government officials who are trying to hide a leaked document that places the government in a poor light.

As Noah travels to and arrives at the rally, the intensity of this group becomes very clear as does Noah's apathy to politics. The two are like vinegar and oil, but the reader can see that something is going to have to change. At this point, the reader assumes it will be Noah who will change, but that is not necessarily a foregone conclusion.

Discussion Question 1

What does the man in the prologue try to tell to the reporter? What does this suggest to the reader about the plot of this novel?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Noah decide to attend the political rally advertised on Molly's flier? What does this suggest about his personality?

Discussion Question 3

What causes Molly to become angry with Noah at the rally? How does this highlight the differences in their beliefs?

Vocabulary

Pointless, accomplishing, globalism, tyranny, progressive, corruption, immune, commonsense, matured, slogans, opinion, instinctively, publicity, unrepentant, animated, confirmed, indications, forecast, nationalism, stricken, retirement, enforcement, proponents, immigration, distribution, protestors.



Part 1: Chapters 11-15

Summary

Chapter 11

Noah drinks too much after Molly leaves his table. When Danny takes the stage, Noah cannot help but make light of the speaker's arguments. When Noah accidentally speaks too loudly a quote that finishes something the speaker said, the whole room takes notice of him.

Chapter 12

Noah is invited up on the stage. Rather than ignore the jab, Noah does take the stage. Noah expresses to the crowd exactly why they will never truly be taken seriously. Noah's speech is heard, but not taken seriously. Danny Bailey takes the stage again and continues his tirade. Noah runs into Molly's mother just as he becomes aware of the number of cops in the crowd. Noah tries to take the woman and leave, but when someone pulls out a gun and the cops reveal themselves, Noah feels compelled to return to the bar to save Hollis from being beaten by a cop. Noah is then hit on the head by the cop.

Chapter 13

Noah wakes in a police transport truck with his head in Molly's lap. They are taken to the local police precinct and placed in separate parts of the jail. Noah is almost immediately called to be interrogated by a detective. Noah's lawyer arrives and throws around his weight, quickly ending the interrogation and telling Noah that he will be released very soon. When Noah spots the man who pulled the gun among the undercover cops, he convinces the lawyer that it was all a set up and asks him to help the others.

Chapter 14

Noah is released and waits outside for Molly and her mother, Beverly Emerson. Noah offers to give the ladies a ride home in the limo his firm sent. They drop off Beverly first. Noah then takes Molly to a local restaurant to pick up food before driving around town long enough to give them time to get to know one another. Finally, Molly asks Noah to take her home with him.

Chapter 15

Noah takes Molly up to his luxury penthouse apartment. They separate once inside, each going to wash and sleep in a separate room. However, Molly soon comes to join Noah, teasing him before falling asleep at his side.



Analysis

Noah attends the political rally that Molly's flier described. Noah's only intention is to get to know Molly better. However, as the speakers take the stage, Noah finds himself listening, if not agreeing, to their arguments. Finally, Noah is drunk enough that he cannot keep his opinions to himself. Noah does not deny the things the group is angry about, in fact he agrees that they do exist and should be changed, but he disagrees with the way the group is going about their protest. Noah makes a strong argument against the anger, the name calling, and the apparent racism that runs rampant among the patriots.

Noah is a great observer of body language and recognizes in the crowd many people who do not appear to fit. For this reason, Noah develops a feeling that something bad is soon to happen. Noah runs into Molly's mother, Beverly Emerson, and tries to take her out of the bar before things go bad. Unfortunately, they do not make it to the exit before someone in the crowd pulls a gun and fires. This gives the waiting police an excuse to attack and arrest the patriots. Noah sees that a cop is about to hit Hollis even though he is already down. Noah comes to Hollis's rescue, but places himself in a position to be beaten as well.

Noah's arrest, along with those of most of the patriots, feels like a setup and Noah gets confirmation of this fact when he sees the man who pulled the gun at the rally among the undercover cops. For this reason, Noah's lawyer is able to get the charges dropped against everyone who was at the rally. Noah takes Molly home, literally.

Discussion Question 1

What is the main topic of the speakers at Molly's rally? Do they have a good argument? What are some of their stronger points?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Noah pulled up on the stage at the rally? What does Noah have to say? What are some of the merits of his speech? Why does Beverly congratulate him?

Discussion Question 3

How is Noah arrested? Why is he the first to be released? Why does Noah try to prove that the arrests were a setup by the police? Was it?

Vocabulary

Reclined, maintenance, rakishly, departed, indicating, feminine, masonry, traditional, upstate, resort, cancer, conversation, impress, inconvenience, itemize, traditional, occupant, overthrow, propaganda, massive, fascinating, integrity, imagine, playlist, destination, instructed, whispered, apologize, misjudged.



Part 2: Chapters 16-27

Summary

Chapter 16

Stuart Kearns, an FBI agent, arrives at the Manhattan Detention Complex. Kearns is treated with indifference until the corrections officer realizes his orders come directly from high in the government. Kearns is there to see Danny Bailey who has been in the complex since his arrest at the rally the night before. Danny has clearly been beaten throughout the night and is weary of Kearns despite his offer of help.

Chapter 17

Kearns convinces Danny to go with him to an unknown destination. Kearns tells Danny that he is part of a deep undercover project in which he has developed a website to convince extreme patriots that he is unhappy with the government and plans to retaliate with a stolen nuclear missile. Kearns needs Danny to help him make contact with five men who have requested to buy the stolen missile. Danny reluctantly agrees.

Chapter 18

Noah wakes to the smell of cooking bacon. Molly tells him she went out to get groceries. After they eat, Noah and Molly decide to go for a walk. After sharing their first kiss, Molly asks Noah to help her break into his father's office so they can find out what his meeting with the government officials the day before was about. Noah initially refuses, but when Molly leaves, he chases her down and agrees.

Chapter 19

Noah helps Molly break into his father's office by using his key to his father's private elevator. In the conference room, Noah plays the slide show that his father used in the meeting. As they view both the earlier slides and then some slides that were under a special password, Noah explains what an overton window is to Molly. Then they both look on in shock as they realize that Noah's father is trying to help the government create such a profound shift in popular opinion regarding specific safety situations that they can essentially begin a whole new government with fewer rights for the people. One of the methods the PR firm seems to be planning to use is war.

Chapter 20

Noah and Molly discuss what they saw as they leave the building.

Chapter 21



Molly invites Noah into her apartment. The apartment turns out to be a safe house for the patriots that can house as many as ten people at a time. As Molly goes to get tea for them, Noah sees some questionable books and then finds Hollis making ammunition. Molly takes Noah into the kitchen where he meets a group of patriots. Each is assigned a specific founding father and the task of memorizing that person's writings. Noah and Molly then go into her room where they discuss some of her views before Noah succumbs to medication that Molly put in his tea.

Chapter 22

Kearns and Danny are in a double wide trailer in Nevada preparing for the first meeting with the extremists that night.

Chapter 23

Kearns and Danny spend the day going over their stories so that they will appear as though they are good friends.

Chapter 24

Kearns and Danny drive to the meeting. They are surprised to find that only four of the five men are there.

Chapter 25

Kearns gives a demonstration of the bomb with the provided address, that of the home of a sitting Senator, to show how the GPS detonator works.

Chapter 26

Kearns and Danny are uneasy when they leave because the four men claimed to not have the money and request a meeting in the middle of nowhere the following day.

Chapter 27

Kearns tells Danny his story, which sounds similar to that of his undercover persona. Danny then convinces Kearns to let him get a beer at a local strip club. In the club, Danny borrows a cell phone to send a warning text to Molly and others in the patriot movement.

Analysis

Stuart Kearns is a disgraced FBI agent who is so far undercover that he is unsure if anyone really remembers that he is an agent. Kearns is tasked with using Danny Bailey to help him unearth a group of extremists by pretending to be selling them a stolen nuclear weapon. Danny only agrees to help because he cannot survive in jail, which is his alternative. Danny and Kearns go to Nevada to meet with the extremists, but there is



something off about the meeting almost immediately. The men refuse to buy the bomb at the initial meeting and their leader is not there. Kearns and Danny both have a bad feeling about the situation and Danny sends out warnings to Molly and others in her patriot group.

Noah grows close to Molly and hopes that there might be a future to their relationship. For this reason, he allows Molly to manipulate him into breaking into his father's office and viewing the materials of his meeting with the government officials the previous night. These materials seem to reveal that the public relations firm is trying to help the government push the American people into such a frenzy of fear that they would be willing to have a new government form, one that would infringe on most of their rights. Molly is outraged about this possibility and determined to stop it.

Molly takes Noah to her safe house and introduces him to some of the other members of her group. They discuss the group's goals and beliefs. Noah seems to be open to these ideas, but it's clear that he has not chosen one side or the other. This seems to be irrelevant, however, when Molly drugs him for unknown reasons.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Kearns? Why is he interested in Danny Bailey? Is Kearns really an FBI agent, or is he really a rogue former federal agent? Why is this important?

Discussion Question 2

What do Molly and Noah discover in the office of Noah's father? What does this information suggest to the reader about the intentions of the government and the public relations firm? How does Noah respond to this revelation?

Discussion Question 3

What do the books Noah finds in Molly's safe house suggest about her organization? What is Hollis making? For what purpose? What does this suggest about his possible future actions?

Vocabulary

Paperwork, operation, awareness, composed, describe, intellectual, innocent, anticipation, transition, explosion, sophisticated, detonator, constellations, lifetime, compliment, coverage, device, console, mindless, belief, watchful, troubling, produced, apparently, endorsed, patriot, verified.



Part 2: Chapters 28-31

Summary

Chapter 28

Noah wakes to find a group of strangers ministering to him. A doctor injects Noah with something that helps drag him out of a drug induced sleep. When Noah learns that he has been asleep for three days, he is shocked.

Chapter 29

Danny manages to send an email to Molly without Kearns being aware of it as they prepare to leave for their next meeting with the extremists.

Chapter 30

Noah goes to his father's office where he is confronted by not only his father, but his father's lawyer and security chief as well. Noah is informed that Molly and her group broke into his father's offices and stole some of the material Noah showed her Saturday afternoon. Noah also learns that Molly intentionally set out to seduce him and use him because of his connection to Arthur Gardner.

Chapter 31

Noah's father sends everyone out of the room to speak to Noah alone. Noah attempts to apologize, but his father waves it off. Noah's father tells Noah that something big is about to happen and that he needs to stay out of it.

Analysis

Noah wakes after having been drugged by Molly. Noah learns that Molly sought him out intentionally so that she could use him. Noah's father tells him that Molly and her group are a nuisance that have been in their way for years. Noah's father clearly dislikes Molly and all she stands for. It is clear that Arthur Gardner has underestimated Noah's affection for Molly.

Arthur Gardner also tells Noah that he has orchestrated something big for the government and that Noah should stay out of the way of it. Noah realizes that his father is planning to go forward with the plans he saw on the material for the meeting with the government officials. The reader is unclear at this point how Noah feels about his father's actions, but it is apparent that something bad is about to happen and Noah is going to have to choose sides.



Discussion Question 1

Why did Molly drug Noah? What were the dangers of the drugging? Could Noah have been killed?

Discussion Question 2

What does Noah's father tell him about Molly and her group? Is any of this a surprise to Noah? In what way?

Discussion Question 3

What does Arthur Gardner's announcement of something big about to happen suggest about how Danny and Kearns' situation relates to Noah's? Are all these things connected? How?

Vocabulary

Manipulation, ignorance, anthropologist, extremists, lemmings, genocide, liberty, potential, uncommon, enunciation, refilling, intrusion, anesthesia, solitude, uninterrupted, impulse, perform, digital, espionage, damaged, desired, automatic, radical, recollection, mechanism, society.



Part 3: Chapters 32-39

Summary

Chapter 32

Noah goes to the mail room in search of Molly and learns that her mother is in the hospital.

Chapter 33

Noah rushes to the hospital where he is met by a doctor friend.

Chapter 34

Noah speaks with Beverly. Beverly has been badly beaten and is having trouble breathing. Beverly asks Noah to find Molly and to protect her. Noah's doctor friend tells Noah that Beverly has been poisoned and cannot be saved.

Chapter 35

Noah goes to the address Beverly gave him and finds a repentant Molly.

Chapter 36

Noah helps Molly create a disguise to help them get through security at the airport. Noah has convinced everyone that Molly is Natalie Portman. However, when they arrive in a lounge for a private screening, Noah nearly panics when he recognizes the security agent as a Star Wars fan. Molly convinces him to continue with the plan.

Chapter 37

As Molly finishes her screening, the security agent sees a cross among her jewelry and questions why she would wear one when she is Jewish. Molly uses lines from Star Wars to distract the agent and escape his doubt. Noah and Molly board the plane, and Molly promptly goes to sleep.

Chapter 38

As Kearns and Danny travel to the final meeting with the extremists, Danny expresses fear that this situation is bigger than either of them imagined.

Chapter 39

Noah reads Molly's diary filled with quotes from the founding fathers on the flight. When they land, he tells Molly he finally understands her views. Molly is less than impressed.



Analysis

Noah discovers that Molly's mother, Beverly, has been brutally attacked and poisoned. Noah is convinced that the security team working for his father is responsible. For this reason, Noah decides to help Molly escape before they can get to her too. Noah is still angry at Molly for using him, but her clear pleasure at seeing him again makes him forget most of that anger.

Noah helps Molly escape New York and travels with her to Nevada, unaware that it is in Nevada where his father's plan to incite terrible fear in the American people is to take place. Noah is blindly following a woman whom he believes he loves. Thus far, she has done little to suggest she returns Noah's feelings. It is a complicated situation that can only end badly for Noah as he finds himself stuck between his powerful father and the woman he thinks he loves.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Noah go in search of Molly? How does he find her? For what purpose?

Discussion Question 2

Who has attacked Beverly Emerson? For what purpose? What message does this attack send to Noah and the patriots?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Noah go to Nevada with Molly? How does this go against what Noah's father said to him? What consequences might Noah face for his actions?

Vocabulary

Informational, newfound, response, reaction, qualify, dominion, protection, martial law, Congress, representative, foreclosures, pundits, complicit, unattributed, successful, operation, resistance, demonize, translates, undaunted, coincidence, practicing, actually, security, terrorism, incident.



Part 3: Chapters 40-47 and Epilogue

Summary

Chapter 40

Danny and Kearns arrive at the meeting. They are both nervous, so they both bring guns.

Chapter 41

Kearns and Danny finish their deal with the extremists. However, when one of the men receives a phone call, it is clear to Danny that it is someone giving the order to kill Danny and Kearns. Both Danny and Kearns open fire, killing three of the men before jumping into a van the last man is escaping in with the nuclear missile.

Chapter 42

Noah and Molly speed off in a rented car. Noah questions Molly about her chosen destination, so she shows him print outs of a text message and email from Danny Bailey.

Chapter 43

Danny calls 911 in hopes of getting help. As they wait in the racing van, Danny theorizes that the extremists are not what they appeared and that the missile that is supposed to be a fake might be real. Kearns agrees and sets the detonator. Danny and Kearns are both killed when the bomb goes off in an unpopulated area.

Chapter 44

Molly and Noah argue until they realize they are about to be overtaken by a squad of police cars. Noah decides to jump out of the car to give Molly time to escape.

Chapter 45

Noah is taken to a remote place and tortured for information.

Chapter 46

Noah's father comes to visit him, making it clear the torture is at his hands. Arthur wants Noah to make a choice between the patriots and family.

Chapter 47

Noah is tortured as his father watches. At first Noah refuses, but then decides to pretend he has chosen his father's side.



Epilogue

Noah has been sent to a remote facility where he is supposed to show his loyalty by helping the PR firm make the most of the nuclear detonation in the Nevada desert. Noah has failed to convince anyone of his loyalty, but has been given another chance. One day a member of Molly's patriotic group visits him, urging him to continue the good fight by giving him proof Molly is still alive.

Analysis

Noah and Molly arrive in Nevada where Noah learns that Molly has once again lied to him about her intentions. Noah is angry, especially since he has only just begun to see things from Molly's point of view, but Molly again convinces him that her actions were justified. Molly will do anything she can to promote her own cause, even if it means placing a man she professes to love in danger. Noah is beginning to understand this.

Danny and Kearns finally realize that the bomb they have is not a fake, but the real thing. The bomb is supposed to be used in a large attack on Las Vegas, an attack that is part of the public relation firm's plan to frighten American citizens, opening the door to a change in government. However, when Danny and Kearns figure this out, they set the bomb off in an unpopulated area, taking away the shock value and leaving the public relations firm with a great deal of explaining to do.

Noah is taken into custody and then tortured by unknown men. When Noah realizes his father is behind the torture, he is not really surprised. Arthur Gardner has a god complex, and he has been throwing it around since before Noah was born. However, the fact that Arthur Gardner would willingly allow his only child to be tortured and killed is hard for the reader to swallow. In the end, Noah convinces his father that he is loyal to him even though he is not. Noah is learning the game and has clearly finally made his choice in this war. Noah is a patriot, not just for Molly, but because he feels that it is the right thing to do.

Discussion Question 1

What goes wrong with the purchase of the fake nuclear weapon? What do Kearns and Danny find in the back of the van along with the fake weapon? How do they discover the weapon is not really a fake?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Noah tortured? Why is he set free? What is Noah's life like now?



Discussion Question 3

Why had Molly brought Noah to Nevada? Why does he accuse her of using him again? Has she? In what way?

Vocabulary

Assignment, accommodations, originally, compiled, administrator, modest, confinement, technicians, exquisite, exonerate, treachery, forgettable, inconclusive, infectious, preparations, electrodes, federal, explosion, squandered, meek, equality, potential, monuments, existence, destiny, existence, fittest.



Characters

Noah Gardner

Noah Gardner is an apathetic young man who has always just gone with the flow of life rather than make definitive choices. However, this begins to change when Noah meets Molly Ross. Molly Ross is a member of Founder's Keepers, a group that believes the American government has taken a wrong turn and needs to return to its roots. Noah unwittingly helps Molly steal from his own father because he believes himself in love with her. In the end, however, Noah realizes that Molly's movement has a true purpose that he supports. For this reason, Noah decides to work against his own father and help promote Molly's cause, even after his father makes it clear that his life is in danger if he makes this choice.

Molly Ross

Molly Ross is a young woman who works in the mail room at Arthur Gardner's PR firm. Noah meets her in the break room when she comes there to hang a flier for a political rally. Noah falls instantly in love with her and goes to the rally, unaware that Molly has set him up so that she can break into Arthur Gardner's office and steal some of his materials regarding the government.

Molly is a driven young woman who believes deeply in her convictions about the direction the American government has taken. For this reason, Molly does not think twice about using anyone who can help her, including Noah. However, Molly appears to have fallen in love with Noah, but the reader wonders if she is simply taking Noah on a ride to further her own cause.

Hollis

Hollis is a very large man who is an active participant in the Founder's Keepers group with Molly and her mother. Hollis is a gentle giant who works as something like the resident mechanic at the safe house where Molly lives. Hollis even makes ammunition from scratch in anticipation of the government making the private purchase of weapons and ammunition illegal. Noah and Hollis become friendly, but Noah remains weary of Hollis and his extremist views.

Beverly Emerson

Beverly Emerson is Molly's mother and the founder of the Founder's Keepers, a patriot group. Beverly speaks at Molly's rally about the IRS and how the tax laws take civil liberties from the people. Later, Beverly is attacked and poisoned, presumably by Arthur Gardner's security people.



Danny Bailey

Danny Bailey is a part of Molly's patriot movement. Danny is a speaker and he has a website where people can view videos of him speaking. For this reason, Danny is well-known in the movement. Danny's ideas have become somewhat antiquated and he often incites more violence than he intends. However, his popularity causes the government to take notice. It is for this reason that Kearns uses Danny to get close to the five extremists who want to buy his nuclear weapon.

Danny realizes something is off from the first meeting with the extremists. It all sounds too familiar, too much like other terror attacks that have happened all around the world. For this reason, Danny continuously warns Kearns and his friends in the movement before finally sacrificing himself by talking Kearns into setting off the weapon in a remote area.

Stuart Kearns

Stuart Kearns is a dishonored FBI agent who has been pushed so far out of the agency that he often worries that no one remembers he is an agent. Kearns has been working undercover trying to find and arrest extremists who are a threat to American safety. In this work, Kearns has maintained a website that suggests to visitors that he is a former FBI agent who has such a grudge against the government that he has stolen a nuclear weapon and is willing to sell it anyone who is willing to use it against the government.

Kearns uses Danny Bailey to help him get close to a group of five extremists who have expressed a desire to use his nuclear weapon. However, as the meetings progress, Kearns and Danny both come to the conclusion that they are being used in some conspiracy against the American people. For this reason, they set the nuclear weapon to discharge in an unpopulated area.

Arthur Gardner

Arthur Gardner is Noah's father. Arthur is the head of a PR firm in New York that has represented some very powerful people, including members of the United States Government. Arthur trained with the original PR man and seems to have a belief that he is a god of sorts because of the power his position brings to him. Arthur has become so god-like that when the government comes to him with a problem, he is willing to go so far as to incite a war to help them get what they want. At the end of the novel, Noah realizes that his father will do anything to get what he wants, including kill his only child. For this reason, Noah chooses to pretend to think as his father does in order to live and to use his father's own logic against him.



Charlie Nelan

Charlie Nelan is Arthur Gardner's lawyer. Charlie is the lawyer who comes to Noah's aid on the night Noah is arrested at Molly's political rally. Charlie also arranges for the rest of those arrested that night to be freed despite his better judgment because Noah insists on it. Charlie is clear Arthur's employee, however, since he clearly does not like Noah and does not approve of his choices in life.

Warren Landers

Warren Landers is the head of security for Arthur Gardner's PR firm. Landers is the one who tells Noah how Molly used him to get to the information in Arthur Gardner's office in regards to an account for the government. Landers also tells Noah that he plans to make Molly's group pay for what they have done, leaving Noah with the impression that Landers and his men are the ones who beat and poisoned Beverly Emerson.

Extremists

Kearns has been communicating with five extremists in Nevada through a website set up to act as part of Kearns' undercover operation. The five extremists want to injure the American government by using a nuclear weapon to kill a prominent US Senator. Kearns claims to have this weapon, though Kearns has been told that the weapon he actually has is a fake. Kearns meets with these extremists twice with Danny's help, the last time turning into a blood bath when the extremists turn on Danny and Kearns and try to kill them. In the end, Kearns realizes that he has been set up by someone high in the government and that the bomb is actually real. Kearns and Danny set off the bomb in an unpopulated area to stop the intended attack.



Symbols and Symbolism

Bracelet

Molly has a bracelet with a Thomas Paine quote on one side and the words, Faith, Hope, Charity, on the other. It is this bracelet that Noah receives in the Epilogue that convinces him that Molly is still alive.

Religious Jewelry

Molly wears a necklace that indicates her Christian beliefs, a fact that puzzles a security agent at the airport when she pretends to be Natalie Portman, a famous actress who is known to be Jewish.

Noah's Keys

Molly slips Noah's keys out of his pocket while they are kissing in order to use them to break into Arthur's office.

Framed Poem

Molly finds in Noah's penthouse a poem he copied for a penmanship class as a child. The poem is a favorite of his father's, written by Rudyard Kipling. It is a dark poem written after the death of Kipling's two children that Noah believes his father has taken and twisted to mean something more than it does. The introduction of this poem begins to show the division in Noah and Arthur's personalities.

Notebook

Molly has a notebook that is filled with quotes from many of the founding fathers and their contemporaries. Noah reads this notebook on the flight to Nevada and finds that he understands Molly's beliefs more after reading it.

Slides

Arthur Gardner uses slides for a slide show while he is describing to clients what he plans to do for them. Noah shows Molly some of these slides for a presentation Arthur made for certain members of the American government.



Tax Code

Beverly Emerson uses a copy of the tax codes to show the people at Molly's political rally that the government puts more effort into restricting the American citizen's rights than protecting them as the tax codes are multiple times longer and more complicated than the Constitution of the United States.

Medication

Noah is drugged with an anesthetic by Molly in order to keep him out of the way while she and her friends break into Arthur's office. Later, Noah is given another medication to help him combat the lingering effects of the anesthetic.

Waterboarding

Waterboarding is a controversial interrogation technique. Noah is waterboarded after he is taken into custody in Nevada. It is later revealed that Noah's own father is behind the torture and Arthur is willing to see Noah die if he does not conform to his ideas.

Nuclear Weapon

Kearns has what he believes to be a fake nuclear weapon that he is supposed to sell to a group of extremists in order to generate enough evidence against them to arrest them. However, the buy does not go as it is supposed to and Kearns soon discovers the weapon is not fake, but real.

Settings

New York City

Noah lives and works in New York City. Much of the novel takes place in New York as Noah and Molly go all over the city during their short relationship. Noah lives on the wealthier side of Manhattan, while Molly lives on the poorer side, showing a contrast not only between each way of life but the contrast between the social classes.

Nevada

Danny Bailey and Stan Kearns go to Nevada where they plan to work undercover against a group of extremists who want to buy a nuclear weapon to kill a United States Senator. The weapon is supposed to be fake, and the extremists are supposed to be arrested after the sale, but Kearns and Danny eventually discover that the extremists are not who they are supposed to be. Molly rushes to Nevada with Noah to help Danny, but arrives just as the bomb detonates, killing both Kearns and Danny.

PR Firm

Noah's father owns a large, influential PR firm. The firm has influenced the American population for many years, swaying their opinion from everything to the products they buy to the politicians they vote for. Noah's father, Arthur, plans to go even further, influencing the American population in such a way that they will allow a republic to form in place of the government the Founding Fathers created. Noah works at this firm and it is here that he meets Molly who works in the mail room.

Noah's Penthouse

Noah lives in a penthouse in a luxury building in Manhattan with several celebrity neighbors, including a disgraced politician. Noah brings Molly to his home to spend the night after their arrest, unaware that she uses his generosity to steal from him, plant evidence against him, and find evidence to use in her fight against the government.

Safe House

Molly and her friends have an apartment in New York that they use as a safe house for people in the movement. The apartment houses as many as eight to ten people at a time. It is here that Molly drugs Noah and leaves him so that she can use what he has unwittingly given her to steal from Arthur Gardner.



Themes and Motifs

Love at First Sight

As the novel begins and the reader is introduced to Noah, they find him falling instantly in love with a woman he has never met before. Noah believes he is in love before the woman even speaks, falling for her beauty and the way her body moves. Noah believes this woman, whose name is Molly Ross, is the one woman for him and his belief never wavers, even when he learns that she set him up from before they even met.

Love at first sight is a phenomenon that many do not believe in. However, in this novel, love at first sight takes an apathetic young man and dumps him into the middle of a dangerous power struggle. Molly is part of the Founders Keepers, a patriotic group that believes the government has drifted away from the original intentions of the Founding Fathers and needs to be pushed back in the right direction. Noah's father, a PR professional, believes that government for the people by the people is a stupid concept that has failed and should be replaced with a republic in which the wealthy rule over the poor.

Noah learns many truths about Molly, his father, and the world he lives in as the novel progresses. However, his conviction that he is in love with Molly from the moment he meets her never wavers making love at first sight a theme of the novel.

Apathy versus Passion

This novel is written by a political analyst who has very definite opinions about the current government in the United States and what the Founding Father's truly intended for the country. Many of these opinions are expressed in this novel as the main character, apathetic Noah Gardner is drawn into a battle between patriots, people who believe the government needs to be pushed back to the way the Founding Fathers wanted the government to be, and his father, a powerful business man who has a god-like complex and believes that the American people need to be governed by the rich and powerful, not a democratic government.

As the novel progresses, the characters begin to push their political ideas on Noah, Molly and her friends in an attempt to convert him to their side, and his father in an attempt to get his son to help in his endeavor to create a republic. As these opinions are voiced and evidence begins to pile up, Noah begins to form his own opinions.

Noah begins the novel as one of those twenty-something guys who has had his whole life handed to him. Noah was born to a wealthy father and never really had to fight for anything. For this reason, it was easy for Noah to follow in his father's footsteps to become a PR man even though he never really had a passion for it as his father did. Noah never really felt passion about anything until he met Molly. With Molly, Noah not only finds passion for another person, but he begins to develop a passion for something



outside of himself, for the fight that Molly and her friends. Noah finds his passion just in time to find himself on the wrong side of his father's wrath.

Power

A great many of the arguments in this novel have to do with power. Molly and her group, Founders Keepers, argue that the government has assumed too much power over the American people, losing sight of the idea of government for the people, by the people. They argue that the modern government has created things that go against all the Founding Fathers wanted in their new country and that someone needs to push them back, remind them that this country was founded on the idea of freedom.

On the other hand, Noah's father has found a great deal of power in his role as a PR executive. Arthur believes that the average American is not smart enough to decide for themselves what products to buy, let alone govern a country. Arthur believes that America should be governed by powerful men, men who know how to make the tough decisions. Arthur believes that men like him, men with wealth and power should be the ones allowed to run the country.

As the novel develops, the reader comes to the realization that Arthur and key members of the current government are plotting to set off a nuclear weapon in a large American city in order to frighten people into allowing the formation of a republic. It might seem like an outlandish plot, but the reader watches as it unfolds in the novel and can imagine how something very similar could take place in reality. This suggests an overreaching of power by the government and shows how vulnerable the American public might truly be. This is what makes power a theme of the novel.

Styles

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The author uses multiple characters as his narrators, including Noah Gardner, Danny Bailey, and Stuart Kearns. By using multiple characters as his narrators, the author shows the reader many views of the plot, giving insight to things that some of the characters might not be aware of but is important for the reader to see.

The point of view of this novel works well within the plot because it allows the reader to be privy to things that the main characters might not be aware of, but which are important to the development of the plot. With the use of the omniscient style the reader would not be aware of the nuclear weapon in Nevada or the decision by Kearns and Danny to set it off in order to spare a large American city the disaster of such a tragedy.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written in English. The novel is written with a language that is filled with both simple slang and highly educated grammar. The main characters are all well educated people who often have a background of a college education, some even more. The author capitalizes on this character trait by using language that is a little more sophisticated than some bestsellers might boast.

The language of this novel shows a great deal of education and sophistication on the part of the author. However, the language is not always true to the characters. The main character, Noah Gardner, is well educated and grew up in privilege, therefore the language fits his character. However, Danny Bailey and Stuart Kearns are not as well educated and the reader might expect their language to be a little less sophisticated than it is.

Structure

The novel is divided into three parts and contains both a prologue and an epilogue. The novel contains forty-seven chapters, many short chapters interspersed with the occasional long chapter. The novel is told in a linear fashion, taking place over just a few days and containing no flashbacks. The novel is written in both narration and dialogue, showing a story rather than telling one. The basic structure of the novel is similar to many other bestselling novels.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Noah Gardner as he becomes involved with Molly Ross and her Founders Keepers group. One subplot follows the relationship between Noah and his father. Another follows the

relationship between Danny Bailey and Stuart Kearns. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

Most people think about age and experience in terms of years, but it's really only moments that define us.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote begins to define Noah. Noah is an apathetic young man as the novel begins who has not experienced many of those defining moments, but he is about to experience a whole string of them.

A pilot will tell you the same thing; a plane crash is rarely the result of a single failure. It starts small, an innocent mistake or a bad decision that leads to another one, and then another.

-- Noah (Chapter 6 paragraph 3)

Importance: This quote describes Noah's opinion of how things began to go so wrong on the day he met Molly.

This country was founded as a representative republic, but you're no longer represented here, are you?

-- Beverly Emerson (Chapter 10 paragraph 20)

Importance: This quote is part of a speech Beverly Emerson makes at Molly's Founders Keepers political rally. This quote illustrates much of what the patriots believe is wrong with the current government.

The United States was built to run on individual freedom, that's true, but because you've let these control freaks have their way with it for almost a hundred years, your country now runs on debt. Today Goldman Sachs is the engine, and in case you haven't realized it yet, the American people are nothing but the fuel.

-- Noah (Chapter 12 paragraph 12)

Importance: This quote is part of the speech Noah makes at the Founders Keepers rally after Danny Bailey pulls him up on the stage. Noah uses his knowledge from his job at his father's PR firm to support his opinions.

Injustice exists, Charlie had said, and for that fact his young client was now profoundly thankful. If it had been an abuse of power that put him in jail for most of the night, then it was surely a second abuse that had coerced the authorities to let him go.

-- Noah (Chapter 14 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote shows the irony of how injustice helped Noah get justice not only for himself but for the others at the rally after they were arrested in a set up by the police and a private security agency.



It's called the Overton Window. My father stole the concept from a think tank in the Midwest' it's a way of describing what the public is currently ready to accept on any issue, so you can decide how best to move them toward what you want.

-- Noah (Chapter 19 paragraph 52)

Importance: This quote explains what an Overton Window is, explaining the title of the novel.

After all, things can sound different when echoed back by men who've decided to deliver their message with a fifteen-kiloton city killer instead of with a bullhorn.

-- Danny (Chapter 23 paragraph 9)

Importance: This quote establishes Danny's disapproval of the way in which the extremists are trying to go about change in the current government despite the fact that he shares some of their views.

A bureaucracy never forgets, though, and they'd kept pushing him further and further out toward the pasture until finally, for the last several years, he'd been banished so far undercover that he sometimes wondered if anyone even remembered he was still an agent at all.

-- Stuart Kearns (Chapter 27 paragraph 4)

Importance: This quote describes the direction of Kearns' career over the past few years and partly explains why he is currently working with Danny Bailey to incriminate a group of violent extremists.

What I'm saying is, there was nothing random about how you met her, and this all started a long time before Friday.

-- Landers (Chapter 30 paragraph 29)

Importance: This quote is the moment Noah learns that Molly set out to meet him and use him to get information on the government officials who are Arthur Gardner's new clients.

My daughter is in danger. I need for you to promise me you'll see her to safety.

-- Beverly Emerson (Chapter 34 paragraph 10)

Importance: This quote shows not only the danger that has developed for the members of Founders Keepers, but it the moment in which Beverly and Molly once again con Noah into helping them without giving him the appropriate amount of information.

He reached out a hand and Danny Bailey took it in a firm clasp of solidarity, and just a moment later, they were gone.

-- Stuart Kearns (Chapter 43 paragraph 54)

Importance: This quote marks the moment Danny Bailey and Stuart Kearns die after



detonating a nuclear weapon in order to stop the extremists from detonating it in a populated area.

It was a matter of pride with Arthur Gardner that his heir should be involved in the transformation that was coming. His son, then, would do his best to prove the adage that pride comes before the fall.

-- Noah (Chapter 47 paragraph 31)

Importance: This quote is the moment that Noah realizes that his father has fallen for his attempt to pretend to be on the old man's side. Noah has decided it is best to pretend to cooperate with his father so that he might one day bring him down.