

# Red Storm Rising Study Guide

## Red Storm Rising by Tom Clancy

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# Plot Summary

In Nizhnevartovsk, R.S.F.S.R., three Muslims kill refinery workers and set fire to the plant. The massive fire is soon discovered by the Satellite Control Facility in Sunnyvale, California. The fire will quickly consume the entire refinery and the oil fields and burn for days. The Russians in control of the country soon realize the significance - that Russia will now have a shortage of energy. The officials know they can't possibly let the rest of the world know because the world will then know that Russia is vulnerable. Rather than risk that, a handful of Russian officials come up with a plan to gain control of larger oil supplies. That plan includes what will become a world war with control of NATO at the heart of the conflict.

The Russians assure the opportunity to attack NATO by staging an attack on their own Kremlin. The attack results in the deaths of several people, including some children. As those "innocent victims" are laid to rest, Russian officials call for retaliation. The Russian people are spurred to the war and America joins on the side of Germany, as does other world forces.

The Russians are led to believe that their military can have a decisive and immediate victory but time passes with the Allied response slowly but surely taking command of the various world theaters. When the Russians take over an air field in Iceland, an American Air Force meteorologist finds himself cut off from his unit and serving as a watch dog for the Allies. With the code name "Beagle," he reports to Allied forces in Scotland, code named "Doghouse." With the reports he garners, the Allied forces soon take back the Iceland air field.

The war continues on land with the majority of the fighting in Germany at sea and in the air. Some of the battles end in the favor of the Russians while the Allies take some. There soon emerge some military leaders, including those who put their lives on the line in submarines, tanks, and air craft. Then a military intelligence leader has the opportunity to converse with a Russian prisoner of war. The man reveals the fact that no one in the Allied forces had yet discovered - that the entire war was being waged because of Russia's energy situation. That information prompts a change in tactics and the Allied troops begin focusing on destroying Russian fuel trucks and fueling stations. That becomes the final straw. As Russian officials seek to reorganize the Russian government, Russian field commanders agree to cease fires in order to save their remaining troops.



# Chapters 1 through 8

## Chapters 1 through 8 Summary

In Nizhnevartovsk, R.S.F.S.R., three Muslims kill refinery workers and set fire to the plant. The massive fire is soon discovered by the Satellite Control Facility in Sunnyvale, California. It's noted that the fire will quickly consume the entire refinery and the oil fields and will burn for days. The analysis is confirmed by the CIA and British and French security services, but it will soon be revealed that those reports are all incorrect. On January 31, 2006, an Associated Press story written by Williams Blake is released, including facts such as the fields account for some thirty-one percent of Russian's oil production. Mikhail Eduardovich Sergetov, on the job just three months, goes over what he knows, including the fact that some three hundred died fighting the fire and two hundred residents of Nizhnevartovsk also died. It also seems likely that it will take two years to repair the damage and three to replace the welltops.

Sergetov delivers his report to the Poliburo, a group of thirteen men who make the decisions for Russia. Points made during the meeting include that the country's electrical system is already overtaxed, that a show of weakness could be used as an excuse for a military attack, and that Russia is dependent on foreign grain to survive the coming year. It's pointed out that if grain shipments are withheld, the people will be hungry. Sergetov notes that without some dramatic changes, the people will be hungry and in the dark. The conversation eventually leads to a conclusion - that Russia must have oil, that they can't possibly purchase it, and that taking it is the only other option. At the end of a second meeting on the subject, it's suggested that NATO be eliminated and Sergetov notes that it's apparently safer for the Russian officials to take the Russian people into war than to have them live with the hunger and cold. A new report by an AP Moscow Correspondent relates that the refinery fire was caused by a technical malfunction and was contained by sophisticated fire extinguishers.

Patrick Flynn and William Calloway, both members of the press, cover the speech by the Russian Foreign Minister who outlines a proposal for arms reduction. Flynn notes that it will take extensive research to determine the details. It seems obvious to the reader that this is an effort by the Russians to divert attention from their upcoming offensive.

As the Russians prepare for the "Red Storm" offensive, four generals are accused of falsifying training records, are court-martialed and shot. In the United States, Robert Toland intercepts communication on the subject and is interested in the event, though his superiors discount its significance. Toland is a reservist and serves his time with the commander of the USS Pharris, Ed Morris. Toland is beginning to put pieces of the puzzle together as he learns that there's a serious shortage of batteries in Russia and that battery factories are working around the clock. Toland reveals what he knows to Vice Admiral Richard Pipes, who relays the information to his superiors as "possible confirmation" of other reports. Toland is almost immediately notified that his two-week



reserve status is now extended indefinitely. When Toland is moved into a new office in Norfolk, Virginia, he meets Colonel Chuck Lowe who shows photos of increased farm sizes in Russia.

## Chapters 1 through 8 Analysis

It's here that the term "Red Storm" is first introduced. The term is a "plan for a mechanized attack into West Germany and the Low Countries." The offensive is slated as a two or three week campaign and requires surprise.

The clues that lead to the conclusion that the Russians are gearing up for an offensive are slowly being accumulated by a number of people. One of those is Patrick Flynn, a reporter stationed in Moscow. Flynn watches as the Russian Navy fills in torpedo tubes with concrete as a show that they are honoring their commitment to reduce nuclear arms. He notes the amount of time it takes so he can later calculate the amount of concrete poured in. Flynn seems skeptical and later that evening is considering the activity that he witnessed at the naval facility and evaluating what that means. Later, Alekseyev analyzes the current readiness of the Russian troops during an exercise. He notes that there is significant improvement and that the execution of the generals who falsified reports rather than training their men as they should have has paid off in deeper commitment among the remaining officers.



# Chapters 8 through 17

## Chapters 8 through 17 Summary

Toland is released from duty and goes home but is recalled at shortly after 2 a.m. the following morning. As he is preparing to leave his home in Crofton, Maryland, he hears a televised news report that an explosion occurred at the Kremlin that morning as the Politburo was scheduled to convene. Toland's immediate reaction is that it would be easy for the Russians to make it look as if they were victims of a terrorist attack in order to have a reason to increase military activity without seeming to be on the offensive. The men who set the charges had papers in order, attracted little attention as they prepared the bombs and left safely. Nothing is yet revealed about the men or their purpose. The official comment is that the terrorists are German. Toland and his co-worker consider the fact that the movie shown on Russian television the previous night was about a German attack on Russia, complete with the message that Russians must prepare to defend against Germany. Toland later watches a Russian televised broadcast of a man named Gerhardt Falken who admits to having blown up the Kremlin. He calls himself a spy, says that he doesn't know the reason his German superiors gave him the order to blow up the building, that he never intended to harm children, and that he was captured at Kiev, but doesn't know how. Toland notes that Falken has been beat up some and that he reads the statement in a monotone, seldom looking up. When he offers his report, his superiors are angry that there are no hard facts available.

The victims of the blast are lying in state at the House of Unions. Toland says all eleven are elevated to be visible but two children are shrouded with photos to indicate how they looked. Of the eleven dead, three are clerical workers and eight are children. Sergetov is among those at the funeral and he is enraged at the loss of life. He notes that some thirty people know of the bomb plot and that half are in the room at this moment. He admits that he almost wishes he had arrived at the Kremlin a few minutes earlier - that death would have been preferable to the part he's playing now. The eulogy for the dead calls for retaliation. Toland, interpreting the televised version, realizes that this means that Russia intends to go to war.

In Germany, Russian soldier Major Andre Ilych Chernyavin masquerades as a Jewish businessman. He picks up secret plans at a post office that include plans for NATO headquarters then steps into traffic and is struck by a car driven by a French woman. Chernyavin's driver rushes to retrieve the package he carries, but is unable to because police are there. Chernyavin is taken to a hospital where a policeman discovers the contents of the package. He is then taken to a military installation, given drugs and tells all aspects of his mission.

The Julius Fucik, a Russian ship, is now carrying Russian infantrymen. The men are brought aboard secretly and are kept below decks so satellites can't detect their presence. The ship is then repainted in route outside the harbor to look like a merchant ship, the Doctor Lykes. When the ship is discovered by U.S. Navy aircraft, a member of



the Russian crew identifies himself as captain of the Doctor Lykes and says they are bound from New Orleans to Oslo with "general cargo." They explain their deviation from normal shipping lanes by saying they fear the escalating hostilities and ask the Navy pilots if they'll come to their aid in the event of an attack. The Navy pilots accept the explanation. Aboard the Julius Fucik, the infantry commander admits that he'll be happy to make it to land. He says that at least on land he can run away and that he feels the ship is a giant target. In Russia, Flynn admits that he's going to give up his post and go home despite the fact that he has never before "run" from an assignment.

As Chernyavin's men travel, they find themselves behind a convoy of tanks - a planned maneuver though they don't know that until much later. When the trucks hauling the tanks come to a complete stop, Chernyavin's men find they are face-to-face with the barrel of the tank, suddenly raised to a position directly into their windshield. The men then hear Chernyavin calling to them to give themselves up. They are surprised because the story of Chernyavin's death has been published. Now he tells them that, under the influence of drugs, he gave up information about them but has managed to earn the opportunity to save their lives. One van load of men emerge as ordered, one at a time and unarmed, with the exception of the final man who has an armed hand grenade. He throws it at their truck, effectively destroying their plans and paperwork before it falls into the enemy's hands. It's noted that Chernyavin grins at the act and praises his man's action. Several teams aren't captured and firefights erupt.

While the fighting begins on the ground in Germany with highly-trained Spetznaz forces of the Red Army, Coloney Douglas Ellington flies through storms at an altitude barely higher than the treetops. He leads a mission targeting thirty-six bridges and Soviet grand troop support. The mission, though costly in that several planes are lost, is largely a success and NATO knows that the Soviet reinforcements will not arrive. Aboard the USS Pharris, Morris learns that he now has orders to engage any East Bloc warship or merchant ship, and alerts his crew to the fact that no more drills will be conducted and any call to arms would be a real battle against "Bad Guys" with real ammunition. At that same time, American satellites go down while waiting confirmation for a plan to down Soviet satellites.

## Chapters 8 through 17 Analysis

In the Ukraine, Alekseyev is angry and says that children were among those killed in the Kremlin. He says there will come a day of reckoning for the crimes committed in the name of Socialist Progress. He also likens the murder of children in the name of this cause to his own glossing over of the execution of the four generals. Meanwhile, Sergetov is in Moscow and realizes that he could easily have been among the dead since he often arrives at the Kremlin early for the Politburo meetings. Alekseyev later addresses officers, saying that the offensive against NATO is two weeks away and that he is pleased to have served with them. Then Alekseyev and Sergetov talk about their chances with Alekseyev saying that nothing is guaranteed but that he believes the military is well prepared for the coming attack.



It's interesting that there are unifications and cooperation among so many parties as the NATO leaders come together in an attempt to eliminate the threat of the Russian attack. The capture of Chernyavin's men is an example of that level of cooperation. When his men move from the safe house, they are immediately followed, though the pursuers have no real information to determine their destination. It's noted that they may simply be moving from one safe house to another. But they are actually on the move to the next phase of their operation.





# Chapters 18 through 21

## Chapters 18 through 21 Summary

First Lieutenant Mike Edwards is in the tower of the air base at Keflavik, Iceland, when the Russian attack begins. The planes go out to meet the threat but are largely unsuccessful as Mach-1 missiles begin to erupt and put the air base completely out of operation within minutes. Then, a pilot discovers four hovercraft about to land on the Iceland coast, just miles from the base. The craft were disguised aboard the Julius Fucik and have now been deployed. The Navy finds the Julius Fucik and fires a missile into her side but is unable to sink the boat. Fighter pilots do some additional damage, including killing most of the bridge crew and injuring the ship's captain, but have no missiles remaining to fire. The captain is seriously injured and has no experienced crew to follow his orders, so makes a drastic decision. He puts the ship in at a nearby port by force, grounding the Julius Fucik but meeting his objective to deliver the remaining crews to port. Meanwhile, Edwards has escaped with a small group of men and a radio, sending information out regarding the strike and the current situation, though his information is met with some skepticism at first. He's then told that he's on his own for the moment.

The Julius Fucik prepares to dock but is too badly damaged and so the captain rams the ship into the port, effectively meeting his objective but sinking the ship. The Russians take over, though the commanding officer notes that he has many things to worry about. Soon, Russians shoot down a civilian who apparently objects to being ordered around. Some nineteen military officials at the air base are killed and the rest taken hostage, with the exception of Edwards and his party. Word soon begins to circulate among the American ships of the attack in Iceland. Meanwhile, the Russian general has learned that the KGB - in control of the Russian Embassy in Iceland - has rounded up the Iceland Parliament. The only major problem confronting the Russians at this point is that missiles were damaged by the saltwater used to extinguish the flames aboard the Julius Fucik and plans are made to fly in replacements. The general notes that problems always arise from the small details - that the missiles should have been the Naval version to withstand the saltwater. Edwards and his men continue to monitor the situation from Hill 152 and are given the codename "Beagle" with command taking the name "Doghouse."

On the water, Toland is aboard the Nimitz when the discovery is made that a group of Russian planes are attacking. The ships take serious damage, some beyond repair. Casualties are heavy and Toland - who barely escaped - says he doesn't want to think about the number of men lost.

At the Doghouse, it's noted that Edwards is in an area with no real darkness because the sun doesn't truly set, that it's hostile territory and that his estimate is actually reasonable under the circumstances. As they make the move, Edwards finds himself unsuited for the stress of the situation. Upon crossing a road, he freezes and is almost



detected by a military truck. He is duly ashamed of his performance and thereafter completely defers to the Marine Sergeant Smith's orders. Their orders from the Doghouse are to observe an electrical plant and that they are to "bug out" if they find themselves in danger.

Edwards and his men watch as an assault is launched against Keflavik with only limited success by American planes. While several of the runways are damaged, the air field remains usable. At sea, the men of the Pharris aid in sinking a submarine, while the Nimitz is determined to be out of commission for a time. With that decision, Toland is shipped to Scotland. He notes that his first order of business there will be to notify his family that he's safe. Aboard the USS Pharris, Toland and others evaluate the recent attack while Alekseyev hears a promise that the Russian Navy can "close" the Atlantic. The Pharris assists in another submarine kill, and McCafferty aboard the Chicago prepares to chase a submarine sighting of his own.

## Chapters 18 through 21 Analysis

There are moments of levity among the characters. Those stationed in Keflavik, Iceland, know that an attack is imminent and are on full alert. This status, coupled with their location where daylight is perpetual at this time of year, have made the crew edgy. When an officer checks in at the tower, he's greeted with the words, "Good morning" - a sarcastic note of the fact that the sun is high in the sky though it is shortly after three in the morning. The commander, First Lieutenant Mike Edwards, calls for an "attitude check" and receives a response from all in the tower that, "I hate this fucking place." When Edwards calls for a "positive" response, the crew says that they "positively" hate it. The drill goes on until Edwards calls for a "short attitude check" which prompts the response, "fuckit." Edwards notes that everyone then has a much needed laugh.

While Edwards remains in the field, reporting what he sees to the "Doghouse," commanders there evaluate what they can expect from Edwards. It's noted that he seems somewhat stressed, but some officers put that down to having the good sense to realize the danger. They ask Edwards a series of questions in an effort to verify his identity. The question of what happened to his girlfriend goes unanswered as Edwards flashes angry curses and refuses to answer. At one point, an attack on the air base is repelled and Edwards is told that his report of fighter planes available there was ignored because it was unconfirmed. When he's later given instructions to move to a safer location, he says it will take hours to make the seven-mile journey.



# Chapters 21 through 26

## Chapters 21 through 26 Summary

Edwards reports in on fighter activity and is told this time to remain on the air. He does so and watches minutes later as the Iceland air field is attacked. The electric plant is effectively destroyed as is the tower. The Russians mount a counter-attack and score one kill but the mission overall is counted a success. As Edwards completes his report on the attack, he sees Russians come to a stop just a kilometer from his position and Edwards announces that the group will have to move. They're given a new location and head out. At the airfield, the Russians have come to the conclusion that someone is feeding information to the enemy and begin a search to eliminate that threat. Edwards and his group soon discover that they're being hunted but the Marine Captain assures Edwards that there's a lot of land to hide in and that they are relatively safe. They are then ordered to "take a little hike" to reach Hvammsfjordur in about ten days over a distance of some two hundred miles. The Sergeant says that it's going to be tough, and Edwards responds that he thought the Marines were tough, prompting them to prepare to move out. They're later buzzed by a Russian helicopter, but don't put themselves in danger again by relaying that information via radio.

On the ocean, the crew of the Pharris prepare to defend themselves as best they can against a new attack. They damage an aircraft but haven't the capability to do more. Morris realizes that the loss of the Iceland airfield is being felt more than they had first anticipated because it paves the way for sea attacks. Meanwhile, the fleet that includes the Pharris has some fifteen hundred miles of ocean left to cross, and the Pacific fleets are preparing to join the fight. Later, the Pharris encounters a submarine. Morris takes a huge gamble and manages to launch a torpedo that strikes the sub. Eleven men escape before the sub sinks. They are taken aboard the Pharris where Morris greets them like visiting dignitaries. He tells the crew that he believes this to be the most effective way to gain information and orders that they be given food, cigarettes, clean clothing and anything else they need, but that officers are to remain segregated. The kill and capture means that a submarine will be painted on the bow of the Pharris and the men, tired from the long voyage and the constant strain, are rejuvenated.

Alekseyev and Sergetov discuss the situation and note that things aren't going well for the Russians in Germany, that they are behind schedule and have sustained heavy losses. Ellington mans one of two planes with a fueling station as an objective. The second plane detonates the target and Ellington is to fire on whatever isn't burning, but the explosion rockets through the woods, and Ellington notes that there's no need to add to the fire. Then he sees a missile launcher a short distance away and fires on it instead. Unknown to him, a high-ranking Russian officer is in that convoy and "dies a soldier's death," firing on Ellington's craft as his last act. It's later that Alekseyev discovers the death and then only because a planned attack doesn't occur. Alekseyev heads to the front lines of the attack and takes along Ivan Mikhailovich, son of Sergetov.



Edwards and his crew find a farmhouse and are going to ask for food when Russians arrive, break in, kill two adults and rape a young pregnant woman of about twenty. Edwards leads the way to kill the five Russian soldiers, earning the respect of the others. They then put the soldiers in their own jeep, push it over a cliff and set it on fire, hoping to make it seem that they'd been drinking and had wrecked. They then burn the house and take the girl, Vigdis, with them. When Edwards radios in late, he's berated for having interfered and having made contact with the Russians. One member of the crew at the Doghouse says that it's impossible to judge a man's actions from a thousand miles away.

Aboard the Chicago, McCafferty continues to find his actions against the Russians thwarted. During one encounter, he penetrates the outer defenses of a convoy, fires three torpedoes, but is detected before he can confirm whether they struck the target. In Scotland, Toland sums up the situation - that they have the capabilities of pounding the Russians but have to locate them.

Aboard the Pharris, Morris makes the prisoners comfortable. One speaks English and Morris compliments the captain on his approach, which prompts the question of how they found the submarine. During the conversation, Morris decides that there might be another submarine in the vicinity but explains that they were located by sonar. Morris arranges for the rooms of the prisoners to be bugged and for them to be given some liquor, though he doesn't ask from where the bottles came. After the prisoner have been handed off to the French, Morris wonders how the merchant marines who have been pressed into service are holding up and later receives a message, "Thanks for nothing, Navy." Morris notes that the message effectively answers his question.

## Chapters 21 through 26 Analysis

As Toland was preparing to leave, his wife's concern was evident. He reassured her with the fact that he would be on one of the largest and best protected ships in the fleet. When they are hit, he sends her a telegram that says simply that he's safe and is now spending some time on the beach. In Scotland, he's given sympathy for the loss of life and boat, but the commander says he's happy for Toland's help. The damage to the fleet is significant. Thirty ships left the American coast and only twenty remain after a second attack sinks several more.

When Vidgis wakes screaming, Edwards realizes that without his intervention she would have been dead. He notes that someone would likely have found the family in a few days, "like they'd discovered Sandy." The full details of Sandy's demise are still not revealed, though Edwards does acknowledge that Sandy's fate has something to do with the fact that he'd killed the Soviet who'd been caught raping Vidgis. He later tells her that Sandy had been a student at the University of Connecticut when she was raped and murdered. Vigdis then thanks him for saving her and says that it seems Edwards killed the Russians for Sandy, though he admits to himself that it was for himself.



Alekseyev takes to the ground during an attack in Germany, but the Russians are repelled, sustaining significant loss of equipment and men in the process. Among the Allied fighters is Terry Mackell, who has honed the art of locating tanks with antennae that indicate the presence of officers. The battle rages on but the Russians are further hampered by their inability to deviate from the established plan to meet the demands and opportunities of the battlefield.



# Chapters 27 through 34

## Chapters 27 through 34 Summary

The Pharris is torpedoed and Morris watches as the wake of the bomb approaches the boat. Then he's thrown backwards and discovers his executive officer, headless, in the midst of severe damage. The boat is damaged beyond continuing the mission but doesn't sink. Morris, at the advice of his crew, arranges for a tug to begin the slow process of returning home, though they're being pulled backwards because of the damage to the bow. McCafferty arrives in Scotland to learn that three torpedoes he deployed actually found their mark and saved a Norwegian submarine crew.

Meanwhile, Russians break into the lines on the ground at Germany and the Allied forces realize that they have a serious problem on their hands. If they can't "plug the hole" and repel the Russians, Germany may very well fall to the Russian forces.

Morris arrives at port in Boston and is immediately ordered to Norfolk. There he's told that he'll receive a decoration for his efforts and that he'll be remaining in Norfolk to work intelligence for the moment. He's also commended for managing to bring the Pharris back to dock and told that the Russians are altering their tactics much more quickly than anyone thought possible. Back at his own home, he begins visits to those killed during the attack.

Edwards' group encounters another helicopter, and this time Edwards and Vigdis are in the open. Edwards has been fishing and now the two put on the appearance of being a young couple enjoying an afternoon together, prompting the helicopter to move on. There's another attack on the air field in Iceland with the Russians facing new radar-jamming technology that results in several losses. They are soon met by paratroopers who land in dangerous territory, leaving one dead and another injured.

The USS Chicago and several additional submarines arrive off the arctic icepack. In the North Atlantic, the captain of the Ruben James collapses from a bleeding ulcer, and Morris is offered command of that vessel. As they leave the dock, they're signaled by another ship, the Battleaxe, who asks "What the Devil is a Ruben James?" To the delight of his new crew, Morris orders the reply, "At least we don't name warships for our mother-in-law." The two ships soon locate a submarine and score a kill. When one of Morris's men - O'Malley - realizes that the sounds he hears is a nuclear vessel rupturing, he offers the credit for the kill to the other team. When they accept, he laughingly points out that they can also have the privilege of filling out the environmental impact statement.

In Moscow, Sergetov's son returns from the front and is questioned by his father. The younger Sergetov says the NATO forces were well-prepared for an assault. When the elder asks if the Russians are losing, the younger says he's not saying that but admits that they are not winning.



As Morris and his convoy prepare to sail from the New York Harbor, he's joined by the reporter, Calloway. Morris notes that there was little warning of the reporter's arrival, but that he's at least professional enough to carry only a single bag.

## Chapters 27 through 34 Analysis

The Russian soldiers killed by Edwards' group are discovered and it's determined that there is a band of men in the area. Russians are sent out to search for them by helicopter and are very near the group's location when they spot and kill a deer instead of continuing the search.

Edwards and Vigdis talk some and Edwards notes that she keeps up without complaining. He also notes that her pregnancy is nothing out of the ordinary in Iceland where unmarried women often have children, care for them, and go on with life. Perhaps because there are no last names, the people seem to care little whether a child is illegitimate.

Aboard the Reuben James, O'Malley is worried that Morris won't withstand the rigors of returning to command after having lost men on the Pharris. O'Malley's assessment seems to be seconded by Captain Doug Perrin of the Battleaxe. Afterward, O'Malley takes Morris for a drink and forces him to go back over the sequence of events that led to the loss of life aboard the Pharris. O'Malley is trying to help him work through the grief and notes that his own disaster in Vietnam led to the deaths of two of his friends.



# Chapters 35 through 39

## Chapters 35 through 39 Summary

Aboard the *Reuben James*, the Allied fighters bring down a Russian aircraft and O'Malley notes that he - as a helicopter pilot - is now going to serve as "missile bait." The two ships and two helicopters then execute a defensive maneuver they call "Doolittle," which ends with no hits by the Russian torpedoes in the water. A Russian ship sinks and an Allied sub is badly damaged as the Allies fire additional missiles and rush to leave the area before the Russians have the opportunity to retaliate.

O'Malley later scores additional hits, says it's the first time he's fired a live torpedo at a live submarine, and that her sinking is the saddest sound he's ever heard. When Morris asks when he'll be ready to go up again, O'Malley says maybe in a week. Later, he's interviewed by Calloway who asks what it's like to sink a submarine. O'Malley points out that the military words don't include "killing." Instead, they sink ships, pretending that it's an inanimate object with no men aboard. O'Malley also says that he personally had done nothing but search and rescue up to this point. He also says that the ability to survive depends on all parts of their defenses working together.

In Moscow, Sergetov is asked to go for a ride with Boris Georgiyevich, a member of the Central Committee's "General Department." Georgiyevich says that all reports requested by the Politburo are divided into three cases - best case, worst case and middle case. The middle case is always submitted to Politburo with information from best and worst cases added in. In the case of information that led to the war, Georgiyevich explains that he himself was out of the office due to an illness. His replacement waited to hear what the Politburo wanted to hear, then presented them with that report rather than the normal, middle-of-the-road report. Sergetov asks if this means the entire war was a mistake and that the next week will determine whether Russia wins the war or loses. Sergetov watches Georgiyevich leave the car and orders his driver, Vitaly, to take him to his office. While it's not explained at this point, it's noted that Sergetov doesn't know the details of his driver's additional activities.

McCafferty scores a hit by sinking the *Foxtrot*. It's noted that the rescue buoy is deployed, though the men aboard are already dead.

In Germany, the chopper carrying Alekseyev and Sergetov is shot down. The men barely escape before the helicopter explodes. They begin walking south and soon commandeer a truck. The *Chicago* encounters Russians, leads an attack away from the wounded sub they're traveling with, and manages a narrow escape themselves. In Southampton, England, the *USS Nimitz* is repaired and prepared again for service. In Iceland, Edwards and his group discover that the hill they're supposed to be aiming for is already occupied. They choose another hill and make their way in that direction. Though they don't as yet have firm orders, Edwards feels confident that they're now going to be picked up, and Vigdis agrees that she will go with him.





Edward's group has to make a dangerous trek across exposed terrain to reach the mountain where they hope to be picked up. Once there, they're ordered to report everything they can see. They do so, though someone in Scotland eventually says that it's a shame Edwards' group can't know what's being planned. Soon Edwards' team watches as a full attack is launched against the air field. It's too late for Edwards, though he doesn't yet know that he's been spotted by an observant Russian on the next hill who sees a repeated flash of light and orders Russian troops up the hill to investigate. When Edwards and his crew realizes that they have been spotted, they take defensive positions and agree to wait until the Russians are very near before opening fire. Edwards radios for help and is told that aid is just moments away. They manage to hold off the continuing attack until the air support arrives, though they suffer some casualties and several - including Edwards - are injured. Edwards passes out from lack of blood just as he's picked up by a helicopter crew.

Aboard the Chicago, McCafferty tracks, loses, and regains sight of a Russian sub, then watches helplessly as the Russian sinks both of the submarines traveling with the Chicago. Then the Chicago makes contact with a British submarine. Asked if they are alone, the Chicago answers in the affirmative.

## Chapters 35 through 39 Analysis

Edwards and Vigdis make a connection and it's actually Vigdis who says that Edwards has fallen in love with her. He doesn't admit it for some time, though he's clearly fond of her. He admires her strength and the "inner beauty" of this woman who has managed to keep up with them through the entire trek. When they are making their approach to the hill that's to be their final destination, she asks if he is now about to leave the country. He says that he won't leave without her and she agrees to go with him. It's when Edwards lies down beside her that he says the words, "I love you."

The tactical descriptions are somewhat tedious and describe the various battles in great detail. It's important to remember that this has been described as a world war. The conflict is raging in Iceland, Germany, and on the seas in between. The variety of battle grounds means there is an impressive array of battle types. Land, sea and air become the scenes for these fights. There is also an array of fighters. Troops from Germany, America, France, and England are joining in the fight in an effort to thwart the Russian plan. What's interesting about this is the Russian determination that the war was actually started because of a report delivered in error by an overly-ambitious officer.

There's an additional situation in which a Russian pilot and American pilot fall into the sea just a few feet apart - the American having been shot down and the Russian running out of gas in his relentless pursuit. In the water, both are in rafts and the Russian shows his gun and declares that the American is his prisoner. The American isn't afraid and counters with the question whether the Russian has sufficient shark repellent, prompting the officer to put down his own weapon.



# Chapters 40 through 45

## Chapters 40 through 45 Summary

Lieutenant Potter is among those who rescues Edwards and his group. Potter and his team then search for all Russians who might alert Keflavik of the impending landing of the Allied ships on the area coast. Potter's men then go house-to-house in Stykkisholmur, Iceland, searching for fishermen experienced with the local waterways who can help steer the large vessels into the coast. In Keflavik, General Andreyev alerts his men that they are to seek out American ships in the harbor first, though his men argue that there's not even any real indication that the ships are there. Toland, aboard the USS Independence, hears the plane departing the carrier and is aware that he's had a narrow escape already during this war. As the Allied forces execute a plan known as "Plan Delta," the odds turn in their favor. At the end of the battle, the Soviets have suffered tremendous air losses.

The captain of the Nassau watches as an elaborate plan is put into action. Missiles are fired into the volcanic rock, creating hot spots. The Russian fighters arrive to find an incredible number of "blips" on their radar screens. The captain of the Nassau continues to watch as the Russian missiles line up on rocks because of the heat being given off. Only a few missiles detect true targets. Toland watches tapes of the action and it's determined that two ships are lost with minor damage to two more. It's noted that some fifteen hundred lives are lost, but that the plan is an overall success. In Keflavik, General Andreyev is waiting for news. He no longer has a working radar and so must depend on reports for information. It's while he's waiting for these reports that a communication is delivered via radio. It's transmitted in Russian and is from the Atlantic Fleet. The message is simply, "better luck next time."

The younger Sergetov is sent on a scouting expedition, finds himself afoot and is horrified as he watches Americans making their way toward the air field. He arrives at Sack, Federal Republic of Germany, where he's intensely questioned by KGB officers before being allowed onto the command facility. He's told that the nearest division headquarters is Fortieth Tanks and knows that has been destroyed. Sergetov tells the major in charge of the area that the Russian troops are marching into a trap and must return to base. The major says he has no authority to recall the men, regardless of the reason or report.

Sergetov manages to go on to Holle where he radios his report to Alekeseyev and is ordered on to Stendal. Alekeseyev passes on the information as well and is summarily dismissed from his post. He goes on a helicopter ride and gathers intelligence photos to support the data provided by Sergetov. He points out that the troops are about to be cut off, but his objections are overridden and he admits to himself that the Russian objective has been a complete failure. In a meeting of Communist Party officials later, the elder Sergetov stands up for Alekeseyev. Sergetov also points out that his own son has risked his life at Alekeseyev's side and asks the other Politburo members where their own



sons are. The meeting continues with an official saying that official numbers from Iceland are not yet available. In fact, he knows what the Soviet losses total and doesn't want to reveal that until he can counter the losses with what the Soviets inflicted. Alekeseyev is advanced to command but doesn't rely on that too seriously, saying the previous commander had been elevated just months earlier and was now being escorted off the premises.

Soon the objectives of those fighting against the Russians have changed. Ellington finds himself alone on a scouting mission. When he locates a group of tanks that are likely gathering for refueling, he takes out the radar and sends for backup. The new orders are to hit as many fuel trucks and tanks as possible. Ellington is directed to a second round of targets where he is soon shot down but manages to eject before impact. Alekeseyev soon learns that the attacks on the fuel means his men at Alfeld haven't sufficient fuel to maneuver during the attack. Alekeseyev orders them to attack anyway, saying the divisions within the German lines will be cut off and die unless the attack goes as planned.

Alekeseyev comes to what he believes to be a "skillful compromise" over his position. He recalls a lesson he learned during his own training in which the Germans allowed the Russians to penetrate well into their territory. They were then cut off and slaughtered. Alekeseyev notes that he is now facing the same situation and his orders are to continue the advance with the interior group while attacking a different point on the front lines with another. Alekeseyev comes to the conclusion that this only chance of survival is to bring the interior group around to aid in the frontal attack, though it's against orders. He notes that he is facing a situation in which he might be executed for failure to follow orders. He says that it's fitting that this be so because he has sent so many young men to their deaths with his decisions.

Alekeseyev is called to Moscow where he's asked to analyze the situation. He says that the use of nuclear weapons could be a benefit though he believes it will be suicide. He cited the "political" aspects as being negative but agrees that they could benefit the military objectives. He then says that he wants to have control of the weapons himself. When asked why, he doesn't say it aloud but notes that it's so that he can assure himself that they won't be used. Soon after, there's an uprising and the KGB, now officially without a leader, wavers. The elder Sergetov notes that it's amazing how the country works and that only some two hundred people know about the uprising.

In Iceland, Edwards receives the Navy Cross and Andreyev officially surrenders a short time later. Alekeseyev soon meets to discuss a similar cease-fire and withdrawal. He proposes to move Russian troops back over a two-week period and is told that the same effect could be accomplished without a cease-fire. After the agreement is reached, Alekeseyev says that the Russians have learned that they must be accountable to the people. He silently notes that the Americans can't possibly know that the Russians don't have codes for the nuclear missiles, having been unable to find them after the uprising that left the head of the KGB dead.



## Chapters 40 through 45 Analysis

Aboard the Independence, Toland talks to Major Chapeyev. He's the Russian pilot who crashed his plane by running out of gas as he pursued those who had bombed Keflavik. Toland reassures him that he'll be treated properly and Chapeyev makes a rude comment about Toland's Russian. Chapeyev obviously expects to be questioned or killed and seems surprised when Toland says that Chapeyev has no information they need. He comments on the photo of Chapeyev's wife and twin daughters, which was in his possession when he was taken from the water. Toland shows Chapeyev a photo of his own wife and Chapeyev takes the bait, becoming talkative and ready to share information about the reason the war started at all. Toland tapes the conversation and reveals the reason the war started - oil.

He sends Sergetov to plead his case with command. Sergetov arrives at the home of his father to find Boris Kosov, director of the KGB, at his father's house. He is immediately aware that he's in the presence of the man who arranged the bombing on the Kremlin and the deaths of the children - the entire situation that inflamed Russia to a war. Sergetov learns that several officers have been arrested, that the army will be blamed if the war is lost, and when he leaves, his father says that he hates using his own son this way, to which Kosov replies that there's no one else to trust. Back on the front, Alekeseyev continues to hope that the planned attack will succeed. There's soon a counterattack to deal with, and Alekeseyev makes plans to get the KGB informer out of his way.

Alekeseyev then sends Sergetov back to visit his father. The younger tells the elder that Alekeseyev doesn't believe the offensive against NATO can succeed and that their best option now may be to negotiate. The elder tells his son that he has stood beside Alekeseyev for his son's sake, and that they are both now in danger. In a meeting of the Politburo, the elder Sergetov points out that the governing body was assured that the war would take only a matter of a few weeks. They have now been informed that Iceland has been retaken. Sergetov learns as he leaves the meeting that the Secretary of Agriculture is in need of fuel to distribute food. It's the first time Sergetov has learned of the larger food plots. He counts the fact that there is food as good news and promises to do what he can to help distribute it. When the Agriculture Secretary later says that he will vote against the use of nuclear arms so that his grandchild will have a country to grow up in, even if it means his own life, the elder Sergetov realizes that he has an ally.

The constant political maneuvering by the Russian officials is typical of the Russian government. It also seems typical of Russia during this time period that there are food stores available and that it seems possible there will be no way to distribute them. The Agricultural Secretary notes that it took an imminent war to prompt a change of policy that would allow for larger food plots.

The cease-fire is agreed upon, though Ellington and the second man who was in his plane when it was shot down don't realize this. They expect to have to make their way

some fifteen miles through enemy lines. Upon making it to within some two kilometers of that distance, Ellington is discovered by Russians. Believing themselves in hostile enemy hands, Ellington expects to be taken prisoner and is surprised when the Russian kisses him on the cheek, points and says they have two kilometers to go. Morris, aboard the Reuben James, is happy to be mooring in Virginia. He realizes that his return means that the war is over.



# Characters

## Robert Toland

A mid-level analyst at the National Security Agency, active reservist, and communications expert. It's Toland who notes the execution of four Russian generals as something noteworthy though his superiors discount the information. It's also Toland who knows that the Russians are pushing for war and ensuring the support of Russian people by urging retaliation for those killed at the Kremlin. Toland continues to evaluate the information from Russia and becomes a major part of the team analyzing tactics, information, and data during the war.

Toland happens to be on hand after the capture of the Russian officer off the coast of Iceland. Toland encourages the officer's confidence by saying that he really has no information that could possibly be of any use. He then points out that they - the men who are soldiers of the wars - simply obey orders and never even know why wars are being fought. That comment sparks the information that Russia's part in the conflict is because of the need for oil. Toland passes the information on and it's this detail that creates a change of tactics so that the Allied forces know that their best chance of winning is to eliminate fuel supplies that are becoming increasingly important to the Russian offensive.

## First Lieutenant Mike Edwards

Edwards is stationed in Keflavik, Iceland. He is actually a meteorologist on assignment with the Air Force. When he discovers that the air base at Keflavik is under attack, he manages to escape and is soon accompanied by three Marines who travel with him as he makes his way away from the air base to a more secure spot. Edwards has a radio with him and uses it to make contact with officials to report the situation. At first, he's not believed and is ordered to get off that channel. When he does make them believe that he has witnessed a Russian attack on the air base, the Allied officials question him to be certain of his identity. Once that's established, Edwards is given the code name "Beagle" and reports to "Doghouse."

As he travels cross country with orders only to observe and report Russian activity, he encounters a young woman being raped by Russian soldiers. Her parents are dead at the soldiers' hands and Edwards, supported by the Marines, disobeys his order to only observe and his group kills all five of the Russian soldiers - several without the use of a gun. Edwards and the young woman are soon in love - he because of his admiration for her strength and quiet serenity even after her ordeal. Edwards is injured as the final assault pushes the Russians into submission on Iceland, turning the base back into the hands of the Allied forces, largely because of the information fed to them by Edwards.



## **Ed Morris**

Commander of the USS Pharris. Morris is caught in a bad situation and finds the Pharris targeted by an enemy torpedo. There's no way to evade the attack and the ship is damaged beyond continued operation, though the immediate efforts of Morris's men means the ship doesn't sink. Morris expects to remain ashore during the remainder of the war but is soon sent out to take over command of the Rueben James when the captain of that ship becomes ill.

## **Commander Daniel X. McCafferty**

The commander of the USS Chicago. McCafferty's attempts to sink Russian submarines and ships seems to be thwarted as the story begins. He is unable to locate enemy targets and spends a great deal of time and energy without scoring a hit. He then learns that he had destroyed a target and saved a Norwegian crew though he hadn't been able to remain in the area at the time to verify the hit.

## **Mikhail Eduardovich Sergetov**

An advisor to the governing body of Russia. Sergetov's specialty is energy production and distribution. Sergetov is on the job only three months when the refinery blow up. Sergetov's son becomes affiliated with Alekseyev and that fact impacts the actions of Sergetov himself. He remains among those who take control of the Russian government as the war comes to a close.

## **Pavel Alekseyev**

Deputy commander of the Southwestern Theater of the Russian military. It's Alekseyev who says that the "Red Storm" plan calls for surprise. He says that preparing for the offensive for four months is certain to attract attention and that the only way to truly present a surprise attack is to attack immediately. Alekseyev says the military leaders could be back at their posts within six hours and that they could attack within seventy-two hours. His idea isn't accepted by others, including his military counterparts. Alekseyev eventually becomes a commander on the front, holding a position of authority but knowing that he is in danger because failure means that he will likely be killed.

## **Major Chapeyev**

The Russian fighter who crashes into the sea in an effort to shoot down another pilot that had fired on the Russians at the Iceland air base. Chapeyev ends up in the ocean just a short distance from the American he shot down. He immediately says that the American is his prisoner. It's Chapeyev who later reveals that the Russians went to war over oil.



## **Ibrahim Tolkaze**

The man who leads the Muslims into the oil refinery at Nishnevartovsk. The group, under the leadership of Ibrahim Tolkaze, kills all the employees who try to stop their attack. It's Ibrahim Tolkaze who opens valves and sets fire to the oil wells. Just as he prepares to do the monumental damage to the oil field, he stops to read a passage from his most treasured possession - half of his grandfather's Koran.

## **Patrick Flynn**

The Associated Press Russian Bureau Chief. Flynn is determined to remain in Russia but agrees to leave once the war becomes imminent. As the conflict reaches a close, he sails aboard the Reuben James.

## **William Calloway**

The Reuters correspondent. Calloway is another of the press members stationed in Russia. He also leaves with Flynn and is later aboard the Battleaxe, a boat in the fleet with the Reuben James as they head for the heart of the conflict in Iceland.





## Objects/Places

### Red Storm

The plan for a mechanized attack into West Germany and the Low Countries. The major components are strategic surprise and the use of conventional weapons.

### Nizhnevartovsk, R.S.F.S.R.

The location in Siberia of the oil refinery blown up by the Muslims.

### Norfolk, Virginia

Where Toland works.

### Crofton, Maryland

Where Toland lives.

### Ghostrider

The plane produced by Lockheed that is called "Frisbee" by the pilots. This is the plane flown by Colonel Douglas Ellington.

### Moscow

The city where the Russian Politburo is located.

### Hill 152

Located four kilometers from Hafnarfjordur, this is the location where Edwards and his fellow Marines go after the attack on the Keflavik, Iceland, air base.

### USS Pharris

The ship commanded by Morris that is badly damaged during a battle and is later put in to port.



## **Reuben James**

The ship that Morris takes over after the USS Pharris is damaged.

## **USS Chicago**

The submarine commanded by McCafferty.

## Social Sensitivity

Red Storm Rising is about war in all its various forms — from terrorism to the clash of huge armies, from war on the ground, to war in the air, on the sea, and under the sea. The novel is an intellectual, largely unemotional portrayal of horrifying conflict. Clancy's intellectual approach converts the war into a mind game, making it a story that may be read with pleasure instead of the revulsion called forth by narratives of the slaughter and destruction of war.

Although Red Storm Rising has the tone of an elaborate game, war is not made appealing. Indeed, it emphasizes that future wars should be left to novels and games; the real thing is too awful. The war on the ground chews up enormous amounts of troops, hardware, and fuel. The armies lay waste to vast tracts of land. Civilian casualties multiply as their homes and countries are crushed by armies that fight more for survival than for victory. At sea, Soviet submarines and land-based bombers try to prevent supply ships carrying troops, weapons, and ammunition from reaching Europe. NATO navies try to intercept the Soviet forces. The result is a vast and confused battle in which men and material are thrown away, while little, if anything, is accomplished.

## Techniques

In *Red Storm Rising* Clancy uses the episodic style of *The Hunt for Red October* (1984) and his later books. The rapidly shifting scenes could be confusing, but Clancy provides each locale with a familiar character to serve as an anchor. Specific characters are associated with each setting and subplot. For instance, Lt. Edwards represents events in Iceland, Sergetov events in Moscow, Gen. Alekseyev the Soviet side of the land battle in Europe, and Sgt. Makall the NATO ground forces at the front in Germany.



# Themes

## The Quest for Power

The quest for power is a recurring theme throughout the story but never so much so as at the very beginning and ending. In both cases, it's the Russians who crave power. As the story opens, the Russians are dealing with the loss of an oil refinery, a major source of the country's energy. With that loss, the country immediately begins trying to determine how to cover up the situation. For the Russians, this is vital because to do otherwise would mean that other world powers would know the Russians are in an undesirable position. The Russians are so anxious that they not lose their standing as a world power that they are willing to go to war rather than reveal their situation.

As the conflict nears an end, it becomes evident that the Russians are not going to win the war. The use of nuclear weapons by Russian military becomes an option as a way to bring the war to a successful conclusion. It's noted that the Russians did not use the weapons early on because it would not have been a politically sound judgment. As it becomes apparent that the Russians are not likely to win the conflict, the need for politically correct judgments become secondary to the need for the power of a win.

## Leadership

There are many in the story who become leaders in the full sense of the word. One of those is Mike Edwards. Edwards isn't a leader as the story begins but is a meteorologist working with the United State Air Force. When the Russians attack the air base where Edwards is stationed, he takes on the role of leader of a small group of Marines who manage to escape. Edwards isn't respected among the small group at first but there comes a point at which he earns their respect. Edwards is also not at first accepted by those in command who talks to him by radio. When he finally convinces them that he is who he claims to be, he is soon accepted as an important person to have in the field. His observations become the information that leads to attacks that bring about the recovery of the air base in Iceland by the Allied forces.

On the side of the Russians, a young man named Sergetov soon emerges as a leader. Sergetov is the son of a Russian official who knows more about the situation that prompted war than most. The younger Sergetov is not at first accepted but eventually becomes an important part of the Soviet intelligence system.

## Fear

There are a number of people who find themselves in harm's way, and many of them show heroism but they also show fear for their lives. The majority of these are shown in the midst of battle and the fact is that most continue with their assigned tasks despite any danger that exists. For example, Morris finds himself in the difficult situation of



having to leave his ship which is severely damaged as the result of an attack at sea. When he's then assigned to a new ship, the Reuben James, he's obviously afraid. In Morris' case, his fear comes as much from the fact that he has responsibility for the safety of his crew as for the fear for his own life. One of the crew of the new ship recognizes this fear and urges Morris to talk it out but admits to himself that this fear and the feeling of responsibility for the lives lost never leaves a person. It's also noted that some of Morris' men see this fear in their captain and that they hope it won't affect his judgment during a battle.

When Alekseyev finds himself at the front lines of the battle, he seems somewhat fearful but is pleased with the fact that he successfully led men into battle. The interesting fear in Alekseyev's situation is that he knows his failure to achieve specific objectives could be sufficient for officials to call for his execution.

## Significant Topics

In the late 1970s, a public CIA report suggested that the Soviet Union's economy might suffer dramatically in the 1980s from insufficient supplies of oil.

Red Storm Rising builds on this premise.

To enhance efficiency, the Soviet oil fields are controlled from only a few command centers. One of these is attacked by Moslem fanatics who use the computer-controlled pipeline switching equipment to destroy a major oil field, cutting Soviet oil production by about a third. Faced with a severe economic crisis, the Soviet leaders fear that the Western nations will push their country into utter economic ruin. Prompted by this fear, the Soviet leaders launch a surprise attack on Western Europe, hoping to eliminate NATO as a military threat and force the Western powers to make social and economic concessions.

At the outset of the war, the Soviets occupy Iceland, depriving NATO of a crucial air base from which to intercept Soviet long-range bombers. NATO forces must then rely on carrier-based fighters to protect their convoys in the Atlantic. NATO fighters swarm to bring down Soviet Backfire bombers over the ocean, and eventually the superior technology of American aircraft enables them to overcome the greater numbers of enemy planes. In Europe, armored divisions rage across the countryside, while NATO and Warsaw Pact fighters shoot at one another overhead. Again superior American technology plays a crucial role, enabling American Stealth aircraft to sneak behind enemy lines to destroy huge quantities of supplies. Once the NATO command understands oil's role in starting the war, it unleashes its Stealth planes on oil supplies, forcing the Soviet leaders to a desperate decision to use nuclear weapons on the European battlefield.

Behind the decisions of when and how to wage war, lurks the ominous threat of escalation to all-out nuclear conflict. The Soviets take a calculated risk when they decide to launch a conventional attack on NATO, knowing that America might respond



with nuclear missiles. And it is the prospect of nuclear war that brings about the novel's climax. When the Soviet leadership orders its military to use nuclear weapons, some officers choose instead to overthrow their government. These officers fear that the use of nuclear weapons will lead to the utter destruction of their motherland. Nuclear weapons are shown to be too fearsome for even hardened soldiers to contemplate, but a chilling aspect of the nuclear theme is its serious consideration by people who want to win a war at any cost.

Fear is another omnipresent theme in *Red Storm Rising*. World War III begins in part because of Soviet fear that the West will take advantage of the oil-driven downturn of their economy. Soviet officers fear their own people — not only the spies among them, but the political leaders who might execute them at any moment.

These officers are pushed into wasteful and even foolish actions out of fear of Moscow's response to their failure on the battlefield. Fear is also felt among NATO troops. As with enemy soldiers, the NATO troops learn to fight in spite of their fear. In *Red Storm Rising*, as in Clancy's other novels, soldiers are not fearless. Instead, they learn to cope with their almost constant fear. War is shown to be a scary business, with sudden death looming at all times in all places.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in third person. The point of view is largely omniscient though is limited by the perspective of the person currently at the forefront of the situation. For example, McCafferty is aboard the USS Chicago when he encounters a situation involving an enemy submarine. He breaks off the contact believing that he has again failed in his attempts to take down an enemy target. It's only later that he meets a Norwegian captain who declares that McCafferty's crew saved his ship and the lives of his crew. McCafferty notes that this knowledge makes a huge impact on his own morale and that of his crew but he simply had no way of knowing that at the time. In this way, the view is limited. However, the huge cast of characters each have turns with the story being told from their perspective meaning the story is not limited to the view of a particular character. The limited perspectives, but with an omniscient view through the eyes of all the characters, is the only real option available to this author because there were simply so many settings and scenes necessary for a full understanding of the story line.

## Setting

The story has a world-wide setting, including scenes in America and Russia. The places - at least for the most part - are real. This adds a level of believability to the story which could be a plus to some readers. There are also some interesting scenes that use real-world information of the day that also add a level of believability. For example there's the situation involving the need for oil and the fact that Russia fears revealing the lack of available energy as a possible situation that could leave them vulnerable.

The time is more difficult to determine. The book was written in the 1980s, and it seems possible that the story is set in that same time frame. There are some clues as to the time. For example, when Toland announces that his team is monitoring Russian television broadcasts, he says that there are a series of movies being shown. When another United States military official jokes that he likes one of the movies, Toland offers to tape it, but asks if the preferred format is "VHS" or "Beta." Beta was a format of taped movies that became popular in the 1980s but quickly faded from the scene to be overtaken by the VHS format. This fact would seem to put the story in the 1980s.

## Language and Meaning

The story is about a war in a world setting. This means that there are people of various ethnicities, religions, and nationalities involved in the story. It's accepted that many of these characters do not speak in English, but the story is presented in English with only a few phrases in other languages, mostly Russian. There are additionally a few Russian words scattered throughout the story. In most cases, these words and phrases are





explained simply because of the text and setting, but it's left to the reader to determine some of those. A more serious issue is the number of people involved. While some are American with at least reasonably common names that are easily remembered, there are many Russian officials serving in various capacities. Both the complexity of the names and the fact that the situation may be unfamiliar to some readers could make comprehension difficult.

## Structure

The book is divided into 43 chapters. The chapters are each named and these names provide a glimpse into the coming events. The chapter titles include "Slow Fuse," "Sailors and Spooks," "Last Moves/First Moves," "Treks," "New Names, new Faces," "The Race of the Cripples," and "The Resolution of Conflict." Each chapter is further divided into a series of smaller sections. These sections are identified by location. For example, some are aboard the various ships including the USS Pharris or the USS Chicago. Other locations include various places in Iceland, Russia, Germany, and the United States. These locations help the reader remain focused on the various aspects of the story. This is vital to the continued understanding because of the huge cast of characters and the numerous settings and scene described.

## Quotes

"Around them was a country whose citizens were poorly fed and poorly housed, whose only abundant commodities were the painted signs and slogans praising Soviet Progress and Solidarity." Chapter 2, page 29

"There will come a day of reckoning, Pasha told himself, a day of reckoning for all the crimes committed in the name of Socialist Progress. He wondered if he'd live to see it and decided he probably wouldn't." Chapter 10, Page 98

"His job was merely to keep out of the way. It made him a little ashamed. The fear he could now taste along with the peppermint made him more ashamed." Lieutenant Mike Edwards, Iceland, Chapter 18, Page 179

"Morris sometimes wondered if captains should be issued coins with YES and NO stamped on either side, perhaps called a 'digital decision generator' in keeping with the Navy's love for electronic-sounding titles." Chapter 18, Page 191

"In case nobody told you, there's a shooting war in Germany. World War III kicked off ten hours ago. We're trying to get a recon bird up your way, but it might take awhile. Nobody's decided what to do about you either." Information to Edwards after the attack in Iceland, chapter 19, Page 200

"The game was hide and seek, played over a million square miles of ocean. The losers died." Chapter 20, Page 221

"With the safety valves opened, steam vented onto the massive stack structure, giving off a dreadful rasping sound that seemed like the ship's own cry of pain." Morris assessing the damage to the Pharris, Chapter 28, Page 352

"The mixture of bare rock, grassy meadows, lava fields, and now a freshwater marsh made him wonder if Iceland might not be the place where God had put everything that had been left over after the worlds was built. Evidently He'd made just the right amount of trees, though, because there were none here, and their best cover was the knee-high grass that sprouted from the water." Edwards, Chapter 28, Page 363

"The battle for Germany would be won or lost on the right bank of the Weser." Chapter 31, Page 407



"The air action now had all the elegance of a saloon fight." Chapter 36, Page 467

"He'd wasted a torpedo - no, he told himself, that was a well-planned attack. It just hadn't worked, as sometimes happened." Chapter 39, Page 560

"A pilot might think a 1-percent chance of being shot down on a given mission acceptable, then realize that fifty such missions made it a 40-percent chance." Ellington, Chapter 41, Page 596

## Key Questions

Red Storm Rising has some qualities of a daydream: What if war were to break out between NATO and the Warsaw Pact? In this sense it is an imaginative playing out of a daydream many a war game player must have had. A discussion group might play on the novel's invitation to use one's imagination by speculating on its details and offering alternative possibilities. Clancy seems to have drawn on the CIA's late 1970s report that poor distribution of fuel would create an economic crisis in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s or early 1990s. Clancy speeds events up a bit by introducing terrorists who try to spark a world war by blowing up an oil production plant. Are there other ways the war might have started?

Would the war progress as Clancy suggests? Would Iceland be a likely target, or does it symbolize the unpredictable elements of war; some other surprising target might show up in a real war. The same idea of Middle Eastern terrorists trying to spark a nuclear war shows up later in *The Sum of All Fears* (1991). How do the books compare to each other? Is one's plot more credible than the other's?

A reading group interested in military books in particular would find much to discuss in *Red Storm Rising*.

Clancy spells out in detail the weapons each side has arrayed against the other.

He analyzes numbers of troops and traditional Soviet and American military tactics. How accurate are his descriptions and statistics? Is he right in suggesting that the technological superiority of NATO weapons, especially aircraft, would offset the Warsaw Pact's immense superiority in numbers? Do the details ring true? For example, would recognizing one another's aircraft actually be a problem for NATO pilots?

1. When would political leaders be likely to use nuclear weapons? Would the idea of a limited nuclear attack be practical?

2. Are the characterizations overwhelmed by the plot and military details? Do any characters stand out in your memory? If so, what are their distinguishing qualities? What makes them memorable?

3. During the 1980s, were Western leaders really appeasers of the Soviet Union?

4. The Gulf War is an example of the use of Western versus Soviet weapons.

Did the aircraft function in the Gulf War the way Clancy describes them in *Red Storm Rising*? Did the tanks operate as he describes them? Would the concerns about chemical and biological warfare serve as a parallel to the considerations of nuclear warfare in the novel?



5. What is the novel's perspective on war? Is it a clinical point of view? Is it emotionally involved? Something else?
6. What would attract readers to *Red Storm Rising*? Did its dramatic storytelling attract people? Did its descriptions of people fighting heroically? Did its detailed portrayal of military hardware?
7. Does *Red Storm Rising* serve a social purpose? Might it inspire people to think more carefully about modern warfare? Might it show people where their military's money is being spent and make them better able to judge for themselves what was well spent and what was not? On the other hand, does the novel encourage people to be more accepting — perhaps fatalistic — about war?
8. In *Red Storm Rising* Clancy tells an epic story on a grand scale. What sacrifices are made in its narrative in order to cover its enormous battlefield?
9. What qualities do the Soviet and American soldiers have in common in the novel? What sets them apart?
10. Is what Clancy tells us of the thinking of the Soviet military commanders veracious? Would their split with Soviet political leaders over the use of nuclear weapons have been likely in real life, or is this just a way to give the novel a happy ending? Once committed to a huge land war, would either side have been able to back off, to halt what was in massive motion?



## Topics for Discussion

Describe the situation that began the war. What was it about the bombing of the oil refinery that had such a long-lasting and deep impact on the Russians?

What action is staged by the Russian government to ensure that a war follows? How does it work? How is it interpreted by those inside Russian? Outside?

Who is Toland? Edwards? Vigdis? O'Malley? Morris? McCafferty?

Describe four of the Russian officials and how they relate to each other. Describe the situation within the Russian government as the war winds down.

What is important about Iceland? How does Edwards become involved in the conflict? Who is Beagle? Doghouse? Describe Edwards' personality. What is it about him that makes him come to the rescue of the young girl being attacked by Russian soldiers?

Describe Morris and McCafferty. Compare the two men and their roles in the war.

What tactics change that hasten the end of the war? How do the Allies discover this weakness?

## Literary Precedents

Red Storm Rising has a close parallel with *The Third World War* by Sir John Hackett (1978). Hackett's book is more scholarly than Clancy's and was partly intended to point out the weaknesses of NATO strategy. In it, Hackett provides a somewhat sketchy account of a conventional war in Europe. His scenes of tank warfare are notably similar to those found in *Red Storm Rising*. However, in *The Third World War* characterization is much more vague, and the military expertise of the book's several consultants often takes precedence over the storytelling. On the other hand, Hackett's book makes the hideous destruction of modern warfare even more appalling than in Clancy's novel.

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