

The Third Option Study Guide

The Third Option by Vince Flynn

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Plot Summary

The CIA sends their number one counter-terrorist Mitch Rapp to assassinate Count Heinrich Hagenmiller. It is Mitch's last assignment and he has a bad feeling it could all go wrong. Nevertheless, alongside his fellow CIA agents, Jane and Jim Hoffman, everything goes according to his plan. They get into the Count's house easily, and when the Count appears, Mitch wastes little time in shooting him between the eyes. When Mitch turns to Jane Hoffmann, she shoots him twice in the chest.

Meanwhile back in Washington Senator Clark meets with Albert Rudin. Rudin has a problem with the CIA and wants the government to replace its directors. He says this will not happen if they hire Irene Kennedy to take over from the current boss. Clark tells him not to worry because he thinks Kennedy will self-destruct.

Peter Cameron spies Jane Hoffmann leaving the Count's mansion by herself and presumes the mission has been a success. However, inside the mansion, Mitch stirs. He was wearing body armor, so he was only wounded and has not received a scratch. Mitch quickly leaves the building, steals a car and heads for France.

Mitch hijacks a taxi and tells the driver to take him to Frankfurt. On the way, he destroys all the evidence that could link him to the Count, changes his clothes and cuts his hair. He uses the driver to book a hotel room before joining a group of cyclists riding to France. Meanwhile, the Jansen's have reported that Mitch is dead. Irene Kennedy is not sure so visits her boss, John Stansfield, at his home. Stansfield says that she should wait on news about Mitch and find out who is leaking information to the Secretary of State.

On a jet heading to Colorado, Cameron talks to the French assassin Gus Villaume. He has hired him to kill the Jansen's. On another plane heading the same direction, 3 former members of the Seal Six Team, chat about their latest assignment from the CIA. The leader and ex-commander, Scott Coleman says they have been hired to bring the Jansen's back to Washington.

Coleman and his men arrive in Colorado and take up a position above the Jansen's house. Meanwhile Cameron and Villaume have set up a position 200 meters from the Jansen's front door. Cameron is lying in undergrowth with his sniper trained on the house. The Jansen's step out to leave, and he shoots them both dead.

Hank Clark gives Cameron orders to kill both Mitch and Villaume. Cameron hires the unstable Jeff Duser, and they both drive off to kill Villaume's friend Mario Lukas, the idea being Villaume is nothing without his friend. They set up an elaborate plan that involves a very public battle between Mario and Duser's men. While Mario is shooting, Duser comes from behind and kills him.

Hank Clark meets with Albert Rudin and Senator Middleton. Hank Clark is trying to get the two Democrats to oppose the president's likely hiring of Irene Kennedy as the CIA



boss and therefore causing a split in the party. His plan seems to be working well, and he encourages Rudin to call Irene in front of his committee and force her to confess to the Count's assassination.

Meanwhile, Mitch is back in Washington. He finds a way to his friend Marcus Dumond's coffee shop, and they go back to Dumond's house. Marcus is a computer hacker for the CIA, and Mitch tells him to hack into the CIA's system and find him some information linked to his attempted assassination.

Irene Kennedy and Scott Coleman meet John Stansfield at his house. While they are chatting, Mitch breaks into the room with his gun trained at Irene. He demands to know why she ordered the Jansen's to kill him. Irene says she did not and talks Mitch's into putting down his weapon.

Cameron meets Clark. He tells the senator that he has recorded a conversation between Mitch and Anna. Hank tells him to break into Anna's apartment and find out as much information about her as possible. However, Clark is not happy. Lukas' killing brought unwanted attention and the only way to sort it out is to kill Cameron. When Cameron leaves, Clark gets in contact with the assassin Donatella Rahn and arranges for her to come to Washington.

Scott Coleman and Mitch Rapp join forces to find out who tried to kill Rapp. Mitch phones Villaume on his cell phone and asks him for some answers. Villaume says he is currently on the run from a man he knows as the professor and gives him his number. Mitch phones him and says they need to negotiate for his life.

Mitch's girlfriend Anna Rielly is kidnapped by the FBI and taken to Mitch's home in Maryland. Mitch guesses something is wrong and heads to Anna's apartment. No one is there, but he finds a listening device in the lounge, proving to him that Cameron has been after Anna. He phones Irene Kennedy and tells her to send him her best people.

Mitch and Coleman discover Anna is at Mitch's house in Maryland, and they organize a surveillance helicopter to hover above the house. With the help of thermal imaging, they can see there are three people in the house. One person leaves in a car and Mitch decides to follow. They catch up with the man at a gas station, pull him into their van and take him back to the house. Here they force him to knock on the door and ask where the girl is. As soon as the agent says the girl is upstairs, Mitch jumps from behind a car and shoots the man in the head. He then kills Duser and runs upstairs to Anna.

Mitch goes to Cameron's office to arrest him but finds him dead. Meanwhile, the President is on the warpath. He first meets with Midleton, forcing his resignation, and secondly questions Rudin on why he brought Kennedy in front of the committee. He makes it clear to both of them that by going behind his back, they have damaged their own party's reputation. The next person he sees is Mitch. He tells him he wants him to stay with the CIA, but as head of counter-terrorism. In other words, he will be legitimate. Mitch agrees.



Chapters 1-5

Chapters 1-5 Summary

Mitch Rapp is walking around the ground of Count Hagenmiller's mansion, checking the situation out for his mission later that evening. He notices the Count has hunting dogs and curses that no one told him. However, though annoying, they are not guard dogs and should not pose a problem.

He goes back into the forest and knocks on the door of a hut three times. Someone slowly opens the door until Mitch sees two eyes staring intently. Once the person realizes it is Mitch, he lets him in. The man's name is Jim Hoffmann, and he is here with his wife, Jane, listening to a radio. Like Mitch, they are both CIA agents, though Mitch has never met them before. He asks Jane how many people will be present at the party, and she tells him 50.

Dr. Irene Kennedy arrives at Camp David in a helicopter. Dr. Kennedy is the unofficial head of the CIA's Orion Team. The team was set up after the Lockerbie bombing. Government officials knew that something drastic had to happen, but they had already tried the first option—diplomacy, and the second option of military action was not appropriate. They therefore chose the third option and took covert action. From her helicopter, a colonel escorts Kennedy to see President Hayes.

The President is dressed in his golfing clothes ready for a game. He has had a tough time as president. Not long ago, terrorists attacked the White House and he had to hide away for two days in an underground bunker. When he surfaced, it came to his attention Saddam Hussein had funded the terrorists and was becoming a real threat to the USA. Hayes has now decided to go after Saddam, but without the UN's backing, he has to tread carefully.

Irene Kennedy has come to talk to the President about Mitch Rapp's assignment in Germany. The President says Mitch can probably go ahead with the mission, but if anything happens, he has no safety net because the American government cannot afford to be seen giving such an operation its support. Similarly he tells Irene that this current meeting and the 6 they have had before, never happened.

Mitch and the Hoffman's prepare for the night ahead. They cannot afford to leave a trace behind, so they wipe the cottage clean. In addition, they each have a flash bag, which they can use to incinerate evidence, such as false identification.

Mitch is an experienced counter terrorist. He originally signed up for the CIA when his girlfriend died in the Lockerbie disaster. Irene Kennedy persuaded him to join up, and his anger towards the terrorists became a major asset. It dissipated when he killed Aziz, the man responsible for the Lockerbie disaster. When he met his current girlfriend Anna, his anger disappeared.



Irene Kennedy is in her office at the CIA headquarters. The President has given the go ahead for Mitch to assassinate Count Heinrich Hagenmiller V. The German Count had in the past supplied Libya with money to build weapons factories. Since then Quadaffi has mellowed. Recently, the CIA found out the Count has been selling material to the Iraqi government. The CIA warned him to stop, and he promised he would, but he has since broken his promise; the American government feels it has no choice but to kill him.

Rapp phones Irene from Germany. He tells her he has a bad feeling. He does not know why, but something is not quite right. Irene says he can choose to pull out if he feels that bad. Mitch declines the offer and tells her this mission will be his last.

In Washington Senator Clark is working late when a member of his committee staff comes in to his office to tell him Rudin is waiting for him in the Bubble. With all his usual affability, Clark thanks the staffer and makes his way to see his friend. Rudin is sitting by himself in the shadows. He tells Clarke he is worried about the CIA. Clark thinks he is always worried about the CIA but keeps his thought to himself. Rudin continues to say he wants to clean out the CIA, but at the moment it looks as though the next CIA boss will be chosen from the inside. That boss looks to be Irene Kennedy. Clark tells him not to worry. He says Kennedy is likely to self-destruct and if Rudin keeps with him, he will keep him informed.

Mitch and the Hoffman's drive to the Count's house. A guard stops them at the gate and the Hoffman's show him fake German secret police identification. At the house, they charge past the Butler. The Butler rushes in front of them and begs them to wait. Initially they ignore him, but when he tells them, he can get the Count within in a minute, Mitch and the Hoffman's decide to wait. The butler leaves and a huge bodyguard enters the room.

Three minutes later, Hoffman comes in with his lawyer and begins talking to Jane. Mitch, not one to waste his time, pulls out his gun and shoots the Count between the eyes. The bodyguard reaches for his weapon but Mitch shoots him in the wrist and then kicks him in the face. He turns to the lawyer and knocks him unconscious. He is tying up the bodyguard and the lawyer when Jane shoots Mitch twice in the chest.

Ex CIA agent, Peter Cameron stares at the Counts house from his binoculars. He is pleased to see Beth Jansen running out of the building by herself, jumping into a car and driving off. He now knows the mission was a success and he will see the Jansen's at the airstrip in a few hours.

Mitch wakes up wondering what the hell happened. He was lucky that was wearing body armor and the bullets did not even scratch him. His head, however is bleeding and he knows he has to clean it up otherwise someone can easily identify him. He drags the butler, the bodyguard and the lawyer out of the room and then begins to douse the furnishings with alcohol before setting light to it. Out in the car park, he steals a Mercedes Coupe and heads for France.



Chapters 1-5 Analysis

Flynn immediately jumps into the story and lays out what is a series of complex plots. The first plot involves the main character, Mitch Rapp. He has been sent to Germany to kill Count Heinrich Hagenmiller but is shot in the chest by people he thought were his allies. The second plot details the rise of Irene Kennedy to the position of head of CIA. In this chapter, she holds meetings with the president, showing her increasing importance within government. In the third plot, Hank Clark and Albert Rudin plan how to stop Irene Kennedy from getting the top CIA position. Rudin wants a complete clean out of the CIA organization. In the fourth plot point, Peter Cameron watches the Count's house, thinking his mission has been successful. For the rest of the book, Flynn works to develop each plot, adding characters and gradually interlinking them until they become inseparable.

From this perspective, the story is plot driven, and the action moves on quickly, intended to either intrigue or excite the reader. For example in these 5 chapters, Flynn not only describes an assassination attempt, but also outlines a number of double crosses from within the CIA and the American government. He does so in great detail; it is obvious Flynn knows his subject well. This is particularly the case when Mitch prepares for the assassination and the narrator describes the degrees to which Mitch goes to cover his tracks and work out an escape route. Some readers may think this is superfluous detail, though it acts to give insight into the analytic and perhaps cold brain of Mitch Rapp. From this perspective, it is Flynn's insistence on describing the background of every character that is the superfluous and acts only to slow down the plot. Already the reader knows Hank Clark and Mitch Rapp's life story's, even though Hank's manipulative ways and Mitch's decisive mind says just as much.

The reader may feel knowing so much so quickly takes away some of the novel's intrigue. With the Third Option being a generic book, an experienced reader has probably already guessed what is going to happen to a counter terrorist, who is on the verge of giving up his job for a woman with whom he has fallen deeply in love. Similarly, the reader can already guess that Hank Clark has the upper hand on Rudin and that there is only way their relationship can go.



Chapters 6-10

Chapters 6-10 Summary

Anna Reilly is at home in her cottage in Maryland. She works as an NBC reporter, but since meeting her boyfriend, her life has taken a turn for the better, and all she wants now is happiness. To help her obtain this happiness, she has tried to go back to things she used to enjoy. For example, she has joined a book club that she goes to every Monday. Her more immediate goal is to make sure Mitch retires from his role with the CIA. He told her his current job would be his last, and she hopes he was telling the truth.

Mitch drives to the airport. Here he parks his car and adjusts his clothes and posture so the surveillance cameras will not recognize him and also if by chance they do, they will see he is injured. He leaves the car park and catches a taxi, telling the driver to take him to Essen. As the driver pulls away, Mitch pulls out a gun and tells the man if he keeps quiet he will not get hurt. He wants the cab driver to take him to Frankfurt.

Peter Cameron has arrived back in Washington; however, he has recently received some bad news and his mood is not great. The problem is the Jenson's have told him there were three dead bodies left at the scene of the crime, including Mitch's, yet the Newspapers are reporting differently. They say there were only two bodies, meaning Mitch could have escaped. Cameron goes to a telephone box and punches in a number. He tells the person on the other end of the line to meet him at the Montgomery Golf Club in an hour.

In Freiburg Mitch burns all the documents that can link him to the Count. He then tells the cab driver to book a room in an inn under the driver's name. In the room, he ties the driver to the bed and gives him an alibi he has to tell the people that find him. Mitch leaves the driver and goes to student accommodations to cut his hair and change his clothes. From here, he goes to a bike shop, buys a racing bike and bike equipment and joins a cycle race to France. Mitch is a renowned cyclist and has no problems keeping up.

The scene moves to Thomas Stansfield's house. Stansfield is the director of the CIA but at 79 years old, he is dying of cancer. Nevertheless, he still has power and receives a visit from his protégé, Irene Kennedy. Irene tells him Mitch's mission to Germany has gone wrong, and she thinks Mitch is probably dead. Furthermore, the fire that was started in the house damaged some priceless artwork, and she now has the Secretary of State on her back. The Secretary says he knows she has had the Count under surveillance for a while. Stansfield asks how he knows and Irene tells him she intends to find out. She thinks there is probably a spy within the CIA.

Liz O'Rourke is with her husband, Michael, in their house. Liz is quite pregnant with their first child, and they are both planning a quiet and relaxing day when Liz turns on her



computer to read her emails. One email is from Mitch telling her to get Anna to safety. He cannot explain why it is so important, but she needs to do it now.

Peter Cameron is flying to Colorado in an executive jet. With him are the Frenchman Gus Villanue and Mario Lukas. He has hired them to kill the Jansen's. Villanue argues that he needs more information, but Cameron says the only information he needs is that it is an easy job and therefore easy money. Still Villanue is unsure and demands to know more. If he does not give him more information, he just has to give the word to Lukas and Cameron will not exist much longer.

Scott Coleman, Keith Hackett and Dan Stroble catch a plane to Colorado. They are all former members of the Seal Team Six and now work as private contractors. Ex Commander Coleman has been requested by the CIA to bring the Jansen's back to Washington. Hackett asks if they are CIA agents why the agency doesn't phone them and ask to them to make their own way to Washington. Coleman says they need a professional job because something has gone wrong in an unofficial operation in Germany involving the Jansen's and Mitch Rapp.

Chapters 6-10 Analysis

In this section, Flynn reveals the home life of a number of his characters. He shows Anna Rielly in Mitch's house in Maryland. He presents her as a normal person, who enjoys reading and working out. Similarly, he shows Irene Kennedy at home with her child, Tom. She is divorced, but works hard to give her son a normal life. Stansfield has decided to die at home instead of the hospital. His wife has already passed away, but his loving daughters and many good friends give him great support. Flynn presents Michael and Liz O'Rourke's life as idyllic. Liz is pregnant and in this section, they are sharing a quiet afternoon in their plush apartment in Georgetown. This all serves to show people like Mitch, a person the reader could easily construe as a cold-hearted killer, as humans with private lives.

In comparison, little is known about Peter Cameron's private life. The reader knows he worked for the CIA and that he likes guns, but beyond that, Flynn presents him as an enigma. By doing this, Flynn can portray him as a self-serving, and therefore bad, character. Hank Clark is another bad character. Unlike Cameron, the reader knows Clark's background and even bits about his home life. However, though the reader knows he is on his third wife, Clark always shuts himself up in his study and the reader never sees them together. This suggests the relationship, like everything in his life, is geared towards moving him towards the presidency.



Chapters 11-15

Chapters 11-15 Summary

Michael O'Rourke drives to Anna's house. She is his wife's best friend, and they both adore her. He recalls a difficult time for them all. On her first day at NBC, Anna was taken hostage by terrorists attacking the White House; she survived, but it been a narrow escape. O'Rourke suddenly realizes she met Mitch very soon after the attack and in conjunction with the e-mail, he wonders if Mitch is really the computer salesman he claims to be.

Peter Cameron waits for Gus Villaume outside the Buffalo Motel. They in the middle of setting up their assassination of the Jansen's and Villiaume says he wants them seen together as little as possible. Meanwhile Coleman and his men have arrived at the Colorado Springs airport and are driving towards the Jansen's. Coleman reflects on how well they work together as a team. Hackett is the details man, while Coleman has the ability to look at the bigger picture. They trust each other's abilities completely, so when Hackett claims he has an intuition that the Jansen mission could go very wrong, Coleman listens. Hackett says he does not know what will go wrong, but the previous night he had a dream about the Jansen's house.

Anna Rielly is now safe at the O'Rourke's house, but she is hysterical that something bad has happened to Mitch. The O'Rourke's tell her that he must be alive because he sent them an email. Anna says if he is alive and in Washington, why does he not call her and say he is okay. O'Rourke tells Anna he thinks Mitch is in trouble, which could put Anna and the O'Rourke's in trouble. Michael says he is a congressman specializing in intelligence, and he wants Anna to tell him who Mitch really is because it has become obvious he is not a salesman. Anna says she is sworn to secrecy, but O'Rourke insists. Anna is a strong person and despite O'Rourke's continued insistence, she refuses to tell him. Finally, Anna gets up and apologizes for putting the O'Rourke's in a difficult situation and says she should deal with the problem on her own. She heads for the door, but Liz, shooting an angry glare at her husband, grabs her friend by the sleeve and guides her upstairs.

Michael picks up the phone and rings the police. He tells them someone has been sending him death threats, which he knows is not unusual, but with his wife pregnant he wants to alleviate any potential stress. The officer says he will send a patrol car to the house every hour.

Back in Colorado, Coleman has positioned himself above the Jansen's house and is looking down at it through binoculars. Jansen arrives in his car and enters the house. He comes back out and opens the back of the car. Coleman does not like what he sees inside.



The previous morning Jim Jansen had been logged onto his AOL account investigating the furor surrounding the assassination of the Count. He felt excited about it generating so much attention, but his excitement soon turned to fear when he read an article about a cab man held at gunpoint. There was no doubt in Jansen's mind the description of the man fitted Mitch exactly. Immediately he realized Mitch must have been wearing body armor, and he curses his wife for not shooting him in the head. They quickly head back to their home and are now rapidly gathering all their possessions for a trip that most likely will last the rest of their lives.

As they pack, Peter Cameron is listening into their conversation. He thinks about his abilities as a marksman. He had never originally liked guns, but one day one of his colleagues in the CIA took him to a shooting range and he got hooked. Over the years, he has developed into one of the best shots in the state and has taken to collecting a variety of guns both new and antique. The one thing he has not done is killed a human, and this is a problem he aims to put right today.

He is currently 200 meters from the house with a sniper aimed at the front door. It is an easy shot, but he knows his nerves could potentially work against him. The Jansen's walk out of the house and he fires two shots. Above the house, Coleman sees the two Jansens falling dead to the floor.

Irene Kennedy and President Hayes meet the German ambassador in the White House. The German is angry and demands to know why the Count, a good friend, from a good German family is dead and with all the evidence pointing towards the American government. The President angers the ambassador further by offering no sympathy. Instead, he says the government was not party to any assassination attempt. However, the Count was supplying Saddam Hussein with the equipment to build firearms. He takes a file from his cabinet and shows Koch photographs of the Count meeting Abdullah Khatmi, the Iraqi vice president. He shouts angrily at Koch for coming into his office with such accusations and Koch apologizes. He tells the president in his position, he is not always given the full picture.

Chapters 11-15 Analysis

The Third Option is all about the intricacies of politics and how people often have to plot their opponent's downfall to progress. In this regard, there are few inherently bad characters. For example, Hank Clark could have easily hired Mitch. The reader could argue that the reason Cameron is working for Hank is because he has promised him a place in the senate, and Mitch would never accept such an offer. However, as the book progresses, the reader sees Mitch's Achilles heel is his girlfriend, and perhaps Hank could have played to this as much as he played to Cameron's lust for power. Flynn is claiming it is all about manipulation and knowing the person.

This puts into question how President Hayes obtained the presidency. He has already given his permission to assassinate the Count when he knows it is against the wishes of the UN, and here he meets with the German ambassador and denies any involvement.

He does it in such a way that he takes blame away from himself and puts it right back onto the Germans. After all, they were the ones who were harboring a criminal.



Chapters 16-20

Chapters 16-20 Summary

Hank Clark is in his study relaxing and watching television when Peter Cameron interrupts. Cameron seems very smug. He tells Clark they encountered many problems, but he took care of them all. Clark asks him to explain further and he tells him that he killed the Jansen's himself and got rid of the bodies. The big problem now is he has found out Mitch is still alive. Clark is not happy. He knows Mitch is a dangerous man and a threat to his plan to ruin Irene Kennedy. He tells Cameron to do everything he can to kill him.

Mitch lands in Washington. At the front of the airport he jumps into a taxi not allowed to take passengers from departure, but before the driver can say anything he waves a \$50 bill in his face and tells him to go to Bethesdon. Mitch gets out at a hotel and makes a call to a friend's house. He gets the answer machine, but he claims this is exactly what he wanted. From the hotel, he goes to a coffee shop owned by his friend Marcus Dumond. Dumond was on the verge of being arrested for hacking into sensitive information when Mitch stepped in and recommended Dumond to Irene Kennedy. Computer hackers are a big part of operations at CIA and Irene hired him immediately. He has since become an integral part of the team and now Mitch needs his help. He asks Marcus if he still has the case he gave him. Marcus says yes and they head back to Marcus's house.

Jeff Duser is on amphetamine and speeding through the streets . He is a contract killer hired by Cameron to kill Villaume. Currently, with the rest of his team and Cameron sitting in the back of the van, he is following Mario Lukas. Cameron thinks that when Villaume hears of his friend's death he will be running scared.

Mario is walking to the bakery. An attractive woman brushes past him and smiles. Immediately, alarm bells ring in Mario's brain and he reaches for his gun. At the same time, the woman goes for her gun, but Mario kills her. Gunshots sound from across the street and Mario dives behind a car and shoots back. Away from the action, Duser parks his van and climbs out. He can see Mario ducked between two cars and slowly walks closer before shooting him in the back of the head.

At the Congressional County Club, Harry Clark meets with democrats Albert Rudin and Senator Midleton. They have come to talk about who is going to take over from John Stansfield when he dies. Neither Rudin nor Midleton want Irene Kennedy to run the CIA because they think it needs cleaning up and hiring another insider will continue things as they are. As Clark listens to the two Democrats argue and claim Kennedy is a liar, he thinks he has them exactly where he wants them. He tells them they should try and dissuade the President from hiring Irene, and perhaps Rudin should take her in front of his committee, where she would have no choice but to confess to the Count's assassination.



Rapp spends a restless night at Marcus' home. He is trying to work out who tried to kill him and the most logical answer he can think of is Irene Kennedy. The question is why? In the morning, he tells Dumond to hack into the Langley and Pentagon computers and find out some information. Rapp catches a metro and heads out of the city.

Chapters 16-20 Analysis

In this section, Flynn shows the problem of someone such as Peter Cameron getting involved in the business of killing. He describes Cameron as a voyeur, and here the reader can see that he has a lust to create havoc and paranoia. When he talks to Clark, he acts like he is proud of his first kill and even seems desperate to elicit compliments from his boss. Clark asks him to kill Mario Lukas and Cameron hires the loose cannon, Jeff Duser. Duser is not subtle and the assassination involves screeching cars and a street fight in daylight. This mistake leads to Hank Clark ordering Cameron's assassination.

In comparison, Mitch is perfect for the job. He has a motivation because while at college, his then girlfriend died in the Lockerbie disaster and soon after he was persuaded to join the Orion Team as a counter terrorist. Consequently, he can distance himself from the killing, seeing it as something that has to be done to protect his country. Mitch plans each attempt carefully with the intent of exposing neither himself nor the American government.



Chapters 21-25

Chapters 21-25 Summary

Mitch is driving in a car with his new acquisition, a dog called Shirley. He had earlier visited the Washington Humane society looking for a dog that did not bark, and they recommended Shirley. Mitch parks on Lingomore Drive and takes Shirley for a jog.

Irene Kennedy is on her way to see Stansfield and talk to him about taking over his position when he passes away. She says the Republicans like her because of her tough stance on terrorism. Rapp is also at Stansfield's house—the difference is that he is not invited. He checks out the house for security, but like so many important people in America, Stansfield's house is not well protected. He has a bodyguard, but from Mitch's position, he can see the bodyguard is not well prepared for any breach of security. He walks Shirley to the back of the house and spies Stansfield in his study talking to someone he cannot see. He sees a car pull up in the driveway and a man he recognizes as a killer gets out and walks towards the house. Mitch is beginning to feel very paranoid and decides he should make a call before following through with his plan.

Anna Rielly is working for the NBC. She is feeling very sensitive over Mitch's disappearance and already a male colleague has inadvertently made her cry. She receives a phone call from Mitch. He says he is safe, but he has to sort a few things out and cannot see her for another week. He asks Anna if her friend, meaning Michael O'Rourke, has talked to Scott C., meaning Scott Coleman. Anna says she does not know.

Mitch throws bits of faux bacon into the backyard and Shirley runs after it, setting off the security lights. Mitch continues to throw bacon until the security guard comes out to see what is wrong. The guard is not interested in the dog and looks around for its master. Rapp calls the name of a different dog in the hope Shirley will stay where she is and walks into the back yard, smiling towards the guard. He says he is new to the neighborhood and the guard sticks out his hand introducing himself as Tom. In reply, Mitch knocks him down and pulls the guard's pants down to his ankles. Pulling him up by his hair, he orders him to take him to Stansfield's office. At the door, Mitch pushes the guard into the room. The guard falls to the floor and Mitch follows behind, shooting the pillow Scott Coleman is sat on, stopping him from pulling out his gun.

Rapp asks Irene Kennedy why she sent out men to kill him. Irene denies that she did. Mitch asks, why did you act so strangely when I told you it was my last assignment before retiring. Kennedy says she acted strangely because she has a lot on her mind. For instance, Stansfield is dying of cancer. Mitch is close to the old man and feels a pang of regret, but keeps his gun trained on Irene. Scott interrupts and tells Mitch he has just come from Colorado where he saw the Jansen's shot. He was there on Irene's orders to bring them back to Washington, so there must be someone else involved. Realizing



Irene did not order his killing, he puts his gun down. If you did not do it, he asks Irene, who did.

Peter Cameron talks to Harry Clark in Clark's study. Clark is angry that Mario Lukas' death is all over the newspapers. He says it was unnecessary and Cameron has ran the risk of exposing his identity, which in turn could expose Clark. In Hank's mind, he thinks he must get rid of Cameron as soon as possible. Cameron apologizes, but says he does have some good news. He tells him he recorded a conversation between Mitch and his girlfriend Anna Rielly. Hank tells Cameron to break into Anna's apartment and find out as much information as you can about her. In particular, he wants him to find a journal.

In Milan, Italy the 38-year-old model, Donatella Rahn receives an email. It is offering her quarter of a million to kill someone. She knows it is not an important person because otherwise they would offer half a million. Donatella accepts the work and books a flight to Washington.

Chapters 21-25 Analysis

Here the reader can see how careful Mitch plans. He leaves Dumond's house thinking that his disguise is okay. He then heads out of the city knowing that everyone will be heading into Washington at that time and therefore the trains will be empty. When he is off the train, he visits the dog emergency center and asks for a dog that does not bark. He then takes the dog for a jog towards John Stansfield's house. At Stansfield's house, he surveys the area, checking how many guards there are and where Stansfield is situated. He uses the dog to set off the house's alarm, causing the security guard to investigate. Mitch knocks the guard to the floor and insists he takes him to Stansfield's office. He pushes the guard through Stanfield's door shocking the visitors and allowing Mitch to enter with is gun drawn. He knows Scott Coleman is already in the room and he immediately trains his gun onto the ex-navy seal. It all works like clockwork, and Mitch gets exactly what he wants from the confrontation.

Before he entered Stansfield's house, he phoned Anna to say he was okay. This was not part of the plan and proves the wrong move. Peter Cameron is listening into the conversation and organizes with Hank Clark to break into Anna's apartment and find out as much information about her as possible. This highlights the fact that for an assassin like Mitch to work well, he has to have the ability to distance himself from his true feelings.



Chapters 26-30

Chapters 26-30 Summary

Scott Coleman is now assisting Mitch in his search for who is responsible for trying to kill Mitch. They are both at Marcus Dumond's apartment looking at profiles on Dumond's computer. The problem they have is both that they have little information and the information they do have brings up thousands of profiles.

Peter Cameron phones Gus Villaume to ask what the hell happened to Mario Lukas. Villaume has already worked out that Cameron hired Duser to kill his friend and asks how much he paid him. Cameron continues to deny he was involved with Mario's death, but Villaume argues back aggressively. In the end, he tells Villaume he will find him and kill him as well. He puts down the phone and decides he will take Duser off his leash.

Mitch Rapp and Scott Coleman wait outside Villaume's hotel in Washington. They want to keep him alive because he is their only link to the Jansen's. Rapp knows Villaume from a mission they worked on together and has lot of respect for both him and his friend Mario Lukas. He decides Villaume will be too careful to come back to his hotel and rings him on his mobile. Rapp tells Villaume he needs his help to find out who was trying to kill him. In turn, he can help Villaume to survive. Villaume says he currently trusts nobody, but he does need help. He says he will think over Mitch's proposal.

Villaume realizes Mitch is too careful to work with someone as unprofessional as the professor and decides to help him as much as he can. He phones Mitch back up and tells him he was working for someone he knew only as the Professor and gives him the Professor's number. He tells Mitch the Professor is 5 foot 11 with dark hair and a beard, but he has no more information. Villaume apologizes, but his life is in danger and he cannot stay on the phone. As soon as he is gone, Mitch orders Dumond to do a search of former intelligence workers and then rings the Professor.

Peter Cameron business phone rings. He has two phones, one for personal calls and another strictly for business. His business phone is untraceable and not under his real name. As soon as he hears the voice, he knows who it is Mitch. He asks Mitch what he wants and Mitch tells him they need to negotiate for Cameron's life.

Senator Clark meets with Rudin, Middleton and Jonathan Brown. Rudin is very upset. He thinks Irene has lied to him about her involvement in the Count's assassination. Jonathan Brown works for the CIA and says Irene did not lie. She was not involved and furthermore Stansfield is not the dictator Rudin claims he is. He is a good man coming to the end of his life and deserves respect. Clark tells the men to calm down, but secretly he is pleased that he has causing friction.



Chapters 26-30 Analysis

In this section, Mitch Rapp and Scott Coleman become friends, but the reader can see it could have easily been different. The narrator shows that Gus Villaume and Scott Coleman are one of the same, and while they have the potential to be friends, they could just as easily be trying to kill each other. Here Mitch phones Villaume to persuade him to give him information. Mitch sends his condolences for the death of Villaume's partner, Mario, and it becomes clear Mitch and Mario have worked together. Now, Mitch wants information from him, so he distances himself from personal feelings and goes about it like a business deal. The reader gets the impression that part of this business could involve Villaume's death. Although it ultimately does not, the reader has already seen in the previous section that Mitch was willing to kill Scott Coleman if he reached for his gun.



Chapters 31-35

Chapters 31-35 Summary

Senator Clark meets with Peter Cameron. Cameron tells him he has received a phone call from Mitch threatening his life. Clark tells him to kidnap Anna Rielly and then perhaps they can trap him. As Cameron leaves, Clark thinks about someone called the Colonel, who has accepted a contract to kill Cameron.

After work, two FBI agents stop Anna Rielly. Agent Pelachuck tells her they need to take her in for some questioning. Anna wants to know what the hell it is all about, and he tells her it is something to do with her boyfriend. She insists on knowing exactly what, and they tell her Mitch wants to see her tonight, but that he has to be careful because people are trying to hurt him. Anna decides to go with them, but before she leaves, she phones Liz O'Rourke to say everything is returning to normal.

John Stansfield visits President Hayes. He thinks there is a leak in the government, and the President needs to find out who it is because they are causing severe damage. The problem is that the leaked information could directly affect the President. If the public find out he ordered the Count's assassination, his career will be over. The President says Mitch has made some progress. Mitch thinks the leak comes from within the State department. Stansfield suggests Senator Middleton, and the President says he hopes the leak is not a person so high up.

Donatella arrives at her hotel in Washington. She books in as Mary Jones and goes up to her room. She thinks about how she used to be a drug addict, but that a man took her to one side and told her he was going to help kick her habit. He not only helped her, but he trained her to become an assassin for the Israeli government. It has proved an enjoyable and lucrative job.

Agent Pelachuck and Agent Salem drive Anna to Mitch's house in Maryland. They wait inside the car until Anna tells them she has a key. They escort Anna into the house, and Agent Pelachuck goes outside to make a phone call. Pelachuck is really Jeff Duser, and he phones Peter Cameron.

Clark thinks how he is going to use Anna to get to Mitch. He says he is going to change the entries in her journal and make Mitch and Anna's death look like a double suicide. He is happy with the idea because he knows such an event will destroy the Democrat party, meaning that he will have a free run to the presidency.

Cameron arrives at Rapp's house and introduces himself to Anna as Barry Leznor from the FBI. Unfortunately, Mitch cannot make it tonight, but it he will definitely be here in the morning. Do not worry, he says, everything is fine. He has just been held up by some business. Cameron's business phone starts to ring and he excuses himself and walks outside.



Rapp knows Anna is in trouble and decides to visit her apartment with Scott Coleman. Before they go, he phones Irene Kennedy and tells her to get some teams ready for back up because he thinks Anna has been kidnapped. He finishes the conversation by telling her he is going to kill every last one of them.

They arrive at the apartment. Mitch gives Scott a quick description of the apartment's layout, and they enter the building with their guns drawn. There is no sign of Anna or that a struggle has taken place. The only thing he finds is a listening device planted in her living room. He phones Kennedy again and tells her to send over her best people to guard the apartment.

Chapters 31-35 Analysis

One of the most interesting aspects of the novel is the way Flynn deals with his female characters, Irene Kennedy, Anna Rielly and Liz O'Rourke. He puts them in strong roles such as Kennedy's position as head of counter terrorism, but gives their characters a conflict that the reader could see as a criticism of society in general. For example, Irene Kennedy is a divorcee with a young son called Tom. She worries she is not giving her boy enough attention, and, in fact, while she is at work saving the world, he is stuck in front of the television. Flynn does not show Tommy doing anything but watch TV and by doing so poses the question, what kind of child will he grow up to be? Furthermore, by showing Irene's guilt and need to be with him, Flynn is asking whether Irene is repressing her natural inclinations towards motherhood.

He explores the theme further with Anna Rielly's character. He initially presents her as a strong woman. She was brought up by a family of policeman and knows how to protect herself. However, the one thing she seems to want is to settle down with Mitch. When Mitch disappears, she understandably becomes very upset, but at the same time, her reactions contradict her role as a strong career woman. Here, two fake FBI agents, telling her they can take her to see Mitch, pick her up. She goes with them almost unquestionably, and this despite the fact she is aware that someone in the government is after Mitch. It seems her love for Mitch and her need to settle down has clouded her judgment.



Chapters 36-40

Chapters 36-40 Summary

Rapp speaks to Cameron on the phone and demands to know for whom he is working. Cameron says if they meet, he will give Rapp all he needs, but Rapp must guarantee his safety. Cameron hangs up thinking Rapp does not know that they have Anna. However, Dumond has traced the call to somewhere in Maryland, and Rapp realizes that means they are in his house. He phones Kennedy to ask her to send a surveillance chopper to look around the area.

Coleman, Rapp and Dumond watch a monitor showing IR thermal images of the house. They can see three heat signatures, two on the bottom floor and one on the top floor. Dumond says the one on the top floor is smaller than the two downstairs. That could mean that the heat signature is Anna or equally it could be a dog. Rapp tells Dumond to phone Kennedy and get an operation's team airborne. Mitch continues to watch the monitor, noticing the men in the house have guns. They see someone leaving in a car, and Mitch orders his driver to follow them.

The car stops at a gas station and Mitch tells his driver to pull in next to them. Mitch then gets out, draws his berretta, knocks the other man unconscious, and drags him into the vehicle. He tells Coleman to follow them in the man's Sedan and they set off back to Mitch's house. The man is Special Agent Salem and Mitch asks him what the hell he was doing in his house. The man refuses to answer, so Mitch breaks his finger and sticks his berretta in his mouth. He asks if Anna Rielly is in the house. The man yes. Have you touched her? Mitch asks. The man says no, but Mitch says he is lying. The man insists the Professor told them not to go near her. Mitch asks where the professor is now, and Salem tells him he has already left the house. This gives Mitch an idea. He pulls Salem's trousers to his ankles, wires him up with a microphone and attaches a bomb to his testicles. He tells Salem he wants him to go to the house and ask them where the girl is. If he does differently, Mitch will blow him up. Do you believe me? The man says he does.

Agent Palachuck answers and Salem asks him where the girl is. Palachuck says she is upstairs. With this, Mitch jumps from the van and shoots Palachuck in the head. He then enters the house and shoots Jeff Duser. Leaving Coleman to deal with the mess, he runs upstairs to see Anna.

Duser was talking to Cameron when he was shot and Cameron overheard everything. Mitch sees the phones and picks it up. He asks for whom Cameron is working. Mitch says he knows what Cameron looks like and describes him right down to his unkempt beard. If Cameron does not do as he says he will kill him. Cameron put down his phone, goes to the bathroom and shaves his beard.



Chapters 36-40 Analysis

The one thing that is apparent throughout is that Vince Flynn knows his subject. He often goes into elaborate detail, and here, he shows the intricacies of a CIA operation and the technologies at their disposal. Mitch finds out Anna is captive at his house and orders a surveillance chopper to fly above the premises. On the chopper, they have thermal imaging, and from their monitor, Mitch and Coleman can see how many people are in the house.

When they see a car driving away from the premises, Scott Coleman shows the need for a cool head. Mitch wants to stay at the house and look out for Anna, but Scott tells him he has to follow the car because it is potentially their easiest route into the house. In the end, Mitch sees he is making sense and they catch up with the driver and use him as bait.

Flynn presents this coolness under pressure as the most important part of the job. Those who display coolness, such as Scott Coleman, Mitch Rapp and Irene Kennedy are successful. People such as Albert Rudin, Peter Cameron, Jeff Duser and Senator Middleton, who rush in and let their emotions get the better of them, either die or suffer in some other way. The coolest head of them all is Hank Clark. He manipulates people to do exactly what he wants and then gets rid of them before they can expose him. Flynn suggests his character gives him an excellent chance of becoming the next president.



Chapters 41-45

Chapters 41-45 Summary

Donatella is in her hotel room practicing her yoga when she receives an email message. It tells her that her subject will be in his office between 8:15 and 8:30am. Donatella stops her exercises, puts on a disguise and leaves her room.

Mitch Rapp has found out the Professor is Peter Cameron and decides they need to pay him a visit at his house in Georgetown. Cameron is not there, however, and they make their way to his office at the George Washington University. Outside the University, Donatella circles the building looking for cameras. She takes note of where they are and walks up to Cameron's office. She puts her ear to the door and can hear him inside shuffling on his chair. Cameron tells her he is busy but she can come back later. Donatella tells him it cannot wait, that she would like to enroll in his course. Cameron opens the door and lets her in. Donatella says her name is Pam and that she has heard good things about his lectures. She points to a certificate on the wall and asks how he won it. Cameron is explaining it to her when she rams a steel pick through his ear and into his brain.

Rapp and Coleman exit the University lift and head towards Cameron's office. A woman passes them, and Rapp is positive he has seen her somewhere before. He puts her out of his mind and continues into Cameron's office, where they find him dead. Mitch phones Kennedy and tells her the news.

Hank Clark meets with the President. He tells him he personally has no problem with Irene Kennedy becoming the new boss of the CIA. He tells the President they have known each other for a long time and they both supported the need for the American government to conquer terrorism. In that regard, Irene is the perfect choice. He admits he has met Rudin and Midleton however and they do have a problem with Irene simply because they think she was responsible for ordering the Count's assassination. He tells the president he would not put up with their disobedience and he should stop them from talking before it gets out of hand.

President Hayes is now on the warpath, livid that both Rudin and Midleton have gone behind his back. He calls a meeting with Midleton and Stansfield. Midleton asks what is going on and the president demands to know why he went for breakfast with Hank Clark to talk about Irene. Midleton admits he does not want Irene to take over from Stansfield because it will be more of the same thing. The president questions why Midleton did not come to him with his grievances. Perhaps then the problem could have been sorted out. Now he is even more determined to have Irene and points out that the decision rests with him and not Midleton. The president tells Midleton he is his boss and what he has just done is a sackable offense. Midleton looks at the President as if he would never sack him and the President hands him a resignation he personally typed out for him earlier. He wants Midleton to sign it.



After the meeting with Midleton, the President meets with Rudin. He asks Rudin why he met with Hank Clark for breakfast. Rudin says they were discussing intelligence issues and the President says that is not true. He knows they were discussing about Irene Kennedy. Why he asks did you call Irene in front of your committee. Rudin claims he was just doing his job, but the President says he may of thought he was doing his job but he was actually damaging the reputation of the party.

Mitch meets the President and Stansfield. They have heard that he wants to quit Intelligence and live a normal life. The problem is they do not want to lose him. They understand he wants to get out of the firing line, but would he not accept a desk job? The President tells him he can take over from Irene's current position as head of counter terrorism. Mitch says his mind is set on settling down with Anna, but Stansfield says they need him and working within the organization means he is legitimate and does not have to lie about his job. Mitch cannot say no to Stansfield and extends his hand, agreeing to the position. Moments later there is a knock at the door Agent Wardle enters and tells the company Midleton has committed suicide.

Chapters 41-45 Analysis

The final part wraps up the loose ends. Mitch finds out that the professor is Peter Cameron, and he works at the George Washington University. He gets to Cameron's office to find he is already dead. The President meets with his two dissenters, Senator Midleton and Albert Rudin. He forces Midleton to resign and gives Rudin a dressing down. The president then meets Mitch. Teh president, who, along with Stansfield persuade Mitch to stay on with CIA and take an office job. The one plot point that Flynn does not resolve is Mitch finding out who was the man behind Peter Cameron. The reader, of course, knows it is Hank Clark, and the novel finishes with him drinking with the CIA man Jonathan Brown. He is trying to persuade Brown to challenge Irene as the next CIA boss. This points to the fact that the story has not finished, and there is another book to come.



Characters

Mitch Rapp

Mitch Rapp is a 32-year old counter terrorist. While at Syracuse University, his girlfriend died in a terrorist attack and Irene Kennedy used his anger to persuade him to join the CIA. He did not need much persuasion and left University that fall, quickly working himself up to become part of the Orion team, a top secret branch of the CIA developed to counter the increasing terrorist threat. Rapp became so revered, they nicknamed him the Iron Man.

One recent attack leads him to meet his current girlfriend Anna Rielly. She was reporting outside the White House for NBC when a group of terrorists lay siege to the building. Mitch saved Anna's life, and not long after, they were living together in his house in Maryland.

At the beginning of the book, Mitch is on the verge of retiring and settling down with Anna. He just has one last job to do. He has to assassinate the German Industrialist Count Heinrich Hagenmiller. Everything goes to plan until two fellow CIA agents try to kill him. Mitch manages to escape to France and then makes his way back to Washington.

In Washington, he stays with his friend and computer hacker Marcus Dumond. Together they try and find who tried to kill Mitch and why. Mitch finds he has more friends than he thought, and the person he is looking for does not work for the CIA. Things take a turn for the worse when Peter Cameron kidnaps Anna, but with the help of Dumond and the ex-Navy Seal Scott Coleman, he forces her release.

Hank Clark

Hank Clark is a self-made millionaire described as the fifth richest person in the senate. His rise to prominence is a typical rags to riches tale. He was brought up in a trailer park, where he had to share the same bed as his older brother. His father was in Hank's words, a loser, the less money he brought in, the more his mother drank, and the more depressing his home life became. He did not let this affect him adversely and left school with realistic dreams of becoming a baseball pitcher. Injury precluded that, but left him able to concentrate on learning how to earn a fast buck. Highly motivated, he progressed from a runner to a millionaire by the age of thirty.

Hank is not the sort of man to rest on his laurels and took his millions into the world of politics. Working for the Republicans, he became reasonably successful, highly popular and one of the voices in support of the Orion Team. However, he soon realized two things. First, his popularity and people skills gave him a realistic opportunity to push for presidency, and second, to achieve this, or anything in politics, he had to drop his code of ethics.



Hank became a harder politician, always looking for an opening to promote his candidacy and put down his opponents. He gets away with this because he is sly and gives his opponents the impression he is doing the complete opposite. In fact, Hank sticks to his favorite motto "keep your enemies close." He is always playing the political game, whether it is pointing out to the president the friendship they have had in the past or encouraging Rudin's hatred of the CIA.

Behind their backs, he hires Peter Cameron to help expose the Orion team. By doing so, he knows he will create a public and diplomatic crisis that will reduce the president's popularity and put him in a good if not unassailable position as a presidency candidate. Things do not go as planned, and he has to order the killings of an increasing number of people to sort out the mess. By the end, Clark finds himself in a strong position, ready to make his next and penultimate move.

Anna Rielly

Anna is a 30-year-old White House correspondent for NBC. On her first week in her job, she got caught up in a terrorist attack at the White House, and Mitch Rapp had to save her. She has since developed a relationship with Mitch and lives with him in his house in Maryland.

When the reader joins the story, she is in a transitional phase of her life, looking to work less and have more fun. Her first step was to buy a speedboat, which she uses for water skiing. More recently, she has joined a book club, yet finds she cannot relate to the female victims in the novels.

in a family of policeman and claims she saw death many times. This explains her devoted love to the assassin Mitch and proves she is not one to back away from a fight. Nevertheless, she has a problem with the line of work Mitch is in and has persuaded him to retire.

Her love for Mitch puts her life into jeopardy. When he disappears in Germany, she worries endlessly about him, and even when she receives a telephone call from him saying he is fine, she wants nothing more than to see him again. Unknown to her, Peter Cameron is listening to the call and arranges for two fake CIA agents to pick her up, claiming they are taking her to meet Mitch. She falls for the trick and Cameron holds her hostage.

Peter Cameron

Cameron is in his late forties. Unlike most of the characters, Flynn does not give him much of a background, but the reader knows he is an ex-CIA man. Hank Clark hires him to organize the killing of Mitch Rapp with the promise he will give Cameron a prominent position in his government. Cameron hires the Jansens. However, they fail the mission and Cameron hires Gus Villaume to kill the Jansens. The relationship between Villaume and Cameron becomes tense and Cameron hires Jeff Duser to kill him. He then asks



Jeff to kidnap Anna Rielly in order to get closer to Mitch. On the telephone to Mitch, he suggests he will tell him for whom he is working. Soon after, Donatella Rahn assassinates Cameron in his office at the George Washington University.

Albert Rudin

Rudin is one of the longest-serving democrats in the government and is known as a party hack. In other words, whenever there is a problem, Rudin is the man the President puts in front of the cameras to smooth things over. Hank Clark describes him as an old style politician, who does not necessarily believe in right or wrong, but concentrates more on defeating the enemy. Consequently, Rudin hates Republicans.

He sees the CIA as very much a Republican invention that goes against democracy. Realistically he knows he cannot get rid of the CIA, but he can help determine the next CIA boss and sets about trying to stop Irene Kennedy from becoming the CIA director. Unfortunately, his anger blinds him to the fact the powerful Republican Hank Clark is using him to cause problems among the Democrats.

Scott Coleman

Scott Coleman is an ex-commander in the Navy Seals. He has since left the Seals and with some of his former colleagues, he has started contract work with the CIA. When the reader is first introduced to Coleman, he is on his way to the arrest the Jansens. However, Peter Cameron gets there before him, and Coleman can only witness the assassination through his binoculars. Back in Washington, he is explaining the situation to Irene Kennedy and the President when Mitch breaks into the office, demanding to know who is trying to kill him. From that moment, Scott and Mitch become friends, and Scott helps him to find out who tried to kill him and rescue Anna.

Dr. Irene Kennedy

Irene is the 42-year-old director of the CIA's counter terrorism and head of the Orion Team. Thomas Stansfield and President Hayes are lining her to take over from Stansfield as boss of the entire CIA organization, but she also has some notable detractors. Albert Rudin, in particular, wants a complete clean out of what he feels is a corrupt organization and sees Kennedy as a major part of the corruption. In comparison, the President, see her as incorruptible. In reality, she is a strong person who is capable of lying, but only if serves to help her cause against terrorism.

Thomas Stansfield

Stansfield is the 79-year-old leader of the CIA. Stansfield is dying of cancer, and the President is lining up Stansfield's protégé, Irene Kennedy, to take over.



President Hayes

President Hayes is the Democratic President of the USA. He is a popular President with support from 70% of the population.

Mario Lukas

Mario is a good friend of Gus Villaume and helps him assassinate the Jansen's. Cameron has him killed because he is worried that Villaume might kill Cameron.

Gus Villaume

The French assassin who Cameron hires to kill the Jansen's. He is good friends with Mario Lukas and once worked with Mitch Rapp.

Jeff Duser

An ex-marine turned contract killer. Cameron hires him to kill Mario Lukas and kidnap Anna Rielly.

Liz O'Rourke

Anna's best friend.

Michael O'Rourke

Liz O'Rourke's husband and a Congressman.



Objects/Places

The White House

Stansfield and Irene Kennedy come here a number of times for important meetings with the President.

Dumond's Apartment

On his return to Washington, Mitch finds refuge at Marcus Dumond's apartment.

Washington

The main setting and where all the political debates and important decisions take place.

Germany

Mitch assassinates Count Hagenmiller in Germany. He then has to escape from Germany and get to France.

Count Heinrich Hagenmiller's house

Mitch kills the Count at his house in Germany and then sets fire to it, destroying all the Count's valuable paintings.

Congressional Country Club

Hank Clark, Rudin and Middleton meet at the club to plot the downfall of Irene Kennedy.

Stansfield's House

John Stansfield decides to stay at his own house rather than go into the hospital. Irene Kennedy often visits him here, and Mitch breaks in to get some answers.

The Jansen's House

The Jansens are killed by Cameron at their house in Colorado.



George Washington Universty

Peter Cameron works here and is later killed in his office by Donatella Rahn.

Hank Clark's Study

Clark likes to lock himself in his study with his dogs and Ernest Hemmingway books. Cameron often visits him here.

Themes

Terrorism

Terrorism is a major theme of the book. Count Heinrich Hagenmiller is assassinated because he supplied weapons to the Iraqi government. The American government is particularly sensitive about this because only a year before, terrorists attacked the white house, killing dozens of secret agents and several civilians.

Flynn does not present terrorism as a new threat. Mitch Rapp was initially recruited into the CIA when his girlfriend died in the Pan Am flight over Lockerbie. At that time, both Hank Clark and President Hayes supported a counter terrorism team that fought to keep the terrorists away, yet was also kept secret from the UN. What became known as the Orion Team was lead by Dr. Irene Kennedy and included Mitch Rapp, Mario Lukas and Gus Villaume. Together they fought and killed such threats to national security as Rafique Aziz, the man behind the Lockerbie bombing.

In the story, the threat does not seem so immediate. Security around Washington has been tightened since the attack, and the Orion team members work mostly as private contractors. However, the fact that the Orion team was held secret from the UN means the President's position would be put in jeopardy if it were ever made public knowledge. The Republican senator and presidential candidate Hank Clark knows this and goes out of his way to uncover the information while still trying to maintain his popularity.

CIA Operations

Vince Flynn displays an in-depth knowledge of CIA operations and describes in minute detail both how Mitch assassinates the Count and how he saves his girlfriend, Anna. In between, Flynn details minor missions such as how Mitch breaks into Stansfield's house and how Cameron kills the Jansen's. Flynn gives an account of how not to go about an assassination showing how Duser's assassination of Mario Lukas creates too much attention.

In fact, Flynn suggests a CIA operation has to achieve its aim with the minimum amount of fuss, and they cannot achieve success without a lot of planning. In the first operation in Germany, Mitch first scouts the area and then goes to a Hut, where the Hoffmann's are setting up radio equipment. Here, Mitch knocks out a code on the door and one of the Hoffmanns let him in. The Hoffmanns themselves have been chosen carefully. They are both American, but with perfect German accents. Furthermore, Mitch needed one of them to be a woman because he thinks her presence will make it easier to get past security. The Hoffmanns and Mitch discuss escape routes. Mitch knows they will need to leave quickly, yet cannot afford to leave any traces behind. Consequently, he explains they should not make a mark on any of the maps, and when they are finished, they should incinerate any documents linked to their current false names in a flash bag.



Before they go, they check their weapons four times. When they arrive at the Count's house, they show the guard their fake BKA ID, and he lets them in. They use BKA identification because they know the Germans respect and even fear them. When the moment finally comes to kill the Count, Mitch does it without a thought to spare.

Political Warfare

In this novel, the Republic senator, Hank Clark, wants to become the next president. Unfortunately, the current President has a popularity rating of 70% approval. Clark is not one to give up and attempts to create disruptions within the Democrat party. As one of the men who supported the Counter Terrorist teams, he knows if he uncovers its existence, he can ruin the President's reputation. With this in mind, he hires the ex-CIA Peter Cameron and orders him to kill Mitch Rapp while Mitch is in Germany trying to assassinate Count Hagenmiller. The attempt to kill Mitch fails and to keep his own reputation intact, Clark orders Cameron to kill the Jansens.

Hank Clark tries to balance ruining the President with increasing his own popularity. Consequently, he is often forced to clean up his messes quickly before anybody can find out. After Cameron kills the Jansen's, Gus Villaume becomes a little bit too nasty, and Clark orders Jansen to kill him. Cameron hires Jeff Duser, but Duser's way of doing things are far too brash and causes front-page news. From here, Clark decides he must get rid of Cameron and hires Donatella Rahn.

Hank's biggest strength as a politician is his ability to manipulate people. He uses this ability to first hire Cameron and then encourage him to become a cold-hearted killer by promising him a lot of money and a position within his government. However, his ability is most prominent in his dealings with Secretary of State Midleton and Senator Albert Rudin. He plays on their hatred of the CIA, knowing their opinion is the opposite of their President. He encourages Rudin to call Irene Kennedy before a committee and asks her to confess to the Count's assassination. He does so willingly, but is soon called to task by President Hayes. Hayes gives Rudin a dressing down and forces Midleton to resign. However, he still has no idea to the extent of Clark's involvement, and the novel finishes with Clark manipulating the CIA officer Jonathan Brown into challenging Irene Kennedy's leadership.



Style

Point of View

Vince Flynn writes the *Third Option* in the third person omniscient, delving into the history of almost every character. The reader knows early on that the CIA drafted Mitch after his sweetheart died in the Lockerbie disaster, and that Hank Clark's alcoholic mother brought Hank up in a trailer park. Both Hank and Mitch are the main characters, so it is not unusual for Flynn to go into such detail on them; however, he also gives background stories to minor characters. For example Flynn treats the reader to a short story about how Jeff Duser became a contract killer. While in the Marines, Duser started a campaign against homosexuals, resulting in one impressionable youth killing someone. Jeff was immediately thrown out and has since worked as a freelance assassin.

Albert Rudin and Peter Cameron are two of the few characters he gives little insight into, and this despite the fact they are major characters. By doing so, Flynn makes sure the reader cannot identify with characters he wants to present as weak individuals, who, in the hard world of politics, do more harm than good. Unlike the cool decisiveness of such people as Mitch, Hank Clark and even Jeff Duser, Cameron and Rudin both make rash decisions that eventually cost them and the people around them. In addition, Cameron's inclination towards voyeurism and Rudin's need to vent his personal vendettas mean they are too introspective to be in a position serve their country.

Such attributes are bad for someone like Mitch because if he does not have the ability to distance himself from what he is doing or has done, than he could be classed as a psychopath. Consequently, Flynn presents him as someone who kills only out of a sense of duty. When the reader sees his point of view, they can see he has a very analytical way of thinking, and his thoughts rarely veer from the job at hand. The only occasion that Mitch lets his passion get the better of him is when Cameron kidnaps Anna, and even then, Scott questions whether he is in the right frame of mind to save her.

Setting

Flynn mostly sets his novel in Washington, the political hub of America. Here President Hays calls the likes of Irene Kennedy and John Stansfield into the oval office to discuss important political matters, and Hank Clark plots against the President with Rudin and Middleton in the Congressional Country Club. All the big players live in Washington, including Stansfield, Clark and President Hayes. Such a setting suits their powerful positions, and their houses only highlight the point further. Hank Clark lives in what he calls a castle. The reader does not know if the house is actually that grand, as Flynn only describes Hank's study, but it is more than enough to understand that Hank is a man who lusts after power. The study is full of signed, first-edition hardbacks by Ernest



Hemingway, and various artwork adorns the walls, as well as an Antique Winchester gun. When Peter Cameron visits Clark, who is relaxing in his leather chair with his two dogs Caesar and Brutus under his feet and a glass of wine in his hand, it evokes comparisons with the Godfather.

In comparison, people such as Mitch tend to live on the outskirts of Maryland or in the Jansen's case, Colorado. These settings also reflect not only the mind of the individual, but their line of work. Both Mitch and the Jansen's house are set in the countryside in the middle of nowhere, but with good views around all sides of the house, so they can see any intruders. When Coleman and his team visit the Jansen's house, they comment that they can only get to it by one road as people who do field work for the CIA tend to be paranoid and make it difficult for people to get to them.

Language and Meaning

The language in the book is clear and easy to understand. Flynn knows his strength is plotting and generally keeps description of external factors such as landscape down to the minimum. However, Flynn does know a lot about espionage and describes scenes involving any sort of rescue attempt, break in, or escape with great detail. For example, Flynn cannot allow Mitch to just walk through an airport and catch a taxi. Mitch has to make sure no one sees him do it, so Flynn details how he looks around for security cameras and even if does not see any, he hides his face and limps along just in case.

Flynn's analytical approach spills into the rest of the book. A lot of the time, such detail highlights how professional the characters are, but sometimes the reader may feel it ruins the flow of the story. For example, such lines "He stepped over a lime-green Nintendo Game Boy that was on the floor in front of the fifty-two-inch TV" can feel like too much information, particularly as Flynn has already outlined the house is owned by a messy computer geek.

The formality of the language is particularly evident in the dialogue. The characters rarely talk about anything outside their professional lives. Flynn even details characters' relationships through descriptive passages rather than through interaction. For example, the reader knows Irene Kennedy hired Mitch after his girlfriend died in the Lockerbie disaster because Flynn mentions the fact in his back-story. In such a high-pressured and secretive world, this means the characters are suitably distant from each other.

Structure

Flynn uses the plot, rather the characters, to drive forward the story. Flynn opens the novel with Mitch's mission to Germany and the mission's failure divides the book into four main plot points. In the first plot point, Mitch, aims to first escape his would be killers and then to find out who tried to arrange his death. In the second plot point, Hank is trying to disrupt the democrats by encouraging Albert Rudin's hatred of the CIA. In the third plot point, Cameron is trying to find and kill Mitch, and in the fourth plot point, Irene Kennedy is preparing to take over from John Stansfield as director of the CIA.



The entire story is underpinned by Hank Clark's campaign to become President of the United States. Clark was one of the members of the Senate that supported the need for a Counter Terrorist team, meaning he is one of the few people privy to the operation in Germany, and he hires Cameron to find some people to kill Mitch. He knows if he kills Mitch, the media will find out about the Counter Terrorist operations. The Democrats will lose a lot of popularity, and Clark will have a free run to the presidency. His plan does not work, so he gives Cameron more power to get things right. Meanwhile, Clark manipulates Rudin into confronting Irene Kennedy about her Counter Terrorist exploits in various countries around the world.

As Clark's puppets fail in their tasks and Mitch gets closer to the truth, the plots begin to merge and center towards some sort of resolution. By the end, Mitch has found out that the person trying to kill him is Peter Cameron, and he goes to his office to arrest him, the idea being that Cameron will tell Mitch who within in the government hired him. If this book was not part of a series, Mitch, with the odd problem here and there, would have taken Cameron back to the White House and found out that Clark is the man he wants. However, when he gets to Cameron's offices, Cameron is already dead and, in this book, Mitch is no closer to finding the truth.



Quotes

"To keep things legitimate, Rapp often did conduct business while abroad, but not on this trip. He had been sent to kill a man. A man who had already been warned twice."

Page 12

"Rapp had been doing this for almost ten years, and he was ready to get out. In fact, this probably would be his last job. He had met the right woman the previous spring, and it was time to settle down. The CIA did not want to let him go, but that was tough. He had already given enough. Ten years of doing what he did for a living was a lifetime. He was lucky to be getting out in one piece and with a marginally sound mind."

Page 12

"Hoffman had been very careful about where he bought the various items, never buying more than one thing in the same neighborhood and always avoiding store surveillance cameras."

P.21

"Washington was a town that loved drama and gossip, and no one loved it more than the politicians. With the delight of brooding Shakespearean characters, they had started their deathwatch."

P.23

"Rapp squeezed the trigger once, and a bullet spat from the end of the long black barrel. Instantly, a red dot appeared between the count's neatly trimmed eyebrows."

P.41

"Mitch Rapp was much more than a computer salesman, that was for certain. The very fact that he knew there was a relationship between his grandfather and Scott Coleman said that he had access to some very delicate and highly classified information."

P.95

"A particularly green private right out of boot camp had taken the platoon's first sergeant's words a little too seriously. After an evening of beer and prodding, the private went back to the barracks and beat a fellow Marine to death. The subsequent investigation exposed Duser's role and many of his other shortcomings. He was court-martialed and run out of the Corps. From there he'd found his way into private security and then contract killing."

P.149

"Cameron was living the life he had dreamed of for years. He was helping manipulate the outcome of events by using his trade craft, and he was getting compensated properly. His life had never been so exciting. Mario Lukas was dead, Gus Villaume was on the run, and Mitch Rapp was about to walk right into his cross hairs. The thrill of it all caused him to smile broadly as his car maneuvered through the midmorning



Georgetown traffic."
P.213

"Rudin, never one to be concerned with decorum, scoffed at the secretary's concern. 'Get off your high horse, Charles. This is no time to worry about etiquette. This is serious shit. I think the CIA killed Count Hagenmiller, and I think that bitch Irene Kennedy came before my committee this morning and lied about it.'"
P.242

"As the four-bladed chopper began to roll away from the hangar, the copilot asked the control tower for permission to take off and gave them his desired heading. The request was granted almost instantly. No flight plan would be filed. No record would be kept of the helicopter's departure."
P.291

"PETER CAMERON PARKED his car and headed straight into the study. He didn't need any coffee. He was already edgy enough without it. The thought of the ensuing conversation with Senator Clark had his stomach acid acting up. Cameron felt the senator was a fair man, though. He took care of people who were loyal to him, and Cameron had been extremely loyal."
P.321

"Before getting out of the car, Rapp looked at Coleman and said, 'I want this guy alive, but if things get tight, I don't want you to hesitate.' Rapp tapped himself on the forehead. 'Put a bullet right in the center of his head.'"
P.337

"'Shut your damn mouth, Chuck. You never got it through that pompous head of yours that I won the presidency, not you.'"
P. 353



Topics for Discussion

How accurate do you think Flynn's description are of CIA operations?

Does Flynn's style of including background for almost all the characters take away from the story's tension?

Why do you think Peter Cameron is one of the few characters for whom Flynn does not provide a background story?

Do you think Flynn's representation of women is negative or positive?

How does Flynn's use of minute detail contribute to the story's meaning and characterization?

Do you think Flynn's choice of using an omniscient point of view works? Does the reader know too much about each character?

How does Flynn use setting to add depth to characters? Do some characters change depending on the setting?