

Transfer of Power Study Guide

Transfer of Power by Vince Flynn

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Plot Summary

President Hayes, advised by Dr. Kennedy and Director Stansfield of the CIA, authorizes American CIA spy Mitch Rapp to kidnap Hezbollah religious leader Fara Harut in the middle of the night after hearing rumors of an impending attack against the United States. Rapp escorts him to Germany, where Dr. Hornig begins to interrogate him and soon discovers Hezbollah has planned an attack against the White House for that very day. In the White House, Hayes is meeting with Democratic National Committee Chairman Russ Piper and his last-minute guest, Prince Kalib of Oman, who is actually international terrorist Rafique Aziz. Rapp notifies the Secret Service of the threat, and agent-in-charge Jack Warch evacuates the President to his bunker just as a team of terrorists led by Aziz takes the White House in a meticulously planned and flawlessly executed multi-faceted attack. He wires explosives around the exterior doors and windows of the White House so no one can escape.

With the President out of touch but safely stowed in his bunker, Vice President Baxter becomes the commander in chief. He is an opportunist and cares more for his career than for the safe and speedy termination of this incident. Aziz demands a large sum of money, and even though Mitch Rapp warns Baxter that Aziz will not be negotiated with, Baxter knows that a negotiation for the release of hostages will look very good to voters. Attorney General Tutwiler releases only part of the money and asks Aziz to release some of the hostages. Instead, the terrorist shoots two hostages in plain view of the cameras.

Dr. Kennedy and Director Stansfield send Mitch Rapp and Milt Adams into the White House through a ventilation duct to gather more information. Once inside, Rapp rescues a beautiful young reporter from assault by one of the terrorists. The two men continue to plant cameras and gather information, while outside Vice President Baxter continues to frustrate his military advisors who desperately want to rescue the hostages and the President. His chief of staff, Dallas King, leaks information to the Washington Post in order to make the Vice President look innocent of the failed negotiation.

Inside the bunker, President Hayes and Agent Warch realize that someone is drilling through the door. Mustafa Yassin, one of Aziz's compatriots, is slowly breaking into the bunker. Two more SEALs attempt to come into the building via the same duct Rapp and Adams used, but Aziz catches and shoots them. Later that day, Aziz broadcasts an appeal to the American people and appears quiet, remorseful, and sympathetic. The terrorist has planned everything down to the last detail. He asks the American people to help him ask the government to lift the UN sanctions against the starving people of Iraq. Baxter immediately begins to assert pressure in that direction, even as his military and intelligence advisors scream protests.

Inside the White House, Rapp verifies that the President's bunker door is under siege with the help of Rielly, and reports back to the CIA that immediate action is necessary. Baxter still will not order an invasion because he knows American voters will think him trigger-happy. Stansfield, frustrated with the Vice President's cowardice, gives Rapp

permission to do whatever it takes to put the President back into communication with his advisors. Rapp disables the jammer and President Hayes regains power as commander in chief.

The military organizes a multi-pronged attack, utilizing many branches of special forces and Rapp's inside information. When Yassin finally finishes drilling and very nearly plucks the President from his bunker, American soldiers invade and kill the terrorists, liberate the hostages, and evacuate the building before the bombs explode. Aziz is the only terrorist to escape, having disguised himself as an FBI agent as the situation within the White House turned against him.

Hayes, reinstated, fires Dallas King, punishes Vice President Baxter, and give Mitch Rapp full authority to hunt down Rafique Aziz. Rapp does so, then finally gets to go on a date with Anna Rielly.

Chapter 1-4

Chapter 1-4 Summary

Dr. Irene Kennedy and Thomas Stansfield of the CIA arrive at the White House for an emergency briefing with President Robert Xavier Hayes and top military advisors General Flood and General Campbell. The CIA has successfully placed an operative within striking distance of Fara Harut, a notorious terrorist and religious leader of Hezbollah. After learning Hamas has leaked plans of a terrorist attack that may be funded by Saddam Hussein himself, President Hayes authorizes Fara Harut's kidnapping.

The scene shifts to Bandar Abbas, Iran, where CIA operative Mitch Rapp, camouflaged as an Iranian beggar, continues to stalk Fara Harut's safe house. Rapp promises himself that this time he will succeed in capturing Rafique Aziz, a devotee of Harut's and a cold-blooded terrorist. Lt. Commander Dan Harris leads a team of Navy SEALs into the Persian Gulf. They land on a beach where Mitch Rapp, code name Iron Man, meets them. Disguised as Iranians, the men move into position to capture Fara Harut.

In position, the team waits for the signal to move in and grab Harut. Rapp takes the opportunity to meditate and visualize exactly how he will proceed. At the signal, Rapp leads the team into the safe house, stealthily shooting guards with silenced weapons as they move into Harut's inner quarters and sedate the religious leader. The team booby traps the house and prepares to move Harut to the roof where a helicopter will pick them up. Just then, a SEAL sniper spots an enemy soldier, or "Tango" walking towards the house. The SEAL sniper hits the Tango and raises the alert in the Hamas-occupied neighborhood. The sniper continues to pick off enemy soldiers as the group loads Harut into the helicopter and escapes. The kidnapping is a success.

Chapter 1-4 Analysis

Chapters 1 and 2 deal primarily with introducing many of the major players from military intelligence and the White House. Within the White House Situation Room sit the Commander-in-Chief, the Director of the CIA, another high-ranking CIA sub-director, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the United States Military Commander.

President Hayes, Commander-in-Chief, with his measured judgment and willingness to take a risk, establishes his powerful presence as a leader, one against which many others will be compared throughout the events of the next week. He has rightfully garnered the loyalty of advisors Generals Flood and Campbell, who, as military men, always desire well-planned action rather than inaction or rash conflicts.

Thomas Stansfield, the Director of the CIA, has worked in intelligence since the CIA's seeds were planted during World War II. He is a formidable and unreadable presence who recognizes other people's motives and can maneuver around them to the end he



chooses. Loyal to the President, who greatly respects him in turn, Stansfield advocates action supported by solid intelligence. Dr. Kennedy also ascribes to this school of thought, as Stansfield's protégé within the agency.

Kennedy is the head of the CIA's counterterrorism unit, as well as the leader of the Orion Team, a secret anti-terrorist organization made up of the CIA's most efficient hunters. Mitch Rapp is a member of the Orion Team, and although Kennedy knows the work they do must be done in order to ensure the safety of the United States, she also knows that such mercenary tactics would sink the political careers of everyone involved if the Team were ever made public. Her concern foreshadows a major theme of this book: the difference between what is right and what is marketable, and how often decisions will be made in order to flatter the whims of American voters.

Dr. Kennedy reflects on Mitch Rapp and how he came to be in the service of the CIA after his college sweetheart was killed in the terrorist attack on the Pan Am flight that went down in Lockerbie. Rapp and Kennedy never have become romantically involved, but their professional relationship includes great mutual respect, unwavering loyalty, and personal amiability. Mitch Rapp also establishes not only his professional savvy, having blended into a Hezbollah hot zone, but also his motivation for taking such risks. He wants revenge.

The Navy SEALs are elite soldiers, all of whom respect Mitch Rapp's reputation and his efficiency and professionalism in person. Even though he and his colleagues are immersed in a terrorist hotbed, the group is accustomed to such high-pressure situations. Rapp is a smooth operator, seemingly fearless, alert and merciless. The operation moves smoothly, but even when trouble is on the horizon the group stays focused and effectively neutralizes the threats around them while working towards the goal at hand. They effectively grab one of the most influential men in middle eastern terrorism and will never receive any credit for it.

Chapter 5-6

Chapter 5-6 Summary

President Hayes begins his day with a briefing from Dr. Kennedy, who informs him that the operation was a success and continues to go as planned. The President's movements are recorded vigilantly by the Secret Service, even his movements from the dining room to the Oval Office, where his Chief of Staff Valerie Jones informs him of a few last-minute changes to his daily schedule, including a brief meeting with DNC chairman and a Prince Kalib of Oman scheduled only the night before.

At Ramstein Air Force Base, slightly refreshed from a nap on the plane, Mitch Rapp is homesick and world-weary, sick of his quest for revenge against Rafique Aziz. He daydreams about having a normal life, with a wife and children and friends outside of the CIA. However, such daydreams will not help him get home safely, so he reminds himself to "suck it up," and greets Dr. Jane Hornig, an interrogation specialist. She goes to work on Fara Harut in order to get as much information as possible on the imminent terrorist attack the White House has been warned of.

Nearby, Muammar Bengazi loads four men and much firepower into the back of a laundry delivery truck, then disguises his cargo with bundles of laundry. A few minutes later, the truck pulls up the front of the Treasury Building, as it has done every day for months, and Abu Hasan, in disguise as Vinny Vitelli, reaps the fruits of his months of getting close to the Treasury guards. Because the guard knows Vinny so well, the truck passes through security without the standard mandatory inspection of its cargo.

In his office, Democratic National Committee Chairman Russ Piper glad hands the reclusive Prince Kalib of Oman, who has stopped in D.C. at the last minute on his way to visit his father. At the promise of a generous donation to the DNC, Piper has orchestrated a last-minute sit-down between Kalib and the President that morning. Little does Piper know that Prince Kalib is actually Rafique Aziz, poised for attack within the walls of the Oval Office.

Piper and Aziz-as-Kalib run into Anna Rielly, a friend of Piper's from Chicago. Anna Rielly has recently been promoted to White House Correspondent for NBC and today is her first day of work. Rielly is wary of Kalib, though she does not know why. Piper and Kalib wish her luck and proceed through security, at which point Aziz pages his colleagues to notify them that he is inside.

Chapter 5-6 Analysis

Mitch Rapp feels desperation, loneliness, and sadness. Although he is a ruthless killer and mechanically accurate military operative, he is also a man who misses companionship and normalcy. He has devoted his life to taking down another man, and although he is weary of that pursuit, he will not rest until he has achieved it.

He is oblivious of the well-organized attack in its first stages of execution in his nation's capital. Aziz has planned a complex, detailed, multi-faceted and synchronized attack on the White House. The activities of the well-organized, highly-motivated terrorists in these chapters are shown concurrently with the late-stage attempts by the United States to subvert such an attack. This effect allows the multiple facets of the attack to gain momentum together, even as the foreshadowing reveals the clock is running out and a nefarious terrorist will soon be shaking hands with the leader of the free world.

The efficiency of the Secret Service plays a major role in these chapters as well. Their detailed and meticulous guardianship of the President presents a major obstacle for any planned siege on the White House. However, their ability to protect the President suffers a major blow when Valerie Jones schedules a meeting the Prince Kalib without notifying the Secret Service. Jones knows that the Secret Service can recommend the President not take last-minute meetings, for security reasons, and that before they would allow such a meeting to take place the individual in question would have to go through a rigorous background check. Prince Kalib is only passing through, and Jones knows he will make a large donation if given an audience with the President. Thus, Rafique Aziz, international terrorist, walks into the White House with a high-ranking Democrat on his left side and a knife on his right.

Chapter 7-8

Chapter 7-8 Summary

In her interrogation, Dr. Jane Hornig has extracted plans of an imminent attack on the White House organized for that day. Rapp immediately calls the headquarters of the CIA and notifies Director Stansfield and Dr. Kennedy, who immediately inform Jack Warch, head of the President's Secret Service detail. Warch orders every agent in the building on high alert, but hesitates to barge into the Oval Office for a false alarm.

Simultaneously, the laundry truck driven by Abu Hasan pulls into the underground lot of the Treasury building, which is connected to the White House basement by a tunnel sealed off with a steel door. Hasan discovered this passageway through a high-ranking source at the White House. Muammar Bengazi unloads a grenade launcher, and 9 terrorists wait in the back of the truck.

Inside the White House, Piper gives Prince Kalib a tour of the West Wing, giving Aziz a perfect opportunity to scout the area in person. They finally make their way into the Oval Office, and Aziz must fight to keep himself from killing the President right then.

At that moment, Warch discovers Prince Kalib has been allowed an audience with the President without Secret Service approval, and he races to the West Wing, shouting orders to tighten up the President's protection. At the same time, Aziz sends an electronic signal to his co-conspirators, telling them to attack. Muammar Bengazi blows through the door in the basement of the Treasury building and races through the tunnel to the White House basement, Salim Rusan takes out four Secret Service agents with a sniper rifle from a neighboring roof, and Rafique Aziz reaches out to greet the President, a knife clutched in his other hand.

Secret Service agents burst into the Oval Office, heavily armed, and grab the President. Jack Warch follows the detail down to the President's newly-completed bunker in the basement of the White House.

Unaware of the plot, Anna Rielly makes her way to the White House mess hall and watches as Secret Service agents and soldiers scatter. Her suspicions are confirmed when she hears gunfire erupting from inside the White House. Bangazi and his crew secure the White House under Rusan's sniper-fire cover, and they take as many hostages as they can, including Anna Rielly. Aziz orders all communication from the White House jammed.

Chapter 7-8 Analysis

The complex and highly detailed plan further proves Rafique Aziz is no fool, but rather a dangerously intelligent fanatic. Even more dangerous, he is being financed by one of the most famous dictators and enemies of the United States the world has ever known.

Miraculously, he makes his way into the Oval Office and would have succeeded in immediately killing the President had it not been for the illicit and politically untouchable actions of Mitch Rapp and Dr. Hornig. Luckily, the Secret Service is as intelligent and decisive as a religious fanatic when it comes to the protection of the President.

The pace of the novel picks up tremendously as soon as Hornig learns of the plot to take the White House. The chapters get shorter and the scenes rapidly flash from one to the next. This device allows the pace of the novel to pick up in a short amount of time; the entire siege takes less than fifteen minutes, but each prong of the attack has its own story to be told.

Chapter 9-10

Chapter 9-10 Summary

Mitch Rapp lands at Andrews Air Force base intent on finishing Aziz, and meets Thomas Sansfield and Dr. Kennedy. They whisk him away to the Pentagon for an emergency briefing at which he will act as a consultant named Mitch Kruse. Dr. Hornig informs Rapp that the group in the White House is armed not only with guns but also with explosives. She continues to interrogate Harut as Mitch makes his way to the Pentagon.

Vice President Sherman Baxter arrives at the Pentagon with his Chief of Staff, Dallas King, and Attorney General Marge Tutwiler. He is soon joined by FBI agent Skip McMahon, CIA representatives Stansfield, Kennedy and Kruse, Generals Flood and Campbell, and Secret Service Director Tracy. Immediately General Flood establishes that the Vice President is the acting President of the nation, since President Hayes is incommunicado. Secret Service Director Tracy briefs the room on how Aziz got into the White House, how he was joined by his compatriots, and the status of the President, who is safe in his bunker with rations and supplies but without communication capabilities. 18 Secret Service agents died in the siege. Vice President Baxter proceeds to brutally cut down Tracy, shaming him for a total failure, and commands that the FBI run the operation at the White House. Furthermore, he demands Tracy's resignation, giving Tracy carte blanche to lash back at the room with his frustration that politics always take precedence over security.

Dr. Kennedy then briefs the room on Aziz's background as a terrorist and religious zealot. Just then, Aziz himself calls the Pentagon from the White House situation room. He demands that the U.S. return siezed assets to Iran, and in return he promises to release one third of the hostages. To refuse his demand will mean the death of one hostage every hour.

Chapter 9-10 Analysis

Jurisdictional scuffles become as much of an obstacle to the President's safety as machine guns. Not only do the politicians have very different goals from those of the military, but within the intelligence community each agency vies for its own autonomy in fully handling the situation. The Vice President ultimately wants to emerge from this conflict unsullied and appearing heroic yet benevolent. By contrast, the two Generals in the room want to take decisive and immediate action to protect Americans, not only those held hostage but all those whose safety will be threatened if Baxter agrees to negotiate with a terrorist. The meeting plants the seeds of doubt towards Baxter, who is ambitious and ruthless, as well as Dallas King, who is even more so.

The CIA, FBI, and Secret Service each have their own agendas as well. The CIA wants to gather intelligence; the FBI wants to storm the mansion to rescue the hostages; and

the Secret Service needs, first and foremost, to secure the President. These divergent goals mean that the American forces are fundamentally separated, and therefore weakened. Aziz has anticipated even the politicians' shuffling and indecision. He knows the politicians will never allow the military to endanger the lives of hostages, and that the military will have no choice but to obey their chain of command.

Chapter 11-13

Chapter 11-13 Summary

The meeting at the Pentagon continues, and all of the career politicians continue to push for caution and compromise. Mitch Rapp knows any gesture of compromise will only encourage Aziz to demand more. Attorney General Tutwiler suggests they release part of the money for some of the hostages, and Baxter tries to shore up support with the adamantly anti-negotiation military men. As the room begins to shift in favor of Tutwiler's plan, Mitch cannot remain silent. He informs the group that such an action will certainly result in the deaths of hostages and that the politicians in the room are making decisions to benefit the health of their careers and not the health of the hostages in the White House.

In the White House mess, Anna Rielly observes everything while trying to keep a low profile. One of the terrorists has already expressed interest in her, so she knows that she must stay quiet and unnoticed in order to stay safe. Aziz enters the room and Rielly immediately recognizes him from their brief meeting earlier that morning. He shoots one of the hostages for requesting blankets for a pregnant woman.

After the Pentagon meeting disperses, Mitch Rapp meets Flood, Stansfield, and Kennedy privately. Flood asks Mitch Rapp to spearhead a covert operation to provide invaluable intel about the situation within the White House, without Baxter's knowledge or approval. Rapp heartily agrees.

Meanwhile, Baxter and King brainstorm a nationwide address. Mitch Rapp's condemnation bothers Baxter, who worries that if Rapp is right and the White House must be retaken by force then Baxter will appear to the voting public as a trigger-happy leader. King knows Baxter's concern is legitimate, and advises him to allow other people to take the fall for potential failures. If Tutwiler's plan to release only part of the money fails, it will only be Tutwiler who takes the blame.

Meanwhile, inside the White House, Aziz checks on another one of his colleagues' progress. Mustafa Yassin, the thief of Baghdad, has begun to drill through the President's bunker door. He will have the door open in 48 hours. Inside the bunker, Agent Warch hears the drills and rouses the group.

Chapter 11-13 Analysis

Anna Rielly establishes herself as a street smart woman whose past brushes with violence give her a heightened awareness of survival. Aziz reveals himself to be a dangerously intelligent sociopath who knows how to control a large group of people with fear. The U.S. government cannot compete with him because they play a different game. They value the lives of individuals because they have trained their voters to value the lives of individuals. To sacrifice 50 American hostages for the sake of the future

security of America makes sense to soldiers, but not to voters, and therefore not to politicians.

Baxter is totally self-serving and unaware of the implications of negotiating with a terrorist. He sees no way to lose in this situation, because he is only considering the health of a career that he can guarantee by throwing his colleagues to the lions when they take unpopular but necessary action. Mitch Rapp, a man of such actions, cannot abide by the Vice President's short-sightedness and unwillingness to be unpopular in order to save lives.

Chapter 14-16

Chapter 14-16 Summary

Mitch Rapp spends his first morning at home in a month, then rushes to a meeting with Dr. Hornig, CIA director Stansfield, and Dr. Kennedy in order to learn what Dr. Hornig has discovered with her ongoing interrogation of Fara Harut. She has retrieved a large amount of information from him, including the names of the other terrorists, Aziz's future demands, and finally, that Saddam Hussein is the financial sponsor of the attack.

Mitch Rapp departs to meet a man named Milt Adams who can help him gain stealth access to the White House, and Stansfield and Kennedy go to the Pentagon to prepare for that day's negotiation with Aziz.

With Attorney General Marge Tutwiler behind the strategic wheel, the United States releases a fraction of the money Aziz demands. Kennedy and Stansfield arrive at the Pentagon, and when Kennedy discovers Tutwiler herself will be attempting to negotiate with Aziz, Kennedy strenuously objects. Aziz will be insulted if the American government forces him to deal with a woman, but Tutwiler insists on remaining in the limelight.

Safe inside his booby-trapped White House, Aziz is not surprised at the government's trepidation, and he formulates a plan to proceed. Just then, while watching the news, he learns of his spiritual advisor's disappearance. As soon as Tutwiler picks up the phone and begins the negotiation, Aziz completely loses his temper. He grabs the National Security advisor and his secretary, takes them onto a White House balcony in full view of the press, and shoots them both. FBI special agent Skip McMahon finishes the conversation for Tutwiler, who is in shock. Aziz maintains his demand for the full sum of seized money to be returned. Vice President Baxter, swayed by the violence and by his Chief of Staff Dallas King, agrees to pay the rest of the money in order to avoid political suicide. The CIA and military representatives are displeased with the Vice President's lack of perspective. Baxter, for his part, is already blaming the FBI for the failed strategy, since Tutwiler has had a full nervous breakdown.

Meanwhile, Mitch Rapp meets Milt Adams, a former White House employee who knows of a secret way into the mansion via the duct system. Adams, a World War II veteran, proves he is in exceptional physical condition and no mental lightweight either. With that in mind, Rapp invites him to take part in the mission into the besieged White House.

Chapter 14-16 Analysis

VP Baxter has, with one irrational act, reversed an entire nation's stance on terrorism, agreeing to a terrorist's demands and handing over money to his operation. The military knows American freedom is greater than one man, even if that man is a President, and though they want to get Hayes out safely, they know giving into Aziz's demands risks future American lives by setting a dangerous precedent.

Baxter is a survivor. He will not be sullied by responsibility for any failed mission, even if that mission was entirely the result of his maneuvering for the best light possible in which to view him.

Rapp is effective because he is autonomous. He makes his own decisions, gets things done, and does not have to waste time worrying about whether or not he will be rewarded or re-elected. Instead, he focuses on a mission, and because he is one man with one agenda, he can be an immensely powerful tool. He immediately likes Adams, who is similarly inclined to cut through political doublespeak and is willing to do whatever Rapp asks of him.

Chapter 17-18

Chapter 17-18 Summary

Inside the bunker, Agent Warch has organized his agents into shifts, while outside the U.S. government transfers the full sum of money demanded by Aziz into his bank account. While Aziz remains concerned about Harut's safety, he also must stay focused on the task at hand and informs Skip McMahon that one third of the hostages will be released later that day. One of those hostages, Anna Rielly, is now certain that one of the terrorists is planning to assault her, as he already has one other woman in the group. She feels brief elation when Aziz randomly selects her to be one of the hostages released, but her admirer insists she remain, and then punches her in the head when she attempts to defy him.

At the Pentagon, the military is deeply concerned Baxter is leading the government down a dangerous path. His bartering with Aziz will cost innumerable American lives down the road. At a politician-free military briefing, Flood prepares CIA, FBI, SEAL Team Six, and Delta Force squads for the inevitable assault that must happen to retake the White House. The entire delicate operation, as multi-faceted as Aziz's own attack, will depend on the accuracy of the intelligence Rapp and Adams will gather when they penetrate the White House.

Chapter 17-18 Analysis

Anna Rielly is a fighter. Though she fears what might happen to her, she is unwilling to relent. Her combination of bravery and her savvy is unique among the hostages, and because of it she has a better chance of survival than the rest of the group.

Already the military must find ways not to include Baxter on preliminary plans to take the White House by force. They are crippled, however, by the theories and wordsmithing of the political world, without whose permission they cannot take the decisive action that will protect the Presidency and the freedom of the United States. The operation to place Rapp and Adams inside the White House, for example, is planned without Baxter's ok, and only presented to the Vice President after the sly Stansfield and Kennedy have had a chance to shade the proposal in the best light possible.

Chapter 19-21

Chapter 19-21 Summary

A team of Delta Force operatives lands at Andrews Air Force base. Everyone knows that this mission, while crucial and extremely high-profile, is also slipshod and poorly informed. Yet they prepare to fly nearly blind in order to take back the White House. Meanwhile, Kennedy and Stansfield brief Baxter and King on their plan to place a covert operative within the White House. The politicians are suspicious of Rapp, because if he makes any mistake they will face tremendous political fallout. Without any other choice, they approve the plan. Kennedy and Stansfield communicate approval to their agents.

With SEAL sniper cover, Rapp and Adams receive a technology briefing from hacker Marcus Dumond on how to operate the wireless cameras and microphones they will be planting throughout the White House. Then, they slip into the duct system, losing radio contact with Langley. After a long crawl, they arrive in the White House basement and begin to creep through the building.

Chapter 19-21 Analysis

Like many other events in the book, the arrival of the special forces soldiers illustrates the contrast between the military and political spheres. While the politicians want to avoid direct contact with this situation in order to protect themselves and their careers, the soldiers step right in without a second thought, even as they risk their own lives. The overlap between the two, in the office of an elected commander-in-chief, results in political maneuvering that inhibits real military action.

Political mishandling, however, has its own consequence which cannot be disregarded. Israel is nervous, and although the Mossad offers aid to the CIA in finding dossiers on the other terrorists involved in the operation, it also clarifies its own first priority: to protect itself. The Vice President is inadequate both in his handling of the military and of international politics.

Chapter 22-25

Chapter 22-25 Summary

After an enormously and unsurprisingly successful press conference, Vice President Baxter continues to strategize with his team while Dallas King slips out to a trendy bar to meet Shiela Dunn, Washington Post reporter. King is attracted to her, and she manipulates his attraction to gain valuable inside information. For his part, King uses her manipulation to feed her the information that he wants out: namely, that Tutwiler is to blame for the earlier failed negotiation. He also tells her that the CIA is responsible for the President's safe removal to his bunker, since they informed Secret Service agents of the threat only moments before the attack started.

Inside the bunker, one of those agents knows the drills are gaining ground, and Warch shares his suspicions that the Vice President may not have the President's best interests in mind. Warch and the Hayes begin to plan for the worst-case scenario.

Anna Rielly's worst-case scenario is happening, as Abu Hasan, her admirer, knocks her unconscious and drags her upstairs to rape her. Hasan does not know that Rapp and Adams are also upstairs in the White House, having set up a slapdash headquarters in a secret stash room in the President's closet. On their way to the stash room, they discover that the door leading to the balcony has been wired with some kind of C4 explosive device. Rapp checks in with Kennedy at Langley, then prepares to reemerge into the White House to plant some cameras. He only gets one planted in the President's bedroom before he hears a terrified scream from just outside the room.

Anna Rielly has regained consciousness, and is doing everything she can to stop Hasan from violating her. Hasan knocks her unconscious again and begins to undress her, not knowing that Rapp and the entire watch room at Langley is watching him from the minute camera planted only moments before. Kennedy tries to raise Rapp on the radio to tell him to stay put, but Rapp steals out of the stash room, stabs Hasan, and carries Rielly back to the stash room. He covers up the murder by taking Hasan's knife and stabbing him shallowly, as a frightened woman might.

Salim Rusan, the terrorist sniper, has changed his appearance and now waits in a nearby safe house with many explosives. His compatriot and leader, Aziz, has just learned Hasan is dead, stabbed to death by a woman. Aziz berates his men for their stupidity, even as Mitch Rapp receives a similar browbeating from Langley for ignoring the order to allow the woman to be raped. Suddenly, Rapp sees Aziz is only on the other side of the stash room wall, and desperately wants to kill him. Kennedy orders him to stay put, and Rapp reminds himself that the only way to get his job done is to stop asking permission to do it.

Chapter 22-25 Analysis

The significance of the title of the novel comes into play in these chapters: various transfers of power occur. Between Shiela Dunn and Dallas King there is a transfer of sexual power, political power, and intellectual power. Dunn wields her sex appeal in order to gain more knowledge, and King barter his knowledge for greater political leverage through the media. This exchange showcases an example of how power can be used for self-serving gains. By contrast, the incident between Anna Rielly, Abu Hasan, and Mitch Rapp shows how an individual can use power both to serve oneself and to serve another. Abu Hasan asserts sexual and physical power over Rielly, who attempts to retain power over her own body but fails. She cannot compete with him in terms of physical power. Mitch Rapp, on the other hand, can and does when he overcomes Hasan's corporeal power and murders the terrorist. In doing so, Rapp uses both intellectual and physical power in a pursuit that holds no promise of reward beyond moral rightness.

The issue of morality becomes more complex here as well. There are various moral compasses by which the characters in the novel may steer themselves. Mitch Rapp, in saving a woman but making himself vulnerable, follows a very human instinct of right and wrong, but ignores what is operationally right. This scene marks the first conflict between what is best for the military and what is best for the individuals the military tries to protect. Rapp endangers the entire mission by killing Hasan, but he prevents a horrible personal tragedy for an innocent woman. The different viewpoints from which individuals measure right and wrong truly affect their decision-making. Rapp cannot blink an eye at the idea of killing a bad man, but he also cannot bear to witness the violation of an innocent. He is a vigilante, and there are some who would consider him morally corrupt. In this novel, however, his viewpoint is the most sympathetic, for he is protecting Americans and killing terrorists. Vigilante justice, for him, is still justice.

Chapter 26-28

Chapter 26-28 Summary

General Campbell decides to send another pair of operatives into the White House. Kennedy and Stansfield agree both to the operation and to Campbell's decision to keep Baxter out of the loop. Baxter wants deniability, so he can say the CIA acted on its own in case the operation fails in a public way. Lt. Commander Dan Harris sends in two SEALs.

In the White House stash room, Rapp comforts and debriefs Rielly; when he discovers she is a reporter he is immediately skittish, but with her help Rapp also discovers Aziz has separated the Secret Service agents from the rest of the hostages.

Aziz has turned up no woman in his search of the White House. He goes to the third basement to check on Mustafa Yassin's progress on the bunker door. Yassin gives an estimate of 24 hours to penetration. Rapp emerges from the stash room and narrowly avoids a run-in with a guard in the third basement, where the 2 Navy SEALs are due to arrive any minute. Rapp recommends pulling the two soldiers back, but they are already out of communication. In fact, they are already in the duct in the third basement, above the head of Rafique Aziz. Aziz hears the movement in the duct and shoots both men.

The morning after the SEALs are shot, Dallas King recognizes a photo of one of the terrorists on the news. Abu Hasan is known to him as Vinny Vitelli, a government employee to whom King gave a personal tour of the tunnel from the Treasury building to the White House some months prior. King is terrified.

Inside the President's bunker, Chief of Staff Valerie Jones agrees with Hayes and Warch that Baxter cannot be trusted. The only people who can take Baxter from his position of commander in chief are totally cut off from the rest of the world.

At Langley, one of the SEALs survives Aziz's shots, but a livid Aziz calls FBI agent McMahon and demands an explanation for the invasion attempt. The FBI has been kept out of the loop on the White House operation, at Baxter's request, so McMahon has no idea what Aziz is talking about, but promises to find out. Enraged, McMahon confronts Kennedy and demands full disclosure, but Kennedy cannot inform him of everything because of Baxter's request. In fact, the Washington Post, as informed by Dallas King, knows more about the operation at hand than FBI agent McMahon does. Stansfield is already suspicious King is leaking information, but must disclose some of the intelligence Dr. Hornig has extracted from Fara Harut. Aziz's next demand will be for the lifting of UN sanctions against Iraq.

Chapter 26-28 Analysis

Even the precise decisions of the military are fallible. General Flood's decision results in the loss of two good soldiers who risk their lives to protect American citizens. How does this bad decision compare to Baxter's bad decision to allow Tutwiler to negotiate with an armed sociopathic terrorist? Both actions result in the deaths of two people. Yet Flood's choice is the execution of good intentions, while Baxter's is merely the scrambling of a career politician trying not to get any dirt on his hands.

Rapp's reaction to Rielly's job foreshadows a major obstacle in their rapport, as Rapp already doubts if he can trust her. Rielly is a reporter, a woman whose entire job is to tear the covers off of stories and expose what is really inside. If she exposes the truth of what happens inside the White House, that a man who does not exist saves her life by penetrating the White House without approval from the acting commander-in-chief, then both Rapp and Dr. Kennedy will have a lot to answer for. Rielly's sense of right and wrong exists in the nature of truth, whether or not people are willing to both tell it and hear it. Rapp cannot tell the truth, and he knows Americans are not ready to hear it from a man whose job is to eliminate terrorists.

Dallas King, on the other hand, measures the value of his actions not by truth but by popularity. When he discovers he has helped a terrorist gain access to the White House, he does not feel guilt, but rather terror that he might be found out. He knows that if the American people discover he aided one of these men, not only will his career be ruined, but he will more than likely be found guilty of a conspiracy against the United States.

One way each agency attempts to remain in power is by consolidating information. While this policy does help to seal off leaks, it also results in serious jurisdictional scuffles. Baxter has ordered the FBI out of the loop, so when McMahon receives an irate phone call from Aziz, he honestly has no idea what has happened and is ill-prepared to deal with the volatile terrorist. The CIA is the only group who knows the full extent of Rapp's movements, and Baxter and King are the only politicians who know even a shred of that information. Everyone wants the power to determine the particulars of the operation, but the only people who are truly empowered to change the situation are the ones holding guns: Rapp and Aziz.

Chapter 29-30

Chapter 29-30 Summary

A well-groomed and suit-wearing Aziz broadcasts a national address from the White House press room. He apologizes for his actions, implores Americans to see the situation from his point of view, and begs the "peace-loving American people" to assist him in persuading the government to lift economic sanctions against the impoverished and starving Iraqi people.

Baxter panics and King puts a poll in the field immediately. Both politicians know how well the handsome, earnest-looking man came across in this national address. As expected, the poll reveals that the majority of Americans want to exhaust diplomatic options before violently engaging with Aziz. King advises Baxter to begin asking the UN to lift the sanctions.

Rapp knows exactly what Aziz hopes to achieve with his speech. Aziz wants to bog down the American public-dependant government by gaining some sympathizers among American voters. With Americans demanding Baxter exhaust all peaceful solutions before a military siege, the military and its career politician handlers are both severely handicapped.

General Campbell leaves Rapp with a standing order not to take any action against Aziz, and Rapp again reminds himself to stop asking permission to do the job he was sent in for. Having been put in a leash, Rapp busies himself with inspecting Rielly's wounds. He is struck by her beauty and her bravery, even as he fears her inquisitive mind.

Chapter 29-30 Analysis

Aziz's brilliant stroke against the politicians forces the question of who is really in power in this situation: politicians, terrorists, or voters? Terrorists are empowered to kill everyone they want to, but they cannot attain their demands without the suspension of those deaths. The politicians are the only people who can give the terrorists what they really want, but they are held hostage themselves by the preferences and values of the American voting public. By swaying the voters to hear his side of the story, Aziz forces the career politicians to hear him as well.

Only the soldiers and anti-terrorist operatives understand Aziz's endgame. They know his only goal is to manipulate Americans and distract them from the idea of a military strike against the White House. Baxter and King know Aziz is up to something, but their attention lies not with the man's motives but with their constituents' responses. Playing a defensive game once again, the Vice President dances away from responsibility even as Mitch Rapp craves more autonomy. If he did not have to answer to Kennedy and Stansfield, he could have already killed Aziz. If he had not heard Campbell's order to

stay put, he could be out there right now, solving the problem in the best way he knows how. Instead, he stays in the stash room and deepens his connection to Anna Rielly. He is taken with her immediately, though he continues to fear her professional duties.

Chapter 31-33

Chapter 31-33 Summary

Inside the White House, Rapp turns off his radio and, with Adams, ventures out to gather more information and plant more cameras. Rapp grows more suspicious of Rielly's discretion, and fears she will broadcast the details of this covert operation once she is out of danger. Rielly reflects on the events that led her to Washington DC and ponders Mitch Rapp's presence in her life.

At the next security briefing, Baxter orders the UN sanctions lifted by the end of the day. Stansfield and Flood immediately and vehemently disagree, telling Baxter that such a move sets a dangerous precedent, cannot easily be undone, and endangers the future safety of all Americans in order to save 50 Americans.

Kennedy checks in with Mossad leader Colonel Ben Fine, who fills her in on rising conflict in the Middle East and tension in Israel. If the U.S. continues to comply with Aziz's demands, Israel will have to protect itself from the inevitable threat of Palestinian violence. Kennedy relays Col. Fine's concerns to the rest of Baxter's advisors, who all agree with the Israeli Colonel. Kennedy attempts to raise Rapp on the radio, only to discover that Rapp has turned his radio off. While General Campbell is irate that Rapp has disregarded a direct order, Stansfield defends Rapp as an autonomous operative accustomed to acting without the support and interference of the government. He further points out that Rapp does not have to waste time doing Baxter's political dance.

Meanwhile, Aziz is monitoring the network coverage of his speech from the White House situation room. He is not surprised to see military men scoff at his suggestion of enduring peace and push for total annihilation, nor is he shocked by the politicians and religious leaders who honestly believe Aziz is sincere and that a nonviolent solution is at hand. Aziz fantasizes about murdering the President on national television, until he sees an interview in which a reporter implicates the CIA in the kidnapping of Fara Harut, which explains how they learned in advance of the attack on the White House. Aziz calls Langley in a rage.

Stansfield denies all knowledge of Harut's kidnapping, and reminds Aziz that an explosion of temper will undo the goodwill he bought with his phony press conference. Stansfield and Kennedy are both disturbed by the terrorist's confidence, and Kennedy reveals that one of the terrorists in the White House is a renowned safecracker.

Chapter 31-33 Analysis

These chapters further foreshadow a romantic interest between Rapp and Rielly. When Rapp leaves for more reconnaissance, she realizes how much he has changed her life, and what might have happened to her had he not intervened. She is intensely grateful.

and does not realize he is as concerned as he is about his ability to trust NBC's White House correspondent.

The American public's response to his speech is exactly what Aziz predicted it would be. Aziz reinforces his competence and even genius in planning this strike. However, the news that Harut was kidnapped by the CIA removes all of the controls of his temper he has so carefully tended. Even methodical madmen have ideas of what is right and wrong, and the kidnapping and interrogation of a religious leader is unacceptable to Aziz.

For Israel, catering in even the smallest way to a terrorist's demands is similarly unacceptable. The rising political tensions in the Middle East require a politician's action, or Israel will have no choice but to engage militarily. Unfortunately, the man at the wheel is as clueless in international diplomacy as he is in hostage negotiation.

Chapter 34-36

Chapter 34-36 Summary

Rapp reconnects with CIA headquarters at Langley and agrees to check on the bunker door immediately. Unfortunately, to plan the mission freely, Rapp needs Rielly to agree to sign a confidentiality agreement. Rielly refuses, uncomfortable with the idea of never being able to tell her story. Rapp is furious with her, and he and Adams leave her alone in the stash room while they scout a route to the third basement.

Adams chastises Rapp for being too tough on Rielly, but when Rapp fills him in on the possible threat to President Hayes, the men focus on their mission. The only way to the third basement is being guarded, so the two men return to the stash room to examine blue prints and continue to strategize. Rielly is contrite and regrets her earlier behavior, and she apologizes to Rapp. She also agrees to allow the government to edit her story before she tells it.

Outside the White House, SEAL commander Lt. Harris and two of his men formulate a preliminary plan to penetrate the White House via the roof, and begin to take steps towards putting that plan into motion.

Chapter 34-36 Analysis

The fight between Rielly and Rapp reveals much more than their flirtation does about how deeply invested they are in each other. Rapp is more than irked by her refusal to sign a confidentiality agreement. He takes it as a personal insult that she is unwilling to compromise her career for his well-being when only hours beforehand he did exactly that for her. Rielly does what is professionally right, even though Rapp ignored his professional duties to step in and save her life. Rapp is intolerant of such loyalty to companies over individuals. However, the very fact Rielly can irritate Rapp so effectively reveals his growing feelings for her. Rielly, while initially offended that he reacts so harshly to her hesitancy to be gagged, eventually realizes how ungrateful and opportunistic she sounds. The apology eases both of their minds.

The military begins to plan independently of the Vice President, both because it is the military's nature to take action and because everyone in charge knows Baxter will bungle the counter-attack if he is the only one to plan it. The SEALs do everything they can to prepare for their plan, hoping that at some point before the President falls into Aziz's hands they will have the opportunity to execute it.

Chapter 37-38

Chapter 37-38 Summary

Dr. Hornig has pushed Harut beyond his limits, and he cannot confirm if Mustafa Yassin is the safecracker Kennedy suspects he is. Kennedy receives more bad news when Mossad's Colonel Fine informs her that the infamous safecracker has not been sighted in Iraq for weeks. Colonel Fine also reaffirms that Israel will not concede anything to Palestinian terrorists, and if Aziz asks for such a concession, Israel will go to war. Kennedy informs Flood and Campbell of these events, and the indoctrinated military men insist their commander-in-chief, Vice President Baxter, be brought up to speed on the recent developments. When they inform him of Israel's threat, the more than likely threat to the President's safety, and the readiness of the SEALs and Delta troops, Baxter fears the inevitable political fallout of ordering a raid on the White House that will certainly result in the deaths of many hostages and soldiers. Dallas and Baxter debate the political consequences of losing the President to terrorists. Baxter orders the soldiers to stay put, even as inside the bunker Agent Warch begins to hatch a plan to protect the President at any cost.

An enraged Flood and a pensive Stansfield both take in the Vice President's order to abstain from decisive action. Flood is frustrated but also bound to honor that chain of command. Stansfield, however, is accustomed to the rules of espionage that have no such binding. He empties the communications room and speaks privately with Rapp. Stansfield then asks Rapp to verify the threat on the President's bunker, eliminate it, and then disable the signal jammer that has left the President out of contact for three days. Stansfield wants to reinstate Hayes, and gives Rapp the green light to do anything he needs to in order to complete the job.

Chapter 37-38 Analysis

Baxter continues to vacillate and place his career above the safety of the President and all American lives. Ironically, his desire for power leaves him powerless to make the decisions that need to be made in order to solve the problem at hand. He knows a bloodbath will result in professional failure, yet such decisive action is precisely what he needs in order to appear the hero he dreams of being. Stansfield, on the other hand, does not play the political game and therefore is the most empowered to take real action. He absolves all around him of responsibility and then takes the leash off Rapp. This is the very opportunity Rapp has been dreaming of ever since he discovered he would be inside the same building as Rafique Aziz. Now he can really get to work.

Chapter 39-40

Chapter 39-40 Summary

Outside the White House, terrorist Salim Rusan has disguised himself as an EMNT, parked a stolen ambulance nearby, and begun to plant several small bombs around the perimeter of the White House.

After much deliberation, Rapp and Adams finally discover a way to check the situation outside the bunker. Rielly, petite and brave, will squeeze into the inner ventilation system and crawl down to the third basement, where she will be able to see the bunker door. Adams, Rapp, and Rielly make their way to the entrance of the duct and Rielly crawls in. She sees Yassin's drills, then spots Yassin himself drinking coffee. She signals the men to pull her back up and excitedly fills them in on what she saw. Rapp realizes the terrorist's coffee-drinking may provide them with the perfect opportunity for action.

Inside the bunker, Warch explains his plan to Hayes. Simply sitting in the bunker stops being effective as soon as the door is breached. Instead of waiting for the inevitable, Warch proposes opening the door early, catching the terrorists by surprise, and then fighting their way out.

Chapter 39-40 Analysis

Unaware of his ally on the inside, Warch takes the only action he can and makes a plan. Warch's plan is that of a soldier and not a diplomat: he thinks aggressively, not defensively. While Baxter continues to angle himself away from oncoming blows, Warch decides to charge decisively into a threat because it is, quite simply, the only option he has. In war, such action is rewarded, yet in politics such action results in the death of a career.

Rapp can finally take action, but he, like the other military operatives, needs a solid plan and good background information before he can be an effective soldier. He is meticulous about researching and intelligence gathering, and he knows that one mistake could cost the lives of innocent hostages or even the President of the United States. However, as soon as he verifies the threat against the President's safety, he knows the politicians will have to scuffle over the best, cleanest way to proceed.

Rielly deeply impresses Rapp with her bravery and willingness to help the team ensure the safety of the hostages. While Rielly is not fearless, she is also courageous enough to overcome her fear. Rapp continues to notice her physical appearance, how adorable she looks in a borrowed sweat suit of the President's. Rielly trusts Rapp enough to believe he will not put her in harm's way, and Rapp is already fiercely protective of the reporter.

Chapter 41-43

Chapter 41-43 Summary

SEALs Harris, Reavers, and Wicker have confirmed the details of their preparations for their plan. As yet, no one has addressed the problem of the bombs that have been wired to the exterior doors of the White House. As soon as the SEALs begin their pitch to General Flood, however, Stansfield notifies the General that Rapp has confirmed an immediate threat to President Hayes' security. Flood hastily approves the SEALs' plan and returns to Langley. The SEALs position themselves to strike.

Inside the White House and unaware that his secret weapon is no longer secret, Aziz prepares for the day ahead with a brief nap and then a review of the plan with his second-in-command, Muammar Bengazi. Aziz is supremely confident, while Bengazi remains skeptical the Americans will remain passive.

Upstairs in the stash room, Rielly reflects on the intense media pressure she will have to withstand if she honors her agreement with Rapp. Even though it will be difficult for her and will inhibit her career advancement, Rielly cannot imagine betraying Rapp's trust. Just then, Rapp comes into the room with a plan to secure the bunker and disable the jammer without totally destroying it; he wants everything to appear normal to the terrorists. Rielly will return to her vent, plant a camera, and signal the men when Yassin takes a bathroom break. At that point Rapp will run to the third basement and disable the jammer while Adams monitors the movements of the terrorists on the already-planted cameras. The three take their positions and wait.

Meanwhile, Dallas King attempts to manipulate Baxter, who knows that since the threat to the President has been verified, the military will have to move to protect him. This event will totally crush his White House ambitions, but King reminds him that Hayes will probably not make it out of the White House alive. Both men are comforted by the thought. King also inwardly prays for the death of the terrorist to whom he gave a guided tour, for if the man survives and fingers King, the death of his career will be the least of his worries.

Chapter 41-43 Analysis

Dallas King and Sherman Baxter instinctively brainstorm ways to avoid having to answer for any decisions made during this morally nebulous episode in American history. On the other hand, the soldiers flown into DC for the duration of the standoff continue to brainstorm ways to triumph against the enemy. Both goals are fair, yet one is self-centered and the other as generous as it is possible to be. Baxter is unwilling to sacrifice his image, yet the soldiers do not even blink at the idea of sacrificing their lives for the President. To add insult to injury, King even hopes the President will perish.

Rielly and Rapp form a stronger bond than ever. He respects her courage and she his valor. Together, and along with Milt Adams, they are a very effective team against Aziz, whose confidence begins to lead him astray. He continues to believe the Americans are cornered by their own politicians' obsession with popularity. However, American forces are willing to do whatever it takes, and they are setting the stage for a massive siege against Aziz's occupation.

Chapter 44-46

Chapter 44-46 Summary

After almost an hour, Yassin finally takes a break. Rielly signals Rapp, who flies downstairs and disables the jammer. Suddenly, in Langley, they can see the bunker and hear Rapp on his field radio.

Inside the bunker, Warch has organized his forces for the plan to blast their way out of the White House. As soon as Jack moves to open the door, his phone, which has been dead for the last three days, begins to ring. It is Dr. Kennedy and Stansfield, who rapidly fill Warch and Hayes in on the events of the last few days, including Baxter's refusal to order a raid even after the CIA had verified the threat on Hayes' life. Hayes is outraged but not surprised, and the group begins to work out a plan to ensure the safety of all the Americans in the White House.

Stansfield then briefs FBI representatives Skip McMahon and Brian Roach on the operation up to that point. Generals Flood and Campbell brief the rest of the team on the SEALs' plan to parachute onto the White House roof, the Delta team's strategy to secure the mansion, and HRT's focus on rescuing the hostages.

Chapter 44-46 Analysis

All the military men have something tangible to lose but proceed fearlessly. Warch prepares to die for the President's safety. Rapp races into harm's way in order to enable the President to communicate with his counselors. The special forces soldiers each have a mission, and each is fully committed to executing it or dying in the attempt.

This is the beginning of the end for Sherman Baxter, whose foolish leadership has been well-documented throughout the entire siege. With Hayes back in charge, the Vice President will have to face the consequences for his judgment, something he has devoted much energy to avoiding. First, however, the President will have to survive the retaking of the White House, and his military, unlike his VP, is entirely invested in his survival.

Chapter 47-49

Chapter 47-49 Summary

Yassin informs Aziz that the bunker door will be open in about an hour. The CIA hears the conversation and suddenly the multi-faceted operation to retake the White House must be moved up. Rapp realizes that when the door opens, Aziz will need as many of his men with him as possible in order to subdue the secret service agents who are still alive and armed inside. This is the perfect moment to attack.

King and Baxter, still unaware that Hayes is in charge again, argue about Israel's threat to protect itself. Baxter finally agrees to prepare to retake the White House once Aziz releases a few more hostages, oblivious to the fact that such an operation is already poised for the green light. Baxter calls Flood to give the order, who at that moment is on the phone with President Hayes. Baxter is shocked to hear Hayes' voice, then humiliated when Hayes cuts down his heinous mismanagement and poor judgment.

Baxter hangs up and the rest of the team continues to plan their counter attack. In an airplane far above this conversation, Navy SEALs prepare for their HAHO jump onto the White House roof. Inside the White House, Rapp and Adams finalize their strategy, then proceed throughout the mansion planting as many cameras as possible, finally discovering the terrorist stationed in front of the security monitors, watching the building's exterior.

Chapter 47-49 Analysis

With a confident, trusted person in charge, things begin to move very quickly. Hayes trusts his military advisors in matters of conflict and war, so he allows the men to use their judgment. This faith enables everyone to act in accordance to their duties, and ultimately results in higher morale, greater motivation, and the making of a successful mission. Ultimately, trust becomes the greatest instrument of power, more powerful than popularity, physical dominance, or intellectual superiority. The stage has been fully set for the retaking of the White House. At this point, the most empowered individuals are the soldiers, whose actions and decisions will determine whether the raid succeeds or fails.

Chapter 50-Epilogue

Chapter 50-Epilogue Summary

Yassin has finished the drilling on the bunker door. He calls Aziz, who prepares to descend to the bunker with his machine gun and the President's secretary as a human shield. At Langley, Campbell alerts everyone that if they do not act now, the President could fall into Aziz's hands. The constantly shifting timetable means that the incoming soldiers have far less information than is ideal for such a complex mission. Nevertheless, everyone agrees to go in blind. The SEALs leap from the plane and HRT begins its helicopter flight towards the White House.

SEAL sniper Charlie Wicker takes out the terrorist guarding the White House roof, and the SEALs land. Rapp takes out the guard who sees the soldiers land, but not before the terrorist alerts Aziz. Rapp jams all the signals in the building. With his radio dead, Aziz fears his operation is in trouble. He has organized an electronic signal to be sent to the bombs at regular intervals from his cell phone. If the signal is jammed, then the bombs will begin their countdown to detonation. He grabs Hayes' secretary and scampers to the Treasury tunnel, where he changes into an FBI uniform and dons a gas mask.

Upstairs, SEALs and Delta soldiers kill the terrorists and begin to move through the building, inspecting the bombs and herding out the hostages. Rapp sees the bombs have been activated, and the group of hostages and soldiers races through the Treasury tunnel, right on Aziz's heels. Aziz, deafened by the explosions, runs out dressed as an FBI agent in a gas mask, and is unrecognizable. He climbs into Salim Rusan's ambulance and the men drive away.

The news of the bombs going off in the White House reaches Dallas King, who immediately calls reporter Shiela Dunn to tell her that President Hayes ordered the failed raid, not Vice President Baxter.

The next day, President Hayes arrives at a meeting across the street from the partially destroyed White House. Waiting for him are his chief of staff Valerie Jones, Director Stansfield, Dr. Kennedy, Generals Flood and Campbell, Dallas King, Vice President Baxter, as well as Mitch Rapp, Milt Adams, and Anna Rielly. Hayes begins by publicly berating King for leaking information to the media, then forces him to sign his own resignation. As for Baxter, Hayes promises to send him to every third world country he can. Hayes then reinstates Milt Adams to help with the reconstruction of the White House. Anna Rielly agrees to respect her confidentiality agreement in exchange for a head start on the story that Rafique Aziz escaped from the White House. Hayes gives Rapp full permission to hunt down and kill the terrorist, no matter the cost. Rapp and Rielly make a date for that evening. Some time later, Mitch Rapp tracks down Aziz and kills him.

Chapter 50-Epilogue Analysis

The constantly shifting timetable means that the incoming soldiers have far less information than is ideal for such a complex mission. Nevertheless, everyone agrees to go in blind. The operation is a success, even though the White House is severely damaged, Rafique Aziz is at large, and Americans have lost their lives. It is a success because American forces triumphed in rescuing their commander in chief, no American died needlessly in the raid, and the White House, even in rubble, is again under the control of the United States.

King, spurned by the President's public humiliation, decides to once again take power by leaking the news of the destruction to the media. He attempts to wield that political and intellectual power even though he is not fully informed, nor is he politically empowered. Such an action is a risk without any insurance, and it results in his expulsion from the political world.

Hayes occupies the ultimate seat of power, and he wields that power with trust instead of selfishness. The last chapter of this book is dedicated to Hayes' setting right all which has been set askew by the attack. Hayes resolves all problems, be they personal, professional, or military. Such resolution provides the quintessential happy ending, in which order is restored, the bad guys die, the good guys survive, and one good guy even gets the girl.

Characters

Mitch Rapp/Iron Man

CIA counterterrorism agent and member of the top-secret Orion Team, Mitch Rapp is recruited by Dr. Kennedy after his college girlfriend is killed in the terrorist attack on the Pan Am flight over Lockerbie. An elite athlete and mercilessly efficient soldier, Rapp is well-respected by Navy SEALs, depended on by CIA administrators, and feared by terrorists world-wide. He has dedicated his adult life to taking down Rafique Aziz, but is beginning to feel the effects of a life spent in the pursuit of revenge. He wants to have a family and be able to communicate with the real world.

Mitch has little tolerance for political maneuvering. He believes the only way to deal with terrorists is to crush them outright, regardless of the popularity of the blow. He prefers to work alone, and in fact often finds himself frustrated by the formal chain of command under which he must operate when he works with the military. For this reason, he often rebels against his superiors and takes initiative when they would prefer he remain under their control. He gets away with this rebellion because his instincts in the field are impeccable, and his judgment beyond reproach.

Rapp likes Anna Rielly for her strength, courage, and beauty. However, he fears starting a relationship with her because of her profession. A reporter and a man who, officially, does not exist make an odd pairing.

Rafique Aziz

Mitch Rapp's mortal enemy and insidious terrorist, Rafique Aziz is a religious fanatic and a brilliant strategist. He plans a complex strategy to take the best-protected building in the world, and that plan works. A sociopath whose only conception of right and wrong lies within what will most hurt the United States, he is a fearsome opponent in a battle of strength or wits. He is especially ruthless in his manipulation of the United States' political system. He knows politicians must answer to voters, and that the action needed to neutralize his invasion of the White House will not play well with the voting public. Because of this knowledge, he can hold not only White House staffers but also the entire cabinet room hostage.

Rafique Aziz has a long history with Mitch Rapp. In fact, Aziz gave Mitch Rapp the long scar on his cheek that still haunts the CIA agent. However, Aziz cares less for personal scores than for personal power. With the guidance of his spiritual advisor, Fara Harut, Aziz knows his seizure of the White House will result in a massive triumph for the fringe fanatics with whom he works, most notably the man who pays for the entire operation: Saddam Hussein.



Thomas Stansfield

CIA director Thomas Stansfield is notoriously difficult to read. With decades of espionage experience, Stansfield's wisdom and foresight are unparalleled in the briefing room. He trusts Dr. Kennedy implicitly, and is not afraid to make enemies of even the most powerful Washington politicians. He lives outside of the chain of command, and breaks rules when it is necessary.

Fara Harut

Religious leader of Hamas and personal spiritual advisor to terrorist Rafique Aziz. Mitch Rapp kidnaps him in order to gain information about Rafique Aziz's movements. Aziz is intensely loyal to this man, and his disappearance terrifies and infuriates the terrorist.

Dr. Irene Kennedy

Dr. Kennedy is Mitch Rapp's handler on the Orion Team and head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center. She is shrewd, professionally astute and manages to maneuver around multiple political minefields. Intensely loyal to Mitch, Kennedy is torn between allowing him to take renegade action and remaining in the chain of command. She is the second-in-command to infamous CIA director Thomas Stansfield.

President Hayes

President Hayes is a morally upright man who disapproves of soft money campaign donations, and who remains suspicious of Vice President Baxter's loyalty. He is a strong judge of character, and he trusts all his advisors to do their jobs. That trust is what makes him such an effective leader.

Anna Rielly

The newest White House correspondent for a major news network, Rielly is beautiful and street-smart, having grown up on the mean streets of Chicago with a cop as a father. She nearly becomes a victim of rape, but Rapp saves her life. She is grateful, and even falls for Rapp in the process of retaking the White House. Stubborn, courageous, and quick to apologize when she is in the wrong, Rielly is a great match for Rapp.

Sherman Baxter

The opportunistic, self-centered Vice President cares only for his popularity and not for moral correctness. Throughout the entire episode, he and his chief of staff scurry from corner to corner, avoiding credit for any poor judgment and taking the limelight when

something goes well. He is not loyal to the President, and even hopes the President dies in the siege.

Dallas King

Dallas King is Baxter's chief of staff, a cocky, overbearing scrambler and opportunist. He consistently steers the Vice President towards short-sighted victory instead of long-term career health. He also leaks information to the Washington Post, an act unforgiveable in a time of crisis when information is the greatest source of power.

Milt Adams

A retired White House staffer, Adams accompanies Rapp into the White House and guides him through the complicated building. Though he is an older man, he is impressively strong and sharp, and proves himself to be a great asset throughout the operation.

Objects/Places

Hezbollah

Hezbollah is an extremist terrorist organization/militia based in Iran. Although the organization claims to be Islamic in its influences, in fact it is as much a fair representative of Islam as the Ku Klux Klan is of Christianity. Fara Harut is its religious leader in this novel.

Orion Team

A top-secret division of the CIA's antiterrorist unit devoted to the tracking and elimination of terrorists. Dr. Irene Kennedy handles the Orion Team, and Mitch Rapp is one of its key operatives.

Langley

The headquarters of the CIA from which Dr. Kennedy and Thomas Stansfield monitor Mitch Rapp's intelligence-gathering mission.

White House Situation Room

A room where the President holds classified intelligence briefings, like that in which he authorizes the kidnapping of Fara Harut. Once he siezes control of the White House, Fara Harut also uses this room as his headquarters.

Bandar Abbas, Iran

Bandar Abbas ia a Hezbollah stronghold from which Mitch Rapp abducts Fara Harut.

Jihad

A jihad is, in the modern media, a holy war, usually one begun by a fringe grassroots organization such as Hezbollah. The word literally translates to "struggle."

Mossad

The Israeli equivalent of the CIA, in this novel headed up by Colonel Ben Fine.

Lockerbie Pan Am Flight

A terrorist bomb on a Pan-American flight resulted in a crash in Lockerbie, Scotland. In this novel, Mitch Rapp's first love perished in that terrorist attack, and precipitated Rapp's involvement with the CIA and the Orion Team.

Nondisclosure agreement

A confidentiality agreement that would bind Anna Rielly's testimony after she is liberated from the hostage situation. She balks at signing such an agreement, but eventually submits in order to help Mitch Rapp complete his mission.

Presidential Bunker

A secured vault complete with food and accommodations located in the third basement of the White House and designed specifically for an emergency evacuation within the White House. President Hayes, his chief of staff Valerie Hayes, and a team of secret service agents ride out the hostage situation inside the bunker.

Themes

Terrorism and Moral Relativism

What is terrorism? Certainly it is the forcible seizure of foreign nationals, the threatening of lives for personal gain, and violence against innocents. Rafique Aziz is guilty of all of these acts, but so are other characters. Mitch Rapp siezes Fara Harut for information on an attack against the United States. Sherman Baxter threatens the lives of all of the hostages and the President of the United States when he refuses to allow the military to rescue them for fear of tarnishing his image. The definition of terrorism depends entirely on the perspective from which one views the events in question.

In the same way, decisions made in such a situation depend entirely on the goals of the decision-makers. The military rages against Baxter's decision to comply with Aziz's demands, even though doing so ensures the continued protection of the lives of hostages. In fact, the military would rather lose fifty hostages than forever weaken the United States against terrorists. A politician would rather keep everyone alive today than consider the consequences realized long after he is out of office and therefore not responsible. Inside the White House, Mitch Rapp does what is right in rescuing an individual from a rapist, yet his action is wrong by the military's standards. When Anna Rielly initially refuses to sign a nondisclosure agreement, her instinct for the preservation of her professional life is absolutely correct, yet in the situation at hand her career must take a back seat to the operation.

Compassion as Weakness

When Mitch Rapp risks the mission to rescue Anna Rielly from a terrible personal assault, that compassion results in a sharp censure from his handlers. Though it is the right thing to do on a personal level, Mitch suffers for his humanity. He does jeopardize the mission with that risk. Regardless, he does not regret rescuing the beautiful reporter. Ultimately, although his compassion weakens the integrity of his mission and he gains unwanted visibility from Rafique Aziz, he remains loyal to his human instincts when it comes to innocent bystanders.

Sherman Baxter's priority of shedding as little blood as possible, although it stems from his own selfish needs, also shows how compassion is a weakness. Even though his only true concern is for his professional health, he knows the American people have compassion for their countrymen being held hostage. His concern for the well-being of fifty hostages results in catastrophic weakening of America's stance on terrorism. By giving in to Rafique Aziz, he establishes that the United States is an ATM machine for anyone with automatic weapons. If he had shown less compassion for the individual lives at stake, then the military could have ended the siege within a day.

At the other end of the spectrum, the merciless and discompassionate Rafique Aziz has nearly all the power in this situation. As he does not care if the hostages live or die and he knows Americans do care, he manipulates their compassion to squeeze money and power from the United States government. With only himself to look out for, any situation has a clear solution: survive, no matter how many others must die.

Jurisdiction and the Transfer of Power

The FBI, CIA, Secret Service, Military, and office of the Vice President all want total control over the situation. Unfortunately, each group has its own priority and cannot function if it attempts to cooperate with all the others. Power is transferred between each group as the situation evolves. The FBI is empowered to watch the exterior of the White House; the CIA is empowered to view the interior of the White House; the Secret Service is empowered to protect the bunker that holds the President; the military is empowered to plan a counter-attack; and the Vice President is empowered to gain popularity among voters. Although each group wants autonomy, in fact the system functions best when each group executes its own small mission in the context of the others, as when the White House is finally retaken by American forces.

Power exists in many forms in this novel, jurisdictional and political power being only one of them. Sexual power, intellectual power, and physical power all shift hands. Sexually, Shiela Dunn controls Dallas King. She knows he is attracted to her and that she can use that to get more information than he wants to give. Intellectually, King has the upper hand on Dunn. He is the White House insider, and even though he is drawn to ingratiate himself to her so she will give herself to him, he never tells her anything does not want publicized.

The triangle between Mitch Rapp, Anna Rielly, and Abu Hasan also illustrates the exchanges of power. Hasan wields sexual and physical power over Rielly, who is powerless to protect her body. Rapp, however, gains the upper hand when he kills Hasan, effectively and permanently disempowering the terrorist. Rielly then gains sexual, though innocent and well-intentioned, power over Rapp. He cares for her romantically, and therefore is willing to protect her.

Style

Point of View

The perspective of the novel is third person omniscient. The reader is privy to the private thoughts of each character as the story comes to focus on the decisions he must make. Since so many principal characters affect the trajectory of parallel and simultaneous storylines, the third person omniscient narrator is a narrative necessity. The narrative voice is reliable and trustworthy. Even when the character speaking is lying, the narrator reveals the untruth.

Much of the novel takes place within the minds of each character. Inner monologues are interwoven throughout the novel. However, in large meetings or briefings the narrator becomes a fly on the wall, noting each character's spoken contribution without passing judgment. With a novel that deals with multiple controversial issues, a neutral narrator is necessary to the preservation of the integrity of the story. It is a fine line between patriotism and propaganda, and Flynn remains on the right side of that line by allowing the reader to create his own opinions about the variety of villains, heroes, and antiheroes this novel depicts.

Setting

The majority of the novel is set in the area within and immediately surrounding the White House in Washington, D.C. Inside the White House, Rafique Aziz makes his personal base of operations the White House Situation Room, a secure chamber usually reserved for conferences at times of serious conflict. The hostages are held in the White House Mess, a windowless dining room, with the exception of the President, who is secured inside his bunker in the third basement of the White House. Mitch Rapp, Milt Adams, and Anna Rielly establish their base of operations in the stash room, a secret chamber inside the President's personal closet. Outside the White House, the major players congregate either at the Pentagon or at CIA headquarters in Langley. By setting the novel in a well-known, iconic American building, Flynn develops the severity of the violation and the life-and-death immediacy of the decision-making. If Aziz had siezed the water board building, for example, the stakes would have been far lower.

The novel is set in present-day America. One of Flynn's objectives seems to be legitimizing the possibility of a domestic invasion. Therefore, many of the characters and organizations in the novel also exist in reality. Saddam Hussein funds Rafique Aziz's operation. Aziz himself is a member of Hezbollah. The placing of real-life entities within a fictional narrative lends credibility to the rest of the plot.



Language and Meaning

The tone is straightforward and clipped, which helps Flynn move a complex and multi-layered plot along very quickly. The text is equally balanced between narrative and dialogue, each with its own benefit. Narrative allows Flynn to describe settings, major actions, and inner thoughts of complex characters. Dialogue permits the reader to understand the character's outer actions, opinions, and statements, as well as to further understand the dynamics between the characters. The characters do have distinct voices. For example, Mitch Rapp speaks perfunctorily, saying what he needs to say without giving thought to political correctness or deniability. Sherman Baxter, on the other hand, chooses his words meticulously so he never has to take full responsibility for anything. A third contrast is Rafique Aziz, whose statements are often peppered with religious phrases and idealistic dogma. Although his belief in such ideas is never fully established, his vocal support of jihad illustrates his religious fanaticism.

The vocabulary is not particularly advanced, which eases the rapidity of the storytelling as well. If the story were told in a more elevated way, not only would the novel lose its grittiness, immediacy, and reality, but it would also be a much slower read. As it is, the rapid-fire dialogue and narrative passages allow the reader to follow along at the pace of the action. Flynn also incorporates a variety of vocabulary from military and political spheres, and therefore the language in this book is not only effective in storytelling but also informative.

Structure

The novel is divided into fifty-four chapters, plus a prologue and epilogue. The chapters are short, and within each chapter are between one and seven scene shifts, marked by a clear page break. This device allows multiple facets of the story to develop simultaneously, to show how the various and wide-reaching consequences of a single action can resonate in multiple spheres. Even though many of the chapters contain multiple, simultaneous scenes, the narrative is linear and chronological.

The novel is dominated by one major plot: Rafique Aziz siezes the White House and America must scramble to protect itself from an enemy inside the gates. However, within that one major plot lie multiple threads. First, the inside-man thread, is established when Mitch Rapp goes on a clandestine mission inside the White House to gain information. Secondly, Baxter, King, and the team of advisors make up a political thread in which the objectives of each player are nebulous and inevitably conflicting. Third, inside the bunker Jack Warch and President Hayes experience the countdown thread, in which they wait to the sound of an ever-advancing drill, until they decide to take action. Fourth, Rafique Aziz and the group of terrorists are the catalysts for the main action of the invasion thread, in which they plot to sieze the President and return to the Middle East triumphantly. Finally, the military teams that assemble various plans for the retaking of the White House make up the final plot thread. They must develop each prong of their attack to most efficiently disable the terrorist's plot.

Quotes

"Slowly, Aziz began to regain his composure. He reminded himself of how far he had come, and of how close he was to obtaining everything he had struggled for. He needed the president to come to him. He needed to be patient. Aziz had waited this long; another minute would be nothing. When the president went to shake his hand, it would begin." Chapter 8, p. 84.

"He studied her for a second and then asked, 'Ms. Tutwiler, have you ever been to Beirut?' Rapp waited a moment for her response and then said, 'I didn't think so. Just in case you were wondering, that's where Rafique Aziz is from. How about Iran? Have you ever been there?' Rapp gave her less than a second to answer. 'I didn't think so. I was in Iran last night,' Rapp added casually. 'Actually, I spent most of the last week there. And since we don't have an embassy in Iran, you can probably figure out that I wasn't on official government business. Do you by any chance speak Farsi or any Arabic dialects?' Rapp shook his head, answering the question for her. 'I didn't think so. How about the Muslim faith? The jihad? Are you up to speed on the customs of Rafique Aziz and his people?'

'What's your point, Mr. Kruse?' asked a defiant Tutwiler.

Rapp looked down the table at the smug attorney general and growled in a voice that was barely beneath a shout, 'The point is, Ms. Tutwiler, you don't have the slightest clue who you're dealing with!'"

Chapter 11, pp. 135-6.

"Rielly lay there, her hands covering her face as the tears flowed from her eyes, her back and head screaming in pain. She wasn't crying as much from the pain as from mental anguish. Anna Rielly knew what was going to happen to her, and the vision of what lay ahead only made her cry harder."

Chapter 17, p. 201.

"Flood and Stansfield had come to the conclusion, after the early morning debacle at the White House, that Vice President Baxter did not have the fortitude and vision to lead them through this crisis. Those were Stansfield's words; the general had actually used the words 'nuts' and 'guts.'"

Chapter 18, pp. 202-3.

"'I don't exactly trust Baxter.' Hayes continued, 'He wasn't my first choice... hell, he wasn't even in my top ten. The truth is the party stuck me with him. They said he could deliver California and the big Hollywood money. You need both to win the race, so he was the man. Experience and character were never factored in.' Frowning, Hayes said, 'I knew a week after the convention that he was the wrong man, but by then there was no turning back.'"

Chapter 23, p. 255.

"'I'll tell you what I see. I see a man who is trained to act on his own. A man who is used to spending days if not weeks in the field without the aid or interference of his country.

Mitch Rapp is not a soldier, and he most definitely is not a politician. His ability to know when to take risks, when to push ahead, when to pull back, is uncanny. It's, quite honestly, the best I've ever seen."

Chapter 32, p. 366.

"Vice President Baxter sat behind the desk in his study and stared blankly at the TV.... He was immersed in the thought of becoming president. It was so tantalizing, so tempting, it had drawn him into a fantasy world. Since early childhood he could remember dreaming of being president one day, and now with it so close, he had some reservations. Not reservations about assuming the office, but how it would play if word leaked out that he had been given information that the terrorists were working on getting President Hayes out of the bunker."

Chapter 48, p. 486.

"Standing next to his boss, [King] watched the White House burn on the TV. In the back of his mind, he was chanting, Burn, baby, burn."

Chapter 53, p. 534.

"You need to understand the American mind. Especially the mind of the politician. Being decisive is not in their character. They will put off making a decision until they are forced to do so. Right now they have gained the release of a third of the hostages and they are playing under the assumption that they can continue to negotiate for the release of more.... As long as the politicians think they can free more hostages without firing a shot, they will do so."

Chapter 41, p. 441.

"Rielly stared blankly at the wall opposite her. Her thoughts settles in on the man named Kruse, and on the odds of him appearing exactly when he did and of all the possible outcomes in between. It was staggering. Call it fate, call it a guardian angel, call it what you like, but someone or something had stepped in and put him there at that exact moment in time. A smile fell across Rielly's face, and she looked upward to say a little prayer of thanks."

Chapter 33, p. 371.

"Rielly had surprised Rapp by taking his arms and wrapping them around her as they lay down to go to sleep. As he drifted off, Rielly had kissed Rapp's hand and whispered something he didn't quite catch. He was more than a little surprised by the warm feeling the little kiss had given him."

Chapter 28, p. 324.

"It is my sincere hope that we can resolve this conflict peacefully, and it is you, the peace-loving American people, that I am appealing to. Enough blood has been shed. It is time for us to stop living as enemies.' Pausing for a second, Aziz looked down and then back up. 'But before we can do that, America must come to the Middle East peace table as a truly independent advocate, not the big brother of Israel.... By six o'clock today, the U.S. must convince the United Nations to lift all economic sanctions against Iraq.... My concern is that my Arab brothers and sisters are starving and dying because

of a feud between the leaders of the West and the leaders of Iraq."
Chapter 29, pp. 329-30.

Topics for Discussion

Who is the villain of Transfer of Power? Who is the hero?

Who is a greater threat to the safety of Americans, a foreign terrorist or a corrupt politician?

What are some of the forms of power in this novel? Which are the most effective in attaining goals?

What assets do politicians provide in a time of crisis? How are those assets different from those the military provides in a time of crisis?

What liabilities do politicians possess in a time of crisis? How are those liabilities different from those the military possesses in a time of crisis?

Do you believe that Rafique Aziz's national address, in which he beseeches the mercy of the American people, contains viable points about international politics, or is he simply blaming the United States for the Middle East's problems?

Is Anna Rielly right not to want to sign a confidentiality agreement? Why or why not?