

Where Eagles Dare Study Guide

Where Eagles Dare by Alistair MacLean

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Contents

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Where Eagles Dare Study Guide..... | 1 |
| Contents..... | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Chapters One-Two..... | 5 |
| Chapters Three-Four..... | 9 |
| Chapter Five..... | 13 |
| Chapter Six..... | 15 |
| Chapters Seven-Eight..... | 18 |
| Chapters Nine-Ten..... | 21 |
| Chapters Eleven-Twelve..... | 24 |
| Characters..... | 27 |
| Objects/Places..... | 31 |
| Themes..... | 33 |
| Style..... | 35 |
| Quotes..... | 37 |
| Topics for Discussion..... | 39 |



Plot Summary

Where Eagles Dare is a thriller/action novel by acclaimed British author Alistair MacLean. Published in 1967, the novel is set during the Second World War and the action takes place over a 36 hour period in the early part of 1944. The novel follows Major John Smith and a small team of allied agents who parachute onto a mountain in Germany and attempt what appears to be an impossible rescue mission. The novel was made into a motion picture in 1968 starring Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood.

On a snowy night in early 1944 a hastily assembled team of seven men led by British Major John Smith parachute onto a mountain in Southern Germany. A moment after the last man jumps a young woman named Mary Ellison jumps after them; the only male team member who knows about her presence is Smith. The team had been assembled just a couple of hours before by the director of M.I.6, Vice Admiral Rolland, and his deputy, Colonel Wyatt-Turner. The unlikely team consists of four M.I.6 officers - Carraciola, Thomas, Christiansen, and Torrance-Smythe - an American Lieutenant named Schaffer, and Sergeant Harrod. Wyatt-Turner explains that an American general has been captured by the Germans and is being held at Schloss Adler - "the castle of the eagle" - an impregnable fortress castle in the mountains of Southern Germany. The team's mission is to parachute onto the mountain, get into Schloss Adler, and rescue the general.

When the team reassembles after the jump, they find Sergeant Harrod dead. Smith leads the team several hundred feet down the mountain and has them make camp. He then doubles back after telling the team that he has forgotten to take a code book Harrod was carrying and meets up with Mary. He then examines Harrod's body closely and sees that he has been murdered. Smith returns to his team and several hours later leads them down the mountain into a small village with Mary Ellison secretly following behind. Schloss Adler sits on a peak several hundred feet above the village, and the only way up or down is via a cable car. There is a large military barracks in the village, but Smith and his men are dressed in German Army uniforms and so blend in.

After stashing their equipment at a deserted railway station, Smith leads the team to a pub in the village where he separates from the others and rendezvous with Heidi, a British agent who is working at the pub as a barmaid. He then meets Mary behind the pub where she has been waiting and introduces her to Heidi who has arranged a job for Mary on the serving staff at Schloss Adler. Smith tells Mary that the American who has been captured by the Germans is not a general at all but an American actor named Jones and then says that the mission has been planned for weeks, but will tell her nothing else. On his way back around to the pub entrance Smith finds the dead body of Torrance-Smythe, who has also been murdered. Back in the pub Smith takes Lieutenant Schaffer aside and tells him what he told Mary, but does not tell the rest of the team. A squad of soldiers then enters the pub and arrests the team. They are taken away in two cars; Smith and Schaffer in one car, and the other three in another.



Smith and Schaffer manage to escape while Mary is taken up to Schloss Adler on the cable car by a Gestapo officer so that she can start to work there. Smith and Schaffer get back to the railway station and radio London. Smith tells Rolland and Wyatt-Turner to have transport ready in 90 minutes. Wyatt-Turner tells Rolland that he wants to go on the plane being sent to rescue the team, and Rolland agrees. Smith and Schaffer then secretly ride up to Schloss Adler on the roof of the cable car that is transporting the other three team members and their guards to the castle. Once there, Mary helps them get inside. Smith leads Schaffer to a platform overlooking a huge room where they see the American actor Cartwright Jones along with Colonel Kramer, a German Secret Service officer and Reismarschal Rosemeyer, the German Army Chief of Staff. The three are soon joined by Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen whom Colonel Kramer praises as being the three most effective spies the Germans have in England.

Smith and Schaffer enter the room with their machine guns ready, but Smith quickly hits Schaffer and disarms him. Smith convinces Kramer that Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen are really British double agents and that he is actually a German spy. Smith then tells Kramer to have Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen each write out a list of all the German agents working in England. If their lists match the one that Smith has, then they are German agents; if the lists do not match, they are imposters. After the three traitors finish their lists Smith overpowers the single guard in the room and takes the lists. Schaffer grabs his machine gun, and Mary soon joins them. Smith tells the three traitors that he intends to take them back to England for trial and he, Schaffer, Mary, and the actor Cartwright Jones manage to get their prisoners to the castle's cable car station. In the station the three traitors overpower Schaffer and head down the mountain in a cable car. Smith is able to stop them, although he ends up killing all three, and then gets the others down the mountain safely.

The four surviving team members meet Heidi in the village. After a high speed escape over snow covered roads the five of them make it to a small airfield where they meet the rescue plane with Colonel Wyatt-Turner aboard. As they are flying back to England, Smith shows the Colonel one of the lists he got from the traitors, and Wyatt-Turner then points his machine gun at Smith and tells the pilot to land in Germany. Smith tells Wyatt-Turner that Admiral Rolland had suspected him of being a traitor for months, and that part of the reason for the mission was to prove it. After he finds that the machine gun Admiral Rolland gave him is useless, Wyatt-Turner commits suicide by jumping out of the plane, and the five team members return to England.



Chapters One-Two

Chapters One-Two Summary

Where Eagles Dare is an adventure/thriller novel written by acclaimed British author Alistair MacLean. MacLean also wrote the bestselling novels *The Guns of Navarone* and *Ice Station Zebra* among other thrillers. First published in 1967, *Where Eagles Dare* is set during the Second World War and tells the story of a mission which most of the participants believe is to rescue an Allied general who has been captured by the Germans just a short time before the D-Day invasion, but is actually about something quite different. Alistair MacLean died in 1987 at the age of 64.

Chapter One. On a night in the early months of 1944 a lone British airplane piloted by Wing Commander Cecil Carpenter is flying through a blizzard deep in the heart of enemy German territory. Carpenter is flying the plane mostly on instinct since visibility is almost non-existent. On board is a hastily assembled team of seven men who are dressed in German military uniforms. The team has three military personnel on it: Major John Smith, the mission commander; Lieutenant Morris Schaffer, second in command and the only American on the otherwise all British team; and Sergeant George Harrod, the radioman. The other four men - Edward Carraciola, Olaf Christiansen, Lee Thomas, and Professor Torrance-Smythe - are section heads at M.I.6, the counter-intelligence branch of British Intelligence. Each of these four men has spent most of the war working behind a desk, and none of them has been on a military operation in many years.

Several hours earlier, the seven men had been at a briefing in London where the head of M.I.6, Vice Admiral Rolland, and his deputy, Colonel Wyatt-Turner, briefed them on the operation for which they had been asked to volunteer. Just a few hours before the meeting a plane carrying an American general named Carnaby had been shot down over the Weiss Spitze, a mountain in Southern Germany. Wyatt-Turner tells the team that the general is an important member of General Eisenhower's staff and knows all of the details of Operation Overlord and the upcoming D-Day allied invasion of Europe. General Carnaby has been captured and taken to Schloss Adler - the castle of the eagle - an impregnable fortress high up on the mountain which serves as the headquarters of the German Secret Service and the Gestapo in Southern Germany. The team's mission is to parachute onto the Weiss Spitze, get into Schloss Adler and rescue General Carnaby before he can be tortured into divulging the details of Operation Overlord. Although most of the team has no commando training, all of them have spent time in Germany in the past, and all of them speak fluent German, which is why they have been picked for the mission. Colonel Wyatt-Turner also admits to them that they are the only men available on such short notice.

After several hours in the air the plane finally reaches the Weiss Spitze undetected, due in large part to the blizzard and Wing Commander Carpenter's brilliant flying. The members of the team - each carrying pieces of equipment that will be necessary for the mission - jump out into the blizzard. Sergeant Harrod, who has never made a parachute



jump before, goes first and the other men follow one after another. A moment after the last of the men jumps one of the plane's crew members runs to the rear of the fuselage and pulls a tarpaulin off of a young woman who has been hiding beneath it. The young woman's name is Mary Ellison and a moment later she too jumps out of the plane, carrying her own equipment. The plane then banks sharply and heads back towards England.

Chapter Two. After coming down on the mountain well above Schloss Adler and quickly burying his parachute in the snow, Major Smith uses his flashlight and whistle to signal the other members of his team. Within two minutes all of the men reach him except for Sergeant Harrod, the radioman. The team spreads out to look for Harrod and a few minutes later Edward Carraciola finds him, dead; Major Smith says that it appears Harrod became tangled in his parachute cords, and that his neck was broken. Smith checks the radio to make certain that it survived Harrod's rough landing, and then has the team get the rest of their equipment. When asked if they should bury Harrod, Smith replies that the drifting snow will take care of that for them.

After recovering the equipment the team sets off and almost immediately comes to a precipice with a ledge that sticks out over a smooth, vertical rock wall. In the darkness it is impossible to tell how far down it goes. The four non-military team members want to wait until morning to try and get down it, but Smith decides to do it immediately. After hammering a piton into the rock and passing their nylon rope through it, Smith has the other men lower him down and finds that it is about 200 feet to the bottom. Using a walkie-talkie to communicate, he has the other team members lower the equipment down first, and then themselves. Smith sends the first man down - Christiansen - to scout the area, and shortly after the last man - Schaffer - reaches the bottom, Christiansen returns and reports that there is a line of trees about 200 yards away. Smith decides that they will camp near the trees until dawn, and then remembers that the book containing all the radio frequencies, call signs, and codes needed to communicate with London is still in Sergeant Harrod's coat, and that he will need to go back up the rope to get them. After going with the team to the trees and establishing a campsite, Smith returns to the rope and goes back up the rock wall.

After reaching the top Smith immediately ties a large knot in the rope and then pulls the slack up until the knot catches firmly on the piton. He then starts to whistle and walk back towards where he landed, and a few moments later is joined Mary Ellison, who immediately hugs him. After hugging her back for a moment, they retrieve her gear and take it back to the edge of the precipice. Just before they head off to find Sergeant Harrod's body, Smith sees the rope go taut and the knot he tied straining against the piton; it is obvious that someone is pulling it from the bottom to trap him up there. After a few moments the rope goes slack again, and Smith and Mary walk back to where Harrod is already partially buried in snow. After retrieving the code book Smith examines Harrod closely and finds a red mark and broken skin at the back of his neck, indicating that he had been struck from behind after which his neck was snapped. Finding no stones or anything else near the body, Smith concludes that one of the team killed Harrod.



After lowering himself, Mary, and her equipment down, Smith leads her to a fissure in the rock wall. He tells her to camp there for the few hours until dawn and that he will be back in the morning before he and his team leave. Smith then returns to where his team is camped and finds Torrance-Smythe on watch and the rest of the men in their sleeping bags. He takes the radio a hundred yards or so outside of camp - where he says the reception will be better - and calls London. After a couple of tries he gets through, and gives the operator on the other end a short coded message saying that Harrod is dead, and that he will call back at 08:00. Returning to camp, Smith tells Torrance-Smythe that he could not get through to London because of the storm, and then relieves him on watch. Smith remains awake for the rest of the night.

Chapters One-Two Analysis

These first two chapters serve to outline the seemingly hopeless mission that Major John Smith's team - and Mary Ellison - have been sent on, as well as get these characters deep behind enemy lines. While a large number of characters (over a dozen) are either introduced or at least mentioned in these chapters, the characters themselves are hardly developed at all. The one exception to this is Major Smith who is the central character throughout the novel, although the information provided about him in these first two chapters is also limited.

Smith is the undisputed commander of the mission, and the most highly trained member of the team. Smith asserts his leadership almost immediately after the team lands on the mountain by insisting they get down the rock wall as soon as they encounter it rather than waiting until dawn as the four civilian team members want to do. The only member of the team who does not question this order - and the only member who even approaches Smith's level of training - is the American, Lieutenant Schaffer. Although Schaffer is not prominently featured in these two chapters he will play an important role in much of the rest of novel.

The author spends the lion's share of these pages describing the circumstances in which these characters find themselves, the physical challenges they encounter, and the environment that surrounds them both in the plane and on the mountain. The majority of the prose in these chapters focuses on describing the settings and the action as opposed to developing the characters or the plotline, and this will be the case in much of the rest of the novel.

It is obvious almost from the first that there is more to this mission than has been told to Smith's team, and that Smith himself is the only one who really knows most of the details - although it is also clear that there are some things that even he doesn't understand. The fact that Mary Ellison remains hidden during the flight from London and that only Smith knows of her presence on the mountain, Sergeant Harrod's murder, and the fact that someone attempts to pull the rope down after Smith has gone back up the rock wall to fetch the code book in an attempt to strand him there all point to the fact that something is very strange about this mission, although at this point the reader has no idea what this might be.



Even though it is obvious from the first moment he finds her on the mountain that there is some kind of romantic relationship between Mary and Smith, he won't tell her any more than she needs to know, indicating that he is unwilling to trust even her with all of the details of the mission. The fact that he lies to his own team members about not being able to get through to London on the radio further confirms that there is more to this mission than first meets the eye.



Chapters Three-Four

Chapters Three-Four Summary

Chapter Three. The team is up before dawn. While the others pack the gear Smith tells them that he wants to get a view from higher up to find the best way down the mountain. He goes back up to the fissure where he left Mary. He tells her to follow his team's tracks in the snow, and stay about 200 yards behind them and out of sight. He also tells her to stop at exactly 7:00 AM and wait for him. Smith then returns to the team and they start down the mountain through the trees. Although the deep snow slows them down, the team is still able to make good progress and by 7:00 AM they have gone down over 1,000 feet. Smith says that it is time they get a good look down the mountain, and the team carefully makes their way out of the trees to get a clear view.

When they reach the edge of the tree line, they immediately see Schloss Adler. The castle sits on top of a peak about 200 feet above a small mountain village, and Smith can see that there are only two ways to get to the castle because of the sheer rock walls that it sits on. There is a steep, winding road leading up to the castle from the village which is completely blocked with snow. There is also an aerial cable car system which travels from the village to the castle; one car goes up while the other goes down, and they pass each other in the center of the cable's span. Just beyond the village is a fairly large military barracks. When asked how he plans to have them get into the castle, Smith replies that they will think about that after they get the rest of the way down to the village. He then leads the team back into the cover of the trees, and pretends to try and contact London on the radio, although he makes sure that the "transmit" switch is off. He tells the team to make camp while he goes back to an area where the trees are thinner so that he can get through to London, and then heads back the way they came.

He finds Mary waiting for him 200 yards up the mountain, and then contacts London. He reaches Admiral Rolland and Colonel Wyatt-Turner at headquarters immediately and reports the team's position and that Sergeant Harrod has been murdered, but that the rest of the team is intact. He then signs off and tells Mary that they will be moving out towards the village at exactly 5:00 PM, and that again she should follow their tracks. He tells her that there is a pub in the village called The Wild Deer and behind this pub is a shed which she will find unlocked. He tells her that he will meet her there at exactly 8:00 PM. She asks him how he knows the shed will be unlocked, but he heads back to the team without another word.

As the afternoon passes the weather begins to deteriorate and by the time the team starts heading for the village it is snowing again. When they reach the village, Smith leads them to a small railway depot he had spotted on the way down. After making sure that the depot is empty, Smith moves to the back of the station where he finds a locked baggage room. After making certain the others are not watching him, he pulls a ring of keys from his pocket and has the door open in seconds. He has the team store their gear and the white snow smocks they have been wearing in the room, and then



suggests they head to one of the village's pubs. When they leave the station a few minutes later they are dressed in German Alpine Corps uniforms. The team passes several pubs as they walk down the village's main street; Smith pokes his head in each one and then continues on, saying that they are too crowded with off duty Alpine Corps soldiers. They finally reach The Wild Deer near the end of the street and, although it is just as crowded as the other pubs, Smith leads the team inside.

Chapter Four. The pub is little more than one huge room packed customers, most of whom are members of the Alpine Corps. A beautiful barmaid asks Smith what he will have, and he orders six beers. He tells Schaffer that when the drinks arrive he and the others should circulate and see if they can overhear anything useful. He then moves off and finds a free chair at a crowded table. The barmaid delivers the beers to Schaffer and the others, and then brings Smith's beer over to him. When she reaches him, Smith pulls her onto his knee. Pretending to be drunk, he asks her if she would like to hear him sing and when she says no and tries to pull away, he tells her that he will whistle instead and starts whistling the same tune he whistled on the mountain to call Mary. The barmaid gives him a look of recognition and Smith whispers to her to slap his face hard, and meet him in her room in five minutes. The barmaid, whose name is Heidi, slaps him and storms away. Smith then goes back to Schaffer and tells him that he is going to check another pub and will be back shortly.

Making certain he is not followed Smith goes behind the pub and finds Mary waiting in the shed. They enter the pub through the back door, and go to a small room. Smith immediately locates a battered leather suitcase, and tells Mary to open it and put on the top outfit. As she is dressing, he tells her that for the remainder of the mission her name is Maria Schenk and that she is the cousin of Heidi, the barmaid, who has been able to get her a job as a maid at Schloss Adler. The suitcase contains several changes of clothes and identity papers. When Mary asks him how all of this could have been arranged when the general's plane had only crashed a few hours before, Smith tells her it wasn't General Carnaby on the plane that crashed but rather an American actor named Cartwright Jones. The operation had been planned weeks in advance, but Smith will tell her nothing else about it. A moment later Heidi enters the room and Smith tells Mary that Heidi has been one of M.I.6's top double agents since 1941. Smith then leaves and heads back towards the front entrance to the pub, but almost immediately trips over a body in the snow. He recognizes the dead man as Torrance-Smythe.

Back inside the pub, Smith tells only Schaffer that Torrance-Smythe has been murdered, and then says that it is time Schaffer "knew the score." As the two men talk quietly Mary walks in through the main entrance of the pub and is immediately greeted by Heidi. Heidi then introduces her to Captain von Brauchitsch, a Gestapo officer who works at Schloss Adler, who has been waiting to escort the new employee up to the castle. Meanwhile, after he finishes briefing Schaffer, Smith gathers the other three members of the team together and asks if any of them know where Torrance-Smythe is. A moment later the doors to the pub burst open and an Army colonel named Weissner enters accompanied by a dozen soldiers armed with machine guns. The colonel announces that he is looking for "enemies of the state." Heidi comes over and immediately tells Weissner that Smith and his companions are the men he is looking for.



The team is arrested and taken away in two cars; Christiansen, Thomas, and Carraciola in one, Schaffer and Smith in another.

As they are being taken to the barracks for questioning, Smith and Schaffer are able to disarm their guards and force the driver to pull the car over. They leave Colonel Weissner and two guards by the side of the road and drive past the barracks towards the blocked road leading up to Schloss Adler. After about a mile the road curves sharply to avoid a cliff and after gathering up the weapons they have taken, Schaffer sends the empty car over the side, where it explodes in the ravine below. Colonel Weissner arrives a few moments later and believes that Smith and Schaffer are dead.

Chapters Three-Four Analysis

Throughout Chapter Three and for much of Chapter Four, Smith remains very secretive with the male members of his team as well as with Mary, although it becomes obvious to Mary during their short meeting at 7:00 AM on the mountain that there is a great deal Smith isn't telling her. When Smith finally tells Mary that the mission is not an emergency operation to rescue a general who had been shot down just a few hours before but rather has been planned and set up for several weeks she is shocked, both by what Smith tells her and by the fact that he has lied to her. Mary is very obviously in love with Smith and, although it appears that he has similar feelings for her, he remains all business when they are together and even chastises her for calling him darling.

When Smith and the others are captured in the pub Mary is certain that the mission is over, but Heidi tells her that from what she has heard Major Smith is a very resourceful man and that they need to get on with their part of the mission and trust that Smith will be able to complete his. When Mary asks Heidi why she pointed out Smith and the others to the German colonel Heidi tells her that the men would have been found out in a few minutes anyway, and this way she and Mary would be above suspicion.

These chapters serve to establish and strengthen a relationship of trust between Smith and Lieutenant Schaffer, as well as help to define Schaffer's character. Schaffer is a wise guy with a quick wit and a sarcastic sense of humor; thus far his conversations with Smith are the only humorous parts of the novel. While he does tend to make light of everything, it is obvious that Schaffer is a very capable man and that it is because of this that he was selected for this mission. Interestingly, even though all of the other members of the team are British, it is the American Schaffer who Smith wants to make certain "knows the score" as far as the mission is concerned. Although the author does not reveal exactly what Smith tells Schaffer about the mission in the pub, the reader is left with the idea that it is at least as much as he has told Mary, and possibly even more.

Why Smith chooses not to tell the rest of the team the truth about the mission - or even that Torrance-Smythe has been murdered - is not explained in any detail, although it is obvious that Smith does not trust the other three men and suspects that it is one of them who killed Torrance-Smythe, as well as Sergeant Harrod. It is also interesting to note that after Smith and Schaffer are able to escape from Colonel Weissner there is no

discussion about trying to rescue the other members of the team; it is clear that Smith and Schaffer are now on their own, although what their mission really is remains unexplained.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

Mary and Heidi take the cable car up to Schloss Adler accompanied by Captain von Brauchitsch. Von Brauchitsch leads them to a large room and introduces Mary to Anne-Marie who is in charge of the castle's female staff and personal secretary to Colonel Kramer, head of the German Secret Service in the area. Anne-Marie takes Mary into a room, questions her and strip-searches her, and when they return it is obvious that Mary has been crying. Anne-Marie tells Heidi to take Mary to the room that she uses when she serves at the castle, and as they are leaving Colonel Kramer himself enters the room. Mary hears von Brauchitsch inform Kramer that three of the British spies will be brought to the castle for questioning shortly and that their leader was killed in a car wreck. In her room Mary is distraught because she thinks Smith is dead, but Heidi tells her that she has to have faith that he isn't and continue with the mission. She then gives Mary a small pistol she has smuggled in as well as several other items, and leaves a short time later.

Down in the village, Smith and Schaffer return to the railway station baggage room. Smith goes through the equipment the team had hidden there quickly and stuffs several hand grenades, some plastic explosives, and some rope into his pack. He then goes to the radio and calls London. Both Admiral Rolland and Colonel Wyatt-Turner are in the Operations Room, and Smith reports that Torrance-Smythe has been murdered and that Thomas, Christiansen, and Carraciola have been captured. He then says that he expects to be inside the castle within the hour, and tells them to have "transport" standing by in 90 minutes. Admiral Rolland tells Smith to abort the mission and save himself, but Smith refuses and signs off. In London, Colonel Wyatt-Turner asks permission to go on the plane that Rolland is sending to extract Smith and his team even though he knows that the chances of them reaching the extraction point are very slim, and Rolland agrees to let him. Just before they leave for the airport, Wyatt-Turner takes a "sten" submachine gun from a cupboard in the room, saying that he may encounter enemies.

Smith and Schaffer leave the baggage room and are about to exit the train station when a truck arrives and a number of German soldiers get out. Smith and Schaffer hide in the women's lavatory as the soldiers go directly to the baggage room and find the radio - which is still warm - and the rest of the equipment they left behind. Knowing that they only have a couple of minutes before the soldiers find them, Smith takes a grenade from his pack and opens one of the lavatory windows. The truck that the soldiers came in is parked just a few feet away, and Smith throws the grenade so that it lands under the rear of the truck where the gas tank is located. A few seconds later the grenade and the gas tank both explode, and the truck is engulfed in flames which quickly spread to the railway station itself. In the ensuing confusion Smith and Schaffer escape.



Smith leads Schaffer to a garage where they find a yellow post bus with a snowplow on the front of it and the keys in the ignition. When Schaffer asks if Smith knew about the bus in advance, Smith tells him that of course he did. They leave half of the explosives they brought with them in the back of the bus, and then make their way on foot quickly to the cable car station. They hide behind the station as a cable car comes down from Schloss Adler and a moment later Heidi - the only passenger - gets off. After her initial surprise at seeing them both still alive, she tells Smith that as she was leaving the castle she overheard someone say that the other members of his team would be brought up in just a few minutes for interrogation. She also tells him that Mary thinks he is dead. Smith tells Heidi to meet them at the yellow post bus in the garage in 80 minutes and to make certain she brings a case of empty beer bottles. Though she doesn't understand why, Heidi agrees, wishes them luck, and leaves quickly.

Chapter Five Analysis

While Smith and Schaffer managed to briefly convince the Germans that they had died in the car they sent into the ravine, it quickly becomes obvious (to everyone except for Mary and Heidi) that they are very much alive after they blow up the truck and set fire to the railway station. The fact that German soldiers arrive at the station so quickly after Smith and Schaffer get there and know exactly where to find the radio and the equipment indicates that one of the three captured team members told them where to look and, in all likelihood, has also told them about the rest of the mission - or, at least, what they believe the mission to be. There can now be no doubt that one of the captured team members is a traitor. However, there is still no indication as to which one it might be.

Although it now appears that there is no way they can succeed, neither Smith nor Schaffer even considers obeying Admiral Rolland's order to abort the mission and save themselves. Both men realize that it would only be a matter of time before the Germans discover that Mary is a spy which would then implicate Heidi and eventually lead to both women being executed. It would also only be a matter of time before the American actor playing General Carnaby was found out and executed, along with those captured members of the team who were not traitors. With only 90 minutes to get to the castle, rescue Mary and the others, and get to the extraction point, the mission appears to be all but impossible, but Smith and Schaffer refuse to give up.

The one bit of good news they get comes from Heidi when they meet her at the cable car station; as she came down on the cable car she could see that the fire Smith and Schaffer started has spread, and the entire railway station is engulfed in flame. The fire should occupy the attention of the troops on the ground giving them at least a chance of getting up to the castle, although Smith has still not told Schaffer how they are going to manage to do this.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

Carraciola, Christiansen, and Thomas are brought in handcuffs to the cable car station by eight heavily armed guards. Smith and Schaffer make their way to the roof of the station and lower themselves onto the top of the cable car itself as it starts up the mountain towards the castle, holding onto the suspension bracket to keep from falling off. In Schloss Adler, Mary makes her way to an unoccupied room directly beneath the castle's cable car station. Even though she still believes Smith is dead, she uses a pair of binoculars Heidi gave her to watch the cable car through a window as it comes up the mountain, and can just make out the two men on the top of it. When they reach the castle station the two men jump up onto the ice covered, sloping leading edge of the station roof and jam their knives into the ice to keep from slipping off. Smith's knife holds, but Schaffer's breaks off at the hilt. Smith grabs Schaffer's wrist just before he falls into the valley below and they manage to get onto the flat part of the roof. Fifty feet above them, Mary lowers a string with a rock on the end of it down, and Smith attaches the rope in his pack to it. Mary pulls the rope up and secures it, and Smith and Schaffer climb up and enter the room through the window.

Mary hugs Smith as Schaffer pulls the rope up, and then gives him the blueprints of the castle Heidi had given her. After studying them for a few moments, Smith tells Mary to get back to her room and give them thirty minutes. A moment later, Smith and Schaffer walk out into a huge open courtyard around which the rest of the castle has been built. There is a helicopter in the courtyard being worked on by a mechanic. Smith tells the mechanic that there is a phone call for him and leads him to small room a few yards from the helicopter where Schaffer is waiting. Smith knocks the mechanic out and then strips off his coveralls. As Smith is tying the man up, Schaffer slips into the coveralls, walks quickly over to the helicopter and removes the distributor cap, disabling it so it can't be used to fly any of the prisoners out of the castle. Schaffer returns to the small room, smashes the distributor cap, and then removes the coveralls. Smith uses a skeleton key to lock the door of the small room behind them, and they move on.

A few minutes later, after climbing several sets of steps, Smith and Schaffer come out onto a platform a dozen or so feet above a huge room called the gold drawing room; at one time the platform - called a minstrel's gallery - was used by musicians playing for guests in the huge room below. Below them they can see three men seated around a fire, all of whom Smith recognizes; they are Colonel Kramer, German Army Chief of Staff Reichsmarschal Julius Rosemeyer, and the American actor pretending to be General Carnaby, Cartwright Jones. The three men are being served brandy by Anne-Marie as Rosemeyer tries to convince Jones to tell them what he knows about Operation Overlord. The phone rings and a moment later Colonel Kramer announces that three members of the team sent to rescue General Carnaby will be brought to them in about five minutes, and in the meantime they should all enjoy their brandy, since things will become unpleasant for the general soon enough.



Smith and Schaffer silently leave the minstrel's gallery and head down a set of steps and through a long corridor, finally stopping in front of a door with the words "Telephone Exchange" on it. Putting his ear to the locked door, Smith can hear an operator inside. They go to the next room down the hall and Smith opens the window, looks out, and sees a thick telephone cable running out of the room and down the wall of the castle. Smith takes the rope from his pack, ties it around his waist, and has Schaffer lower him out the window. He goes down ten feet and then swings back and forth until he is finally able to grab the phone cable with one hand. Using his knife, he saws until he has completely cut the cable. He then climbs back up the rope, and in through the window.

As Mary is waiting in her room for 30 minutes to pass there is a knock on her door and a moment later Gestapo Captain von Brauchitsch lets himself in. Though Mary tells the captain that she needs to report for work, von Brauchitsch insists that she join him for a cup of coffee in the castle's dining room. Reluctantly she agrees since refusing might make him suspicious.

Chapter Six Analysis

After their harrowing trip up the mountain on the top of the cable car both Smith and Schaffer are exhausted - especially Smith, since he remained awake and on guard the night before while the team was camped on the side of the mountain - but there is no time for them to rest. The clock is ticking on the mission and if they do not make it to the extraction point on time, they will be stranded behind enemy lines and eventually caught and executed. Although Mary is overjoyed to see that Smith is still alive, she too understands that time is of the essence and has to be satisfied with a quick hug before they get down to work.

Once Smith has located the places they need to get to on the blueprints Mary gives him, he and Schaffer are able to move relatively freely in the public areas of the castle, such as the courtyard and the hallways. There are hundreds of soldiers from the Alpine Corps on duty at the castle and Smith and Schaffer are still dressed in their Alpine Corps uniforms, so they blend right in. Schaffer, although he still has no idea of how Smith plans to rescue the American actor and the other members of the team - let alone get back down the mountain without them all being caught - has come to trust Smith's instincts implicitly and no longer even considers questioning his decisions. Smith's "inside information" and amazing mental and physical abilities have saved Schaffer's life on more than one occasion in just the previous couple of hours, and Schaffer believes that Smith might just have a few more tricks up his sleeve.

Captain von Brauchitsch showing up at Mary's door and insisting that she join him for coffee is the first piece of bad luck to happen since Smith and Schaffer made it into the castle. If it were anyone else, Mary would have stuck with her story about having to start work, but von Brauchitsch is a member of the Gestapo - the most feared and powerful organization in Germany - and refusing his invitation would be sure to make him suspicious. Even though it puts her continued participation in the mission - and her

escape from Germany - in jeopardy, Mary has no alternative but to accept the captain's invitation and hope that she will be able to get away from him in time.



Chapters Seven-Eight

Chapters Seven-Eight Summary

Chapter Seven. Smith and Schaffer return to the minstrel's gallery and see that Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen have joined the others in the gold drawing room. They are no longer handcuffed, and are all holding brandy snifters. Colonel Kramer raises his glass and then toasts the three men, calling them the finest spies in Europe; the actor playing General Carnaby smashes his glass and calls the three men traitors to England. Colonel Kramer nods to Anne-Marie, who leaves through a side door and returns a moment later with a tray holding a hypodermic needle and a vial of truth serum. As she is about to inject the actor, Smith and Schaffer come down into the hall from the minstrel's gallery, their submachine guns cocked and ready. Smith then tells Colonel Kramer that he will get nothing out of his prisoner because he is not General Carnaby but rather an actor hired to play a part. He then turns his machine gun on Schaffer and tells him to drop his weapon. When Schaffer looks at him, confused, Smith drives the butt of his gun into Schaffer's stomach. Schaffer's gun falls to the floor and Smith propels him into an empty chair as Kramer and the others watch in shocked silence. Smith then asks Kramer if he has a completely loyal guard that he can call, "a man who won't talk afterwards."

A moment later they are joined by an armed sergeant named Hartmann. Smith places his machine gun on the floor and tells Colonel Kramer that Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen are English spies. He then says that his name is actually Johann Schmidt and that since the start of the war he has been working as a spy for Germany. When Kramer asks for proof, Smith asks him if he knows the name of the top German spy in England. When Kramer says he does, Smith takes a notebook and pen from his pocket, writes a name, tears the page out and hands it to Kramer who nods, impressed. Smith then tells Kramer to put a radio call through to General Kesselring's headquarters in Northern Italy, and ask to speak to his chief of intelligence, Colonel Wilner. Kramer calls the radio room, and a few moments later is connected with Wilner in Italy, who tells him that Major John Smith is their top double agent in the Mediterranean, and then describes Smith to him. When he ends the radio call, both Kramer and Rosemeyer are convinced that Smith is a genuine German double agent.

Smith then tells Kramer that Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen are actually imposters who have been sent to Germany pretending to be double agents, and that Smith's orders are to stop them. Carraciola says that he now believes that Smith is who he says he is but that some terrible mistake has been made regarding his identity, and Thomas and Christiansen agree. Smith says that there is only one way to find out for certain and tells Kramer that his notebook contains the name of every German agent working in England. If Carraciola and the others are who they say they are, they should each be able to write a list that matches the one in Smith's notebook. If they can't, they are imposters. Kramer has Sergeant Hartmann take the three men over to a table, provides them with pens and small notebooks, and then tells them to write out the lists.



Chapter Eight. After spending almost half an hour with Colonel von Brauchitsch in the castle cafeteria Mary says that she is feeling tired and lightheaded, and that she needs to lie down. Von Brauchitsch says that she does look pale, and escorts her back to her room. On the way they walk through the courtyard, and the captain notices that the helicopter engine cover is open but that no one is working on it - which is against regulations. After dropping Mary off at her room, he hurries back to the helicopter and asks a guard who is patrolling the area when he last saw a mechanic working on it; the guard says that it has been almost 45 minutes. Quickly searching the rooms near the helicopter, he finds the mechanic bound and unconscious where Smith and Schaffer had left him. He walks quickly back to Mary's room and knocks on her door, but there is no answer. Using a skeleton key he lets himself into the room, but finds she is gone.

In the gold drawing room Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen finish their lists. Smith gathers the three notebooks up and hands them to Kramer so that he can compare the lists to the one in Smith's notebook. Kramer opens Smith's notebook first and immediately sees that all the pages are blank. Smith knocks Sergeant Hartmann out with a judo chop on his neck while Schaffer quickly retrieves his machine gun and aims it at Kramer. Smith retrieves his gun, and then takes the three notebooks containing the three double agents' lists and zips them in the inner pocket of his coat. Smith tells Kramer that M.I.6 has been suspicious of Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen for several weeks and has been feeding them false information about Operation Overlord. Smith's real job was to prove who the traitors were and to get them to provide the names of all the German spies working in England. When Kramer asks about the intelligence chief, Colonel Wilner, who verified Smith as being genuine, Smith tells him that he has been feeding Wilner out of date information for almost two years, and that he actually believes Smith is a top German spy.

The door to the gold drawing room opens and Mary walks in quietly, closing the door behind her. Smith says that it is time to leave and tells Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen to stand up; he intends to take them back to England to stand trial. As the three men get to their feet, the door opens again and Captain von Brauchitsch enters with his pistol drawn. Smith raises his gun but von Brauchitsch fires first, hitting Smith in the hand which causes him to drop his weapon. Schaffer drops his gun. Von Brauchitsch tells Mary that he suspected her from the start, which is why he insisted she join him for coffee so he could question her, and then tells Anne-Marie to take her to into another room and search her thoroughly for weapons. Anne-Mary drags Mary into the room where she got the truth serum and hypodermic needle and closes the door. There is an immediate cry of pain, and several loud crashes. A moment later Mary emerges from the room with her small pistol pointed at von Brauchitsch's head.

Schaffer takes von Brauchitsch's gun, and then retrieves his machine gun while Smith and Mary go back into the room Anne-Marie had dragged her into. Mary bandages Smith's hand and the two return to the gold drawing room with a tray holding several hypodermic needles and vials of Nembutal, a fast acting anesthetic. Smith tells Kramer that he is not a murderer, and that the Nembutal will keep him and the others unconscious long enough for Smith, Schaffer, Mary, and Cartwright Jones to get their three prisoners and the notebooks back to England.



Chapters Seven-Eight Analysis

After Smith plays out his charade for Colonel Kramer and Reichsmarschal Rosemeyer and gets the notebooks from the three traitors, the true reason behind the mission is finally revealed. For several months information had been leaked from somewhere inside M.I.6 to German intelligence about sensitive operations. Vice Admiral Rolland had narrowed the possible traitors inside M.I.6 down to four of his section heads - Carraciola, Thomas, Christiansen, and Torrance-Smythe (although Torrance-Smythe is eliminated as a suspect when he is murdered, and is probably killed by one of the others specifically because he wasn't a traitor). While the four men could have been arrested and questioned back in England, there was no way to ensure that they would provide the names of all of the other agents who had infiltrated British intelligence.

As Smith tells Kramer, he and Admiral Rolland cooked up this scheme several weeks earlier because they knew that once the traitors felt they were safe in Germany, getting the information out of them would be far easier - particularly when they understood that the Germans would shoot them immediately if they couldn't provide the names of the other German agents and prove that they were, indeed, German spies.

A small part of Major Smith's history is also finally revealed as he explains things to Kramer. Smith has spent the previous two years establishing his credentials as a German double agent by feeding German intelligence false information, and so was the perfect man to lead the mission. Schaffer, since he is an American and had no previous connection to M.I.6, was the only member of the original team other than Mary whom Smith could trust. If Smith can get the notebooks he now possesses back to Admiral Rolland, he will be able to effectively destroy the German intelligence network in England which, in turn, will help to pave the way for the D-Day Allied invasion of Europe. However, since Smith and Schaffer have been in Schloss Adler the operation has taken slightly longer than expected, and they are running out of time.



Chapters Nine-Ten

Chapters Nine-Ten Summary

Chapter Nine. Smith leads Schaffer, Mary, Jones, and the three traitors to the castle's Radio Room. The radio operator sees them open the door and is able to trigger an alarm before Smith can knock him out. Running to the hall Smith smashes the ringing alarm bell with the butt of his pistol. Smith has Mary and Jones guard the prisoners while Schaffer watches the hallway. He then uses the radio to contact London. He gets through to Admiral Rolland and tells him that he has everything they came for, and then says he needs another hour. Rolland says that he has it, and Smith destroys the radio. German soldiers arrive in the hallway outside and as Schaffer holds them off, Smith has everyone else get into a closet at the rear of the room. He then opens a window, secures one end of his rope to a table leg, and throws the other end out the window. He slams the door and snaps a skeleton key off in the lock, and then he and Schaffer join the others in the closet, their guns against the prisoners' heads. Two minutes later the Germans blow the door open, see the rope, believe Smith and the others have climbed down it, and run out to find a phone to alert the guards below.

Smith has Schaffer plant plastic explosives in five rooms along the corridor while he retrieves the rope and then sets fire to the Records Room a few doors down from the Radio Room. Their diversions set, Smith leads the group down several sets of steps to a room two floors below the room where they entered the castle, 15 feet above the cable car station roof. After securing the rope Schaffer goes down first and Smith follows him. Above them, the plastic explosives Schaffer has planted begin to explode.

They scrape the snow away from the flat part of the roof and find iron bars which protect a skylight. Schaffer eases himself down the rope and over the roof of the cable car station, and then uses the ice-covered cable to make his way onto the roof of the cable car, and then finally into the station itself. He searches the station quickly, finds it empty, and then bolts the door leading to the castle. He hears the sound of smashing glass and sees that Smith has broken the skylight. Smith says that the traitors are on the roof with him and tells Schaffer to start the cable car and ease it out halfway. He will send the traitors down the rope to the top of the cable car. Schaffer can then reverse the car back into the station, haul the traitors in, and then come back out halfway for the rest of them.

Carraciola goes down first, followed by Thomas and then Christiansen. As the cable car reverses back into the station, Mary and Jones join Smith on the roof. As Schaffer is hauling Thomas down into the station, Thomas pretends to collapse and the other two use the opportunity to overpower him. Carraciola gets Schaffer's gun and knocks him out. Realizing that the only people who know that the three of them are not British commandos are drugged unconscious and that they will be shot on sight if they go back into the castle, Carraciola decides they will head back down the mountain. As the cable car starts moving, Smith looks through the broken skylight, sees Schaffer unconscious on the floor of the station, and understands immediately what has happened.



Chapter Ten. With no other options open to him, Smith jumps on the ice covered roof of the cable car and barely avoids sliding off by getting hold of the suspension bracket. He loses his gun in the process, but manages to hang on to his pack. Inside the moving cable car Carraciola realizes what Smith has done and fires through the roof at him, but Smith is not hit. After firing several more times without success, Carraciola cautiously has Thomas and Christiansen boost him up onto the roof of the cable car. Holding on to a hole in the roof made by a previous shot Carraciola fires at Smith but only grazes his shoulder. Smith lays flat on the car roof, keeping the suspension bracket between himself and Carraciola. Carraciola slowly crawls to the suspension bracket, and gets to his feet. He levels the gun directly at Smith's head and is about to pull the trigger when the cable car reaches the first of the huge support pylons rising up out of the valley below. The steel suspension arm holding the cable smashes into Carraciola's back, breaking it and throwing him off the cable car to his death.

Working quickly, Smith takes plastic explosive charges from his pack and sets them next to the suspension bracket connecting the cable car to the cable and then waits as the ascending car approaches the descending car he is on. Holding onto the cable, he jumps onto the ascending car as the two cable cars pass in mid-span. A moment later the charges explode and the car carrying Thomas and Christiansen plummets into the valley, killing them both.

At the castle cable car station Schaffer has regained consciousness, although he is still shaken. After Smith arrives on the ascending car he helps Mary and Cartwright Jones off the roof, and the four of them start back down the mountain in the cable car. As they descend they can see flames shooting from the upper windows of Schloss Adler. The cable car abruptly comes to a halt just a few feet from the bottom station, and Smith knows that the Germans have broken into the castle station and will soon reverse the cable car from the master control panel. Schaffer, who has two good hands, quickly lowers first Mary and then Jones out the back door of the car, and they fall less than three feet into the snow below. Smith quickly jumps after them. Schaffer pauses to arm and then toss a plastic explosive towards the front of the car, and then jumps down next to Smith. The empty cable car starts back up towards the castle and a few moments later bursts into flame as the plastic explosive detonates.

Chapters Nine-Ten Analysis

As the mission enters its final phase, Smith realizes that he is going to need another hour to get to the extraction point and so is forced to run the risk of stopping at the Radio Room in the castle to call London. While the call is successful and he is able to get the hour he needs, the radio operator is unfortunately able to sound the alarm before Smith knocks him out which makes the already seemingly impossible escape even more difficult. Rather than having the element of surprise on their side, the Germans now know exactly where Smith and the others are. It is only Smith's quick thinking (and the German soldiers' excitement at finding the rope Smith hung out the window as a decoy) that allows them to finally get back to the roof of the cable car



station, but he knows that it is only a matter of time before the Germans think to search for them there.

Schaffer insists that because he has two good hands it should be he who goes to the cable car station first, since he will need to make his way there by going hand over hand along the frozen cable for several treacherous feet, and Smith reluctantly agrees. Smith is rapidly reaching the end of his strength from a combination of stress, the lack of sleep, and the loss of blood from his wounded hand. When Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen are able to overpower Schaffer and steal the cable car Smith is forced to act, although even as he is jumping onto the roof of the cable car he has no clear idea of what he is going to do. All he knows is that if he can't keep the three traitors from reaching the bottom and alerting the troops in the village about what is happening, they will never be able to get out of the castle in time.

It is only sheer luck that Carraciola doesn't notice the steel suspension arm on the first pylon and is knocked off the cable car, and Smith realizes that he can't trust to luck when it comes to Thomas and Christiansen. While it had been his intention to take all three traitors back to England alive, he understands that the only way he and the others can escape is if Thomas and Christiansen never reach the lower cable car station. Although he has disabled/knocked out a number of soldiers and destroyed a huge amount of property and machinery, Thomas and Christiansen are the first people Smith has actually killed since the mission began.



Chapters Eleven-Twelve

Chapters Eleven-Twelve Summary

Chapter Eleven. Smith leads the others back to the garage, where they find Heidi waiting for them. The five of them board the yellow post bus with the snowplow on the front where Smith and Schaffer had stored some of their equipment earlier. Smith gets behind the wheel as Schaffer smashes out the front windshield with the butt of his machine gun. He then kneels beside Smith with the gun ready to shoot. Revving the engine, Smith floors it and crashes through the main double doors of the garage, careening out into the crowded main street of the village. Pedestrians - most of whom are looking up at where Schloss Adler is burning - scatter as the post bus picks up speed and then crashes into a military command car, pushing it to the side easily. Smith quickly reaches the end of the village's main street, makes a sharp left, and heads towards the military barracks.

Smith floors the gas pedal and gets the bus up to 90 kilometers an hour as Schaffer stands up and looks through the rear window, where he sees that so far they are not being followed. As they reach the barracks they see a number of soldiers being loaded into trucks on either side of the main gates, but no one fires at them. Smith stops the bus after he is through the gates and screams at the guard to send the barracks doctor to The Wild Deer pub, where Colonel Weissner has been shot. A few yards further up Smith starts to shout the same lie to a group of soldiers when he sees that one of them is a captain who was at the pub when he and the others were arrested earlier. He immediately floors the gas pedal, and a moment later the rear windshield and door of the bus are riddled with bullets. Smith smashes through the gates at the other end of the barracks and continues on the main road, followed by a number of command cars and several trucks filled with soldiers.

Schaffer moves to the rear of the bus where he sees Heidi has loaded six crates filled with empty beer bottles. Schaffer quickly starts emptying the crates out the shattered rear windshield, and they smash on the road behind them. The tires of the two lead command cars blow out, causing the cars to smash into each other, blocking the road. Though it delays the pursuers, Smith knows it will not hold them for long. In another three minutes they come to a very unsteady looking 50 foot long wooden bridge over a small ravine. Smith slows the bus to 40 KPH and drives across the bridge. As soon as they are across Smith stops the bus and Schaffer jumps out the back door. He runs back to the bridge and halfway across it, where he plants plastic explosive charges on the central support trestle. A moment after Schaffer makes it back to the bus the charges explode and the bridge is destroyed.

Ten minutes later the bus arrives at a very small airfield used by Bavarian Mountain Rescue pilots. A few moments after that a small, fast British bomber known as a "Mosquito" flown by Wing Commander Carpenter circles the airfield with Colonel Wyatt-Turner in the co-pilot's seat; Wyatt-Turner is shocked to see a pair of strong headlights



flash on and off signaling the plane, and Carpenter quickly lands on the snow covered runway. After Smith and the others get on the plane Carpenter takes off, first flying towards the blazing Schloss Adler, then banking sharply east.

Chapter Twelve. As the Mosquito heads for England, Smith thanks Wyatt-Turner for coming to get them himself, and Wyatt-Turner tells him that he would have gone mad if he'd stayed in London. The colonel says that if he had known how many lives would be lost he would never have sent them all on the mission, and asks if Smith was able to find out which of the M.I.6 section heads was the traitor. Smith tells him that Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen had all been feeding information to the Germans for years. Smith then hands him one of the three notebooks he'd gotten from the traitors. After looking at the names in the book Wyatt-Turner nods, and points the "sten" submachine gun he'd taken from the cupboard in M.I.6 headquarters at Smith.

As the others look on in shocked silence, Smith tells Wyatt-Turner that Admiral Rolland had suspected him and the section heads of being double agents for months. When Rolland had put Wyatt-Turner in charge of this mission, he'd known that the colonel would immediately agree with Rolland's suggestion that Smith lead it since Wyatt-Turner - like the officer in German intelligence who told Colonel Kramer over the radio that Smith had been feeding him secret information for two years - believed that Smith was a German double agent. Although Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen could no longer identify Wyatt-Turner as a traitor, many of the spies whose names were in the notebooks would be willing to do so in return for their lives.

Wyatt-Turner tells Wing Commander Carpenter to change course back to Germany, but Smith tells him not to bother. Wyatt-Turner threatens to shoot Smith if the pilot doesn't comply, and Smith tells him that he personally filed the firing pin on that "sten" gun down and placed it in the cupboard Wyatt-Turner had gotten it from just 36 hours before. Wyatt-Turner pulls the trigger, but the gun clicks harmlessly. Smith pulls a gun from his coat and, when Wyatt-Turner asks if Smith is going to shoot him, Smith tells him he would rather see him hang for treason. Wyatt-Turner quickly opens the side door of the plane and jumps out; neither Smith nor Schaffer make any move to stop him.

Smith then uses the radio to call Admiral Rolland. He reports that Wyatt-Turner has killed himself, and that he has notebooks containing the names of all of the German agents working in England. Rolland tells him that they will start making arrests as soon as they get the books. Smith then asks Rolland to make arrangements for him and Mary Ellison to be married later that morning as soon as the plane lands.

Chapters Eleven-Twelve Analysis

The reason for Colonel Wyatt-Turner's odd request to accompany Wing Commander Carpenter on the flight to rescue Smith and the others finally becomes clear. Although the colonel believed that Smith was a German double agent when he picked him to lead the mission to Schloss Adler, he has started to have his doubts - particularly after Smith makes the radio call requesting "transport in 90 minutes." If Smith was actually a



German double agent, Wyatt-Turner would have expected him to simply stay in Germany where he would be safe. Wyatt-Turner came on the flight to ensure that if he was wrong about Smith being a double agent he would still be able to survive by having the plane land in Germany, where he would be welcomed as a hero.

He is surprised to see Heidi and Mary Ellison - neither of whom he knew about - board the plane with Smith, Schaffer, and Jones and when Smith shows him one of the three notebooks he managed to get from the traitors, Wyatt-Turner realizes that his doubts about Smith were well founded. Wyatt-Turner had never been given all of the details about Smith's mission even though he believed that he was in charge of it because, from the first, Wyatt-Turner himself had been one of the main targets of the mission. When he learns that Smith had anticipated that he would request to come on the flight to rescue the team so that he could escape to Germany and disabled the only gun to be found in the command center of M.I.6, Wyatt-Turner chooses to kill himself by jumping out of the plane rather than face disgrace and execution back in England.

As Smith tells Mary after Wyatt-Turner jumps out of the plane, their part in the war is now over. Both Smith and Mary had been pretending to be double agents in Italy for two years, but they will no longer be able to do this. Smith will not even be allowed to fight as a soldier, because if he was ever captured he would immediately be shot as a spy. He tells her that, finally, it is time for them to think of themselves and for the first time is able to return the affection that she has been showing him throughout the novel. He asks Admiral Rolland to make arrangements for him and Mary to be married as soon after the plane lands as possible because he wants to start his new life with her as soon as he can, and leave the madness of the war behind forever.



Characters

Major John Smith

Major John Smith is a top agent for M.I.6 - the counter-intelligence branch of the British Secret Service - and is the main character in the novel. Smith is in command of the team that parachutes into Germany supposedly to rescue an American general who is being held by the Germans in Schloss Adler - the castle of the eagle. For much of the novel Smith is the only member of the team who knows the real reason for the mission; he eventually shares this information with the only American member of the team, Lieutenant Schaffer, whom he comes to trust and rely upon.

Smith has spent the two years prior to the opening of the story in Italy pretending to be a German double agent and feeding German intelligence false information. It is this well established cover that makes him the perfect man to lead this mission, and allows him to dupe the head of the German Secret Service at Schloss Adler - Colonel Kramer - into forcing the three traitors to provide Smith with the information he needs to successfully complete the mission.

Smith is a very intelligent, resourceful, and talented man and seems to have a "sixth sense" when it comes to survival. Throughout the novel Smith pushes himself beyond what most human beings are capable of and manages to find a way to keep himself - and a few other members of his team - alive even when the odds are stacked hopelessly against him. Smith is a truly heroic character who only kills when it is absolutely necessary and who remains completely committed to the mission even when there appears to be no hope for success. Throughout the novel it is obvious that there is a romantic relationship between Smith and Mary Ellison - with whom he has worked for the last two years in Italy - but it is not until the very end of the novel that he actually allows himself to show his love for her by asking Admiral Rolland to arrange for them to be married as soon as they return to England.

Lieutenant Morris Schaffer

Lieutenant Schaffer is an American military officer attached to the O.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services) in London, and is picked to be Major Smith's second in command on the mission to Schloss Adler. He is specifically picked for the mission because he has had some previous commando experience and because he is not a member of M.I.6, and so is not part of the spy ring Smith is trying to expose and destroy. During the course of the mission Smith comes to trust Schaffer completely, and respect and rely on the American's abilities. Almost from the first Schaffer is impressed with Smith's ability to deal with almost any situation, and quickly learns to trust Smith's instincts and obey his orders without question.



Schaffer is funny and quick witted, with a sarcastic streak and a sharp, biting sense of humor - although he is all business when he needs to be. During the course of the story a mutual respect grows between Smith and Schaffer, and by the end of the novel they have become close friends. Schaffer is responsible for a number of key events in the novel, including getting back in to the cable car station when Smith is unable to do so because of his injured hand, and blowing up the bridge between the village and the airport from which the team escapes.

Mary Ellison

Mary Ellison is the only female member of the team sent on the mission to Schloss Adler. She parachutes onto the mountain just after the seven male members of Smith's team do, although Smith is the only member of the team who is aware of her presence there. Mary gets into Schloss Adler by posing as the cousin of Heidi - an M.I.6 agent working as a barmaid in the village just below the castle - who has gotten her a job on the staff. Mary is responsible for getting Smith and Schaffer into the castle by securing a rope so they can climb up the castle wall, and also provides Smith with blueprints of the castle after he is inside.

Mary is sensitive and a bit emotional, but is also a committed and capable intelligence professional. Even though at one point she is certain that Smith has been killed she continues with her part of the mission, and is partially responsible for the mission's success. Mary had worked with Smith as a double agent for two years prior to the start of the Schloss Adler mission, and is deeply in love with him. Although Smith also loves Mary he needs to remain focused on the mission and so does not show her how much he cares for her until the mission is over.

Heidi

Heidi is a beautiful young woman who has been one of M.I.6's most important and successful intelligence agents in Southern Germany since 1941. Heidi has been working as a barmaid at The Wild Deer pub in the village below Schloss Adler for several months prior to the start of the story, and has also been a server at a number of functions that have been held at the castle. It is Heidi who arranges for Mary, who poses as her cousin, to get into Schloss Adler by getting her a job there and also provides her with a pistol, the blueprints to the castle, and several other items that help Mary get Smith and Schaffer inside. Heidi leaves with the surviving members of the team on the plane back to England.

Colonel Wyatt-Turner

Colonel Wyatt-Turner is the deputy director of M.I.6 in London. Wyatt-Turner believes that he is the one who has designed the mission to Schloss Adler. It is later revealed that the mission was actually designed by Smith and Vice Admiral Rolland - the head of M.I.6 - to catch Wyatt-Turner and several of M.I.6's section heads, all of whom Rolland



suspects of being traitors and spying for the Germans. Wyatt-Turner travels on the plane that is sent to bring Smith and the surviving members of the team back to England. After Smith tells him the truth about the mission, Wyatt-Turner tries to force the plane to land in Germany, but ends up killing himself by jumping out of the plane rather than face execution in England.

Vice Admiral Rolland

Vice Admiral Rolland is the head of M.I.6 - the counter intelligence branch of the British Secret Service - and is the only person other than John Smith who knows the real reason for the Schloss Adler mission. For several months prior to the start of the novel Rolland had suspected his deputy, Colonel Wyatt-Turner, and four of his section heads of being at the top of an extensive network of traitors spying for the Germans. It is Rolland who hand picks Smith to command the Schloss Adler mission, and who allows Wyatt-Turner to travel to Germany on the rescue plane.

Edward Carraciola/Lee Thomas/Olaf Christiansen

Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen are section heads at M.I.6 whom Vice Admiral Rolland has suspected of being traitors for several months before the start of the story. During the course of the Schloss Adler mission Smith is able to prove that the three are traitors and get each of them to make a list of the other German spies working in Germany. Although Smith intends to take the three back to England to stand trial, Carraciola dies while trying to kill Smith after the three escape from Schaffer, and Smith is forced to kill Thomas and Christiansen by blowing up the support bracket on the cable car they are riding in and sending it crashing into the valley below Schloss Adler. The traitors are the only people Smith kills in the course of the novel.

Colonel Kramer

Colonel Kramer is the Deputy Chief of the German Secret Service in Southern Germany, and in command of Schloss Adler. Kramer is convinced by Smith that the three traitors who were part of Smith's team (Carraciola, Thomas, and Christiansen) are imposters and are in reality British double agents sent to infiltrate German intelligence. Kramer forces the three traitors to write lists of all the German agents working in England to prove their identities, after which Smith informs the Colonel that he has been duped, takes the lists, and knocks him out with drugs.

Cartwright Jones

Cartwright Jones is an American actor who is hired to play American General Carnaby. M.I.6 arranges for Jones to be captured by the Germans and taken to Schloss Adler just before the novel starts, and at first every member of the team except for Smith believes that their mission is to rescue the general. Jones is indeed rescued by Smith and



Schaffer and accompanies them, as well as Mary and Heidi, back to England on the rescue plane.

Captain von Brauchitsch

Captain von Brauchitsch is a Gestapo officer at Schloss Adler. After accompanying Heidi and Mary up to the castle when Mary reports for work, von Brauchitsch takes an interest in Mary and politely demands that she have coffee with him. Von Brauchitsch becomes suspicious of Mary and almost foils the team's escape from the castle, but eventually fails.

Reichsmarschal Julius Rosemeyer

Reichsmarschal Rosemeyer is the German Army Chief of Staff and comes to Schloss Adler because he believes that General Carnaby (who is really Cartwright Jones) has information about the allied invasion of Europe. He, along with Colonel Kramer, is completely duped by Smith, and is also knocked out with drugs.

Wing Commander Cecil Carpenter

Only seen briefly in the first and last chapters, Carpenter is an exceptional pilot who knows the mountains in Germany well. He flies the team to the exact location they need to be to parachute onto the mountain where Schloss Adler is located, and then flies the "Mosquito" Vice Admiral Rolland sends to pick up the surviving members of the team.

Torrance-Smythe

Torrance-Smythe is a fourth M.I.6 section head whom Admiral Rolland suspects of being a traitor, but it turns out that he is the only one that Rolland is wrong about. Torrance Smythe is murdered by one of the three traitors behind The Wild Deer Pub.

Sergeant George Harrod

Sergeant Harrod is one of the original team members on the Schloss Adler mission. Responsible for the radio, Harrod is murdered immediately after the team parachutes onto the mountain by one of the three traitors.



Objects/Places

Radio

Smith uses a small, portable radio several times to communicate with London; later, he uses the powerful radio in the castle.

Guns

Smith and Schaffer use a variety of captured enemy guns both in the village and while they are in the castle.

Cable Car

The only way up to or down from Schloss Adler is by cable car. Smith and Schaffer get to the castle by riding on the top of an ascending cable car.

Knife

Smith uses his knife in a number of ways throughout the novel. At one point he uses it to keep himself and Schaffer from sliding off the cable car station roof, and later he uses it to cut the telephone lines going out of the castle.

Nylon Rope

Nylon rope is used throughout the novel for climbing up and down rock walls on the mountain, as well as the walls of the castle.

Plastic Explosives

Smith and Schaffer use plastic explosives to blow up a number of things, including one of the cable cars and a bridge.

Blueprints

Smith uses blueprints Heidi smuggles in to Mary to find his way around the castle.



Hypodermic Needles

Smith, Mary, and Schaffer use hypodermic needles to inject Colonel Kramer and several others with a sedative so they can escape the castle.

Parachutes

Smith, his team, and Mary Ellison use parachutes to enter Germany.

Airplanes

Airplanes flown by Wing Commander Carpenter bring Smith and his team to the mountain at the start of the mission, and then pick up those who are left when the mission is completed.

Post Bus

Smith and the others escape to the small airfield outside the village in a post bus.

Weissspitze

The Weissspitze is a mountain in Southern Germany near Switzerland onto which Smith and his team parachute.

The Wild Deer

The Wild Deer is the name of the pub where Smith rendezvous with Heidi, and where his team is arrested.

Schloss Adler

"The castle of the eagle," Schloss Adler is an impregnable mountain fortress that Smith and his team must get into to complete their mission.



Themes

Courage

Courage is a quality that is shared by several of the most important characters in the novel. It is Smith and Schaffer's courage that allows them to face and overcome the incredible impediments and challenges that confront them at almost every turn, and which allow them to successfully complete the mission. While both characters are larger than life in many ways, the author does a very effective job of presenting them as men who - far from having no fear - are instead able to overcome the fear that they do have. Smith does this by remaining completely focused on the mission at all times, and pushing himself to the point where he is too exhausted to be afraid. Schaffer, on the other hand, deals with his fear by making a joke of everything.

Mary encounters a number of very dangerous and frightening things during the course of the novel and yet somehow manages to find enough reserves of courage inside herself to deal with them. The long hours she is forced to spend alone on the mountain in a blizzard, and the time she spends in Schloss Adler believing that Smith is dead, stretch her courage almost to the breaking point but she, like her male counterparts, is able to overcome her fears and stay focused on the mission. Heidi and the American actor Cartwright Jones each display their own unique forms of courage, and this courage plays a vital part in the success of the mission. It is not a coincidence that these five most courageous characters are the ones who, at the end of the novel, end up returning safely to England.

Espionage and Treason

The difference between espionage and treason - and the morality associated with each - is a theme that is touched upon over and over again in the story, and is at the heart of the novel's plot. Smith, Mary, and Heidi have all been spies for years, either gathering intelligence about enemy activities or feeding the Germans false and misleading information. All three of them are loyal British citizens and have spent years putting themselves in constant danger of detection and execution in the service of their country. On the other end of the spectrum, even though they are also engaged in espionage activities Wyatt-Turner, Carraciola, Thomas, and Christianson are British citizens who have sold out their country and are presented as cowardly, despicable characters for whom the reader has no sympathy whatsoever.

The difference between a spy and a traitor is shown most clearly by the behaviors of the various characters. While Smith does what he can to avoid killing "innocent" German soldiers during the course of their mission because he understands that they are just doing their duty, Carraciola and the others think nothing of murdering Torrance-Smythe and Sergeant Harrod in cold blood. Smith is shown as an honorable man serving his country while the traitors are presented as greedy, evil cowards who will do anything to



save themselves. The reader understands that along with selling out their country for money, the traitors have also sold their souls. All of the traitors die before the novel concludes while the Allied spies escape, showing that in the end no one can avoid the consequences of their actions.

Trust and Loyalty

In the beginning of the novel, Smith is uncertain about whom he can trust and whom he can't, and so keeps the details of what the Schloss Adler mission is really all about to himself. Over the course of the novel he provides details to both Mary and Schaffer, because he realizes that they are really the only two members of the team he can trust. As the mission progresses and they face challenge after challenge together, Smith comes to trust Schaffer completely, and Schaffer lives up to that trust consistently, helping Smith with the details of the mission and providing him with a much needed lighter perspective on their seemingly hopeless situation. Once trust has been established between the two men, friendship follows quickly and this helps them to work together as an almost perfect team.

An attribute that Smith and Schaffer share which helps turn their relationship from one of simple trust to one of friendship in a matter of just a few hours is loyalty. When Vice Admiral Rolland tells them over the radio to abort the mission and save themselves neither man even considers it; Mary is already in Schloss Adler, and to abort the mission would mean that she and Heidi - along with Cartwright Jones - would surely be captured and executed. The two men don't even need to discuss the issue; each knows what the other's answer will be, and they get on with the job of completing the mission.

For Mary, trust and loyalty - along with love - is pretty much all she has throughout the story. Mary believes that Smith is dead for a large part of the novel, but continues to carry out her part of the mission because she trusts that regardless of the odds, he has found a way to keep alive. It is this loyalty that allows Smith and Schaffer to get into Schloss Adler and make the mission a success.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person and, with only a few exceptions, is written from John Smith's point of view; Smith is the central character in almost every scene in the novel. In those few scenes where Smith is not present, the point of view is that of the character around whom the action is centered. The author often presents Smith's unspoken thoughts and feelings (and occasionally those of other characters) outside of normal description or conversation; this helps to keep the reader situated at all times, and provides a perspective on the action and events that would have been impossible to achieve otherwise.

The narrative is very heavily weighted towards descriptive prose, with the author spending a large amount of time ensuring that the reader sees and feels what Smith and the other major characters do. There is also a considerable amount of dialogue in the novel and this is mostly used to move the plot along, explain the reasons behind various events or actions, or provide character development and back-story. The combination of a large amount of descriptive prose with some dialogue thrown in for clarification works well and helps keep the action moving at a breakneck pace throughout the course of the story. This is particularly effective in the second half of the novel, which takes place in the space of just over two hours.

Setting

The novel is set behind enemy lines in Nazi Germany during the Second World War in the early (winter) months of 1944. The vast majority of the action occurs at several locations on the Weiss Spitze, a mountain in Southern Germany near the Swiss border. There is a blizzard raging throughout most of the time Smith and the other main characters are on the mountain, and this is crucial to the novel's plot. The blinding snow, driving wind, and extreme cold on the mountain serve to make it a bleak and dangerous place, and impacts the main characters' actions throughout the novel as they are forced to survive both the Germans and the harsh elements.

Just under half of the novel is set in Schloss Adler - the castle of the eagle - which is an impregnable castle fortress built on a peak of the mountain several hundred feet above a small village. Because the blizzard has blocked the one road leading up to the castle, the only way in or out of Schloss Adler is via a cable car which runs from the village to the castle. The remote and seemingly unreachable location of Schloss Adler and its huge size are crucial to the plot as the mission revolves around getting in and out of this massive and impossibly situated structure in a very short period of time.



Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is slightly more formal than what readers today may be used to, although it is not difficult to follow the action and understand what is going on. The novel was written in 1967 - a little over two decades after the end of the Second World War. Modern readers may not be as familiar with a number of the real characters and events that are mentioned during the course of the story (Operation Overlord, D-Day, Heinrich Himmler, General Eisenhower, etc) as the readers at the time the novel was published would have been, but most of these are referenced in passing and do not impact the story in a significant way.

The novel was first published in Great Britain and the author is British, so American readers will encounter a number of words that are spelled differently from what they are used to (programme/program, tyre/tire) but this should not interfere with the reader's understanding or enjoyment of the story. The novel does contain a large number of violent scenes, but these are necessary to the plot and are not graphically presented. There are no sexually explicit scenes in the novel, and no offensive language or profanity is used.

Structure

The novel is divided into twelve chapters and is 312 pages long. The last chapter is the shortest at just 11 pages long; all of the other chapters are between 22 and 33 pages in length. Each chapter is divided into several shorter sub-chapters, and contains a number of different scenes. The majority of the action in the novel takes place over the course of slightly less than 24 hours; the action in the last six chapters takes place in just two hours and 15 minutes. All chapters contain both descriptive narrative and dialogue.

There is one main plot and several subplots in the novel. The main plot follows Smith and Schaffer as they overcome impossible odds and complete the real mission that the team was sent into Germany to accomplish, which is to obtain the names of all of the German double agents working in England. One sub-plot follows Mary - who is in love with Smith - as she deals with her fears and completes her part of the mission, much of the time not knowing whether Smith is dead or alive. Another sub-plot revolves around the top secret final purpose of the mission and how it affects M.I.6's second-in-command, Colonel Wyatt-Turner.



Quotes

"Smith glanced down below him and his lips tightened. Just dimly visible in the greyness beneath, Harrod, a very erratic human pendulum, was swinging wildly across the sky."

Chapter One, p. 34

"His neck is broken. I want to find out just how it was broken.' He glanced up at the girl.

'You don't have to look.' 'Don't worry.' She turned away. I'm not going to.'" Chapter Two, p. 51

"Handbook for spies, golden rule number one.' She drew away from him and stared down at the snow-covered ground, her voice low and bitter. 'Never ever ever tell anyone anything unless you have to.'" Chapter Three, p. 72

"You'd risk an innocent' 'He's getting plenty,' Smith interrupted. 'Twenty-five thousand dollars for a one-night stand. The peak of his professional career.'" Chapter Four, p. 96

"Well, well, well,' Smith said thoughtfully. 'I wonder what little bird has been whispering in Kramer's shell-like ear. One with a very long-range voice, methinks.'" Chapter Five, p. 141

"The man to watch, Smith knew, the man to fear. It was said of Kramer that he never made the same mistake twice - and that no one could remember when he'd last made a mistake for the first time." Chapter Six, p. 167

"Coffee to match the surroundings, Mary thought, would have tasted of hemlock. She said: 'What did those men want? They seemed to be looking for someone.'" Chapter Seven, p. 185

"It's every parent's duty,' said Schaffer pontifically, 'to encourage his daughter to take up judo.'" Chapter Eight, p. 215

"You'll die in a screaming agony, Mr. Jones, an agony beyond your wildest nightmares. And you'll take a long time dying. Hours. Maybe days. And screaming. Screaming all the time.'" Chapter Nine, p. 245

"He lifted a hand in greeting but they gave no sign in return. Ghosts returning from the dead, Smith thought wryly, weren't usually greeted by a wave of the hand." Chapter Ten, p. 270

"In the far distance the silhouette of the Weissspitze was but dimly seen, but there was no mistaking the intensity of the great fire blazing halfway up the mountainside."

Chapter Eleven, p. 297

"This is the most important document in Europe, the most important document I have ever seen.' Wyatt-Turner sighed. 'The nation is deeply in your debt, Major Smith.'"
Chapter Twelve, p. 303



Topics for Discussion

Who is John Smith and why is he chosen to lead the mission to Schloss Adler? Why does Smith keep the true purpose of the mission secret from most of his team? How does Smith know about his contact being at The Wild Deer? How long has Smith really been working on the Schloss Adler mission?

Discuss the relationship between Smith and Lieutenant Schaffer. Why is Schaffer the only member of the team to whom Smith tells the real reason for the mission? Why does he wait so long to tell him? Does Smith completely trust Schaffer? Does Schaffer trust Smith?

Discuss the relationship between Smith and Mary Ellison. Why does Smith treat Mary so coldly and callously throughout much of the story? Does Smith really love Mary? Does he trust her? Does she love and trust him? Could the mission have succeeded without her?

Why does Smith avoid killing whenever possible? How does his not killing any German soldiers benefit him when he meets Colonel Kramer? Why does Kramer believe that Smith is a German double agent? What sort of proof does Smith offer?

Who is Heidi? Who is Cartwright Jones? What parts did they play in the mission? Did either or both of them contribute to the success of the mission and, if so, in what way? Could the mission have succeeded without either of them?

Discuss the difference between a spy and a traitor. Why is what Smith and Mary have been doing in the Mediterranean region for the previous two years considered honorable? Why are Carraciola, Thomas, Christiansen and finally Wyatt-Turner presented as despicable characters?

Do the traitors deserve to die? Why does Smith choose to kill Thomas and Christiansen after Carraciola falls off the roof of the cable car? Could Smith have found another alternative? Should he have tried?

Is the mission a success? Is Vice Admiral Rolland satisfied with the outcome? Is Smith? Was the mission worth the cost? Why does Colonel Wyatt-Turner commit suicide at the end of the novel? Could Smith have stopped him from killing himself? If so, should he have?