

A Tangled Web

Alan Maley

Before reading

1. Look at the front cover. What is the photograph of?
2. The title comes from the quotation on page 4. What do you understand about the story from the quotation?
3. Read the blurb on the back cover. What kind of story do you expect?
4. Look at the list of characters on page 4. What organisation do most of them work for? What kind of organisation is it?
5. Look at the maps on page 5. Where is the action going to take place?
6. If you have the recording, listen to *The Valley*.

Check your reading

The Valley

1. Put the events in the correct order. The man ...

- a bends forward to look at something
- b falls into the river
- c is sitting by the river
- d touches his ear

CHAPTER 1

1. True or false?
 - a Someone had shot at the man.
 - b The man swam underwater to be safe.
 - c He got out of the river and walked along the bank.
 - d The man had been a spy in the past.
 - e The man didn't know the person who had shot at him.

CHAPTER 2

1. Finish the sentences
 - a The man with the rifle isn't sure ...
 - b The woman is feeling ...
 - c They decide to ...
 - d The man gives the woman ...
 - e They arrange to meet ...

CHAPTER 3

1. Answer these questions.
 - a Who was Jurgen Heid?
 - b Who were Nina and Cas?
 - c Who looked through binoculars?
 - d Who hit who on the head?
 - e Who tried to strangle who?
 - f Who was killed?
 - g Who took the rifle and the car keys?
2. Why is Dan Combes surprised that Jurgen Heid came to kill him?

CHAPTER 4

1. Answer these questions.
 - a What was perfect about Dan's house?
 - b What did only Dan know?
 - c What did Dan always leave in the cellar?
 - d What did Dan leave in the cellar now?

- e What did he take from the safe?
 - f What surprised him in the café?
 - g What did Dan take from the car park?
2. Why do you think Dan took the CDs?

CHAPTER 5

1. Look at the words in italics. Who are *I*, *they*, *we*, *you*?
 - a *I* drove towards Toulouse.
 - b And how had *they* found me?
 - c The only person who knew where *we* all were was Sir George.
 - d Luckily *they* had a room free.
 - e I'll explain when I see *you*.
 - f ... don't tell anyone *we've* spoken ...

CHAPTER 6

1. True or false?
 - a Dan finds Heid's suitcase in the boot of the car.
 - b He throws the car keys away.
 - c He has good coffee in a nice bar.
 - d Annie has a nice new car.
 - e Annie's boyfriend is called Lucien.
 - f Dan asks Annie to drive to Barcelona.
 - g Dan doesn't tell Annie everything because it's dangerous.
 - h Annie doesn't like Dan smoking in the car.

CHAPTER 7

1. Which of these things do Dan and Annie talk about on the journey?
 - a operation San Cristobal
 - b the latest world news
 - c Annie's boyfriend
 - d Dan's relationship with his wife, Annie's mother
 - e motorways, roads and the countryside
 - f their sporting interests
 - g Annie's childhood
2. Why is the journey and the evening in Barcelona important for Dan and Annie?

CHAPTER 8

1. Match the beginnings and endings.
 - 1 Bert Perkins did exactly the same thing ...
 - 2 At 19, Bert Perkins didn't want ...
 - 3 In the Army he went into ...
 - 4 He was very good at ...
 - 5 At 25, Bert started working ...
 - 6 Bert knew lots of things ...
 - a to join the army.
 - b breaking codes.
 - c every weekday morning.
 - d about MI6's operations.
 - e the Signals Regiment.
 - f for MI6.

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CHAPTER 9

- Put the events in the correct order. Nina ...
 - took a taxi to a hotel in Latouyrie.
 - had a bad night of dreams and memories of the past.
 - went to a 'safe' house in Wimbledon.
 - waited in the café for Heid.
 - went to London via Toulouse and Paris by train.
 - telephoned the emergency number from a public phone box.

CHAPTER 10

- True or false? Hugo Strang is ...
 - elegant, **b** charming, **c** intelligent, **d** kind, **e** ambitious, **f** funny, **g** proud, **h** helpful, **i** rich, **j** trustworthy
- Who is angry, and why?

CHAPTER 11

- Who are these people?
 - Peter Perkins, **b** Gunther Holzmann, **c** Kurt Klassens
- Who said what?
 - 'I'm sorry, Dan, but the boy is dead.'
 - 'What's Holzmann like?'
 - 'How can you possibly think that anyone here would even dream of doing such a disgusting thing?'
 - 'I'll find out who it is, even if it takes me years.'

CHAPTER 12

- Describe the other three agents. What are they like; what are they good at?
 - Nina Rowlandson, **b** Jurgen Heid, **c** Cas Cousins
- Who are these people?
 - Julio Ramon Menendez-Arroyo de Ybarra y Figueras,
 - Raoul Guayateca

CHAPTER 13

- Answer these questions.
 - Why does Dan like motels?
 - Why does Dan suddenly feel afraid?
 - Why does he go for a walk in the forest?
 - Why does Bert think Dan had better not go home with him?
 - Why does Dan write an email to Annie?

CHAPTER 14

- What happens at these times?
 - two o'clock in the afternoon
 - four o'clock in the afternoon
 - midnight
 - three o'clock in the morning
 - half past four in the morning
- Why is Nina so surprised to see Cas?
- Why is Cas angry with Nina?

CHAPTER 15

- Match the beginnings and endings.
 - Bert thinks that they want to kill Dan because he knows something ...
 - Bert helps Dan because he wants ...
 - Dan is very surprised to hear ...
 - Bert thinks that someone higher up in MI6 ...

- Bert tells Dan that there will be ...
- Bert thinks Dan should go to Wimbledon ...

- that Cas is still alive.
- before Cas gets to Nina.
- an important meeting in Oxfordshire next weekend.
- he doesn't know he knows.
- is involved in this as well as Strang.
- to get even with Strang for his son's death.

- What do we know is in the briefcase Bert leaves for Dan? What else do you think might be in it?

CHAPTER 16

- Put these events in the correct order.
 - He tries the doorbell but gets no answer.
 - He finds Nina's dead body in the bedroom.
 - Two men come to take away Nina's body.
 - He lets himself in by the back door.
 - Dan travels to the Wimbledon safe house by train.
 - Dan buys a mobile phone.
 - He finds Cas' cigarette end in the ashtray.
 - Dan gets an email from Annie saying she is pregnant.
- Why is Dan worried at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 17

- What ...
 - was ideal for driving in the Oxfordshire lanes?
 - was like a picture postcard?
 - was familiar to Dan?
 - were parked in front of the Hall?
 - was Dan looking for as he walked round the fence?
 - did Dan get in the town?
 - did Dan make with the things he got in town?
 - did Dan hide in when he got under the fence?
 - went on as soon as he was hidden?

CHAPTER 18

- Who are ...
 - Henry Minelli? **b** Bob Nash?
- Which two people is Dan surprised to see there?
- What does Dan realise about Sir Clive Horley?
- What does Dan realise about what is going on and why they want him dead?

CHAPTER 19

- True or false?
 - Dan sends an email to Bert.
 - Dan speaks to Annie on the phone.
 - Dan goes back to Burstead Hall at eight o'clock that night.
 - Dan puts on a waiter's uniform.
 - Dan kills both Cas and Strang.
 - Dan is recognised despite the waiter's uniform.
 - He throws the last petrol bomb into the office
 - When he gets back to his car Bert is waiting for him.

CHAPTER 20

- What is Dan going to do next day?
- What happened to Kurt Klassens?
- What do Dan and Bert think was the deal under which Holzmann was released?
- What event caused the people at MI6 to want to kill Dan?

CHAPTER 21

- Who says what to whom?
 - 'You'd better stay the night.'
 - 'She says there have been several phone calls asking for me.'
 - 'It will be better if we don't communicate again – at least for quite a long time.'
 - 'Thanks for everything, and take care.'
 - 'I'm going to head for Dunkirk.'

CHAPTER 22

- How does Annie feel?
- What tragedy happened early in Dan's life?
- What does he realise he has been doing ever since?
- What arrangement do Dan and Annie make?

CHAPTER 23

- Match the beginnings and endings.
 - At first, when Dan meets Annie ...
 - They drive west slowly, ...
 - Dan tells Annie about ...
 - Annie is very upset ...
 - stopping and visiting places.
 - his life as a spy.
 - that Lucien has left her.
 - she is very quiet and unhappy.
- What plan does Dan make for their future?

CHAPTER 24

- Complete the sentences.
 - Dan is going to go and get
 - Annie wants to
 - Dan and Annie go for a walk
 - At dinner Annie tells Dan she can't
 - Nothing Dan says can make Annie
 - Dan sleeps

CHAPTER 25

- Put the events in the correct order.
 - Dan finds the house just as he left it.
 - He goes for a walk down to the river.
 - Dan drives to the disused farm at La Puech.
 - He puts the CDs into his rucksack.
 - He walks down the hill to his house.

An Underground Station in London

Who fell under the train?

The Valley

Who fell into the river?

A Drug Overdose at HQ

Who took the pills?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

- The newspaper headline on the last page is MI6 CHIEF ACCUSED. Write the newspaper article.
- What do you think happened to Annie?
- Do you think Annie made the right decision? Why/why not?
- Imagine you were making a film of *A Tangled Web*. Which actors would you choose for the main characters in the story?
- Do you think *A Tangled Web* is a good title? Make up an alternative.
- Describe Dan Combes as a person, including biographical details and his character.
- What did you learn about relationships from *A Tangled Web*?
- Write some activities for other students to do (e.g. some multiple choice questions).