



## Book Club Questions

1. Which characters in this book do you think are based on real-life people, and why? Which do you think are composites?
2. Why did the president offer the position of secretary of state to someone he thought of as an enemy? And what would make someone accept a position like this? Do you think this happens in real life, at that level of politics?
3. Discuss the relationship between Betsy and Ellen. How unusual is it in thrillers to have this relationship at the heart of the book? Do you have a similar relationship in your life?
4. Ellen seems to have been continuously underestimated by men, due to her age or her gender. Did you find this realistic? How did she use this to her advantage as the plot unfolded?
5. Discuss Anahita's role in the novel. Did you find her sympathetic?
6. Do you think Ellen and her son Gil share some of the same traits and characteristics, in terms of diplomacy, integrity, and tenacity?
7. What were your impressions of Dunn's interactions with Ellen? Do you think a former president could--or would--act the way he did? Do you feel like Ellen had the upper hand?

- 8. What was the most surprising twist in the novel for you?**
  
- 9. Did you feel the Russian president had similarities or differences with President Putin? How realistic was this portrayal?**
  
- 10. Near the end of the book, we have this sentence: "I think we have our next nightmare." What do you think this means?**
  
- 11. How do you think this book compares to other political thrillers out there? How is it different? In a good way, bad way?**
  
- 12. What are some of the book's strengths? Weaknesses?**