



Mystery

The Fallen

Mark Terry

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A diabolical genius and his band of terrorist thugs have taken over the G8 Summit in Colorado, threatening to kill world leaders one-by-one if their demands are not met. The complex is wired with explosives, an attempted rescue by US Special Forces has been thwarted, and just minutes remain before the deadline. Only one man, an agent deep undercover on the inside, can save the day. While this sounds like the plot of a bazillion novels and half again as many movies, *The Fallen* is a singularly entertaining read.

This is the author's fourth full-length novel and his experience shows. Terry has mastered the art of pacing; the 288 pages fly by. No adverb poisoning or superfluous verbiage here, every word was clearly chosen with care. The end result is a near effortless read, more like watching a movie than reading a book. He did his homework too. Everything from complex political intrigue to close-quarters combat is plausible and convincing. Little things like this are not only critical for believability, but they help make good stories great.

Engaging characters further the book's appeal. Even the minor players, such as the paratroopers whose attempted rescue lasts three and a half pages before they are assassinated, are fascinatingly done. The hero, Derek Stillwater, is a troubleshooter for the Department of Homeland Security. A former Green Beret, he has a Ph.D. with specializations in biological and chemical warfare. He is a smart, tough, and likeable character. The villain, Richard Coffee, was Stillwater's closest friend. They worked together in the military before Coffee turned his back on his country and founded the Fallen Angels, an international group of disgraced spies drawn from the ranks of the CIA, FSB, Massad, and similar intelligence agencies.

During the first US encounter with the Fallen Angels, the president's wife and family were murdered. Stillwater was able to take out some of the bad guys, but Coffee and a few of his minions were able to escape and rebuild the organization. Stillwater, already in trouble for bending the rules during his run-in with the Fallen Angels, was assumed to have been killed in a

terrorist attack on Detroit, but subsequently went deep undercover. A “maintenance worker” at the Cheyenne Hills Resort, Stillwater finds himself in position to finish the job when the Fallen and his gang of saboteurs take over the complex. Engagingly written, *The Fallen* is real page-turner, everything a first-rate thriller should be.

Lawrence Kane