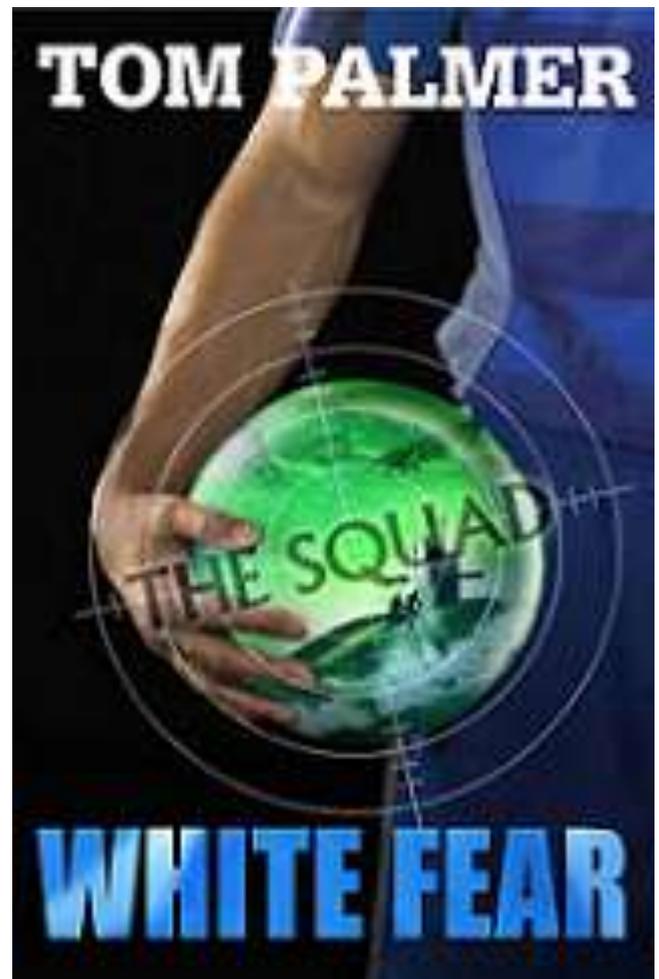


# The Squad : White Fear

## by Tom Palmer

An unknown criminal is trying to hijack a world conference about the precious fuels that lie below the arctic ice. To prevent an international war breaking out, Lily, Lesh, Hatty, Adnan and Kester go undercover to find out who it is and stop them.

But the beauty of the icy mountains and deep fjords hide some dangerous secrets and someone will do anything to make sure that the Squad don't discover them . . .



### Chapter 1 Falling Down

Five children crouched motionless on the top of a building, all but one of them waiting for the order to jump.

Around them was some of the most spectacular views any of them had ever seen: vast snow-topped mountains, deep gorges with fjords running through them, a row of black mountains in the distance. They were in the highest building in the most northern city in the world.

But they hadn't even looked at the scenery. They were there for business, not pleasure.

The fifth of the children – Lesh – sat in a wheelchair, waiting to relay that order and send the other four over the top.

‘Remind me why we’re doing this?’ Adnan, a stocky Asian boy, murmured to the two girls crouching next to him.

One was white with light brown hair. Lily.

The other black with tight dark plaits. Hatty.

‘There’s someone we need to talk to,’ Kester, the taller of the boys, said.

‘Who?’ Hatty asked.

‘I’m not allowed to say,’ Kester said.

‘Thirty seconds,’ Lesh said.

‘Why not?’ Hatty pressed.

‘Orders.’

‘And why do you know and we don’t?’

‘I’m the leader,’ Kester said.

‘Twenty seconds,’ Lesh said.

Lily listened to the others bickering, but decided not to join in. But she too was trying to work out what was going on.

The thing was: they were not supposed to meet or to be introduced to anybody new. These five children on the roof were a secret. So secret, in fact, that only their commander and their commander’s commander knew about them.

Their role?

To travel around the world to gather information to save British lives.

Their name?

The Squad.

Five children who work for the British government, spying in the places that ordinary spies cannot reach.

‘Ten seconds.’

‘Bear in mind it’s windy,’ Kester ordered. ‘As you fall.’

Lily shifted her feet and prepared to move, her mind still whirring. Who, she asked herself, was this person? Why was he about to find out who they were? And, why did they have to meet him like this?

‘Five.’

The four children stood as one.

‘Four.’

‘Three.’

‘Two.’

‘One.’

‘Go,’ Kester said in a low voice.

And, with that, the four children threw themselves over the side of the building.

Lily felt her rope tighten almost as soon as she began to fall. Now she began to let it go, arm over arm, her three friends moving down at the same pace. She felt her feet bounce twice on the sides of the hotel as she descended, then land on something solid and horizontal.

A balcony.

Without wasting a second – a second in they might be seen from below – the four children pushed a pair of large glass doors open and entered the warmth of a large hotel suite, lavishly decorated by a large chandelier, gold leaf wallpaper and a lush red carpet.

‘Shut the door,’ the woman facing them ordered.

Adnan, the last one in, eased the door to.

The four squad members found themselves facing a man and the woman who had spoken. The woman, with a bright copper hair, was no stranger to them. She was Julia, their commander.

The man was, however, a surprise.

Even though the five Squad members, as trained spies, were supposed to be able to mask their reactions and appear as if nothing could surprise them, Lily heard at least two of her friends quietly gasp.

Because they all knew exactly who he was. His face was in the newspapers and on the TV every day. He was about as famous as you could be.

They were looking at the Prime Minister. Their Prime Minister.

And now they knew that this mission, high in the Arctic Circle, was going to be their most serious, most dangerous and most significant to date.

**Now read on...**



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