



# The Closing Window

A NOVEL BY GREGG ROMAN

*“The people who were supposed to act wouldn’t. The people who could — did.”*

## ABOUT THE NOVEL

As protest sweeps Iran, a Washington think tank does what its government will not: the Meridian Institute is running live networks inside the country. Then the thirty-nine-day war ignites, and everyone at Meridian must weigh the cost of action against the price of standing by — knowing every name on the ledger is real. A thriller about the people who move when the state hesitates, and the count that never stops.

## WHY I WROTE THIS

*“I have spent years watching good people choose between two kinds of failure: the failure of speaking and doing nothing, and the failure of acting and being unable to live with what it costs. Neither choice is clean. Both leave bodies on the ledger. I wrote this novel to sit with that contradiction long enough that a reader feels it in their own chest, the way the characters do — the way the people who actually do this work do. The Meridian Institute is invented. The choice it faces is not. The count continues. So must the watching.”*

— GREGG ROMAN

### Invite the author to your meeting

Gregg Roman offers book clubs a free 15-minute virtual visit — a chance to ask him your group’s questions about the novel directly. Requests are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

**To book:** send your club’s name, city, and preferred dates via [greggroman.com/contact](https://greggroman.com/contact)

TEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 01 The novel opens inside the machine: at 4:40 a.m., Colonel Farhad Nazari of the Revolutionary Guard is ordered to turn his air-defense battery against an Iranian city — and stalls, in front of a deputy who may be the regime’s eyes. Why do you think the story begins with him rather than with the Americans? What does his hesitation cost him, and what does it buy?
- 02 The Meridian Institute acts where the agencies built to act are paralyzed “by process, by politics, by the fear of owning what comes next.” What gives a private institution the standing to make promises to people inside Iran? What does it lose the moment it makes them?
- 03 Jonah Keller keeps a private ledger of names — every person who has risked something on Meridian’s word. What does the ledger mean to him? Is keeping the count an act of responsibility, of penance, or of control — and does its meaning change by the end?
- 04 A nurse in Karaj records the dead the state won’t number “so the night can’t round them off to zero.” Why does counting carry so much weight in this novel? What is the difference between a number and a name?
- 05 In his author’s note, Roman writes of two kinds of failure: “the failure of speaking and doing nothing, and the failure of acting and being unable to live with what it costs. Neither choice is clean. Both leave bodies on the ledger.” Where in the story did you feel the weight of both failures at once? Which character carries that weight most heavily?
- 06 The title’s window is literal — a ceasefire, a deadline, sixty days before an agreement becomes binding — and moral. What windows close over the course of the book? Who sees them closing in time, and who refuses to look?
- 07 Meridian’s sources are people “who trusted the wrong country to catch them if they fell.” What does the novel suggest about promises made across borders — who has the right to make them, and what is owed when they break?
- 08 Roman says the Meridian Institute is invented, but “the choice it faces is not,” and that the book was built from years of conversations with Iranians who spoke at real risk. Does knowing this change how you read the fiction? Should it?
- 09 The chapters carry bylines — a colonel in Iran, an analyst in Washington, a nurse in Karaj — and the story moves between the inside of the regime and the inside of a think tank. How did that structure shape your sympathies? Was there a point of view that surprised you?
- 10 The novel’s last word on its own purpose: “The count continues. So must the watching.” After the final page, what do you think keeping the count asks of a reader — as opposed to a character? What, if anything, will you keep watching?