# Good Material

***Good Material*** is a witty, heartfelt, and emotionally sharp novel about **breakup, masculinity, friendship, and growth**, told from the perspective of **Andy**, a stand-up comedian in his mid-thirties who’s just been dumped by the love of his life, Jen.

The twist? This isn’t a typical breakup novel told from the woman’s point of view — Alderton flips the script and explores **heartbreak through a man’s eyes**, capturing the confusion, ego bruises, and quiet self-discovery that follow.

Andy navigates life post-breakup: crashing on friends’ couches, reliving their shared memories, awkward dating attempts, and trying to figure out where it all went wrong — and what it means to be a man when the narrative of "having it together" crumbles.

## Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Jen 1

The chapter "Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Jen" presents a candid and detailed reflection on the narrator's complex feelings towards Jen, highlighting a series of personal quirks and social behaviors that created distance between them. The narrator recounts Jen’s lack of rhythm and dancing skills, her outdated views on glamour, and her peculiar habits such as refusing to arrive early at the airport and her prolonged, meticulous bedtime routine. These traits, combined with her tendency to talk excessively and relate every film plot back to herself, paint a picture of someone whose personality often clashed with the narrator’s expectations and lifestyle.

Further complicating their relationship were Jen’s social circles and family dynamics, which the narrator found difficult to tolerate. Jen’s sister Miranda’s confrontational activism and disdain for certain demographics added tension, as did Jen’s work friends,

described as dull and exclusive. Jen’s repeated postponements of adventurous plans and her long-term therapy sessions, which remained a private matter, contributed to a sense of unfulfilled potential and emotional distance. The narrator also reveals frustration with Jen’s overattachment to dogs and her family’s traditional activities, which contrasted sharply with his own preferences.

The narrator expresses irritation at Jen’s critical nature, particularly her focus on his personal habits, and her inconsistent stance on having children, which seemed to lack genuine openness. Jen’s snobbery, especially her judgment of others’ fashion choices, and her slow pace in museums, where she showed exaggerated reverence for minor artifacts, further highlight the differences that made their relationship challenging. Despite these grievances, the narrator notes moments of vulnerability, such as Jen’s rare tears during a documentary, revealing a complex, multifaceted individual beneath the surface.

Ultimately, the chapter conveys a mix of exasperation and resignation, culminating in the narrator’s blunt conclusion that Jen “ruined my life.” Through this introspective and sometimes biting account, the chapter explores how fundamental incompatibilities and contrasting personalities can erode a relationship. It offers a nuanced view of Jen, not merely as a source of frustration but as a person whose traits and choices were profoundly incompatible with the narrator’s desires and values, making their separation not only inevitable but, in the narrator’s view, beneficial.

# Friday 5th July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator observing a pair of clothes on a washing line, symbolically “holding hands” in the wind, as he prepares to call Jen, the woman he has loved deeply for nearly four years. Their relationship ended painfully just eight days earlier, and this call, arranged for exactly seven o’clock, becomes a charged moment of vulnerability and control. The narrator deliberately waits to call three minutes late, signaling his attempt to reclaim some agency in a situation where he feels powerless. This sets the tone for a fraught, emotionally raw conversation between two former lovers now estranged.

During the call, the narrator and Jen exchange cautious, clipped greetings that belie the depth of their shared history. The narrator struggles with the formal tone Jen adopts, a stark contrast to their past intimacy. Memories surface, such as Jen’s habit of deleting his number to avoid obsessing over his messages, revealing the complexity of their emotional bond. Despite the breakup, there remains a thread of care and familiarity, as they discuss mundane details like Jen’s living situation and the narrator’s mother’s feelings, highlighting the lingering connections that make detachment difficult.

The conversation reveals the narrator’s deep pain and denial about the breakup, juxtaposed with Jen’s more pragmatic and clinical approach. She suggests a therapeutic exercise to help him move on: writing a list of reasons why their separation might be for the best. This suggestion, while intended to provide closure, only intensifies the narrator’s turmoil, as he clings to the hope of reconciliation. Their dialogue underscores the difficulty of navigating the end of a relationship when love and heartbreak coexist, and when one party has emotionally moved on while the other remains entangled.

Throughout the chapter, the narrator’s internal conflict is palpable—his desire to express love and his simultaneous need to appear indifferent. The conversation is a microcosm of the broader struggle to accept loss and the painful process of healing. The chapter closes with the narrator wrestling with his emotions, caught between desperation and detachment, illustrating the raw, unfiltered experience of heartbreak and the slow, uncertain path toward letting go.

# Monday 27th July 2015

The chapter opens on a reflective note about the transition from the symbolic thirtieth birthday to the more settled and familiar thirty-first, marked by a lifestyle of moderate indulgences and practicalities. The narrator attends Jane’s birthday party, set in a nondescript pub chosen to accommodate a large, diverse group. The atmosphere is casual but tinged with the complexities of coordinating adult friendships and responsibilities, such as babysitting and travel logistics. This setting underscores the evolving nature of social interactions in early adulthood, moving away from youthful exuberance to a more grounded, if sometimes awkward, social experience.

At the party, the narrator reconnects with Avi, a boisterous friend who immediately engages with familiar banter and camaraderie. Avi’s loud and unfiltered presence contrasts with the quieter, more introspective tone of the narrator, creating a dynamic that highlights the different ways people cope with adulthood. The introduction of Jen, Jane’s best friend, adds a subtle layer of intrigue and tentative connection. Her casual style and genuine interest in the narrator suggest the possibility of new social bonds forming amidst the routine of the celebration.

The interaction between the narrator and Jen is marked by a tentative, somewhat self-conscious exchange that reveals their personalities and social roles. Jen’s curiosity about the narrator’s career as a comedian invites a deeper conversation, where humor and self-deprecation reveal the narrator’s insecurities and experiences. The dialogue also touches on themes of identity and social expectations, as both characters navigate their perceptions of each other and themselves, reflecting the nuanced dance of adult relationships and self-presentation.

The chapter closes with a playful yet meaningful exchange about Jen’s profession, hinting at the complexities behind outward appearances and societal roles. The narrator’s guesses and Jen’s cryptic clue about being “overpaid” suggest layers of

irony and ambiguity, inviting readers to consider the contrast between public personas and private realities. Overall, the chapter captures a moment of transition, connection, and subtle self-discovery within the familiar yet shifting landscape of adult friendships and social life.

# Saturday 6th July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator waking up in his mother’s house, grappling with the fresh reality of his recent breakup with Jen, which coincides with the end of their rental contract. He reflects on the loneliness that now pervades his belongings left behind in their flat, underscoring a sense of isolation and loss. His immediate instinct is to check his phone for any messages from Jen, only to find silence. Despite this, he compulsively views her Instagram story, searching for clues about why their relationship ended, yet only encounters a mundane image from her morning run, intensifying his emotional turmoil.

As he ventures into town on an errand for his mother, the narrator is haunted by sensory memories of Jen, particularly the scent of her perfume, which triggers a visceral reaction. He contrasts her usual meticulousness with this one careless choice that now relentlessly follows him, symbolizing the inescapable presence of their past relationship. The physical absence of Jen among the crowd starkly highlights his solitude. Seeking refuge, he chooses a bright prosecco bar over his usual gloomy haunt, where he attempts to drown his sorrows in cheap wine while listening to a podcast, momentarily finding solace in the shifting effects of alcohol.

The encounter with Debbie, a family friend, brings a moment of connection and support. Debbie, empathetic to his situation, encourages him to actively erase Jen from his life to heal, emphasizing the necessity of wiping away memories to move forward. Their conversation, though partly lost on the narrator amidst his swirling thoughts, plants a seed of hope and the promise of rebuilding social ties. This interaction represents a turning point where the narrator begins to consider recovery and personal growth beyond his heartbreak.

The chapter closes with a somewhat comic yet poignant scene in a pharmacy, where the narrator clumsily seeks out Jen’s signature perfume, Armani She. His awkwardness

and insistence on purchasing multiple bottles reflect a complex mixture of denial, attachment, and the struggle to let go. The sales assistant’s warm response contrasts with his internal chaos, underscoring the theme of human connection amid personal pain. This moment encapsulates the narrator’s conflicted state — caught between clinging to the past and the tentative steps toward acceptance.

# Wednesday 10th July 2019

The chapter opens on a quiet morning where the narrator, seeking change from a stagnant day at home, discovers the Sun and Lion pub open for breakfast. Drawn by a nostalgic warmth, he chooses a modest meal and settles in with his laptop to organize practical aspects of his life, including arranging storage and moving his belongings. Amid this mundane but pivotal activity, he reconnects via WhatsApp with friends, revealing a yearning for connection and the subtle complexities of his current emotional state.

Through a candid exchange with Jane, the narrator asks for temporary refuge, revealing underlying tensions in his personal relationships. Jane’s welcoming response offers a glimpse of support amid uncertainty. The atmosphere of the pub, with its blend of old-world charm and everyday reality, underscores the narrator’s internal conflict as he prepares to face significant changes, including the symbolic “funeral” of his relationship with Jen. The environment acts as both a physical and emotional backdrop for reflection and decision-making.

As the day progresses, the narrator grapples with distraction and melancholy, indicated by his shifting focus from work to social media and memories of past relationships. A chance encounter with a barmaid who resembles his first girlfriend, Nicky, triggers a flood of reminiscence about youthful love and loss. This moment highlights the enduring impact of early relationships on his understanding of romance and personal identity, juxtaposed against his present sense of dislocation.

The chapter closes with the narrator wandering aimlessly, contemplating the formative nature of his first love and how those early experiences shaped his perceptions of intimacy and connection. The narrative balances a tone of wistfulness with a sober acknowledgment of change, capturing a moment of transition where past and present converge, and the future remains uncertain but open to new possibilities.

# Saturday 13th July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator embarking on a train journey back to London, deliberately immersing themselves in a recently released Bon Iver single to provoke introspection and emotional release. The music serves as a conduit for processing the end of a significant relationship, allowing the narrator to confront feelings of loneliness and loss. Despite the mundane surroundings, including a fellow passenger engrossed in a PowerPoint presentation, the narrator finds solace in the music and experiences a moment of quiet vulnerability, underscored by the respectful distance maintained by their seatmate.

Upon arriving at Euston, the narrator hesitates before entering their flat, which has been largely emptied of furniture and personal belongings. The scent of cleaning products and the sight of neatly folded clothes on the floor reflect the recent upheaval and the effort their ex-partner, Jen, invested in clearing out shared spaces. The narrator's mixed emotions surface through imagined scenarios of others laughing at their possessions, revealing a sense of humiliation and displacement following the breakup. This moment emphasizes the tangible aftermath of the relationship’s dissolution and the narrator’s struggle to reclaim their personal space.

The narrative then shifts to a frustrating encounter at a storage facility in Kentish Town, where a booking error complicates the narrator’s attempt to secure a unit for their belongings. The staff member’s rigid adherence to policy and the ensuing bureaucratic back-and-forth highlight themes of alienation and the impersonal nature of modern urban life. Despite the narrator’s impatience and exasperation, they ultimately navigate the process, securing a small unit that symbolizes the modest scale of their remaining life possessions and the necessity of starting anew.

Finally, the narrator visits friends Avi and Jane in the suburbs, marking a transition from the isolating city experience to a more domestic, albeit awkward, social

environment. The interaction is tinged with emotional distance, as Avi's cold reception contrasts with the enthusiastic greeting from the narrator’s young godson, Jackson. This juxtaposition encapsulates the narrator’s ongoing search for connection and stability amidst personal upheaval, offering a glimpse of hope and continuity within their fractured world.

# Sunday 14th July 2019

The chapter opens with a lively morning scene as Jackson bursts into the narrator's room, demanding a birthday cake and causing a playful commotion. Jane, acting as the responsible parent, tries to calm Jackson down, emphasizing the narrator's need for rest. Amidst this domestic chaos, the narrator receives a cryptic late-night message from Jen, consisting of a single kiss emoji, which sparks a swirl of speculation and emotional uncertainty. Jane offers a grounded perspective, suggesting the simplest explanation is often the correct one, helping to temper the narrator's obsessive thoughts about Jen's intentions.

Throughout the day, the narrator immerses themselves in the rhythms of family life with Jane, Jackson, Avi, and little Rocco. The contrast between this nurturing environment and the narrator's own life is striking, highlighting the profound differences between the worlds of young parents and single adulthood. The narrator experiences a jet-lagged, disoriented sensation, both physically and emotionally, as they navigate the warmth, joy, and challenges within this close-knit family dynamic. Moments of humor and gentle discipline underscore the affectionate bonds shared among them, revealing the complexities of parenting and familial love.

The chapter also explores themes of aging and self-perception through a candid conversation between the narrator and Avi. They discuss the narrator's single status and the shifting priorities that come with age, humorously touching on societal views of what it means to be thirty-five. The narrator embraces this stage of life as a new beginning rather than a decline, viewing it as an opportunity for growth and reinvention. Avi's suggestion to pursue a new hobby reflects the broader theme of finding purpose and connection beyond romantic pursuits.

In a reflective closing scene, the narrator confronts the physical signs of aging symbolized by "The Egg," a bald spot humorously pointed out by Rocco. This moment

encapsulates the chapter’s blend of lighthearted family interactions and deeper introspection. The narrator’s acceptance of these changes, paired with the supportive presence of the family, underscores a narrative of resilience and adaptation. Overall, the chapter paints a vivid picture of a day filled with affectionate chaos, emotional complexity, and hopeful self-discovery.

# Tuesday 16th July 2019

The chapter opens on Tuesday, 16th July 2019, as the protagonist prepares for their first gig following a recent breakup. Despite hoping the performance might offer solace, they acknowledge the fickle comfort an audience provides. Before the show, the protagonist works an early shift at a cheese stall and later visits Emery, an old friend and fellow comedian, who greets them warmly. Their reunion is marked by casual conversation and Emery's enthusiastic commentary on music and comedy, highlighting the respect shared between the arts. Emery's distinctive, unpolished charm and intense personality contrast with his undeniable appeal, drawing the protagonist into a reflective mood.

As they drive to the comedy club, the protagonist confides in Emery about the breakup with Jen, revealing deep emotional turmoil and a persistent preoccupation with lost love. Emery responds with a mix of humor and blunt advice, diagnosing the protagonist's state as "The Madness." He urges them to stop obsessing over Jen, equating this fixation to a form of self-destructive masturbation, and suggests redirecting their fantasies elsewhere to facilitate emotional detachment and healing. Their exchange blends candid vulnerability with sharp wit, revealing the complexities of coping with heartbreak within the comedic world.

Arriving late at the Colchester Comedy Club, the social hierarchy backstage is immediately apparent. The established headliner, Danny, dominates the scene with his veteran status and polished career, followed by Emery as the compere. The younger, emerging talent Thalia performs first, bringing fresh energy and political commentary. The protagonist and Dean occupy the middle tier—experienced but not yet distinguished—defined by modest achievements and a modest presence. This backstage dynamic underscores the competitive and stratified nature of the comedy circuit, where status and recognition shape interactions and self-perception.

Throughout the chapter, themes of friendship, ambition, and emotional struggle are interwoven against the backdrop of the comedy industry. The protagonist’s internal conflict contrasts with the external demands of performance and professional hierarchy, illustrating the tension between personal pain and public persona. The candid dialogue and vivid characterizations provide insight into the realities of life as a working comedian, where humor serves both as a shield and a means of connection amid uncertainty and heartache.

# Saturday 20th July 2019

The chapter opens on a significant day, with the narrator being gently awakened by Avi and their child, Jackson. The morning is lively and upbeat, underscored by the playing of a favorite song that holds sentimental value for the narrator and Avi. Jane, another key figure, is preparing for a weekend getaway to a spa hotel with friends, including Jen, whose recent breakup with the narrator casts a subtle shadow over the atmosphere. The narrator grapples with feelings of exclusion and jealousy, questioning the disparity between Jen’s supportive retreat and his own less glamorous plans with Avi.

As the day progresses, the narrator and Avi organize a night out with close friends, which surprisingly avoids any mention of the narrator’s recent breakup. The group engages in lighthearted, diverse conversations that serve as a distraction from the narrator’s emotional turmoil. Despite the camaraderie, the narrator feels a growing frustration and desire for acknowledgment of his pain, culminating in a bold gesture of ordering tequila shots to break the silence surrounding his heartbreak. This moment marks a turning point where the narrator openly announces the end of his relationship with Jen.

The friends respond with a mixture of practical questions, advice, and shared stories of their own romantic disappointments, creating a therapeutic but somewhat detached environment. The narrator listens but remains emotionally distant, reflecting on the complexity of seeking comfort in shared experiences. The night continues with the group moving to another venue, where the social dynamics and interactions highlight the narrator’s internal conflict between wanting connection and feeling isolated in his grief.

In a quieter moment alone, the narrator visits the spa hotel’s website, imagining Jen and her friends enjoying a luxurious and supportive weekend that contrasts sharply

with his current reality. This reflection deepens his sense of loss and longing, as he envisions the emotional support and camaraderie that he feels deprived of. The chapter closes on this poignant note, emphasizing the narrator’s struggle to come to terms with his breakup while observing the contrasting paths taken by those around him.

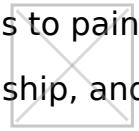
# Sunday 21st July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator waking up disoriented in Avi’s bed, wearing unfamiliar clothes and nursing a hangover. Avi, cheerful but clearly still affected by the previous night's drinking, explains their swapped sleeping arrangements as a drunken joke. Despite Avi’s casual attitude, the narrator feels uneasy and confused about the night’s events, especially regarding the missing clothes and the strange choice of underwear. The morning unfolds with a mix of humor and discomfort, setting a tone of uncertainty and mild frustration that colors the narrator’s reflections on the aftermath of a heavy night out.

As the narrator tries to recover, he listens to a podcast about motherhood during a long, nauseating shower, highlighting his low point. Later, with Avi, he orders an expensive KFC meal and watches a Harry Potter film in silence, signaling a subdued day. The arrival of Jane and the boys introduces a brief distraction, but the narrator remains too unwell to engage deeply. A Sunday night tube journey leads to Emery, whose drunken insights on male-female relationship dynamics provide a cynical but humorous commentary on break-up behaviors, revealing the narrator’s ongoing struggles with personal relationships.

Emery’s onstage drunken comedy performance contrasts sharply with the narrator’s quieter, more introspective style. The narrator senses his set falling flat after Emery’s energetic act, reflecting on the different ways success and failure feel in comedy. This moment underscores the narrator’s internal conflict between his artistic identity and audience expectations, as well as the broader theme of coping with disappointment. The journey back to London continues with light-hearted banter about self-improvement, revealing the narrator’s desire to connect more with his physical self and escape his habitual overthinking.

The chapter concludes with a candid conversation about personal change, where the narrator expresses his wish to live more in his body rather than just his mind. Emery’s skeptical response adds a layer of humor but also highlights the narrator’s vulnerability. The narrator’s glance at his phone, checking Instagram message requests, subtly suggests his ongoing search for connection and validation amid his internal and social struggles. Overall, the chapter blends humor, introspection, and social interactions to paint a vivid picture of a man grappling with the complexities of adulthood, friendship, and self-identity.



# Wednesday 24th July 2019

The chapter opens at the Recruitment and Headhunting Awards 2019 ceremony, where the host announces nominees and winners for the most effective employer brand development. With only two contenders, the award goes to "Absolutely Management," greeted by polite applause and a celebratory walk to the stage. The host’s casual and humorous closing remarks set an informal tone, encouraging attendees to celebrate and enjoy the evening. As the event concludes, the narrator encounters Bob, a man with a distinct appearance and a candid personality, who compliments the event’s liveliness and shares his unconventional lifestyle living on a canal boat in London after a difficult divorce.

Bob’s story reveals a transformative life choice prompted by personal upheaval, highlighting his break from corporate norms and the surprising reactions from his family. He offers the narrator an opportunity to rent his boat, suggesting it as an ideal living situation for an artist seeking community and novelty. Their conversation touches on themes of change, adaptation, and finding new paths in life, with Bob’s humor and openness providing a contrast to the narrator’s current uncertain living arrangements after a recent breakup. The chapter subtly explores resilience and the appeal of alternative lifestyles in times of transition.

Later, the narrator returns home with friends Avi and Jane, where they watch Boris Johnson’s first speech as Prime Minister. The group shares a candid and critical dialogue about their political views, particularly their disdain for Johnson and the Conservative Party, expressed through blunt and colloquial language. This political interlude adds depth to the narrator’s worldview and social circle, revealing a shared skepticism and frustration with current leadership. The narrator’s reflection on Johnson's hair humorously underscores personal insecurities and the broader theme of appearance versus substance.

The chapter concludes with the narrator excitedly sharing news of finding an affordable one-bedroom canal boat in East London, which surprises and puzzles Avi and Jane. Despite their concerns about practical challenges like seasickness, the narrator embraces the idea as an adventurous solution to housing difficulties and a chance for independence. This decision encapsulates the chapter’s themes of change, self-discovery, and taking unconventional risks to forge a new life path. The tone remains conversational and relatable, balancing humor with the earnestness of personal growth.

# Friday 26th July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator returning to a storage facility, exchanging no pleasantries with a blue-haired man who hands over the keys to a rented unit. Reflecting on the sparse belongings inside, the narrator imagines the life of the owner, noting the simplicity and minimalism of the items stored. This moment of introspection leads to a practical realization: all possessions fit neatly into a large taxi, negating the need for a van. The scene sets a tone of transition and minimalism, framing the narrator’s current circumstances and mindset as they prepare for a new phase of life.

The narrative then shifts to the introduction of a narrowboat, where Bob, dressed casually, hands over the keys and offers a brief orientation. The narrator is struck by the boat’s small size and the various practicalities of living aboard, including managing fire, fuel, electricity, and a porta-potty with its unique challenges. Bob’s casual, almost jovial tone contrasts with the narrator’s cautious skepticism, especially regarding the cramped sleeping arrangements and the need to move the boat regularly to avoid eviction. This section highlights the challenges and novelties of adapting to life on a narrowboat.

As the narrator settles in, they engage with the local community, sharing their new living situation and enjoying the interest it generates. The process of unpacking and organizing is swift, but uncertainty about what to do next lingers. The narrator’s interactions with others underscore the novelty and intrigue of living on a boat, while also revealing a sense of isolation and adjustment. The chapter balances practical details with emotional undercurrents, illustrating the narrator’s tentative steps toward embracing this unconventional lifestyle.

The chapter closes with a rainy evening aboard the boat, where water leaks through the windows, prompting a message to Bob for reassurance. His advice to use towels to manage the leaks reflects the ongoing improvisation required in this new living

arrangement. The narrator prepares a simple meal, settles in with a film and wine, and reflects on a distant relationship with Tash, whose interest seems to be fading. This ending captures a mix of solitude, adaptation, and subtle longing, encapsulating the complexities of embarking on a fresh start in an unconventional home.

# Monday 29th July 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator’s experience of moving out of a boat, a process that proves more cumbersome than anticipated. Communication with Bob, who instructs leaving the keys in a code-locked box, reveals a cooling of their previously friendly relationship. Additionally, the narrator encounters bureaucratic hurdles at a storage facility, where despite renting the same unit, they must complete a new customer form. These events set a tone of transition and subtle tension, reflecting the narrator's unsettled circumstances and the challenges of managing practical affairs amidst personal upheaval.

Upon visiting Jane and Avi’s home, the narrator senses a shift in dynamics. The boat is notably absent from conversation, and the household seems to have been prepped for a significant announcement. The warmth of the family setting is underscored by affectionate gestures from Jane and her children. This leads to the revelation that Jane is pregnant with their third child, a news delivered with pride and a hint of surprise from the narrator. The couple’s desire for a larger family is candidly expressed, highlighting themes of kinship, belonging, and the complexities of life choices.

The narrator’s response to the pregnancy news is one of affection and acceptance, despite personal feelings of loss and longing for a friend named Jen. This emotional moment is juxtaposed with the narrator’s own pressing concerns, particularly the urgent need to find suitable accommodation. A restless night follows dinner, marked by a determined search for housing within a tight budget. The narrator’s efforts are met with frustration until an intriguing, affordable room listing in Hornsey captures their attention, offering a glimmer of hope amid instability.

The chapter concludes with a peculiar phone conversation between the narrator and Morris, the elderly homeowner offering the room. The dialogue is marked by awkward pauses, unusual questions, and a brusque tone, revealing a complex, somewhat

eccentric character. Despite the odd interaction, the arrangement is quickly settled, with Morris setting strict conditions and a mysterious instruction not to ring the doorbell. This ending emphasizes themes of uncertainty, the need for adaptation, and the unpredictable nature of seeking refuge in unfamiliar environments.

# Wednesday 31st July 2019

The chapter opens with the protagonist arriving at Giraffe Storage Kentish Town, where a blue-haired man silently hands over a key without acknowledgment. The protagonist assures him that it will be the last time they meet, but the man remains indifferent. Following instructions from Morris, the protagonist arrives at a new residence, knocking cautiously and eventually being greeted by a small, wary man. Their initial interaction reveals Morris's suspicion about the protagonist's modest belongings and lifestyle, hinting at a cautious and reserved personality.

Inside the house, the protagonist is struck by the abundance of plants and the meticulous care Morris takes with them, emphasizing his strict routine and desire for order. The living room contrasts with its neat columns of old newspapers, symbolizing Morris's attachment to history and record-keeping. Their conversation touches on privacy concerns in the digital age, with Morris expressing distrust of modern technology and data tracking, revealing his cautious and somewhat paranoid nature. The protagonist listens patiently, establishing a tentative rapport.

Upstairs, the protagonist's exploration uncovers more of Morris's personality—plants, vintage wallpaper, and a collection of Beatles records. Their shared appreciation for the Beatles leads to Morris recounting the house's unique connection to George Harrison, adding depth and a sense of legacy to the setting. Morris's frustration with English Heritage for ignoring his efforts to commemorate this history further illustrates his passion and dedication. The dialogue also touches on the protagonist's career as a comedian, highlighting a subtle clash of expectations between the two characters.

The chapter concludes with a moment of curiosity and intrigue as the protagonist notices a mound in the garden, revealed by Morris to be an Anderson shelter he built himself. This detail enriches the narrative with historical context and hints at Morris's resourcefulness and connection to the past. The chapter combines themes of trust,

history, and the tension between modern life and preservation, setting a reflective and intimate tone for the unfolding story.

# Friday 2nd August 2019

The chapter opens with the protagonist meeting Kelly, a personal trainer at the gym, who immediately challenges his stated goal of simply "getting fit" and "feeling healthy." Kelly probes deeper, uncovering the emotional root behind his desire to feel strong—his recent breakup with his ex-girlfriend, Jen. Through an intense workout session and a strict meal plan emphasizing healthy fats and the avoidance of carbs and sugar, Kelly promises not just physical transformation but holistic healing, bonding over their shared experiences of heartbreak and determination to prove themselves despite being on the "wrong side of thirty-five."

Following this intense start, the protagonist spends the day working at a cheese stall during a food and drink trade show. The timing proves difficult as he battles hunger and fatigue while adhering to his new dietary restrictions. His mind fixates on food, categorizing items according to Kelly’s plan, and he finds a distraction in obsessing over the diet instead of his emotional pain. The chapter captures his internal struggle and resolve to fight back against his cravings and the emotional weight of his breakup, illustrating the challenge of starting anew under pressure.

Later, the protagonist crafts and sends a carefully worded, nostalgic yet balanced birthday message to Jen, marking the first communication since their breakup. Her prompt but brief reply signals a fleeting moment of connection, but his awkward attempt to keep the conversation going falls flat, ending the exchange abruptly. This interaction highlights his vulnerability and the delicate balance of reaching out to an ex while trying to move forward. The chapter poignantly portrays the uncertainty and emotional complexity involved in post-breakup communication.

The chapter closes with the protagonist making conscious food choices aligned with his new plan, sending proof to Kelly to maintain accountability. Her enthusiastic encouragement boosts his morale as he commits to this transformative journey. Eating

a protein-rich snack on the bus, he reflects on his physical and emotional state, signaling the beginning of a challenging but hopeful path toward recovery and self-improvement. The narrative effectively blends themes of heartbreak, self-discipline, and resilience, setting the tone for his ongoing personal evolution.

# Saturday 3rd August 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator recounting a vivid and emotionally charged dream about Jen, his ex-partner. This dream brings him an unexpected sense of happiness, the first since their breakup, and he humorously notes a peculiar remedy involving eating moldy cheese late at night to induce such dreams. This moment sets a tone of bittersweet reflection and longing, highlighting the narrator’s ongoing struggle with heartache and his desire for emotional closure through subconscious reunion.

As the day progresses, the narrator’s uplifted mood helps him navigate routine administrative tasks, but his optimism wanes when he attends a planned night out with friends. Only two show up, and the gathering feels lackluster, signaling a fading support system. The initial solidarity following the breakup, described as a brotherhood intent on helping him heal, now seems to be dissolving. The friends’ early departures and disengagement underscore the narrator’s growing isolation and the gradual erosion of communal encouragement.

Returning home, the narrator encounters Morris, who is quietly peeling potatoes to freeze for the upcoming winter. This interaction introduces an element of foreboding and mystery, as Morris cryptically alludes to unexpected events anticipated in the future. Their exchange reveals a contrast between Morris’s secretive, sometimes inscrutable behavior and the narrator’s straightforward openness. The scene subtly conveys undercurrents of uncertainty and preparation amidst everyday domesticity, hinting at challenges yet to come.

The chapter concludes with the narrator’s attempt to recreate the emotional connection of his dream by viewing a slideshow of photos chronicling his relationship with Jen. This poignant act of remembrance, accompanied by ethereal music, underscores his yearning and hope for reconciliation, even if only in his dreams. The closing image reflects the chapter’s central themes of memory, loss, and the fragile

hope that sustains the narrator through his emotional recovery.

# Sunday 4th August 2019

The chapter begins with the narrator’s restless night marked by stomach cramps and dehydration after eating blue cheese late at night. Unable to rest, he spends the early morning on the bathroom floor, where Morris, a concerned companion, wakes him abruptly. Their exchange reveals Morris’s suspicion of drug use, a stereotype often associated with musicians, which the narrator denies. Despite his illness, the narrator’s discomfort and fatigue persist, leading him to cancel a scheduled evening gig and seek solace in hydration and rest.

As the day progresses, the narrator encounters Morris in the kitchen, who is preparing to run errands, including delivering a letter to Belmarsh Prison. The mention of Julian Assange surprises the narrator, prompting a candid conversation about Morris’s unconventional support for Assange through emotional and financial means. Morris’s dedication reflects a deep respect rather than personal acquaintance, dispelling any assumptions about their relationship. The interaction sheds light on Morris’s solitary lifestyle and his principled commitment to causes he believes in.

The narrator observes Morris’s character and habits, noting his careful preparation and quiet resolve. As Morris leaves to hand-deliver the cheque to avoid interception, the narrator watches him depart with a mixture of curiosity and contemplation. Back inside, the narrator retreats to bed, overwhelmed by fatigue but also reflective. The house is filled with the ambient sounds of Morris listening to a radio program on 5G, underscoring the quiet, everyday moments that contrast with the larger political themes hinted at by Morris’s letter.

In the evening, the narrator struggles with feelings of loneliness and longing, as every form of entertainment—romantic films, comedies, family dramas, even nature documentaries—reminds him of Jen, a significant figure in his life. His emotional state is one of depletion and nostalgia, culminating in his surprise at receiving a message

from Jen after a long, unplanned sleep. This closing moment introduces a subtle tension and hope, leaving readers anticipating the nature of the message and its impact on the narrator.

# Thursday 8th August 2019

In this chapter from *Thursday 8th August 2019*, the protagonist endures a grueling workout session led by Kelly, who emphasizes the importance of motivation to push through physical and mental barriers. Kelly encourages envisioning a compelling personal image or dream to maintain commitment, despite fatigue or cravings. She shares her own motivating scenario involving a past relationship and challenges the protagonist, Andy, to find a similarly powerful vision to sustain his fitness journey. This interaction highlights the struggle to stay motivated and the psychological tactics used to overcome moments of weakness.

Following the workout, Andy reflects on a terse message from Jen concerning the closure of their joint bank account, signaling the practical and emotional complexities lingering after their breakup. Jen’s message is formal and businesslike, underscoring the distance that has grown between them. Despite this, Andy recalls a cherished memory of their last New Year’s Eve together, revealing his emotional attachment and the difficulty in moving on. He attempts to “Jen-proof” his phone and appearance in preparation for their forthcoming meeting, illustrating his internal conflict and lingering feelings.

The chapter then shifts to their encounter at the bank, where Andy experiences a mix of anxiety and nostalgia. Jen’s demeanor is polite but distant, and their exchange is marked by awkward silences and superficial conversation. The transformation from intimate partners to almost strangers is palpable, as Andy notes how Jen has become unfamiliar and untouchable. Their dialogue reveals the emotional awkwardness and unresolved tension that often accompany the practicalities of separating lives after a relationship ends.

As they wait to finalize the closure of their account, the chapter captures the quiet, poignant reality of parting ways. Andy’s reflections and observations convey the

complexity of disentangling shared lives, both emotionally and logistically. The chapter closes on a note of subdued resignation, emphasizing the contrast between past intimacy and present estrangement, while underscoring the ongoing process of healing and self-redefinition after a significant relationship ends.

# Saturday 10th August 2019

In this chapter, the narrator and Avi meet at a pub to watch a football match, marking the dwindling of their social circle to just the two of them. The narrator reveals a recent painful encounter with Jen while closing their joint bank account, which ended in a heated argument. Their conversation shifts to comparing their breakup to famous Beatles splits, reflecting the narrator's attempt to process the emotional turmoil through cultural references. Avi's detached yet supportive presence highlights the narrator's struggle to move on, while the football game's outcome mirrors their somber mood.

As the evening progresses, Avi offers candid advice, suggesting the narrator is trapped in nostalgia and unable to see the breakup clearly. He contrasts his own experience of moving on after marriage and children with the narrator's ongoing fixation on past memories. The narrator resists this idea, defending artistic overanalysis as part of their nature, but Avi insists that dwelling on unfulfilled potentials will only deepen the pain. This exchange underscores the tension between self-reflection and the necessity of emotional release.

After parting ways, the narrator contemplates Avi's words but remains resistant, choosing instead to drown sorrows with drinks and music. Returning home, a brief interaction with Morris reveals further isolation, as Morris is preoccupied and unreceptive. The narrator's attempt at light banter about the Beatles is met with indifference, emphasizing a growing sense of loneliness. This moment reinforces the narrator's internal conflict between seeking connection and retreating into solitude.

The chapter concludes with the narrator lying in bed, acknowledging the need to manage their emotional expression more carefully to preserve friendships. They consider developing a system to track and control how much they discuss the breakup, aiming to balance honesty with social harmony. This resolution reveals the narrator's

awareness of the impact of their grief on others and hints at a tentative step toward healing and self-regulation.

# Thursday 22nd August 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator, Andy, being abruptly awakened by Morris, who urgently wants to discuss a significant development: the Highgate and Hornsey Express has agreed to interview him about a George Harrison commemorative plaque. Morris requests Andy’s presence during the interview and suggests that Andy mention his involvement in show business to lend credibility to their cause. Andy agrees to express strong dissatisfaction with the current treatment of Morris's efforts, agreeing to label the situation as “a disgrace.” The interaction reveals both men’s hopefulness and a shared sense of mission tied to honoring George Harrison’s legacy.

As the journalist and photographer arrive, Andy finishes his workout and prepares reluctantly to face the media. Despite his initial urge to avoid the encounter, he participates in the staged photo session and the interview, where he plays the role Morris assigned to him. Andy’s performance of outrage appears genuine enough to satisfy the journalist, who appreciates his comments on English Heritage’s neglect of Morris’s campaign. This segment highlights the performative nature of media interactions and the small acts of solidarity that support Morris’s cause.

Later, Andy meets his mother in a busy London department store, where she immerses herself in cosmetics shopping, testing numerous perfumes and lipsticks with childlike enthusiasm. Their interaction is tender but tinged with Andy’s underlying discomfort and detachment from his mother’s world. He observes her vulnerability and the subtle dissonance between her small figure and the overwhelming urban environment. The scene captures a poignant moment of familial connection amid the noise and distraction of the city.

The chapter closes with Andy’s internal reflection as he wanders through the store, feeling like an outsider to the feminine preoccupations around him. His awkwardness and self-consciousness contrast with his mother’s carefree exploration of beauty

products. This ending underscores themes of generational difference, gender roles, and personal alienation, while maintaining the narrative’s intimate and observational tone.

# Saturday 24th August 2019

The chapter opens with an evocative scene featuring Morris Foster, a 78-year-old Hornsey resident and former laboratory technician, who is passionately advocating for recognition of his home’s connection to Beatles history. Morris claims that George Harrison once stayed overnight at his house in 1963 after a concert, a fact that he believes qualifies the house for an English Heritage plaque. Despite his diligent research and repeated attempts to contact English Heritage, his efforts have been ignored, leaving him feeling marginalized and erased from an important cultural narrative. This frustration is shared by Andy Dawson, a record producer who lodges with Morris and expresses his outrage at the institution’s neglect.

The narrative shifts to a more personal tone as the author interacts with Morris in the kitchen, reflecting on the significance of the newspaper article and the day ahead. Their conversation reveals layers of character and subtle tension, particularly around the author’s profession as a comedian, which Morris struggles to fully understand or accept. This exchange highlights the contrast between Morris’s traditional mindset and the author’s contemporary career, yet also hints at a budding friendship as they tentatively agree to spend time together socially. The scene underscores themes of connection, memory, and the challenges of communication across generations.

The focus then moves to the author’s experience preparing for a wedding gig in London, marked by a mixture of cynicism and professional obligation. The author expresses disdain for wedding performances, noting the difficulty of crafting personalized humor from limited information provided by the couple. Upon arrival at the venue, the author encounters Robbo, the best man, whose confident and informal demeanor adds a touch of levity to the otherwise awkward situation of navigating the event’s logistics. This part of the chapter captures the author's ambivalence about the job and the social dynamics involved in performing at such occasions.

Overall, the chapter weaves together themes of historical recognition, personal identity, and professional challenges. Morris’s struggle for acknowledgment contrasts with the author’s everyday battles for artistic validation and social connection. The chapter balances moments of seriousness with humor and warmth, painting a nuanced portrait of individuals negotiating their places within larger cultural and social frameworks. It sets the stage for further exploration of these intertwined lives and their respective quests for meaning and respect.

# Friday 6th September 2019

The chapter opens with an unexpected encounter between the narrator and Daisy, his ex-girlfriend from before his relationship with Jen. Despite the passage of time, Daisy appears unchanged, and the narrator reflects on the painful end of their two-year relationship. He recalls how he concealed his loss of love, delaying the breakup and ultimately leaving Daisy to initiate it. The meeting stirs a complex mix of emotions, including guilt and empathy, as the narrator recognizes the hurt he caused her and now experiences similar feelings himself. Their brief conversation is polite but distant, underscoring the awkwardness of reconnecting after such a significant shared history.

Following the encounter, the narrator meets Morris in a pub, offering a contrasting dynamic. Morris, a somber and somewhat blunt companion, listens as the narrator recounts the failed casting audition and the emotional weight of seeing Daisy again. Their interaction is marked by Morris’s straightforward, sometimes insensitive remarks, which the narrator navigates carefully. The conversation reveals a camaraderie rooted in mutual understanding of life's disappointments, especially in matters of love and career. Morris encourages persistence, while the narrator expresses a resigned acceptance of rejection and personal setbacks.

As their dialogue deepens, the narrator shares insights into his emotional growth, particularly his newfound empathy for Daisy’s pain. This reflection highlights the narrator’s evolving perspective on relationships, recognizing the complexity and vulnerability involved. The mention of Morris’s own marital past introduces a poignant layer, as Morris unexpectedly reveals he was once married but was left without explanation. This disclosure adds depth to Morris’s character and parallels the narrator’s experiences of loss and abandonment, emphasizing themes of loneliness and resilience.

The chapter closes with a tone of quiet reflection and bittersweet understanding. Both men, through their shared stories and candid exchanges, confront the difficulties of human connection and the unpredictability of life’s paths. The narrator’s toast to Morris’s advice about avoiding marriage carries a note of irony and resignation, encapsulating the chapter’s exploration of love’s challenges and the personal growth that arises from heartbreak and unexpected reunions.

# Saturday 7th September 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator reflecting on the importance of details in storytelling, emphasizing that the specifics of how events unfold matter more than the mere facts. On a hangover-soaked Saturday morning, he reluctantly heads to a job promoting haircare products in a busy London shopping center. His role is vaguely defined, and as he struggles through the day, the narrative sets a tone of awkwardness and uncertainty. The initial encounter that seems significant is when he unexpectedly sees Jen, an important figure from his past, which momentarily brings a sense of ease and warmth.

However, the story takes a turn when Jen introduces the narrator to Seb, a strikingly perfect and confident man who immediately unsettles him. Seb’s polished appearance and confident demeanor contrast sharply with the narrator’s own insecurities and awkwardness. The interaction between the three is tense, underscored by subtle social cues and uncomfortable exchanges, such as Seb’s comment about buying a mattress, which carries an implicit intimacy with Jen. The narrator’s internal struggle becomes evident as he tries to maintain composure while feeling overshadowed and out of place.

The chapter’s tone shifts from lighthearted to more distressing when the narrator deals with the emotional weight of the encounter. He reflects on his relationship with Jen and the painful reality of her being with someone like Seb. The experience forces him to confront his feelings of rejection and the harsh truth of moving on. This emotional turmoil is compounded by a message from Daisy, another past connection, which bluntly tells him to stop projecting his emotions and move forward. The narrator’s inability to respond to either message highlights his inner conflict and sense of stagnation.

Ending on a note of defiant resilience, the narrator navigates through the bustling city, grappling with feelings of shame and redemption. An encounter with a street preacher condemning him to hell is met with a quiet but firm resolve to face his challenges bravely. The repetition of his affirmation, “Yes I will,” serves as a poignant declaration of his determination to endure and grow despite the emotional pain. This closing moment encapsulates the chapter’s exploration of vulnerability, acceptance, and the complexity of human relationships.

# Thursday 12th September 2019

The chapter delves into the narrator's recent discoveries about Seb, a man connected to Jen, revealing details from his background and personality. Seb works at the same company as Jen, having joined a year prior, and hails from a small English border town with Welsh ties. He has South African heritage through his mother and is 44 years old. The narrator uncovers Seb’s past relationship with Kate and notes Seb’s interests, such as Caribbean holidays and extreme sports for charity. Despite some sympathy for Seb’s personal losses, the narrator remains skeptical of him, particularly regarding his relationship with Jen.

The narrator initiates what is termed the "Jen Inquiry," a personal investigation into the reasons behind Jen's breakup with them and the nature of her relationship with Seb. This inquiry is marked by the narrator's strategic approach to conversations with mutual acquaintances, carefully managing social "tokens" to avoid overstepping. The tension of navigating these interactions is palpable, especially during a visit to friends Jane and Avi, where the narrator must balance curiosity with social tact amid the chaos of family life.

A poignant moment arises when Jane’s child, Jackson, expresses feelings of being replaced, mirroring the narrator’s own sense of loss and displacement. This interaction underscores the emotional undercurrents running through the chapter, highlighting themes of attachment, favoritism, and the complexities of familial and romantic relationships. The narrator's empathy toward Jackson’s plight provides a humanizing contrast to the otherwise investigative tone of the chapter.

The chapter concludes with a lighter, more humorous scene as the narrator recounts an unexpected encounter with Daisy, an ex-partner, and the awkward aftermath of a drunken voicemail apology. This anecdote serves to break the tension and offers insight into the narrator’s vulnerable and self-deprecating nature. It also subtly sets

the stage for further exploration of the narrator’s personal life and emotional struggles, maintaining the chapter’s blend of introspection and narrative momentum.

# Saturday 14th September 2019

The chapter opens with Kelly recounting her disastrous trip to Ibiza during an early morning training session. She shares a detailed, multi-chaptered story about how her plans to enter a club with another woman fell apart. Instead, she encountered her ex while intoxicated on the dance floor, witnessed her ex leaving with someone else, and subsequently got into a heated argument that led to both of them being ejected from the club. Kelly’s recounting is vivid and emotionally charged, painting a picture of chaos and heartbreak that she relives with every retelling.

As Kelly continues her rant, the narrator admits to mentally tuning out, recognizing that Kelly’s story is likely repeated to many clients with the same intensity. Despite this, the narrator offers a blank, attentive face, understanding the cathartic value of such venting. This moment highlights the contrast between Kelly’s emotional investment in her story and the narrator’s own emotional distance, setting up a reflective tone that permeates the chapter.

The narrator then drifts into a private, almost desperate contemplation, listing a series of extreme and sometimes absurd sacrifices they would be willing to make to rekindle a past love with Jen. These imagined concessions range from personal inconveniences like giving up alcohol and never eating ham again, to more significant life changes such as visiting Jen’s parents regularly or enduring the loss of a grandparent. This internal monologue underscores the narrator’s deep yearning and the lengths they would consider going for love, adding a layer of vulnerability beneath the chapter’s outwardly casual tone.

The chapter closes on a note of dark humor as Kelly laughs "demonically," dismissing the ex and the situation with a biting remark. This final interaction encapsulates the mix of bitterness, resilience, and camaraderie between the two characters. The narrator’s mental escape and Kelly’s fiery attitude together create a nuanced depiction

of coping with emotional turmoil, blending raw honesty with a touch of sardonic wit.

# Wednesday 18th September 2019

The chapter explores a unique experiment where the narrator, adopting the fictional identity "Clifford Beverley," attends a therapy session to gain insight into his troubled relationship with his girlfriend, Alice. By posing as Clifford, he seeks professional advice on whether to end the relationship, reflecting his confusion and need for clarity. The narrator’s inventive approach stems from his desire to understand what a therapist might say about someone like him, influenced by imagined opinions that may have contributed to his breakup with Jen. This sets the tone for a candid exploration of personal doubts and relational dynamics.

During the session, Clifford reveals his concerns about the disparity between his corporate career as a lawyer and Alice’s unconventional, creative pursuits as a burlesque dancer and juggler. He expresses frustration and judgment towards Alice’s lifestyle, contrasting it with his own structured, financially driven path. The therapist probes deeper, challenging Clifford’s judgments and suggesting that his negative feelings might stem from deeper emotional conflicts rather than surface-level issues like income or job status. This dialogue highlights the complexity of Clifford’s feelings and the therapist’s attempt to unravel underlying causes.

The therapist encourages Clifford to reflect on his upbringing and parental influences, implying that his critical attitude towards Alice mirrors the judgments he experienced from his father. Clifford struggles to engage fully with this introspective line of inquiry, eager to focus on practical relationship concerns rather than childhood history. Despite his resistance, the session underscores the importance of addressing personal history to understand present relationship challenges. The therapist’s calm, methodical approach contrasts with Clifford’s impatience and skepticism about therapy’s value.

The chapter concludes with Clifford abruptly ending the session, feeling dissatisfied and skeptical about the therapeutic process. He is left grappling with unresolved

questions about his relationship and his own emotional state. The narrative shifts briefly to his professional frustrations, as he notices delayed payments and a lack of career progress, adding to his sense of dissatisfaction. Overall, the chapter presents a nuanced portrayal of a man caught between conflicting desires, searching for answers through an unconventional and revealing therapeutic encounter.

# Saturday 28th September 2019

The chapter opens with Emery’s return to the dressing room, where his presence instantly lifts the mood. Having been absent from the comedy circuit following a recent award, Emery’s arrival sparks a warm and familiar exchange with the narrator. Their conversation is playful and intimate, marked by Emery’s teasing riddles about upcoming projects and a phone call with their agent. This interaction reveals the behind-the-scenes dynamics of their careers, highlighting the tension between professional demands and personal connections within the entertainment industry.

Amid their banter, the narrator expresses frustration with their agent’s lack of communication, contrasting it with Emery’s seemingly privileged access to high-profile opportunities, such as dinners with Netflix executives. This comparison underscores the competitive and sometimes isolating nature of their profession. Emery offers support and understanding, acknowledging the challenges of maintaining relationships with agents who juggle numerous clients. Their camaraderie is punctuated by light-hearted jabs, reflecting the blend of rivalry and friendship that defines their relationship.

The conversation shifts to more personal territory as the narrator confides about an obsession with another man, which Emery interprets as a sexual fixation. His candid and humorous response delves into themes of jealousy and desire, using the example of the song “Mr Brightside” to illustrate how romantic jealousy can be a powerful, if conflicted, emotional force. This moment reveals the characters’ vulnerability and the complexities of their emotional lives, set against the backdrop of their comedic personas.

The chapter concludes with the arrival of other colleagues, Tim and Marcus, signaling the ongoing bustle of the comedy world. Their brief introductions and descriptions maintain the chapter’s rhythm, capturing the diverse personalities that populate their

environment. Overall, the chapter paints a vivid picture of the interplay between professional ambition, personal struggles, and the bonds formed within the comedy community, all conveyed through lively dialogue and rich characterization.

# Friday 4th October 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator mentally preparing for a date with a woman twelve years his junior. He rationalizes the age difference by identifying shared cultural touchstones, such as popular music and significant world events, which bridge their generational gap. He humorously dismisses the notion that age should dictate compatibility, arguing that shared experiences are more complex than simply overlapping timelines. The narrator also acknowledges societal judgments and defends his choice, emphasizing the woman’s maturity, clear communication, and self-possession as factors that balance the inherent power dynamics in their relationship.

Upon arrival at the pub, the narrator finds the woman already engaged with a collection of self-developed black-and-white photographs, including intimate self-portraits. These images provoke a mixture of fascination and awkwardness in him, as he grapples with how to appropriately respond to such vulnerability. Their interaction is marked by a casual intimacy, underscored by laughter and mutual respect. The photographs serve not only as a window into her artistic expression but also as a symbol of her openness and confidence, setting the tone for their evolving connection.

The woman shares insights about her work as a photographer’s assistant, candidly discussing both the opportunities and challenges she faces in the fashion industry. Her reflections reveal a keen awareness of the professional landscape and a determination to carve out her own identity amidst difficult circumstances. The chapter highlights her dynamic personality through anecdotes illustrated by images on her phone, which she uses to enrich their conversation. This exchange deepens their rapport, blending personal and professional dimensions in a natural flow.

Throughout the date, the narrator discloses personal details about his recent lifestyle changes, including his commitment to fitness and dietary discipline. The woman’s measured and nonjudgmental response fosters a sense of ease, allowing him to share

vulnerabilities without fear of criticism. Their reciprocal attentiveness, such as taking turns buying drinks and discussing preferences, further cements a balanced and respectful interaction. The chapter closes with the narrator beginning to explain his path into comedy, signaling a continued unfolding of their connection grounded in openness and mutual curiosity.

# Monday 7th October 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator recounting his routine visits to Sophie’s flat after gigs on consecutive nights. Their interactions are intimate yet casual, blending physical closeness with relaxed conversation and shared meals. Despite their connection, Sophie enforces a boundary: the narrator must leave by Monday night, regardless of inconvenience. This rule sparks a playful yet honest dialogue about their differing views on relationships, desire, and the "chase." The narrator admits to valuing genuine affection over games, contrasting Sophie’s teasing insistence on maintaining some distance and complexity in their dynamic.

As they discuss their relationship status, Sophie probes the narrator about his past, revealing his recent breakup and lingering feelings. She encourages openness, creating a space for him to share his vulnerabilities about his ex-girlfriend and his struggle with social media boundaries. Sophie’s advice to block his ex and her new partner on Instagram highlights the emotional challenges of moving on. Their exchange balances humor with tenderness, underscoring themes of heartbreak, healing, and the complexities of modern dating.

Walking home, the narrator reflects on the ambiguous nature of his relationship with Sophie. He feels a blend of closeness and detachment, excitement and dissatisfaction, as if they are enacting couple-like routines without the commitments or expectations typically associated with a relationship. This paradoxical state evokes a sense of confusion but also a reluctant acceptance, emphasizing the nuanced emotional landscape of their connection. The narrator’s introspection reveals the tension between desire for intimacy and the freedom of non-commitment.

The chapter concludes with a shift to a domestic scene involving Morris, who is setting up an early Christmas tree. Through Morris’s explanation, the narrator learns about the tradition’s personal and practical significance, separate from religious connotations.

This moment adds a layer of warmth and normalcy, contrasting with the narrator’s romantic uncertainties. The scene subtly reinforces themes of routine, support, and the small rituals that provide comfort amid life’s complexities.

# Friday 11th October 2019

In this chapter, the narrator recounts his experience performing at the UK Independent Pharmacists' Annual Autumn Party. Though initially anticipating a lackluster event, he finds the audience surprisingly receptive, even if his comedic credentials—rooted in minor TV appearances—fail to impress. The pharmacists respond kindly, laughing at his jokes about Big Pharma, contrasting sharply with past hostile receptions from audiences like accountants. This sets the tone that the event itself was not the issue, but rather what follows afterward.

The narrative shifts as the narrator reflects on his professional status upon checking a corporate booking website where performers are discreetly ranked by booking fees, from A to F. Previously proud to be ranked as an E, he is dismayed to discover he has been demoted to an F, symbolizing a low point in his career. Attempts to discuss this setback with his agent prove frustrating, highlighting the difficulties he faces in managing his career and the emotional toll of such demotions in a competitive industry.

Seeking support, the narrator shares moments of his personal life, including interactions with his friend Kelly, who encourages him with humor and camaraderie. These exchanges provide a brief emotional uplift amidst professional uncertainty. The narrative also touches on his domestic life, where he visits friends Avi and Jane, enjoying simple pleasures like fish and chips and the warmth of their family home. These scenes contrast with his professional struggles, emphasizing the importance of personal connections and comfort.

The chapter closes on a note of quiet reflection as the narrator navigates the complexities of relationships and secrecy, asking Avi not to mention Sophie in front of Jane. The sensory details of sharing food and the warmth of friendship underscore themes of belonging and vulnerability. Overall, the chapter blends professional

challenges with intimate moments, illustrating the narrator’s resilience and the small joys that sustain him amid career disappointments.

# Tuesday 15th October 2019

In this chapter from *Tuesday 15th October 2019*, the narrator meets Sophie for dinner in Chinatown, where they share mutual frustrations about their personal and professional struggles. Sophie vents about a difficult day assisting on a magazine cover shoot, while the narrator laments a recent downgrade in their corporate speaking engagements. Their conversation touches on deeper themes of self-awareness and financial independence, highlighting a contrast between their current states and past relationships. The narrator reflects on the comfort found in simple companionship rather than intense self-discovery, appreciating the easy camaraderie with Sophie despite their age difference.

After dinner, they wander through Soho in search of a bar, where the narrator enthusiastically suggests karaoke. Despite Sophie’s initial reluctance and labeling karaoke as "cringe," the narrator persuades her to join a private booth for a more intimate experience. They share drinks and take turns singing, with the narrator confidently performing a rap-heavy song while Sophie initially remains reserved. Gradually, the duo engages in duets, easing Sophie into the activity, though the narrator senses a forced effort beneath her surface enjoyment. The karaoke setting serves as a backdrop for their evolving dynamic, balancing lighthearted fun with underlying emotional tensions.

The narrator reminisces about a previous relationship with Jen, contrasting the current tentative connection with Sophie against the passionate and exuberant early days with Jen. This memory of shared karaoke sessions, intimate moments, and the thrill of new love underscores the narrator’s current ambivalence. The chapter juxtaposes the joy and intensity of past relationships with the quieter, more uncertain beginnings of the present one. The narrator’s reflections reveal a longing for meaningful connection while acknowledging a reluctance to delve too deeply into personal vulnerabilities at

this stage.

Overall, the chapter explores themes of companionship, vulnerability, and the complexities of adult relationships. Through the shared experience of karaoke, the narrator and Sophie navigate the awkwardness of early intimacy and the challenge of truly knowing another person. The narrative balances moments of humor and nostalgia with an honest portrayal of emotional reservation, illustrating the nuanced ways people connect and support each other amid life’s uncertainties.

# Friday 18th October 2019

The chapter unfolds backstage on Friday, 18th October 2019, where the narrator observes the changes in Emery, a successful yet disheveled performer whose increasing fame seems mirrored by his expanding hair. Their interaction reveals Emery’s exhaustion and restless energy, highlighted by his dependence on whisky and his cryptic reflections on romantic relationships. The narrator confides his confusion about his ambiguous connection with Sophie, struggling to define whether their intimacy is purely physical or something more meaningful. Emery’s candid, if somewhat slurred, advice encourages him to embrace the uncertainty and enjoy the present creatively.

As the evening progresses, the dressing room fills with other comedians preparing for the show. Archie, a confident newcomer popular online, and Michelle, a seasoned Australian feminist and comedian, arrive alongside Nick, a bitter veteran whose presence dampens the room’s mood. The dynamics between these performers underscore the contrasts within the comedy circuit, from fresh digital fame to traditional stage experience. Michelle’s relatable and sharp humor about British men and motherhood immediately wins over the audience, setting a lively tone for the show.

The performance begins with Archie’s archetypal character comedy, which, despite its predictability, resonates with the crowd familiar with his online persona. Michelle follows with witty observations on cultural quirks, urging men to be “faster and funnier” in their storytelling, a mantra that elicits enthusiastic audience participation. Emery’s drunken, impromptu set on political themes, though disorganized, is received as a special treat, his spontaneous protest song rallying the crowd with collective humor and nostalgia.

Finally, the narrator takes the stage to a lukewarm reception, relying on familiar comedic bits to engage the audience. This moment captures the precariousness of performance, where success is uncertain and the pressure to connect is palpable. The chapter vividly portrays the backstage world of comedians—their vulnerabilities, camaraderie, and the interplay between personal struggles and public personas—while reflecting on themes of identity, creativity, and the complexities of human relationships.

# Monday 21st October 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator waking up to a disconcerting text from a barely known comedian, hinting at troubling online discussions involving them. Initially confused and anxious, the narrator searches online, discovering a critical article titled "RIP STAND-UP COMEDY" that harshly condemns the current state of stand-up comedy, using comedian Andy Dawson as an emblem of its decline. The article dismisses Dawson's style as uninspired and repetitive, symbolizing a broader cultural stagnation in comedy. This revelation shocks the narrator, who begins to question the relevance and quality of traditional comedic forms dominated by unoriginal performers.

As the narrator delves deeper, they encounter a flood of online comments reacting to the article. The responses vary from enthusiastic support to dismissive indifference, reflecting a divided public opinion on both the article and the comedian in question. The narrator observes this digital “party” of voices, noting the mix of humor, criticism, and personal anecdotes that reveal the complexities of the comedy scene and its audience. This engagement with the online discourse intensifies the narrator’s introspection about their own place within this ecosystem and the impact of such public scrutiny.

The chapter then shifts focus to the narrator’s personal reflections triggered by a disparaging comment from someone who attended the same school years earlier. This prompts a painful self-examination of their past behavior and reputation, exacerbating feelings of vulnerability and isolation. The narrator grapples with the desire to reach out to old acquaintances for reassurance but is hindered by pride, fear of judgment, and concern over burdening close relationships. This internal conflict underscores the emotional toll that public criticism and social media exposure inflict on individuals.

In the closing moments, the narrator confronts the loneliness of their situation, longing for a confidant who can provide comfort and perspective away from the relentless

online chatter. They express a deep need for human connection and escape from the digital noise, illustrating the profound personal consequences of public controversy in the modern age. The chapter poignantly captures the intersection of public persona, online culture, and private vulnerability, setting a reflective and somber tone for the narrative.

# Monday 28th October 2019

The chapter opens with the protagonist receiving a belated call from his agent, triggered by a viral article about a client's disastrous comedy set. Their conversation reveals the agent's superficial support and the protagonist's growing disillusionment with the platitudes often exchanged in their professional relationship. Despite the agent's insistence on staying quiet about the article, the protagonist feels detached and resigned, recognizing the performative nature of the encouragement he once valued. The dialogue hints at a stalled career moment, with the agent urging him to contemplate new creative directions for an upcoming Edinburgh show and tour, though the protagonist remains skeptical about the sincerity and future of their collaboration.

Later, the narrative shifts to a more intimate setting as Sophie arrives at the protagonist's home, marking their first meeting since a previous awkward encounter. Despite his initial reluctance to socialize, Sophie's persistence leads to a tentative reunion marked by a cautious exploration of his personal space and belongings. Their interaction is characterized by a quiet, tentative curiosity, with Sophie asking about the protagonist's past and family, gently uncovering layers of his history and emotional landscape. This scene establishes a subtle emotional connection, underscored by the protagonist's guardedness and Sophie's empathetic responses.

The conversation reveals poignant details about the protagonist's family background, including his absent father, which Sophie acknowledges with sympathy. Their exchange deepens as Sophie offers a rare gesture of physical comfort, breaking the emotional distance between them. The protagonist's reflection on his upbringing without a father challenges conventional narratives of loss and resilience, presenting a nuanced view of identity shaped by absence rather than tragedy. This moment of shared vulnerability hints at the possibility of trust and support in their evolving

relationship, contrasting with the earlier professional disillusionment.

The chapter concludes with a subdued atmosphere as they watch a lengthy film together, sharing quiet companionship without romantic or physical expectations. Sophie’s slow and distracted search for a missing scarf adds a subtle tension, perhaps reflecting her emotional state or the complexity of their interaction. The protagonist’s desire for solitude contrasts with Sophie’s lingering presence, leaving the scene open-ended and reflective. Overall, the chapter explores themes of isolation, connection, and the challenges of navigating personal and professional uncertainty with a tone that balances introspection and understated emotional depth.

# Saturday 2nd November 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator seeking a private place in a park to make a difficult phone call, consciously avoiding being overheard or disturbed. Reflecting on recent emotional turmoil, including two break-ups within four months, the narrator wrestles with feelings of confusion and vulnerability. Despite self-reassurances that no promises were made and that the relationship was casual, there is an undercurrent of uncertainty about the true nature of the connection with Sophie.

During the call, the narrator carefully chooses words, attempting to clarify their relationship status. The interaction reveals a tension between their desire for a casual arrangement and Sophie's expectation for a more formal relationship. Sophie’s impatience and sarcasm surface as she challenges the narrator’s hesitations, prompting a candid exchange about their feelings and intentions. The narrator admits to needing something casual due to lingering emotional distress from a past break-up, which Sophie interprets bluntly as a regression to a purely physical connection.

The conversation intensifies as Sophie accuses the narrator of only reaching out because of mutual acquaintances, highlighting a lack of trust and emotional distance. The narrator tries to express genuine affection and regret for the situation, but Sophie’s tone shifts to coldness and finality. Her earlier warmth is replaced by a strict boundary, emphasizing that the relationship cannot continue in any form. This stark change underscores the emotional complexity and unresolved tension between them.

The chapter concludes with Sophie decisively ending the call, refusing further contact and reinforcing the end of their interaction. The narrator is left grappling with the consequences of their choices and the fragile nature of their connection. This moment captures the painful reality of navigating relationships complicated by timing, emotional readiness, and differing expectations, leaving a lingering sense of loss and unresolved feelings.

# Friday 15th November 2019

The chapter centers on a rare gathering of old friends—Jon, Jay, Rob, Avi, Matt, and the narrator—brought together by Jon, who is typically unreliable. The narrator suspects Jon has an important announcement, possibly related to marriage plans, which adds a layer of anticipation to the evening. Despite the camaraderie, the narrator feels a familiar burden as the designated MC, tasked with maintaining the night's pace and morale, a role that reminds him of his fading comedic relevance among the group. Meanwhile, the narrator observes the social media activity of acquaintances, interpreting their posts as indirect messages about relationships and personal status.

As the night unfolds, the group slips into their habitual pattern of complaining about various life issues—from home renovations to parenting struggles—highlighting a shared sense of frustration and stagnation. Jon’s unusual quietness eventually breaks with the revelation that he and his long-term partner, Chrissy, have recently separated. This news shifts the atmosphere, inviting sympathy but also exposing the group's emotional distance. Their support is limited to logistical offers and generic reassurances, reflecting a reluctance to engage deeply with the raw emotional reality of break-ups.

The narrator, having endured a similar heartbreak months earlier, recognizes the pain Jon faces and yearns to offer genuine empathy and understanding. However, the group’s typical response falls short of meaningful emotional support, perpetuating a cycle of superficial consolation. The narrator wrestles internally with the desire to break this pattern and provide a space for honest expression of sadness, recognizing that acknowledging pain is crucial for healing and avoiding mental turmoil. Yet, he hesitates, uncertain how to communicate this without awkwardness or misunderstanding.

In the quieter moments between the two friends, the narrator attempts to bridge this gap by openly offering his support to Jon, emphasizing his willingness to listen without judgment. Jon’s response, though subdued, invites a deeper connection, hinting at the potential for shared vulnerability. The chapter closes on the narrator’s introspective note, contemplating the importance of confronting sadness openly rather than masking it, and the challenges inherent in expressing emotional truths within the confines of male friendship and societal expectations.

# Saturday 16th November 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator arriving at a lively fourth birthday party, immediately immersed in the chaotic atmosphere of energetic children running amok. Jen is present, quietly engaged in conversation while the living room overflows with young kids in various states of play. Avi, the host, manages the crowd with a mix of humor and mild frustration, noting how the children seem more adept at using modern technology like Alexa than the adults. The parents' absence is noticeable, as many have left their children to be entertained, highlighting the party's dual role as a social event and informal childcare.

The narrator reconnects with familiar faces, including Jen and Jane, and observes the dynamics among the adults, who gather mostly in the kitchen. Jane shares her anticipation for her upcoming maternity leave, describing it as a refreshing break from societal pressures and the isolating aspects of motherhood. Meanwhile, Jen, who has no children, is playfully acknowledged by the other mothers as having the "right idea." This conversation subtly underscores the varying perspectives on parenthood and the social expectations surrounding it.

As the party progresses, Avi returns with party supplies that spark a minor domestic dispute with Jane over the choice of party bag contents. Despite Jane's clear instructions to avoid sweets and plastic toys, Avi's selections include exactly those items, prompting a teasing but pointed exchange. This moment captures the tensions and compromises inherent in family life and event planning, as well as the underlying humor in their interactions. Jen and the narrator share a knowing glance, recalling the couple's familiar bickering.

The chapter culminates with the narrator surprising the children by donning camouflage and face paint, brandishing Nerf guns to initiate an energetic game. The children's excitement is palpable, especially Jackson's, who eagerly embraces the

playful chaos. The narrator’s transformation and engagement in the game bring a sense of joy and connection amidst the earlier tension, highlighting the importance of fun and spontaneity in family gatherings. The lively scene encapsulates the chapter’s themes of community, parenting challenges, and the blending of order with joyful disorder.

# Sunday 17th November 2019

The chapter opens with a quiet, somewhat cold morning as the narrator wakes beside Jen, who is already awake but emotionally distant. Their interaction is marked by subtle tension; Jen is hung-over and evasive about the previous night's events, signaling a desire to avoid accountability. While the narrator yearns to prolong the intimacy and connection they shared, Jen's actions—turning on the radio, bustling about independently—suggest a withdrawal and a shift in their dynamic. The atmosphere is one of fading warmth, as the narrator senses the magic of last night has dissipated.

As the morning progresses, practical concerns arise with the discovery that the narrator's keys are missing. Jen's efforts to help find them reflect a momentary return of care, yet the unresolved loss of the keys symbolizes deeper uncertainties in their relationship. The narrator's suggestion to contact the Uber driver and reliance on a housemate for entry highlight a growing distance and the logistical complications that mirror their emotional disconnect. Jen's offer to post the keys if found feels like a polite but detached gesture, underscoring the fragile state of their connection.

The chapter's emotional core unfolds in a poignant exchange at the door, where both characters grapple with unspoken feelings. The narrator recalls a shared memory from a holiday, using it as a lens to confront the reality of their breakup. Jen's hesitant admission that the recent weekend was a "lost weekend" and that the narrator was her own "lost weekend" reveals the complexity of their parting—marked by regret, sorrow, and unfulfilled potential. Jen's tearful acknowledgment brings a moment of clarity and understanding to the narrator, as they recognize the finality of their separation.

In the closing moments, the silence between them speaks volumes. The narrator's simple farewell and departure, followed by the closing door, signify an emotional and

physical severance. The chapter encapsulates a bittersweet farewell, blending memories with the stark reality of loss. It captures the nuanced process of letting go, balancing tenderness with the inevitability of moving on, and leaves the reader with a resonant sense of closure and quiet heartbreak.

# Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Jen 2

The chapter "Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Jen" succinctly captures the emotional reality of unrequited feelings. The narrator opens with a stark acknowledgment: Jen did not want to be with them. This simple yet profound statement sets the tone for the chapter, emphasizing acceptance of a relationship that never truly existed from Jen’s perspective. The brevity underscores the clarity with which the narrator views the situation, highlighting the importance of recognizing when affection is not reciprocated.

The core viewpoint revolves around the necessity of moving on from a one-sided attachment. The narrator implicitly suggests that understanding Jen’s lack of interest is a crucial step toward personal growth. By stating the fact plainly, the chapter avoids dramatization, instead opting for a mature reflection on the dynamics of relationships where feelings are not mutual. This perspective encourages readers to confront uncomfortable truths rather than dwell in denial or false hope.

Moreover, the chapter’s tone maintains an objective and composed stance, steering clear of bitterness or resentment. This neutrality reflects a healthy emotional processing of rejection, focusing on the benefits of not being with someone who does not share the same feelings. It subtly advocates for self-respect and emotional well-being by acknowledging that a relationship without mutual desire is ultimately unfulfilling and potentially harmful.

In essence, this brief chapter distills a complex emotional experience into a clear and concise message: it is better not to be with someone who does not want to be with you. The narrator’s acceptance serves as a reminder that recognizing and respecting the boundaries of others’ feelings is essential. This realization forms the foundation for moving forward with dignity and self-awareness, reinforcing the overarching theme of personal empowerment through honest self-reflection.

# Saturday 7th December 2019

The chapter opens with a vivid depiction of a bleak winter evening in suburban England, emphasizing the starkness and desolation of the environment. The narrator reflects on the short daylight hours and the dull, lifeless garden visible from their bedroom window, drawing a contrast between this mundane setting and more exotic, harsh landscapes. This somber atmosphere sets the tone for the narrator’s introspective mood as they engage in a quiet, yet emotionally charged interaction with their mother, who brings them tea and expresses concern about their infrequent visits, typically linked to times of distress.

As the evening progresses, the narrator contemplates the possibility of settling permanently in their hometown, weighing the simplicity and comfort of life with their mother against the complexities and isolations of life in London. They acknowledge the emotional and social distance from friends and significant others, highlighting their strained communications and the fading motivation that once fueled their fitness routines and healthy habits. The narrative conveys a sense of stagnation and longing for stability, juxtaposed with the pull of a life that feels both overwhelming and unfulfilling.

The shared dinner and television watching create a domestic backdrop for a deeper conversation about politics and dreams of a different life, such as owning a hotel abroad. The mother’s candid remarks and lighthearted fears about such a venture add warmth and humor, yet the narrator’s internal questioning about why they must return to London underscores a desire to avoid heartache and disappointment by embracing a quieter, more predictable existence. This tension between desire for safety and the necessity of confronting life’s challenges permeates the chapter.

The chapter culminates in a poignant moment when the mother, breaking her decade-long abstinence, smokes a cigarette in reaction to the distress over political outcomes,

leading to a shared drink and an intimate conversation about rejection and emotional pain. The mother offers a profound insight into the nature of heartbreak, framing it as the resurfacing of all past rejections and insecurities. The narrator’s admission of exhaustion and difficulty in letting go deepens the emotional resonance, leaving the reader with a powerful reflection on vulnerability and the complexity of healing.

# Saturday 14th December 2019

The chapter opens with the narrator ending a relationship with Kelly during a train journey to London. He sends a thoughtful message explaining his need for introspection and a pause from his usual fitness regimen, the Dream Body Plan™, prioritizing inner growth over external appearances. This moment of personal reflection is accompanied by a modest dinner choice and a conscious decision to abstain from alcohol, marking a hopeful shift in his habits following the breakup.

Upon arriving home, the narrator encounters Morris, whose normally reserved demeanor is replaced by an unusual buoyancy. Their conversation reveals Morris's excitement about a letter he has received from someone named Julian, who acknowledges Morris's efforts in preserving the Beatles' history and commends his dedication to exposing corruption. The letter expresses high regard for Morris's integrity and the importance of his mission, surprising the narrator and deepening the connection between the two characters.

As the dialogue unfolds, the narrator shares his intention to remain in town and invites Morris to join his family for Christmas, offering both companionship and a place to stay. Morris's initial hesitation gives way to acceptance, signaling a budding friendship and mutual support. This exchange highlights themes of healing, community, and the gradual rebuilding of trust and connection after personal setbacks.

The chapter concludes with Morris tentatively offering advice on personal relationships, revealing his own uncertainty but a willingness to engage with these complex matters. His cautious yet earnest approach underscores the chapter's exploration of vulnerability and the challenges of navigating emotional growth. The tone remains reflective and sincere, emphasizing the characters' evolving interpersonal dynamics and the tentative steps toward renewal.

# Friday 31st January 2020

The chapter opens with the protagonist preparing nervously for a stage performance scheduled for 7:30 p.m. As he checks himself in the mirror, he reflects on the significance of the day—coinciding with the final hours of the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union. Despite the cultural fatigue surrounding Brexit jokes, he contemplates weaving a sophisticated parallel between the political breakup and his personal breakup with Jen. This internal monologue sets a tone of introspection and anticipation, highlighting the intersection of public and private upheavals.

Descending the stairs, the protagonist encounters Morris, who is meticulously disinfecting the mail with rubber gloves, a detail that underscores the pervasive anxiety likely linked to an unfolding health crisis. Morris offers encouragement for the upcoming show and mentions uncertainty about attending the next performance, hinting at external circumstances affecting their lives. The protagonist, though puzzled by Morris's behavior and concerns, accepts the situation with a calm resignation, emphasizing his focus on the immediate task ahead.

At the venue, the protagonist engages in a final soundcheck and reviews his notes backstage. He scans the audience as they arrive, anxiously searching for Jen without success. Checking his phone for any response from her, he finds none and prepares to document the show for later review. The environment is charged with a mix of professional focus and personal tension, as the protagonist balances his commitment to the performance with his unresolved feelings toward Jen.

When the show begins, the protagonist spots Jen in the third row. Her expressionless face and subtle physical details, like the shifting shape of her nose, evoke a poignant sense of emotional distance. Her gaze is fixed ahead, not meeting his, reinforcing the theme of separation and unspoken emotions. As the stage lights dim and the music cues his entrance, the chapter closes on a moment of quiet intensity, capturing the

complex interplay of personal loss and public performance.

# Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Andy

The chapter "Reasons Why It’s Good I’m Not With Andy" offers a candid and detailed critique of Andy’s personality and behavior, highlighting numerous challenges the narrator faced in the relationship. Andy is portrayed as someone who overindulges, particularly with food, and then complains about the consequences, reflecting a broader pattern of dissatisfaction and negativity. His refusal to engage in therapy or self-improvement, combined with a dismissive attitude toward mental health, creates emotional strain. The narrator emphasizes Andy’s misunderstanding of ambition, equating it with superficial praise rather than personal growth, which fuels his jealousy and moodiness, especially in professional contexts.

Andy’s emotional responses are depicted as unpredictable and often inexplicable, such as crying during seemingly trivial moments, which the narrator links to unresolved personal trauma, notably his relationship with his absent father. His self-pity and low self-esteem distort his perception of how others view him, and he tends to wallow in these feelings rather than seek constructive change. Nostalgia dominates his outlook, as he clings to past highs and struggles to live in the present. His obsession with fame and social media validation further reveals insecurities, while his interests, including music, shift from romantic to obsessive, detracting from genuine connection.

Interpersonal dynamics with Andy are fraught with tension. His friendships are described as superficial and unsupportive, placing excessive emotional demands on the narrator. He also exhibits codependency, insecurity, and neediness, often prioritizing his own career and values over those of the narrator. His attitude toward her family and their shared social experiences deteriorates over time, demonstrating a lack of respect and effort to maintain harmony. His behavior during disagreements tends toward dramatics, and his tone-deaf approach to sensitive issues like feminism undermines his attempts at being a supportive partner.

The chapter concludes by underscoring Andy’s lack of curiosity and unwillingness to engage deeply with new experiences or ideas, exemplified by his dismissive behavior during museum visits. His contradictory habits, such as rigorous exercise followed by unhealthy eating, add to the picture of inconsistency and self-sabotage. Ultimately, the narrator reflects on how these accumulated traits and behaviors made their breakup not only inevitable but also particularly painful, affirming the relief and clarity found in no longer being with Andy.

# Friday 31st January 2020

The chapter opens with a vivid childhood memory where the narrator recalls an intense fascination with weddings, imagining herself as a bride every Saturday, complete with a white dress and a lace curtain veil. This ritual, fueled by family stories and cultural expectations, sparks her curiosity about the origins of her desire for marriage and why it eventually faded. The narrative introduces a backdrop of strong familial monogamy, highlighting generations of long-lasting marriages, including her own parents' union, which was traditionally viewed as a model of success and stability.

As the narrator reflects on her family's marital norms, she contrasts her own path with that of her elder sister Miranda, who came out as gay and thus diverged from the expected trajectory. The narrator describes the weight of expectations placed upon her to uphold the family's conventional ideals, including the anticipation of her own wedding as a significant and inevitable event. This dynamic reveals the pressures and assumptions that shaped her understanding of relationships and personal identity within her family's social context.

The story takes a pivotal turn when the narrator, at thirteen, unexpectedly discovers a woman in her home wearing her mother's dressing gown, revealing a hidden aspect of her father's life. This moment shatters her perception of her parents' marriage and introduces doubt about the family's narrative of harmony. The father's evasive explanations and subsequent secrecy deepen the narrator's confusion and mistrust, prompting her to scrutinize the complexities and contradictions underlying her family's outward appearance of marital success.

In response to this emotional turmoil, the narrator channels her energy into academic and extracurricular achievements, striving to earn her father's approval and secure his presence in her life. Her pursuit of excellence at school and university, alongside a burgeoning career, serves as a coping mechanism against family instability. Despite

professional success, she experiences a sense of entrapment and postpones personal aspirations, illustrating how familial expectations and unresolved issues influence her adult life and relationships.