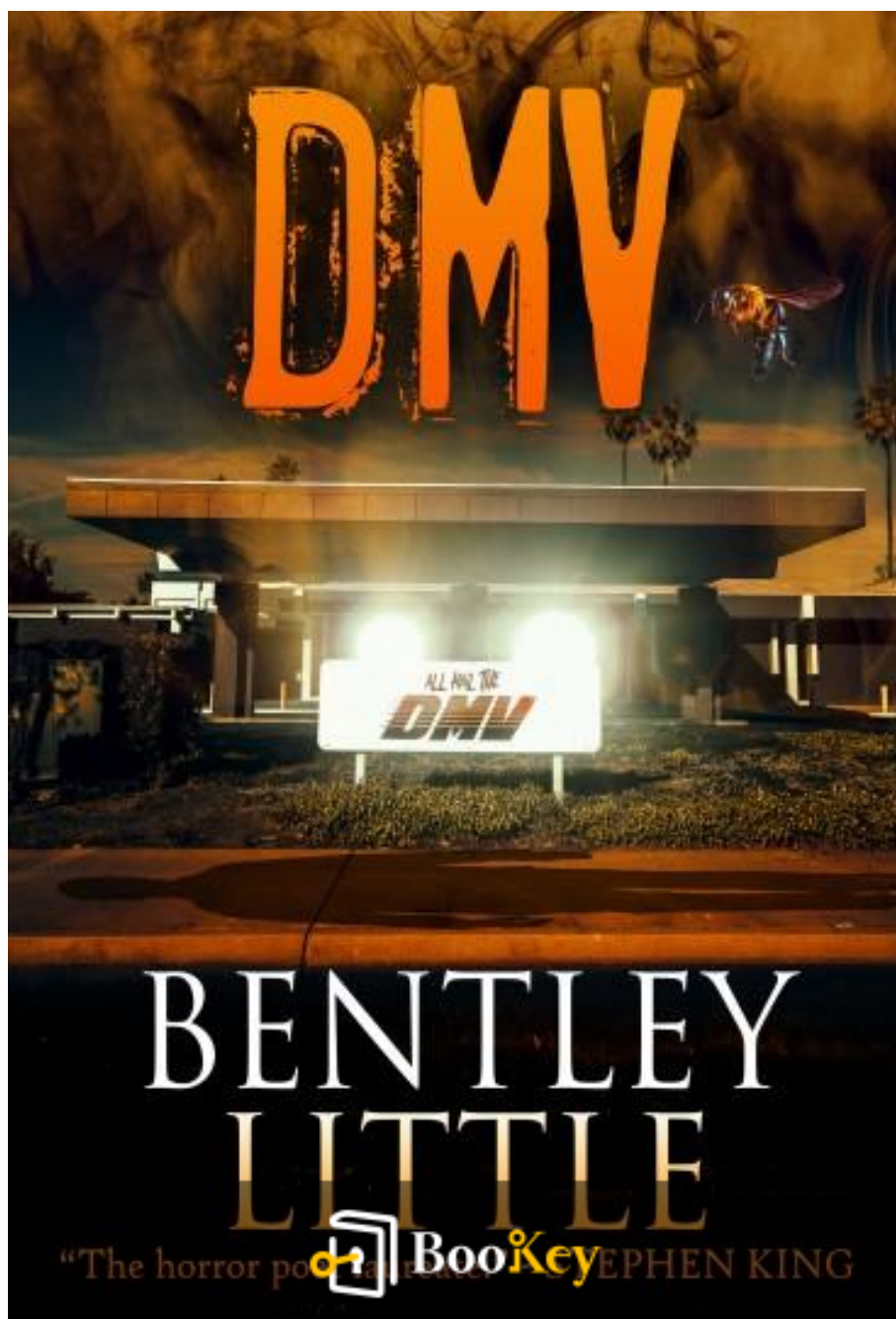


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Bentley Little



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Dmv Summary

"Government Service Turns Ominous in a Bizarre Bureaucracy."

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About the book

In the seemingly mundane world of driver's licenses and vehicle registrations, "DMV" by Bentley Little unveils a chilling narrative that transforms this familiar territory into a landscape of unimaginable horror and suspense. Through the ordinary and bureaucratic halls of the Department of Motor Vehicles, hidden malevolent forces lurk, ready to ensnare the unsuspecting. Here, the simplest tasks become hazardous tangles of red tape, where each form, line, and innocuous official harbors unforeseen dangers. Bentley Little masterfully weaves together elements of horror and dark satire in a tale that questions the nature of control, entrapment, and the fearsome power of bureaucratic machinations. With every page, "DMV" drives readers to the edge of sanity, blurring the lines between reality and the macabre. Prepare to be gripped by a terrifying ride that redefines the term "road to nowhere." Your next stop? It could be your

#Bureaucracy #BentleyLittle #DMVThriller

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About the author

Bentley Little, an acclaimed American author, is renowned for his suspenseful and eerie narratives that often delve into the uncanny and macabre. Born in Arizona, Little's prolific writing career began in the late 1980s after being discovered by Stephen King, who famously praised his unique talent for storytelling. With a flair for exploring themes of societal and institutional terror, Little has captivated readers with his ability to weave supernatural elements seamlessly into everyday settings, creating a chilling juxtaposition that keeps audiences on edge. His works, including "The Store," "The Association," and "The Mailman," have solidified his reputation as a master of horror literature, and his keen insights into human nature and fear continue to resonate with fans worldwide.

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Chapter 1 Summary: One

In these opening chapters, we dive into the personal and professional lives of two characters: Todd Klein, a beleaguered author facing relentless criticism, and Zal Tombasian, a programmer navigating work uncertainties amidst a significant new project for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Chapter One: Todd Klein's Struggles

We meet Todd Klein, a writer whose self-esteem takes a hit whenever he reads the negative reviews of his latest book, "Across the Divide." Despite healthy sales, the harsh feedback from online reviewers gnaws at him, and he considers the implications that these criticisms might represent a broader consensus. His wife, Rosita, suggests ignoring the "online critics," but Todd can't help himself. The couple shares a moment of routine domesticity, discussing meal plans and Todd's imminent DMV appointment.

The next day, Todd faces the DMV, entering a world of inefficiency and frustration. Stuck in endless lines, he is reminded of his first failed driving test experience with an intimidating examiner named Cliff. His appointment gets mixed up, leading to an unproductive and aggravating visit. To exit, he uses a side door, only to see someone who resembles Cliff, evoking old memories of an unnerving time in his youth.

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Chapter Two: Zal Tombasian's New Opportunity

At Data Initiatives, Zal feels the relief and excitement when the team secures the DMV account—a massive project ensuring job security. Zal and his colleague Bernard share the joy, having discreetly worried about potential layoffs. Amidst these professional winds of change, Zal's personal life is depicted as a bachelor lifestyle where he lives in his late parents' old-fashioned house, spending nights immersed in gaming with friends.

During a lunch break with colleagues, Zal faces the familiar scenario of being nudged towards potential relationships. There is talk of a new woman in the research department, Violet, who is single, which his colleagues suggest could be a match for him. Although Zal dismisses the idea, his friends seem determined.

A mundane drive to work turns noteworthy when Zal gets pulled over by a cop due to expired tags. Agitated because he followed DMV renewal procedures without receiving the updated sticker, Zal contemplates his next steps—traffic school or contesting the ticket in court.

Meanwhile, the chapter ends with Zal reflecting on how others perceive his lifestyle and the comic relief found in workplace camaraderie as he



continues to mull over personal changes amidst professional security.

These chapters set the stage for intertwining narratives of personal struggles and professional drama. Todd grapples with the weight of public opinion, while Zal navigates the complex landscape of work projects and personal life, forming a backdrop to a rich exploration of how individual stories intersect with broader systems in everyday life.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Two

In Chapter Two, Zal Tombasian and his colleagues at Data Initiatives celebrate landing a lucrative Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) project. The project is a massive statewide system overhaul, offering job security to Zal and his coworkers who had been anxiously job hunting as their current project was ending. Zal's relief is palpable as details from management confirm the long-term nature of the project, suggesting job stability for the foreseeable future.

Returning home, Zal reflects on his life. Living in his childhood home, which he inherited after his parents' passing, he feels a mix of nostalgia and discontent. The house, still adorned with his parents' décor, serves as a metaphor for Zal's stagnant personal life. Despite intentions to revamp his home and life, his routine remains unchanged—spending evenings eating frozen meals and playing online games with friends.

The next morning, Zal grapples with similar feelings of outdatedness as he notices his kitchen's vintage aesthetic. This reflection of his parents' presence and his reluctance to address his emotions about them creates a lingering disquiet. The mundane transitions to tense when he is pulled over for expired tags—despite having submitted renewal forms—highlighting inefficiencies that his new project aims to fix. Although frustrated by the citation, Zal finds humor in Bernard's joking offer to erase the ticket.



At work, a conversation about color misunderstandings morphs into a discussion about potential romantic setups for Zal. He brushes off suggestions about meeting a new coworker named Violet, preferring to maintain his detached yet comfortable lifestyle, a sentiment Bernard mockingly supports.

Chapter Three shifts focus to Jorge Gutierrez, who awakes burdened by financial stress after losing his job. His wife Beverly's income is insufficient to cover their mounting bills, pushing Jorge into a desperate job search. Over lunch with his sister Rosita, Jorge is reminded of his impulsive decision to quit his job without a backup plan. Despite Rosita's support, he feels pressured and defensive, knowing that finding another job won't be easy.

After lunch, Jorge is approached by two mysterious men, Mr. Black and Mr. White, who offer him a job at the DMV with an enticing salary. Their unconventional recruitment method, combined with their intimidating demeanor, raises Jorge's suspicions, and he refuses their offer. However, upon returning home, Jorge is shocked to find the men already there, speaking with Beverly, who views their offer favorably.

Feeling coerced, Jorge reluctantly agrees to take an aptitude test administered by the men. The test contains bizarre, disturbing questions unrelated to DMV work, leaving Jorge stunned and confused. Despite his



protests, the test system inexplicably qualifies him for DMV employment. The men insist on immediately taking him to a DMV training camp, asserting their authority.

Both chapters weave together themes of job security and personal change, with Zal representing a stable albeit stagnant life, while Jorge faces coercion in a sinister job offer. Their stories explore the balance between retaining comfort and facing new challenges.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace the Need for Change and Growth

Critical Interpretation: A key takeaway from Chapter Two of "DMV" is the recognition of the comfort derived from job security and routine, coupled with the acknowledgment of personal stagnation. Zal Tombasian's reflection on his unchanged lifestyle amidst a promising new professional opportunity serves as a reminder that stability should not lead to complacency. While job security offers much-needed relief and confidence, using this foundation to catalyze personal growth and transformation is crucial. This chapter inspires readers to balance the reassurance of stability with the courage to progress in personal ventures, renovate existing environments, and confront emotions that hinder growth. It encourages embracing new challenges and seizing opportunities to revitalize one's life, rather than hiding behind the facade of comfort and nostalgia.



Chapter 3 Summary: Three

Chapter Three follows Jorge Guiterrez as he navigates a tough phase in his life. He wakes up one morning feeling defeated after a failed job fair and several rejections from firms he applied to. The financial strain weighs heavily on him, especially since his wife Beverly's income barely covers their monthly expenses. Jorge reluctantly looks for more jobs and agrees to have lunch with his sister Rosita, who he anticipates will lecture him for quitting his job without another one lined up. During lunch at a Mexican restaurant, Rosita does voice her concerns, suggesting he should have waited before quitting and lamenting how responsibilities now fall more on Beverly. Jorge feels defensive, suspecting Rosita and Beverly are talking about him behind his back. Despite this, the siblings manage to shift their conversation to lighter family matters and end up having a pleasant meal. However, once the topic returns to Jorge's job hunt, Rosita offers potential help if necessary but stresses the importance of finding a job soon.

After lunch, Jorge encounters two men who offer him a mysterious job opportunity with the DMV, promising considerable pay and benefits. Feeling uneasy about their approach, he dismisses them. When he returns home, the men are already there with his wife, Beverly, who seems to support their offer. They guide him to take a bizarre aptitude test asking unethical questions unrelated to driving or DMV work. Though Jorge is unwilling to answer, the test mysteriously declares him as "QUALIFIED." The men insist



he join a "DMV training camp" immediately, leaving Jorge feeling coerced, unsure of what exactly this entailed but pressured to accept.

Chapter Four shifts to Todd Klein, a writer and Rosita's husband, who experiences his own set of challenges. He receives a call from his publicist, Chyla, who pressures him to engage in promotional activities he finds undignified, such as morning radio shows. Chyla also shares that his new book faces criticism for cultural appropriation, a concern Todd dismisses since he based a character on a real-life neighbor. However, he realizes some complaints might have been used to push him towards unwanted marketing tactics.

Todd's friend Robinson, whose competitive nature frustrates Todd, also calls, disrupting his focus. Later, while shopping for his own book with Rosita, Todd rearranges it in stores to make it more visible, hoping for better sales. At a restaurant, a fan recognizes Todd and invites him to a podcast, which Todd considers a favorable alternative for publicity. When Rebecca, Todd's publicist, checks the show's credibility, she encourages him to participate.

During the podcast with host Winston Rackley, the interview goes well until abruptly cut short when Todd begins relating the DMV incident to his creative process. Rackley's sudden end to the session leaves Todd puzzled by its conclusion, furthering an air of unease as he navigates publicity pressures



and personal skepticism towards industry tactics.

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Chapter 4: Four

Chapter Four delves into Todd Klein's ongoing struggles with promoting his newly released book and the complexities of being an author. Todd receives a call from Chyla Reynolds, his publicist, who suggests a publicity strategy involving radio show appearances as a means to widen his book's audience. Skeptical about its efficacy—viewing such stunts as beneath him and unlikely to drive significant sales—Todd reluctantly listens as Chyla also relays criticism from an Asian American critic about alleged cultural appropriation in his book. In defensive mode, Todd argues that his portrayal of a Chinese neighbor is grounded in personal experience, not stereotype. The discussion highlights the tension authors face balancing creative authenticity and cultural sensitivity.

Todd grapples with personal tasks like renewing his driver's license, which distracts him from writing. These mundane interruptions add a layer of grim humor to his life and echo his internal conflicts over his book's reception. When Robinson Boyd, Todd's college "frenemy," calls to congratulate Todd on the book but ends up monopolizing the conversation with self-focused chatter, it reinforces the isolation and competitive nature of Todd's professional and personal world.

After a pleasant lunch turned chance meeting at a restaurant with a podcaster named Winston Rackley, Todd sees a glimmer of promotional opportunity.

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Despite his reservations, he agrees to a podcast interview, hoping it will satisfy Chyla's demands. Todd's nervousness about sounding articulate gives way to a surprisingly smooth interview experience, reigniting some of his confidence until the abrupt end raises doubts about the interaction's value.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Five

In Chapter Five, the story revolves around Danny Wilding who is preparing to take his driving test. He initially feels a sense of disappointment because his father, who has been his constant support throughout his Driver's Education classes, is unable to accompany him due to work commitments. Instead, Danny's mother is taking him. There's a poignant moment when his father reassures him of his capabilities and asks Danny to call him post-test results. Danny grapples with nervousness as he sets out with his mother, who is less instructive compared to his dad, making him question if he's ready for the test.

Upon arriving at the DMV—usually chaotic according to his Driver's Ed teacher, Mr. Sabato—Danny finds the environment oddly calm. He goes through the process, but the elderly clerk at the counter casts doubt on his chances of passing, accompanied by a lecture about earning a driver's license through sacrifice, which unnerves Danny. As Danny returns to his mother in the car line, the plot abruptly shifts; they receive a distressing phone call from Danny's sister, Jill, disclosing that their father has died, marking a sudden transition in Danny's life.

This event drastically alters Danny's existence, creating a divide between life "Before" and "After" his father's passing. Consumed by grief, Danny becomes reclusive, unable to engage with his friends or continue with the



driving test, as he grapples with feelings of guilt and responsibility for his father's death. He irrationally links the timing of events, suspecting that his quest for a license was a fatal sacrifice, an idea planted by his nightmare and the clerk's ominous words. Although he logically knows this is unfounded, the emotional turmoil leaves him struggling with dark thoughts and resisting moving forward in life, which is now devoid of his father's presence.

Chapter Six shifts focus to Rosita, who finds herself overwhelmed at her library job due to staffing shortages. Her Saturday shifts are particularly hectic, packed with both kids and homeless patrons. This day, Rosita's attention is drawn to an odd encounter with a man named Tyson Buddrick, attempting to renew his library card using an unconventional driver's license. The ID raises suspicion due to its peculiarities, including cartoonish elements and irrelevant personal data, leading Rosita to reject it despite the man's insistence on its legitimacy. This incident leaves her unsettled, especially the man's choice of book: "Mass Shootings and Their Aftermath."

Rosita returns home to her husband, Todd, who is embroiled in his own issues with the DMV. They discuss Tyson's bizarre ID over dinner, where Rosita confesses a strange sense of belief in the man's story. Todd's unresolved licensing issues and her brother Jorge's job training at the DMV amplify her sense of unease about the institution. The narrative unfolds a glimpse of Rosita's burdens as she balances family dynamics, wishing her parents hadn't returned to Mexico, leaving her in constant mediation



between Todd and Jorge.

Following their conversation, Rosita and Todd engage in cherished routines like a leisurely walk and cozying up with “magic beans”—heated bean bags that warm their bed—helping Rosita find comfort amidst the chaos.

However, her anxiety manifests in a disturbing dream, foreshadowing violence at the library involving Tyson. She wakes relieved to find no such tragedy has occurred, though she passes a disturbingly taped-off DMV on her way to work, temporarily forgetting about it amidst her library concerns.

These chapters explore themes of loss, responsibility, and the way unexpected events can reshape one's life, while interweaving elements of mystery and foreboding surrounding the DMV's influence on multiple characters. The narrative intertwines the personal struggles of both Danny and Rosita, building a rich, interconnected storyline.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resilience Amidst Loss

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter Five of "DMV" by Bentley Little, Danny Wilding is thrust into facing life's unpredictability and grief following his father's sudden death. This pivotal loss compels Danny to confront his fears and emotions, learning resilience as he navigates a world forever altered by tragedy. For you, this moment serves as a powerful reminder that while life's challenges can be daunting, persevering through grief and unexpected events can build inner strength. It highlights the importance of allowing yourself to feel emotions, understanding them, and eventually finding a pathway through adversity. Your journey, like Danny's, may be interrupted by unforeseen events, but embracing resilience allows you to honor your memories while fostering growth and a renewed sense of purpose.

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Chapter 6 Summary: Six

Chapter Six

The library is understaffed, leading to increased work pressure for Rosita, whose schedule now includes Saturdays, making her work six days a week. Saturdays at the library are bustling with more homeless individuals and children. While dealing with this busy day, Rosita prefers assisting at the Reference desk but finds herself frequently redirecting traffic inside the library. During her shift, a high school volunteer informs her that Grace, an aide temporarily handling library card renewals, needs her help. A middle-aged man named Tyson Buddrick is attempting to renew his card with an unusual driver's license bearing odd information and a cartoonish image. Despite his claims of its authenticity, Rosita and Grace must reject it due to policy, leading to his frustrated outburst. The encounter leaves Rosita unsettled, especially when she notices the book he intended to check out titled "Mass Shootings and Their Aftermath."

Rosita reflects on her family dynamics, notably her husband's and brother's separate ties to the DMV. Her husband Todd is struggling to renew his license, while her brother Jorge seeks employment with the DMV. The DMV's closed office and a mysterious training camp Jorge attends pique her curiosity, but she has yet to investigate.



At home, she shares the odd library encounter with Todd while having pizza. Despite dismissing the man's peculiar driver's license earlier, she admits to Todd that she found some truth in Tyson's insistence. After dinner, Rosita enjoys the notion of a cold night snuggled in bed with heated “magic beans,” a gift from her friend Beverly. That night, she dreams of Tyson returning to the library with a weapon, causing destruction. Awakening tense, she turns on the morning news but sees no sign of the dream coming true. However, she notes police tape at the DMV, bringing her brother Jorge to mind, but she quickly dismisses it as she resumes her shift at the library.

Chapter Seven

Zal, a programmer, feels embarrassed when he discovers that his coworker Judi has set him up with Violet, a new research assistant. Though taken by surprise, he finds Violet knowledgeable and socially similar to himself, contrary to his initial feelings of inadequacy. The lunchtime setting becomes more relaxed when conversation flows between them, particularly about clichés and language rules, revealing Zal's and Violet's interests align somewhat.

Later, Zal and his colleague Bernard prepare for a meeting about a new DMV project with two freelancers, Boo and Gary. The freelancers share



frustrations about the complexity of the project, revealing challenges that lie ahead. Despite this, the project offers job security for Zal's company. Finishing their professional duties for the day, Bernard suggests an impromptu visit to Violet's work area to greet her, and through an amusingly awkward interaction, Zal finds a moment of connection with her.

After work, Zal discovers a mix-up with his car registration sticker, receiving last year's sticker instead of the current one — a testament to the DMV's need for system updates. Frustrated yet resigned, he prepares to tackle the issue later, as his evening plans include virtual gaming with friends. He logs into "Altair Assault" to join his friends, promising himself to address the DMV sticker conundrum the next day. Meanwhile, the programming work continues to overshadow their lives, promising challenges but also a sense of job security.

Chapter	Summary
Chapter Six	Rosita is overworked at the library, tackling understaffing and weekend shifts. The library is bustling, especially on Saturdays, leading to an encounter with Tyson Buddrick, who attempts to renew his library card with an unusual driver's license. Rosita refuses his request, leading to a tense and unsettling interaction amplified by the book he wants to borrow: "Mass Shootings and Their Aftermath." At home, Rosita reflects on her family's DMV connections; her husband Todd is having license renewal issues while her brother Jorge is involved with a mysterious DMV training camp. The chapter closes with Rosita's disturbing dream about Tyson returning to the library with a weapon, followed by a seemingly unrelated news story about police tape at the DMV.
Chapter Seven	Zal, a programmer, experiences a surprise setup with Violet, a new research assistant. Despite initial embarrassment, he finds common ground with



Chapter	Summary
	Violet. Meanwhile, Zal and his coworker Bernard face challenges with a new DMV project, dealing with freelancers Boo and Gary who share their frustrations. A post-work discovery reveals a mix-up with Zal's car registration sticker, promising another DMV-related conundrum. Although irked, he sets it aside for an evening of gaming with friends, balancing professional demands with personal escapism.



Chapter 7 Summary: Seven

Chapter Seven Summary:

In the office break room, Zal is taken aback when Judi attempts to set him up with Violet Benning, a young and attractive newcomer from the Research department. Although embarrassed by Judi's meddling, Zal finds himself intrigued by Violet, struck by their mutual social awkwardness that creates a bond. Conversation flows around language theories and the absurdities of idiomatic expressions, cementing a connection between Zal and Violet. Interlaced with humor and camaraderie, the scene reflects the characters' distinct personalities. Later, during a meeting about a challenging DMV project, Zal and his colleague Bernard engage with freelancers Boo and Gary, tackling the complexities of a bureaucratic redesign. The afternoon is spent grappling with a particularly difficult interface component. As they wrap up and part ways, Bernard teases Zal about Violet, nudging him to make a detour through the Research department. When Zal faces DMV issues with an incorrectly issued car registration sticker, he finds himself ensnared in a bureaucratic nightmare that highlights the inefficiencies of the system. Unperturbed, he looks forward to tackling the DMV chaos, much like the digital battlefield in his online game, Altair Assault.

Chapter Eight Summary:

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Todd is surprised to receive a call from a longtime acquaintance, Robinson, who informs him of a rather mixed review he wrote about Todd's latest novel. Unperturbed, Todd realizes his maturity in not letting the criticism unsettle him. His focus, though, shifts to an impending DMV test appointment—a task that's been mounting pressure due to increasingly tricky questions. Despite reassurance from his wife, Rosita, Todd finds himself grappling with bizarre and unrelated test questions. Among the irrational inquiries, one question eerily references a friend, Robinson, arousing suspicion of a privacy breach. Frustrated, Todd visits the local library for solace and meets Rosita, sharing his confounding test experience. She pledges to investigate the potential invasion of privacy, reminding Todd of his support network. Seeking further clarity, Todd decides to visit a friend and police lieutenant, Jim Briggs. They bond over shared disdain for DMV inefficiencies and tales of bureaucratic ineptitude. Jim promises to investigate the legality of the odd test questions and suggests Todd might find this ordeal to be good material for a book, emphasizing that, even as the DMV presents its own sets of challenges, Todd is not alone in facing them.

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Chapter 8: Eight

In Chapter Eight, Todd receives an unexpected phone call from Robinson, an old acquaintance who has reviewed Todd's new novel for the Chicago Tribune. Although Robinson assures Todd the review is positive, he warns that he had to be "a little hard" in places. Todd's initial irritation shifts to a sense of maturity upon realizing he no longer feels the need to defend his opinions or actions to others—an evolution from his college days. Distracted from reflecting further on this, Todd prepares for an upcoming DMV test, recalling warnings from friends and family about its difficulty. On the test day, after enduring a bizarre array of questions, including a disturbing one about his driving compared to Robinson's, Todd is told he failed. Frustrated, he drives to the library to share the perplexing experience with his wife, Rosita, who is equally bewildered and suggests researching the legality of the test's invasiveness. Seeking advice, Todd visits Lieutenant Jim Briggs, a local police officer and fan of Todd's writing, who acknowledges the strange circumstances but suggests Todd consult a lawyer. The chapter ends with Jim recommending Todd incorporate the DMV experience into his next book.

In Chapter Nine, Jorge wakes up in a mysterious DMV training camp where he is held against his will, unable to contact his family. The camp has the semblance of a high-tech training facility, complete with a replica DMV office and dormitory-like lodgings, but Jorge is certain it is a farce meant to



indoctrinate him. Plagued by suspicion about his roommate, Durrell, and the other recruits, Jorge suspects they might be spies monitoring him. During a chance exploration, he encounters a concrete wall more suited for a prison, hinting at the camp's true nature. Determined not to be broken or brainwashed, Jorge plots to expose the camp's secret. During one of his secret ventures, he discovers what seems to be a hidden area guarded by bee-like creatures, only to be apprehended by security guards. The chapter ends with Jorge contemplating the camp's secrets and vowing to investigate further, biding his time until he can reveal the truth. Through these chapters, both Todd and Jorge grapple with oppressive systems—Todd with the DMV's enigmatic questioning and Jorge with a coerced training program—each determined to regain control over their situations.

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I've learned. Highly recommend!

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Chapter 9 Summary: Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

Jorge finds himself waking up in an unfamiliar and dark place, not knowing the time or even the exact location of the "training camp" where he and other recruits are detained. They've all been brought to this camp for DMV training, but Jorge feels more like a prisoner than a trainee. All their personal belongings, including phones and watches, have been confiscated, leaving them unable to communicate with the outside world or know the time. Depicted as an impressive, movie-like setup with modern facilities, the camp on the surface seems professional, yet the environment feels restrictive and secretive with a simulated DMV office at its center for training.

Jorge's skepticism grows due to forced pairings with other recruits—he's rooming with Durrell, whom he suspects is a plant sent to spy on him—and a lack of curiosity from others about the camp's operations. Despite his disdain for the training and conditions, Jorge finds the classes interesting and somewhat useful, though he still harbors doubts about the camp's true purpose.

He observes a troubling lack of diversity and wonders about the absence of visible staff quarters for the instructors and employees. During his



downtime, Jorge attempts to explore the camp's boundaries but encounters high walls topped with barbed wire, intended to prevent escaping. A foray into the woods reveals the presence of mysterious, sculptural beehives and raises the camp's ominous atmosphere before Jorge is accosted by aggressive guards claiming the area is restricted. Unwilling to give up, he plans to return to the hive area to uncover the camp's secrets despite threats, intending to expose the truth once he is free.

Chapter Ten Summary

Danny receives a puzzling letter from the DMV addressed to his deceased father, claiming their old Jeep was involved in a robbery, thus making his father, and now his mother, liable. The family is baffled, especially since the Jeep was donated to charity years ago. Danny's mother calls the DMV to clarify, revealing they have legal documents to prove the donation, but the DMV representative, Ralph Brandt, insists they will confiscate the family's current vehicles based on asset forfeiture laws, which deeply frustrates and angers them both.

Danny suggests involving consumer advocates from local news channels to address the unfair situation publicly. As the family contemplates how to protect their remaining cars, Danny's mother decides to ask neighbors to hide them temporarily, revealing the tension and precarity they're under due



to this bureaucratic nightmare. Meanwhile, there's additional family tension with Danny's sister, Jill, who is spiraling after their father's death. She later confides in Danny about witnessing a hit-and-run accident involving a woman and a baby, horrifyingly claiming that their father, whom everyone believes is deceased, was the driver. The revelation adds another layer of shock, disbelief, and confusion to their current struggles.

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Chapter 10 Summary: Ten

Chapter Ten Summary:

In this chapter, Danny comes across a troubling letter from the DMV addressed to his late father, claiming that their old Jeep was involved in a robbery, making his dad "legally liable." His mother, shocked and angry, can't understand how a car sold years ago could still implicate them. They discover the Jeep was donated to a charity, with all paperwork intact. Despite this, they face the drastic consequence of having their current vehicles impounded due to asset forfeiture laws. Danny's mom plans to fight back, considering legal action or media assistance, while trying to hide their cars in neighbors' garages to prevent immediate confiscation. The family's struggle with grief over their father's passing is evident, with Danny reflecting on his dad's once-stabilizing presence. Meanwhile, Danny's sister, Jill, is spiraling since their father's death, highlighted by her secretive and risky behavior. This peaks when she confides in Danny about witnessing a hit-and-run involving a stroller. Shockingly, she claims the driver was their father, complicating the family's emotional turmoil.

Chapter Eleven Summary:

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Zal, a contractor working on the DMV's computer systems, is asked to sign a troubling non-disclosure agreement suggesting severe penalties for sharing information. Concerned, he brings the issue to his manager, Murdoch, who decides to consult Legal as other employees, including Zal's colleague Bernard, have already signed it. Bernard shares his cynical view that companies are increasingly overreaching into employee rights. Adding to his apprehensions, Zal navigates a quasi-date with Violet, a co-worker he has feelings for, while maintaining professionalism. Later, Murdoch reassures everyone that the NDAs were a mistake sent by an ex-employee, and new, less severe agreements are distributed, alleviating tensions. On Saturday, Zal attends a "behavioral training" course, aka traffic school, which takes an odd turn with cult-like chants praising the DMV. Returning home, Zal ponders this bizarre experience when he receives a mysterious, cheerfully designed "superstar" certificate from the DMV, leaving him bewildered about its true significance.

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Chapter 11 Summary: Eleven

Chapter Eleven Summary:

The chapter begins with Zal, an employee presumably working on a project involving the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), being called into a rare private meeting with his manager, Murdoch. Zal fears the worst—potential layoffs—but instead learns he is required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) for the DMV project. As Zal reads the NDA, he uncovers a disturbing clause threatening severe physical punishment for any breaches. Both Zal and Murdoch are shocked by the content, which leads Murdoch to involve the legal team. Meanwhile, Zal shares the unsettling news with his colleague, Bernard, who expresses skepticism and refuses to comply with such an agreement, hinting at broader issues of employer overreach during the pandemic.

Later, at lunch with a colleague named Violet, Zal navigates a budding friendship. Violet opens up about her personal background, revealing her diverse heritage and uncertain professional journey. As they chat, Zal and Violet share a mutual attraction, offering hope for a potential relationship.

During a company meeting, Murdoch distributes revised NDAs from the DMV, clarifying that the previous version was sent out by a rogue

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ex-employee. The new NDA is straightforward and more acceptable, focusing solely on protecting intellectual property. After signing, Zal prepares for a planned traffic school, now termed "behavioral training." The session takes place at a local courthouse, where Zal endures an unexpectedly bizarre introduction involving a cult-like tribute to the DMV, although the class returns to normalcy soon after.

Upon returning home, Zal, while settling into his evening routine, receives a puzzling, DMV-related automated message expressing gratitude for completing his behavioral training. Concurrently, his printer unexpectedly prints a certificate labeling him a "superstar," leaving Zal perplexed about its significance.

Chapter Twelve Summary:

Todd, an author, is restless after releasing a new book. He reflects on his past connections and regrets the lost potential of alternative life paths. Trying to focus, he reads an email from his publisher requesting he blurb a memoir of a young woman with a dramatic personal story. Todd declines, frustrated by the industry's preference for marketable personal narratives over genuine talent. He finds a forwarded review of his book, written by a critic named Robinson, which unfairly criticizes his work. Annoyed by Robinson's personal bias, Todd shares his frustration with his wife, Rosita.



Rosita expresses concern about her brother Jorge, a DMV employee who has mysteriously gone silent after attending what she describes as an abduction-like training camp. Todd promises to inquire with a police contact, Jim Briggs, about Jorge's situation during his upcoming book signing.

At the signing, Todd experiences unexpected success, with a larger and more diverse crowd than anticipated. However, a suspicious man with a scarred face, vaguely familiar to Todd, watches him closely. The man approaches Todd after the event, offering help against DMV "oppression," claiming the DMV is set on revoking Todd's license. The man leaves Todd a card with a phone number, urging him to call when needed, and reveals a connection to Robinson.

Later, Todd attempts to contact his policeman friend, only to learn that he has been transferred to the DMV, heightening the mystery surrounding the organization. This unsettling revelation leaves Todd with more questions than answers.

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Chapter 12: Twelve

Chapter Twelve and Thirteen Summary:

In Chapter Twelve, we are introduced to Todd, an author prone to feelings of restlessness after publishing a new book. Despite living his ideal life, Todd reflects on the passage of time and the narrowing of his life's potential. Attempting to shake off his restlessness, Todd goes through mundane tasks like opening the refrigerator and checking emails. He receives a request from his publisher to write a blurb for a young woman's memoir but declines, unimpressed by what he perceives as an overhyped life story.

A particular email stands out—a forwarded negative book review by someone named Robinson, notorious for his harsh critiques. The review is an unwarranted attack on Todd's latest work, and although Todd is receptive to criticism, he dismisses Robinson's as a personal vendetta. When Rosita, Todd's wife, arrives home, he shares the review's contents with her. Both resolve to sever any form of courtesy toward Robinson and console themselves over dinner, discussing Rosita's concerns about her brother Jorge's mysterious circumstances linked to a peculiar DMV training camp.

To support Jorge, Todd plans to connect with his friend Jim Briggs, a police officer, yet is surprised to learn Jim was transferred to the DMV. At a book

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signing, Todd experiences an unexpected success, gaining the admiration of a diverse audience. A mysterious man confronts Todd to offer help against an unsuspected conspiracy within the DMV, leaving him with a chilling warning about the upcoming struggles he will face with the department.

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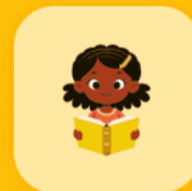
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Chapter 13 Summary: Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen Summary:

Rosita, an intuitive woman, senses something amiss with her brother, Jorge, despite no concrete evidence. Her unease lingers throughout the day, and as soon as her shift ends, she heads to Jorge and Beverly's house, noticing its alarming neglect. Beverly, sobbing, reveals she hasn't heard from Jorge in two weeks since he went to a DMV training camp, a situation that neither woman finds entirely credible. Rosita tries to comfort Beverly, speculating that the secretive camp's seclusion might just be standard for intensive training, but deep down, she shares Beverly's doubts.

Beverly also shares her bizarre experiences with odd DMV-related correspondences and relentless robocalls. Rosita promises to investigate, suspecting a connection between the DMV and these harassing incidents. She hopes to find support from groups or lawyers who may have dealt with similar cases. Rosita assures a tearful Beverly of her support, and despite her mounting fears, clings to hope that Jorge will return soon.

That night, Rosita has a vivid nightmare about the DMV, casting an eerie shadow on the institution's operations. She wakes, shaken by the dream's intensity and its haunting echoes of her fears for Jorge, signifying to her that



even in the waking world, something remains off.

Chapter Fourteen Summary:

Jorge, stuck in the dubious DMV training camp, writes daily letters to his wife Beverly and sister Rosita, unsure if they ever reach their destination. His growing suspicion of the camp's operations is fueled by the odd behavior from staff like Ms. Lane, whose oversized hands unsettle him. The instructors at the camp, often replaced without explanation, impart lessons that expose the DMV's extensive and, in Jorge's eyes, concerning power.

His discomfort deepens with the instructors' encouragement to exploit the DMV's regulations for petty amusement, revealing a disturbing lack of accountability.

Jorge's daily jog around the compound serves dual purposes: exercise and surveillance for possible escape routes. He is haunted by strange beehives he once encountered, perceiving them as integral to the camp's sinister undertones. During a midday exploration, Jorge stumbles upon a graveyard near the camp, its presence and the unmarked graves confirming his darkest fears about the camp's ominous activities.

Upon his return, Jorge faces unsettling changes: his roommate, Durrell, has seemingly been replaced by another claiming to be Durrell, strengthening his



belief in the camp's manipulation and control.

The narrative raises questions about the true nature of the DMV's operations, leaving both Rosita and Jorge in a state of anxiety as they face the unknown.

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Chapter 14 Summary: Fourteen

Chapter 14 Summary:

Jorge's routine at the DMV training camp involves writing letters to his wife Beverly and sister Rosita, though he doubts they reach them. His suspicion grows when Mr. Dodge, a camp administrator, assures him the letters are sent daily, but Jorge suspects censorship. In morning class, under yet another new instructor, Ms. Lane, Jorge is unsettled by her unnaturally large hands, sensing a bizarre pattern of deformities among staff. Ms. Lane shares the DMV's power privileges, boasting about manipulating rules for amusement, which troubles Jorge. He questions the ethics but is quickly shut down, furthering his feeling of isolation as if everyone else might be complicit.

Outside class, Jorge skips lunch to jog around the compound, searching for security weak spots. Unable to shake off thoughts of mysterious beehives he once saw, he feels a strange fear and curiosity about them. During a subsequent exploration, he discovers a hidden cemetery with unmarked graves near the camp's perimeter wall. The number of graves alarms him, raising questions about their purpose, whether it's a pre-existing burial site or linked to the DMV operation. As unease mounts, he hurries back to his quarters, only to discover his roommate has inexplicably been replaced by someone else claiming to be Durrell, deepening the surreal atmosphere and



mistrust gripping the camp.

Chapter 15 Summary:

Danny and Jill's lives are strained following their father's death, with their mother taking a second job and urging them to seek work. The siblings remain puzzled and disturbed by Jill's account of seeing their deceased father in a hit-and-run accident. Despite searching for evidence and the red sports car she saw, they find none. During one of their attempts, they're interrupted by unexpected visitors claiming to be from the "DMV Home Support," offering Danny a driving test due to a missed appointment. Alarmed by the man's aggressive insistence and the mysterious, quick entry into their house, they are manipulated into complying.

Danny is coerced into taking the test with Tanya, an indifferent DMV examiner. During the test, Tanya issues bizarre and illegal instructions, showing little interest in actual driving skills. Despite the test's absurdity, Danny is inexplicably issued a provisional, cartoon-illustrated driver's license with strange conditions. When their mother returns, she is distracted and dismissive of their alarming tale, hinting at a preoccupation with visiting their father's grave. Alone, Jill reveals to Danny a suspicion that their mother might have seen their father too, deepening the mystery surrounding his alleged death.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resourcefulness and Self-Initiation

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 14 of "DMV" by Bentley Little, you're inspired by Jorge's determination to uncover the truth and take action in an unsettling environment. Despite the oppressive atmosphere at the DMV training camp, Jorge does not succumb to passivity or fear. Instead, he practices resourcefulness by taking matters into his own hands, choosing to bypass the regimented schedule to explore the compound. His silent defiance, like jogging to investigate or seeking answers about the unmarked graves, reflects courage and initiative. This lesson encourages you to act even in challenging circumstances, urging you to explore, question, and seek truth in a world often constrained by rules and expectations. Jorge's bravery demonstrates how taking initiative can lead you closer to uncovering hidden truths and overcoming whatever obstacles lie before you.



Chapter 15 Summary: Fifteen

Chapter Fifteen Summary:

In the wake of their father's uncertain circumstances regarding life insurance, Danny and Jill's family experiences financial strain, prompting their mother to take a second job and encouraging them to find part-time work. Saturdays and Sundays, Danny and Jill are left to manage on their own while their mother works at Lights 'N' Things. The siblings are haunted by the mystery surrounding a hit-and-run accident Jill claims their father was involved in. Despite their efforts, they find no evidence online or in police logs to support the event. Jill is steadfast in her belief about what she witnessed, but both siblings are left distressed and seeking answers.

Their day takes an unexpected turn with the arrival of a strange man claiming to be from the DMV, insisting Danny must take a driving test that he allegedly missed. The demand seems suspicious and when Danny reluctantly agrees, he's subjected to a bizarre and surreal driving exam by a disinterested woman named Tanya. The test concludes with Danny receiving an odd, cartoon-like driver's license accompanied by peculiar restrictions. Their mother, upon hearing the story, remains distracted and unfazed, suggesting they visit their father's grave. Jill confides privately in Danny, expressing her suspicions that their mother may have also seen their



deceased father.

Chapter Sixteen Summary:

Todd, seeking help with the DMV, follows the mysterious instructions from a scarred man he met at a book signing. Arriving at a seedy location, he is ushered into a room where former DMV employees, now scarred and maimed, offer covert assistance in passing DMV tests. These individuals, wary of exposure, use code names to protect their identities. Todd learns his brother-in-law Jorge has been taken to a mysterious training camp, linked to Todd's activities, and faces an uncertain fate.

Despite the ominous circumstances, Todd receives intensive training which includes learning DMV procedures and how to manipulate exam questions using cheat codes. Todd informs Rosita, Jorge's wife, about her husband's situation. She insists they alert the authorities, leading to fruitless attempts to gain attention from emergency services and media outlets. Social media brings some support but no tangible action.

Todd completes his prep course successfully and applies the learned techniques at his DMV appointment, passing the test with ease. Although the ordeal has left Todd and Rosita wary of the mysterious underbelly within the DMV, he returns home with a blend of relief and anxiety, unsure of what



the future holds for Jorge and if their brushes with this secretive world are truly over.

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Chapter 16: Sixteen

In Chapter Sixteen, Todd is on a quest to find out more about a mysterious address linked to a group that purportedly offers crash courses to help people pass the DMV test. He finds himself standing before a dilapidated blue door wedged between a tattoo parlor and a bar. During a previous phone inquiry, the number led to a curt, automated message confirming the address before going out of service, making Todd question his decision. Nonetheless, he arrives at the specified location, prepared with his essentials for what seems like a tutorial that includes not only study materials but potentially an under-the-table cash transaction, though Todd ponders the prudence of bringing personal checks which reveal his address.

Inside the building, Todd finds a group of eccentric tutors who are all former DMV employees, each visibly scarred physically and with a clear disdain for their former employer. They operate under a veil of secrecy, avoiding sharing personal names for security reasons while using anonymized designations like 'Number One' and 'Number Two.' They warn Todd that the DMV has likely marked him due to his actions or connections, suggesting his entanglement is why his brother-in-law, Jorge, was mysteriously taken to a DMV training camp. Despite Todd's incredulity about the significance of the DMV's actions, the tutors assure him they're more than capable of gaming the system to help him pass his test and offer to discreetly gather information about Jorge's whereabouts.



Rosita, Todd's partner, is skeptical and horrified by Todd's story of the clandestine operation and the DMV's seemingly ominous influence, believing the situation warrants involving authorities. However, despite sharing the information with friends and attempting to contact larger entities like the media and their local congressman, their story gains no traction. Instead, they find modest solace in social media support from others with allegedly similar experiences. Todd eventually immerses himself in the crash course, gaining practical insights into DMV test patterns and two days later, feeling both uneasy and satisfied about the subverted test process, which results in a passing result and a sense of accomplishment tempered by the cloud of ongoing concerns for Jorge.

In Chapter Seventeen, the focus shifts to Zal, who is hosting a surprise party for a colleague, Bernard's fortieth birthday. Zal eagerly tries to gauge how Violet, a colleague for whom he has feelings, will perceive his transformed living space. He toils to remove traces of his parents' past life in the house, redecorating and updating furniture to reflect his style. Hosting activities build throughout the chapter, reflecting both the personal stakes of Zal's budding interest in Violet and the professional stakes of camaraderie with co-workers — mutually interrupted by Bernard's premature arrival that spoils the surprise.

During the revelry, a hint of hidden complexity surfaces when Gary and



Boo, attending freelancers for an enigmatic DMV project, mention a secretive 'initiation' process shrouded in non-disclosure agreements, sending an unnerving ripple through Zal and sparking curiosity about the inner workings of a seemingly mundane government organization. The party itself brings its share of organizational woes and social rewards — including Zal's

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Chapter 17 Summary: Seventeen

Chapter Seventeen Summary

Zal finds himself thrust into hosting duties for Bernard's surprise 40th birthday party, much to his dismay as he doesn't want his friends to see how he lives. Zal has no family left, so his holidays are spent with a makeshift family of friends and colleagues. He scrambles to redecorate his late parents' house to make it his own, especially wanting to impress Violet, a coworker he has feelings for. Despite his efforts, the party doesn't go as planned. Bernard arrives early, ruining the surprise, but still enjoys the attention.

During the party, Zal tries to connect with Violet, discovering they share similar interests in books—their favorite being "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." They bond over their mutual dissatisfaction with their career statuses, and Violet expresses a lack of direction, something Zal empathizes with. Zal reveals his family history to Violet, deepening their connection. The party becomes a success despite the mishap, with everyone singing "Happy Birthday" to Bernard. Meanwhile, Zal learns about a mysterious initiation ritual mentioned by freelancers Gary and Boo related to their DMV project, raising his curiosity.

The next morning, Zal is confronted by his irate neighbor, who accuses him

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of stealing traffic cones. The cones were placed by the neighbor to reserve a parking spot on the public street. However, the real culprit turns out to be another neighbor, Mr. Garcia, who confides in Zal about the petty revenge he took against the entitled neighbor. They agree to continue their mischief as a united front. As the day unfolds, Zal reflects on the successful party and his promising interaction with Violet, which leaves him hopeful for the future.

Chapter Eighteen Summary

Rosita is deep in an investigation into strange occurrences linked to the DMV, triggered by her brother Jorge's mysterious disappearance. Alongside Beverly, she compiles alarming first-hand accounts of bizarre and sometimes horrific incidents experienced by others at the DMV, though she cannot find anything concrete online due to apparent information suppression.

While working at the library, Rosita discusses the unsettling possibility of the DMV offering some services there, which worries her given the agency's mysterious reputation. As budget cuts loom, she debates layoffs and funding priorities with her friend Michelle.

Their day is disrupted when a former colleague, Will Caskey, storms the library with a gun, claiming he's licensed for such actions as per his driver's license. The police quickly intervene, and it's discovered that Will's license,



bizarrely, does claim he's an "active shooter."

Despite Todd's concerns for her safety following the incident, Rosita insists on returning to work. She is secretly uneasy about the potential threats lurking, reinforced by the DMV's suspicious influence. Back at the library, while assessing damage, she finds the work area seemingly untouched by the turmoil. However, the computer at the Reference desk displays a disturbing DMV-related cartoon that eerily resembles the attack, hinting at deeper connections to the DMV's shadowy activities.

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Chapter 18 Summary: Eighteen

Chapter Eighteen:

Rosita is consumed by her investigation into the DMV's mysterious operations, but the agency's ability to manage its public image hinders her efforts. While her online research yields minor grievances, horrifying personal accounts flood her and Beverly's social media, detailing violent and degrading incidents at DMV testings—such as an examiner forcing a driver to hit an elderly man or a woman being detained for failing a written test. Despite having no hard evidence, Rosita is determined to use these testimonials to uncover the whereabouts and fate of her missing brother, Jorge.

Amid rumors of library budget cuts due to the city's financial issues, Rosita grapples with the possibility of merging DMV services into her library. This prospect, after what she's learned, is unsettling. Her concern is amplified by her friend Michelle as they discuss the state of their workplace, unsettled by a growing anti-intellectual trend and the threat to public information resources.

Their conversation is abruptly cut short by a shooting in the library by Will Caskey, an ex-employee laid off due to funding issues, claiming he has a

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license for his actions. When the chaos ends, Rosita is determined to return to work despite Todd's concern, arguing the library is unlikely to face another attack so soon and emphasizing her dedication amid staffing threats.

Despite the aftermath of the shooting, Rosita returns to discover physical remnants of violence are being addressed, but alarming signs persist, such as a strange DMV-related computer screen at her desk. Rosita's unease grows as she realizes the image eerily resembles Will Caskey, reinforcing her suspicion of the DMV's sinister involvement.

Chapter Nineteen:

Jorge, isolated at a secretive DMV training facility, observes unsettling changes among both staff and trainees—individuals are swapped out yet retain the same names. It's as if they are being replaced when they fail to perform or gain trust, and Jorge wonders if such failures lead to death and burial, recalling the hidden cemetery he discovered.

Prevented from escaping or exercising unmonitored, Jorge questions the timeline of his captivity, resorting to marking days to maintain a semblance of time. As the indoctrination continues, he suspects that Beverly and Rosita are tirelessly searching for him despite probable DMV cover stories.

During a chilling session led by the peculiar Mr. Lane, trainees like Jorge



witness brutal enforcement of authenticity as a colleague, B.D., is tortured for his perceived phoniness. Lane's lecture veers into bigotry, highlighting racial biases enshrined in DMV practices and confronting Jorge with the system's corruption. The ordeal's objective seems twofold: to condition the trainees through fear and perhaps specifically to manipulate Jorge into complicity. The horrific scene climaxes with B.D., seemingly lifeless and swarmed by ants, serving as a haunting symbol of Jorge's precarious predicament in a place that seeks to control him completely.

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Chapter 19 Summary: Nineteen

Chapter Nineteen Summary:

Jorge finds himself in a bizarre training facility for the DMV where nothing is as it seems. Fellow trainees like Durrell, Jean, and Al, along with the instructors, are constantly being replaced by others who share their names but not their identities. Jorge is paranoid and under constant surveillance. He suspects that this strange turnover is intentional, and wonders if the hidden cemetery, with its fresh grave, holds any answers about the original trainees.

Despite being isolated for a month, Jorge doesn't feel he's learned much about his supposed job role. Instead, he believes the purpose of this place is indoctrination—forcing him to join a cult-like appreciation for the DMV, something he resolutely resists. His movements on campus are tightly controlled, and his attempts to feign ignorance or resist instructions lead to confrontations with security.

In class, led by a peculiar instructor named Mr. Lane, the trainees are subjected to unsettling lessons designed to instill fear and conformity. Mr. Lane's lesson takes a sinister turn when a trainee, B.D., is singled out for lacking authenticity. This leads to a brutal demonstration where B.D. is tortured—awakening doubt in Jorge about whether it's real or just a show



for his benefit. Yet the evidence of B.D.'s suffering and the sight of ants covering him when he loses consciousness suggests the horror is genuine. Jorge remains defiant but deeply unsettled.

Chapter Twenty Summary:

Todd receives his new driver's license in the mail and is immediately shocked to find that the license number—341579—matches the tattoo number assigned to his great-grandmother at Auschwitz, a grim legacy of her time in the concentration camp. He finds this more than coincidental and deeply disturbing, leading him to question if it was an act of retribution from the DMV, given that he and Rosita have been probing into Jorge's disappearance.

When Todd tries to have the number changed, he's met with bureaucratic indifference and a menacing DMV representative who insists that he is now defined by this number. Frustrated and angered by these encounters, Todd attempts to escalate the issue through various formal complaints but gets no resolution.

In the meantime, Jim Briggs, a policeman with whom Todd has communicated before, cryptically advises Todd to watch the local news. The broadcast reveals a deadly incident involving the death of eight people in a



suspected arson, six of whom were ex-DMV employees, including those who helped Todd prepare for a DMV test. This news leaves Todd and Rosita deeply worried about Jorge's fate and the overarching power and malevolence of the DMV. The developments leave them feeling vulnerable and questioning who they can trust as the story deepens into a dangerous conspiracy.

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Chapter 20: Twenty

In an unsettling turn of events, Todd's seemingly routine experience of receiving a new driver's license becomes a spiral into discomfort and confusion. Awaiting his new license from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Todd discovers an unexpected detail: his new license number reads 341579, the same horrifying number tattooed on his great-grandmother during her imprisonment at Auschwitz. The trauma of this chilling coincidence is compounded by the faceless and unfeeling bureaucracy of the DMV. Attempts to understand or change the number are met with indifference and hostility, particularly during a menacing visit from a DMV agent who insists Todd must accept his new identification.

Meanwhile, Todd's anxiety mounts when he receives cryptic advice from his friend, police officer Jim Briggs, urging him to watch the news. The broadcast reveals shocking news of an arson killing eight former DMV employees, some of whom had tutored Todd. With fears that the DMV itself might be linked to these sinister activities, Todd is left feeling overwhelmed and impotent against a seemingly powerful organization that is capable of such heinous acts.

Separately, Danny's household is thrown into chaos following the impounding of one of their cars overnight, an action apparently justified by a murky incident involving Danny's father. The DMV further deepens the



family's troubles with an unnerving gift: a stolen sports car, accompanied by a bewildering revelation that Danny holds a license permitting him to drive it. Haunted by the appearance of DMV officials inside their home and the disturbingly casual mention of stolen property, Danny grapples with the absurdity of his newfound license privileges.

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Chapter 21 Summary: Twenty One

Chapter Twenty-One Summary:

In the middle of the night, Danny's family finds that their Honda has been confiscated. Danny's mom is frantic and decides to handle the issue directly with the police. While Danny deals with the chaos at home, he encounters a mysterious visit from two odd DMV officials, who offer him a stolen red sports car. They claim Danny is licensed to drive stolen vehicles, a notion confirmed by a bizarre alteration to his driver's license indicating "Stolen Vehicle." As Danny grapples with these surreal events, his sister, Jill, reveals she was assaulted by her date the previous night but refuses to tell their mother. An officer later confirms the car is stolen, but no charges will be pressed against the family. The officer advises them to avoid further involvement with the DMV, which seemingly has its tentacles in their lives because of an old Jeep donated by Danny's father, implicating them in a past crime. The family is left dealing with an increasingly surreal and bureaucratic nightmare.

Chapter Twenty-Two Summary:

Zal and Violet are getting closer, frequently talking before work. Violet

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appears upset one morning but chooses not to share why. At work, Zal and his colleague Bernard uncover anomalies in the DMV's system: dead drivers' licenses being renewed, hinting at a systemic issue or fraud. After lunch, their boss Murdoch informs them of a mandatory initiation required by the DMV, which sounds cult-like. They visit an eerie warehouse for this initiation, led by a bizarre character. Inside, they're introduced to a different world filled with bees and surreal structures. They undergo an unsettling experience that ends with them supposedly gaining full access to DMV systems.

Meanwhile, Zal struggles with his uncanny neighbor, Howard Lang, who falsely reserves public parking spaces. Soon after Zal raises the issue, Howard is mysteriously arrested, possibly linked to the DMV's intervention described in a cryptic email. Zal is uneasy about the DMV's pervasive influence and disturbing practices, feeling haunted by the day's bizarre events. At work, Zal confirms through his newfound access that Lang was reassigned for "re-education," leaving Zal with more questions than answers. As the chapter closes, Zal leaves work with Violet, who seeks refuge from her own troubles, indicating that the strangeness surrounding their lives might just be getting started.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Power of Taking Initiative

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 21, Danny's mother's decision to directly confront the authorities and her relentless pursuit of resolution amidst bureaucratic challenges stand out as a profound lesson. Often in life, we find ourselves entangled in situations that seem unjust or absurd, much like the surreal experiences Danny's family faces with their vehicle and the mysterious DMV officials. The key takeaway here is the importance of taking initiative and actively engaging with the issues rather than succumbing to confusion or despair. By confronting obstacles head-on, regardless of how bizarre or daunting they may appear, we harness the power to influence outcomes and regain control. This assertiveness fosters resilience and cultivates a proactive approach to life's unpredictable challenges, inspiring us to embrace the narrative that change begins when we decide to take the first step forward.



Chapter 22 Summary: Twenty Two

In Chapter 22, the narrative unfolds within the confines of the Data

Initiatives building where Zal and Violet establish a morning routine of parking next to each other, highlighting their deepening bond. However, this particular morning, Violet arrives visibly upset, laden with an unspoken emotional burden that leaves Zal anxious yet undecided on how to support her. Their unease continues, albeit unspoken, as they separate for their respective departments. As Zal settles into work, a mystery emerges when Bernard discovers a database anomaly involving driver licenses of deceased individuals being renewed without associated addresses. The peculiarity hints at either a massive system glitch or potential fraud, instilling a lingering unease in Zal.

A new tension develops as Murdoch calls Zal and Bernard into his office, revealing that their project access has entered sensitive territories necessitating participation in a "DMV initiation" — an unusual request casting a cult-like shadow over their obligations. Despite the outlandish requirement, refusal threatens their jobs, compelling them to comply, albeit skeptically.

Zal's day becomes further complicated by a confrontation with his intimidating neighbor, who, claiming past military service provides validation, illegally reserves street parking spaces. The altercation is terse,



concluding with the neighbor backing down temporarily, but setting an unsettling precedence.

The following day, Zal and Bernard's initiation unfolds in an eerie, seemingly abandoned warehouse. As they navigate a surreal interior filled with disorienting illusions and surreal occurrences — including being stung by bees and confronted by a peculiar figure with a large head — they are both unsettled and bewildered, left with more questions than answers about the true nature of the DMV and their involvement.

Chapter 23 introduces Jorge, another character ensnared in the DMV's grip, stationed at a training camp. Upon receiving the devastating news of his wife's sudden death through a letter, Jorge's desperation to escape heightens. He futilely confronts Mr. Line, an administrator, to demand leave, but is met with unyielding resistance. His escape attempt is tactically thwarted as vehicles and personnel converge to contain him, and Jorge is subdued through manipulation and force.

In a dismal turn of events, Jorge is coaxed into a mysterious Temple where the energies seek to placate his grief, only to wake in a luxurious suite indicative of his forced assimilation into the DMV's fold. Under threat and psychological pressure, including accusations against his late wife's fidelity, Jorge's resolve is continuously challenged. Amidst these manipulations, he battles for his autonomy but faces an ever-intensifying, enigmatic restraint



pushing compliance upon him.

Across both chapters, themes of coercion, manipulation, and surreal experiences underscore the questionable integrity and profound power of the DMV, its initiations veiling deeper conspiracies and psychological control. Zal, Bernard, and Jorge each grapple with their own realities skewed by inexplicable phenomena as they navigate understanding their roles and resist the encompassing grasp of the DMV.

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Chapter 23 Summary: Twenty Three

Chapter Twenty-Three Summary:

Jorge, stuck at a DMV training camp, receives a letter informing him of his wife Beverly's sudden death from a stroke. Overwhelmed with grief, Jorge decides to leave the camp immediately to attend to his wife's funeral but is stopped by Mr. Line, the camp administrator, who insists that Jorge's training isn't complete and refuses to let him leave. Jorge's attempt to escape is thwarted by members of the camp, and he is subdued by force. In his despair, Jorge is manipulated into visiting a mysterious “Temple” at the camp, where he witnesses a bizarre and unsettling energy emanating from an insect-formed figure, causing his grief and anger to temporarily dissipate. As Jorge prays desperately for Beverly's return, he loses consciousness and awakens in a luxurious suite within the camp. Confused and still under the influence of the mysterious forces at play, Jorge is deceived by Mr. Line into believing false information about his wife. Jorge's desperation to leave is quelled by a supernatural influence, leaving him feeling docile and entrapped.

Chapter Twenty-Four Summary:

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Rosita receives a late-night call from Beverly, claiming Jorge has left her for another woman, prompting Rosita and her husband Todd to visit her. On their way, Rosita is startled by a ghostly figure she recognizes as Will Caskey, a dead man involved in a library shooting, seemingly driving a nearby car. At Beverly's place, the encounter is unsettling as Beverly doubts her perception and Todd shares his concerning theories about the DMV's sinister activities, suspecting foul play related to Jorge's whereabouts. Beverly, overwhelmed by the revelation and resentful about being kept in the dark, shuts them out. The strange sighting haunts Rosita as they leave.

The next day at the library, Rosita researches Will Caskey and confirms he is deceased, though she wonders about what she witnessed. Uneasy suspicions and eerie feelings pervade her interactions at the library, particularly in the basement stacks where she senses something sinister. These experiences reinforce her fear that something inhuman is orchestrating malevolent actions connected to the DMV, further blurring the line between reality and the otherworldly.



Chapter 24: Twenty Four

In Chapter 24, Rosita, already in bed for the night, is startled when a late-night call shakes her awake with unsettling news. It's Beverly, her sister-in-law, crying that Jorge, Rosita's brother, has left her. The claim stems from a call Beverly received from a woman claiming to be with Jorge. A confused, worried Rosita wakes her husband Todd, insisting they check on Beverly despite the late hour, as she fears for her well-being.

As they drive through the quiet streets, Rosita spots someone driving a car who looks just like a deceased criminal, Will Caskey, who she had seen taken away shot and dead after a library shooting. She dismisses it as stress-induced imagination, but the image lingers.

Upon reaching Beverly's home, they find her alright, though emotionally distraught. Beverly starts to question whether the call was real. Todd suggests a far-fetched theory: the DMV, with a history of peculiar, sinister actions including kidnapping Jorge, orchestrated this incident to throw them off. He shares how the DMV's activities involved strange tests, mysterious deaths of DMV ex-employees, and more. Their partial confession that Jorge might be in a brainwashing camp enrages Beverly, who demands they leave.

On the drive home, the eerie sighting of Will Caskey continues to haunt Rosita, adding to her fears of encroaching uncanny events. The next day,



Rosita, at work, verifies that Will Caskey is officially dead and buried and struggles to convince herself it was just a lookalike. Her unsettling library environment and coworkers' jitters post-shooting suggest all is not as it seems, creeping into her job tasks and surroundings. A daunting basement experience with strange noises and power fluctuations heightens her fear, and she decides to leave her task mid-way, seeking the safety of the library's main floor.

In Chapter 25, Danny is yanked from sleep by his sister Jill in the dead of night. He finds her in his room, fearfully informing him that their deceased father has somehow returned and is with their mother. The gravity of encountering what seems to be his resurrected dad frightens him, and they both discuss leaving the house. Sneaking quietly out, the eerie house sounds and their mother's distant sobs underline the surreal situation.

As they try to leave, they're suddenly confronted by what appears to be their father, whose zombie-like appearance and unsettling demeanor instill terror. Attempting to escape through the front door, they encounter bizarre obstacles and are abruptly abducted by strangers, thrust into a white van.

Inside the van, they are taken blindfolded to a prison-like complex labeled a "re-education camp." Attempts to seek help through a 911 call reveal an official cover-up, indicating they were supposedly remanded by their father, who's allegedly still alive according to records.



Faced with bureaucratic coldness, their kidnappers reveal a twisted justification for holding them: Danny's refusal of a DMV "gift" and Jill's reckless behavior violating "license terms." The depressing reality of their captivity is underscored by the haunting environment and rigorous control of the camp. The siblings are forced to accept grotesque terms, including having license numbers tattooed on them for identification, signaling harsh indoctrination ahead.

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Chapter 25 Summary: Twenty Five

In chapter twenty-five, Danny is startled awake by his sister, Jill, in an unprecedented situation—she's in his room at night, fear-stricken, and in her underwear. Jill quietly motions to the window where their father's car is parked, a grey Volvo linked to a tragic accident. Their father, presumed dead, seems to have returned, though eerily altered. They both hear noises from their parents' bedroom, where their mother is crying, and an unrecognizable voice resembling their father's mutters distorted words.

Frightened and confused, the siblings debate their next move, agreeing to escape. In haste, they sneak past their parents' room, noticing their father moving unnaturally like a marionette. The two bolt for the living room, hearing unsettling noises in the walls that seem synchronized with their father's presence. Just as they reach the door, they're confronted by men from a white van parked outside, whisked away with bags over their heads.

Once transported to an unidentified camp with prison-like buildings, the camp's guards reveal that their father recommended them for "re-education." Attempts to call for help are futile when the dispatcher nonchalantly confirms their transfer was sanctioned, leaving Danny and Jill helpless. They are greeted by a threatening figure who criticizes their traffic-related behaviors and warns them of the camp's control. They are led into a building where a grotesque figure demands to mark them with identification numbers,



instilling further fear.

In chapter twenty-six, Todd, a writer, receives news that his book, *Across the Divide*, makes it onto the USA Today bestsellers list. His publicist, Chyla, proposes leveraging this success by having a profile written about him. Things take a darker turn when his publicist unveils unexpected knowledge about his family's Holocaust history, causing him to question the privacy invasion, suspecting a connection to his mysteriously informative DMV-issued driver's license.

Simultaneously, Todd deals with the disappearance of his brother-in-law, Jorge, and agrees to pursue information from Jim Briggs, a policeman uneasy about his forced transfer to the DMV. During their secretive meeting, Jim reveals unnerving truths about the DMV, including suspicions of orchestrated murders disguised as accidents. However, the meeting is cut short by an attack of bees inexplicably swarming Jim. Todd rescues him amidst chaos and trepidation, suspecting DMV reprisals.

Returning home, Todd becomes wary of a pursuing black Camry, potentially linked to bizarre occurrences, Walter Caskey's death being one. Haunted by conspiracies and uncertainty, Todd resolves to discuss these escalating events with Rosita, preparing for profound revelations.

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Chapter 26 Summary: Twenty Six

In Chapter 26, Todd is interrupted during an attempt at writing by news that his book, "Across the Divide," has unexpectedly made it onto the USA Today bestsellers list. Although it's just number 98 on the expanded list, significant figures from his publishing house reach out to congratulate him, indicating the book's success. Chyla, his publicist, suggests that Todd could gain national exposure through a profile by freelance writer Alanis Malaga in USA Today. Initially skeptical, Todd agrees to this plan, but things turn uncomfortable when Chyla mentions his Holocaust-surviving great-grandmother as a potential publicity hook—information that is uncomfortably personal and makes Todd uneasy about its source.

As he gets off the call with Chyla, Todd receives another call from Beverly, who is seeking to reconcile after a previous misunderstanding concerning her missing husband, Jorge. The conversation reveals the suspicions surrounding a mysterious camp and its connection to disappearances. Todd vows to follow up with Jim Briggs, a police lieutenant transferred to the DMV, for answers.

When Todd meets Jim in a park, Jim appears troubled and tired, revealing unsettling information about the DMV. Jim insinuates that the DMV is involved in illicit activities, including the orchestrated deaths of individuals labeled as "renegades." Todd presses Jim for action but learns that options



are grim due to the DMV's overwhelming power and influence. Their conversation raises Todd's fears regarding the DMV's potential brutality, especially when Jim confirms his suspicions about "that camp" and advises Todd to avoid interaction with the DMV.

Their meeting ends in disaster when Jim becomes engulfed by a swarm of bees after he returns to his car, a bizarre attack suggestive of sabotage. Todd manages to save Jim and calls an ambulance, but the event leaves him suspicious and alert to the DMV's potential reach. Driving home, Todd is nearly accosted by a man in a black Camry, hinting at ongoing surveillance or ill intention.

Chapter 27 shifts to Zal, who reflects on the temporary stay of his partner, Violet. Having enjoyed her presence, he feels the void following her return home and contemplates a more permanent relationship. He notices the continued absence of his neighbor, Howard Lang, whose disappearance was cryptically framed by the DMV as "taken care of."

At work, Zal and his colleague Bernard dive deeper into the DMV's antiquated system, uncovering bizarre and sinister anomalies within the DMV's database, such as thousands of controversial, and potentially illegal, license types. Among their discoveries is the unsettling fact that licenses can be flagged for "termination." When Zal checks Violet's record out of curiosity, he discovers her license has been flagged, causing him concern



over what "termination" might mean.

At a team meeting, Project Manager Murdoch informs the team of an unexpected DMV announcement pushing for the expedited rollout of their new online registration system, bypassing the need for in-person DMV services. This new directive pressures Zal, Bernard, and their team to work swiftly, putting their discoveries on hold for now.

Meanwhile, Violet becomes aware of the increasing buzz around the DMV plans and offers to contribute to unraveling the mysteries surrounding the DMV's database and its implications after learning about the red dot by her name. Determined and undeterred by the ominous findings, the team braces for further revelations and challenges ahead as they navigate the increasingly mysterious and dangerous world of the DMV.

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Chapter 27 Summary: Twenty Seven

In Chapter Twenty-Seven, Zal reflects on his deepening relationship with Violet, who had spent nearly a week at his place, which brought an unexpected sense of emptiness after she left. Despite the brief separation, their time together confirmed their compatibility and affection for each other. Meanwhile, Zal ponders the mystery of his missing neighbor Howard Lang, who has been mysteriously "taken care of," leaving Zal uncertain about whether Lang would ever return or if something more permanent has happened to him.

At work, Zal and Bernard encounter shocking irregularities within the DMV's system while working on a new project, uncovering bizarre and unsettling protocols like issuing handicapped placards for alcoholism and licenses allowing illegal behaviors. These anomalies hint at a depth of corruption and control within the DMV, including watch lists based on non-driving related criteria.

Zal finds Violet's name flagged with a red dot, meaning "termination," a concept that fills him with dread. The duo is interrupted by a DMV directive that accelerates their project timeline, adding urgency and stress to the situation. When contacted mysteriously via Violet's phone by someone from the DMV about their presence in the break room, Zal and Bernard realize they are being monitored, likely due to a bee sting marking from their



initiation, implying further sinister oversight over their actions.

Violet's calm reaction to the revelations about the DMV and her red-dot status shows her determination to investigate further, despite not having direct system access. She plans to leverage her research skills to uncover more information about what "termination" means for her.

Chapter Twenty-Eight follows Jorge, who is haunted by surreal dreams that blur the lines between reality and his subconscious fears. As the trainees progress to the next phase of their training, where they will work in a realistic mockup of a DMV office, Jorge remains skeptical of the camp's intentions. Mr. Toll and Mr. Line guide the trainees through a process where each is assigned to a station, with Jorge ending up at Window Twelve, tasked with taking ID photos. The environment is deceptively inviting, hiding the sinister undertones of the training facility.

The tranquility is shattered when trainee Holly is publicly punished for a mistake by having her pinky finger cut off, a brutal demonstration meant to ensure compliance and performance. This horrific incident reinforces the cult-like control of the DMV, using fear to drive obedience. Jorge, witnessing this, feels a deep helplessness and despair, yet is soothed by the office's calming atmosphere and the system's omnipresent buzzing, encouraging him to "work hard and enjoy your work."



These chapters underscore a climate of control, surveillance, and indoctrination within the DMV and its extended influence. They also highlight the personal stakes for both Zal and Jorge, as they navigate their dangerous and manipulated environments, searching for answers while being watched and evaluated by the system they serve.

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Chapter 28: Twenty Eight

Chapter 28

Jorge finds himself in the throes of a nightmare where he stands before an endless line of ants, which transform into a line of cars headed toward a DMV office. His dream shifts abruptly, placing him in various surreal and unsettling scenarios involving the DMV, a symbol for both monotonous bureaucracy and hidden perils. He wakes up in a cold sweat, haunted by the dream and the memory of Beverly, who is no longer alive.

As Jorge moves through his morning routine, he is disturbed by the diminishing number of trainees and reflects on his peculiar circumstances at the training camp. Breakfast triggers nostalgic memories of his family in Mexico, emphasizing his current isolation. The true trainees seem separated from those who spied on them, and Jorge feels uncertain about the success of the camp's brainwashing, particularly with Mr. Line's announcement of a transition to more advanced training.

In the upcoming phase, the trainees are introduced to a mock DMV office, described with an eerie perfection. Mr. Toll emphasizes the importance of verbal affirmations, and an unusual ritual takes place where trainees are chosen for their roles. As Jorge navigates this environment, a sense of



unease grows, mirroring his internal struggle against the seemingly charming facade of the institution that holds him captive.

Jorge ends up at Window 12, tasked with photographing applicants, under the supervision of Ms. Chung. The training takes a sinister turn when Holly, a fellow trainee, is publicly punished for a minor error. A horrifying spectacle of ants and violence serves as a brutal reminder of the camp's oppressive control and the potential consequences of dissent. The ritualized punishment shakes Jorge, reinforcing his awareness of the camp's underlying horrors.

As the routine continues, the office fills with a familiar and calming buzzing sound that numbs Jorge's senses and urges diligent work, exemplifying the disturbing influence the camp exerts over its trainees.

Chapter 29

Meanwhile, Todd visits Jim Briggs at the hospital, despite his discomfort and the potential risks of surveillance by the DMV. Jim, heavily medicated and unable to communicate due to injuries inflicted by bees, remains unresponsive. Todd's visit stems from a sense of duty and desperation to find his brother-in-law, Jorge, who has been taken to an unknown training camp. As Todd whispers to Jim in hopes of gaining clues, he is interrupted by Lisa, Jim's girlfriend, leaving him feeling impotent and disconnected.



Departing the hospital, Todd plans a surprise dinner for Rosita but soon has a tense encounter with a police officer. The officer stops him under dubious pretenses and uses a mysterious number connected to Todd's past. Todd is overwhelmed by fear when the officer, exhibiting signs of possible white

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Chapter 29 Summary: Twenty Nine

In Chapter 29, Todd visits Jim Briggs, a comatose policeman still heavily medicated in the hospital after a severe encounter involving bees. Despite warnings from Rosita and Beverly, who suspect that the DMV might be monitoring Jim, Todd feels a sense of responsibility. He believes Jim holds crucial information about a mysterious training camp linked to Jorge's disappearance. During his visit, Todd whispers to Jim, urging him to recall any clues. Just as Todd is about to leave the hospital, he finds himself pulled over by a patrol car. The officer, suspicious and authoritarian, eventually detains Todd without clear reason. Todd is taken to a strange, rundown DMV office, unlike any he has seen. There, an unsettling interaction occurs, involving an old woman and a pale man. The officers refer to Todd by a mysterious number linked to his great-grandmother, and amidst a surreal and threatening scenario, he is told he will be sent to 'the camp.' Before he can process it fully, a bag is placed over Todd's head, leading him into an uncertain fate.

In Chapter 30, the focus shifts to Rosita, who grows increasingly concerned as Todd has failed to return home. She meticulously checks every possibility to trace his whereabouts without success. Recalling Todd's belief that the DMV is somehow involved, especially after Todd's visit to Jim Briggs, Rosita considers this angle despite its implausibility. She desperately tries to reach out to people through social media but discovers her attempts are



inexplicably blocked. Her suspicions deepen when two enigmatic men, claiming to be from the DMV, appear at her door to confiscate her driver's license, citing alleged violations against the department. They also inform her that Todd's car was impounded after it was found abandoned, intensifying her belief that the DMV is indeed behind Todd's disappearance. Tension mounts as Rosita wrestles with the chilling realization that the DMV is not what it seems, potentially hiding a clandestine and malevolent agenda involving her husband.

These chapters encapsulate rising paranoia and anxiety as personal and mysterious events intertwine with the enigmatic operations of the DMV, setting the stage for more profound revelations and escalating tension.

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Chapter 30 Summary: Thirty

In chapters thirty and thirty-one, the tension intensifies as the characters encounter mysterious circumstances and uncover a deeper conspiracy involving the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Chapter thirty begins with Rosita growing anxious when her husband, Todd, fails to return home for dinner as scheduled. This is unusual for him, and Rosita, already burdened with the stress of her brother Jorge's peculiar disappearance, starts to panic. Jorge's phone has been unreachable, and while Beverly, Jorge's wife, clings to the belief that a suspicious phone call from Jorge's supposed lover is fake, Rosita remains skeptical.

To distract herself, Rosita tries to track down Todd's whereabouts, recalling his plan to visit Jim Briggs, a friend at St. Joseph's hospital. However, Todd's absence remains unexplained, leading Rosita to contact the police, although they dismiss her concerns since enough time hasn't passed to consider Todd officially missing.

Worrying that the situation is tied to past peculiarities involving the DMV—a notion reinforced by a similar case in a social media post—Rosita becomes desperate. This fear is confirmed when two dubious men, claiming to represent the DMV, arrive at her door to repossess her driver's license, accusing her of derogating the department. They ominously inform her that



Todd's car has been impounded, heightening her suspicions of a DMV conspiracy.

In chapter thirty-one, the focus shifts to Zal, who meets with his girlfriend, Violet, after work. Violet has been researching the DMV and shares shocking information: the DMV may be much older than presumed, possibly existing since ancient times in various cultures as a controlling force over human transportation, with a history linked to mystical and ominous origins.

As Zal and Violet delve deeper, they learn that the DMV has a secretive, almost cult-like existence that could be connected to the disappearance of people involved with it, including Zal's neighbor. Furthermore, they suspect that the DMV's push for online registrations is part of a larger, obscure agenda.

Violet confides in Zal about her father's precarious immigration status, a personal issue that has recently surfaced and strained her family. When Zal checks her father's driver's license online, they are horrified to discover it marks him as a 'victim' in the DMV's system, making him vulnerable to road incidents. They realize this is a manipulation of the same pervasive and sinister DMV force they've been investigating.

The overarching mystery grows as Zal, Violet, and their friends contemplate their next steps against an ever-concealing adversary. They decide to discuss



their plans in secrecy to evade potential surveillance, acknowledging the gravity of their discoveries and the need to strategize carefully.

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Chapter 31 Summary: Thirty One

Chapter Thirty-One Summary:

Zal is called to meet Violet after work, where she reveals shocking findings about the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles). Throughout history, the DMV existed long before cars, dating back to ancient times. Violet discovered documents indicating the DMV's presence in various historical periods, including Rome and the Civil War. In ancient Rome, "DMV" stood for Deus Malum Vehiculum, or Evil God of Vehicles, implying a historical role as regulators of human transportation. The DMV, shrouded in secrecy, has influenced society, much like natural forces of earth, fire, air, and water, and has been integral to various cultural and religious contexts.

Zal's concern grows as Violet shares their findings, suspecting they are now under DMV scrutiny due to computer tracking. Their friend Bernard joins them, realizing the repercussions of their discoveries and the likelihood that the DMV might use newfound technology to monitor and control the population. As they plan their next moves, Violet shares a personal revelation about her father's undocumented status and the potential danger it poses. Zal checks her father's records and discovers a dangerous designation on his driver's license. They realize they must protect him. The chapter ends with a sense of unease, knowing they might be watched and need to devise a



plan to counter the DMV's influence.

Chapter Thirty-Two Summary:

Danny and his sister Jill are trapped in what appears to be a re-education camp run by the DMV, where they face dehumanizing treatment, such as being chained to their beds at night. The morning brings an unsettling lesson involving Jill being forced into a crash test scenario to demonstrate the effects of vehicular accidents. She's injured during the staged crash, and an instructor displays a disturbing lack of empathy, highlighting an inhumane system allowing select individuals to administer "justice."

As the day unfolds, Danny meets Todd Klein, a fellow prisoner, and they ponder the legality of their captivity, realizing the sinister scope of the DMV's power. They witness "The Pit," a form of punishment involving dangerous ants, and endure grueling manual labor akin to slave work.

Danny's confrontation with an instructor reveals Jill's disturbing fate—they plan to amputate her legs, allegedly to demonstrate advancements for disabled drivers. Despite Danny's fears, fellow prisoner Todd offers hope, assuring they will seek a way to escape with Jill. Dinner in the camp resumes, clouded by dread and an unyielding desire to resist their captors.



Chapter 32: Thirty Two

In Chapter Thirty-Two, we delve into the unsettling lives of Danny and his sister Jill, who find themselves imprisoned in a peculiar camp that masks its sinister activities under the guise of a re-education program. The siblings endure humiliating routines, such as being chained to their beds at night with diapers on, which Danny finds particularly degrading. Amidst growing speculation about their father's role in their mother's death, Danny grapples with the harsh realities they face in the camp.

As they participate in daily lessons, they are subjected to a cruel crash test exercise where Jill is forced to play the role of a crash test dummy. The instructor, a tall man with short legs who insists on being addressed as 'Sir,' coerces her into participating in a staged collision to illustrate the consequences of avoidable crashes. The demonstration turns horrifying as Jill sustains visible injuries, leaving Danny in a state of distress and helplessness.

The camp they are trapped in is filled with other detained individuals, highlighting the systematic nature of their captivity. While struggling with the absurdity of the situation, Danny encounters newfound hope in Todd Klein, a writer and fellow detainee, who hints at the possibility of escaping. Todd is genuinely concerned about the legality of their situation and gestures towards forming an alliance to find a way out.



In the evening, Danny desperately confronts the instructor about his sister's wellbeing, only to learn that Jill's legs have been amputated, allegorically rendered by the instructor in an offhand manner that implies her potential participation in future demonstrations for disabled drivers. The grim revelation shatters Danny, forcing him to reconcile with the dire possibilities they face.

In Chapter Thirty-Three, we shift to Jorge, who finds himself in the midst of an exhausting regimen at a DMV training camp designed to weed out weakness and ensure compliance through brutal disciplinary measures. Amidst this bleak setting, trainees, including Jorge, perform monotonous tasks under intense scrutiny. Any mistake leads to severe corporal punishments, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and compliance.

Jorge navigates his duties with grim determination, often witnessing colleagues brutally punished for the slightest errors. When facing a racist insult from a superior, Jorge's frustration boils over, resulting in a retaliatory punch, which to his surprise, draws approval from his supervisor. This incident punctuates the dysfunctional and oppressive environment they are subjected to.

One day, Jorge stumbles upon an intriguing form titled "Application for Civilian Entrance to Department of Motor Vehicles Training Camp," hinting



at a way outsiders might infiltrate or expose the camp's operations. Sensing the potential for a lifeline, Jorge memorizes the form number, seeing this as a fragile link to the outside world and a means of rescue for him and his newfound companions, Todd and Rosita.

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Chapter 33 Summary: Thirty Three

In these chapters, the story unfolds in a haunting dystopian world where Jorge finds himself at the DMV, subjected to brutal and dehumanizing training. The chapter begins with Jorge, an exhausted trainee at the DMV, who has been at his station for almost a full day, highlighting the relentless and punishing schedule imposed on trainees. Jorge realizes the DMV training is less about preparedness and more about driving mistakes from sheer exhaustion, showing a cruel and draconian training style. He has been tasked with sorting forms meticulously, a job symbolizing the bureaucracy's grindstone.

Amidst this monotonous task, Jorge is reminded of his past and the pain of losing Beverly, offering a glimpse into his personal struggles. His ability to adeptly fulfill tasks is juxtaposed against the struggles of fellow trainee Mitchell, who makes a mistake and faces severe punishment with grotesque brutality. Adding horror, the trainees witness a ritualistic punishment involving bizarre and medieval-like tactics, a commentary on fear and compliance in bureaucratic systems.

In a shocking turn, Jorge discovers a form labeled "Application for Civilian Entrance to Department of Motor Vehicles Training Camp," hinting at a bureaucratic loophole to enter the camp. Recognizing its significance, he memorizes it, hoping it could be a key to unraveling or exposing the sinister



workings of the DMV.

The story transitions to Rosita, Jorge's sister, waking up to find her car impounded and her home violated, with a notification subtly threatening - signed by "the DMV." Her movements and possessions are being monitored, showcasing the invasive power of the institution.

Rosita receives a message from Jorge, revealing Todd, her partner, is also at the DMV camp. Jorge's cryptic message directs her to obtain a specific form as a step to reach and possibly rescue him and Todd. She quickly enlists Beverly, concocting a plan that hints at an attempt to infiltrate this guarded DMV camp.

The two women confront eerie and surreal circumstances at the DMV office, finding it overtaken by death and decay, yet mechanistic operations continue undisturbed. The scene is a jarring mix of grim reality and absurdity, reflecting the sinister transformation of a place that should symbolize routine and order into something malevolent. They engage with the odd, detached employees to obtain permits facilitating entry into the DMV camp, despite the ghastly environment filled with mutilated and crawling masses.

Their journey ends in hesitation and uncertainty, facing animated dead forms blocking their exit, suggesting the DMV not only controls their fate but also the very environment itself in a supernatural manner. This climactic moment



signals a turning point as they prepare to step into a literal and metaphorical battleground to save their loved ones, driven by desperation and courage amidst chaos.

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Chapter 34 Summary: Thirty Four

Chapter Thirty-Four and Thirty-Five Summary

Rosita wakes up in distress to find out her car has been impounded, with the pink receipt of seizure on Todd's pillow, indicating an intruder has breached her house. An intruder who has not only taken her car but also ransacked Todd's office and had the audacity to make a sandwich in her kitchen. This invasion is overshadowed by a cryptic text she receives from her brother, Jorge, indicating that both he and Todd are at a mysterious DMV training camp. Jorge's message urges Rosita to find DMV form A131/2B to track them down. Alarmed yet determined, she contacts her sister-in-law, Beverly, with whom she quickly devises a plan to retrieve the form and rescue their husbands.

The duo heads to the eerily vacant DMV office to obtain the required form. Their experience inside is surreal; the environment is a bizarre mix of horror and bureaucracy, with catatonic employees and a strange, malevolent atmosphere. Despite these unsettling circumstances, they acquire temporary permits that supposedly allow them entry to the camp holding their loved ones.

Meanwhile, Zal and Violet, amidst an increasing sense of looming danger

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from the DMV, are visited by a neighbor, Mr. Garcia, who oddly knows about Zal's work on the DMV's computer system. Alarmed, Zal contacts his friend Bernard, a colleague who is equally suspicious of the DMV's motives. Together, they concoct a plan to infiltrate a DMV office under the guise of needing to check the system's updates, hoping to find a way to sabotage the department's ominous activities from within.

Zal, Bernard, and Violet find themselves at the same DMV location as Rosita and Beverly. Here, the two groups converge amid the grotesque setting—a house of horrors filled with dead bodies and strange symbols. After rescuing Rosita and Beverly, the group decides to band together to venture to the DMV training camp to save their family members, armed with the vital permits.

On their journey, they face numerous surreal threats, including a ghostly encounter with Zal's dead parents, who appear to be raised by the DMV to hinder their progress. As they navigate these perils, the group becomes increasingly aware of the DMV's vast and sinister power. Their destination, a remote training camp, looms ahead, protected by a formidable gate and guarded by an armed sentinel. With their temporary permits validated, they step past the gate, unsure but resolute in their mission to uncover the truth and rescue their loved ones from the tyrannical grip of the DMV.



Chapter 35 Summary: Thirty Five

Chapter Thirty-Five:

Zal, waking up next to Violet, revels in a rare moment of contentment amidst the chaos of their lives. However, this peace is short-lived as Violet questions their next steps regarding the looming threat of the DMV's malevolent influence over them. Zal admits that their ability to fight the system is limited due to its immense complexity. Their breakfast is interrupted by a visit from a distressed neighbor, Mr. Garcia, whose license was suspended without cause. Oddly, he knows about Zal's involvement with the DMV's computer system, raising Zal's suspicion of surveillance or leaks about his work.

Zal contacts Bernard, a trusted friend and fellow programmer, to discuss their precarious situation and the eerie encounter with Mr. Garcia. Bernard, arriving in haste, suggests infiltrating a DMV office to better understand how the system operates and potentially sabotage its more nefarious components. Despite the risks of legal and professional repercussions, the group - now including Violet - resolve to take action.

Their journey to a local DMV office reveals an unsettling scene that defies logical explanation: a seemingly abandoned building teeming with lifeless



employees and strange geometric structures. They encounter two women, Rosita and Beverly, who share their tragic stories about their husbands being taken by the DMV. The group agrees to join forces to locate the men, securing permits to enter a mysterious DMV training camp.

The trek to the camp is fraught with danger, including confrontations with a hostile police officer and vehicles seemingly driven by malevolent forces—including a haunting encounter involving Zal's deceased parents. Each vehicle becomes a potential threat, but they manage to evade further incidents and arrive at the camp, uncertain of the challenges that lie ahead.

Chapter Thirty-Six:

Inside the camp, Todd is shackled and subjected to degrading conditions. He is approached by DMV bureaucrats who attempt to recruit him by leveraging his unique skills, which suggests awareness of his presence. This interaction fuels Todd's hope that the outside world may be attempting to find him, but he knows he cannot rely solely on external rescue.

As Todd navigates the camp's grim atmosphere, he befriends Danny, whose sister has been missing for days, fueling fears of her fate. Encountering other long-term detainees like Purvis, Todd realizes the perils of the camp and the extent of the DMV's covert activities.



Witnessing a brutal activity termed a "demolition derby," where inmates are forced to crash into each other with small cars, Todd's resolve strengthens to find a way out. During this ordeal, Danny receives devastating confirmation of his sister's death, administered with chilling detachment by an instructor.

The haunting and systematic brutality of the camp sharpens Todd's focus on escape, underscored by the shared misfortune of those around him who are trapped in this sinister operation.

These chapters intertwine the oppressive reach of the DMV with the personal stakes of the characters, highlighting themes of resilience and unity as they confront seemingly insurmountable odds.

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Chapter 36: Thirty Six

Chapter Thirty-Six

Todd wakes up in captivity, shackled to a bed and wearing a diaper he refuses to use. Upon being released by a smug young man, he rushes to the bathroom. Reflecting on his situation after being asked to proofread a document by bureaucrats, he speculates whether efforts are being made outside to find him, hoping Rosita is publicizing his disappearance.

In the mess hall, Todd meets with Danny, a worried young man whose sister is missing. They speculate about her fate, with Danny fearing she might have been sacrificed, while Todd suspects she might still be healing—or worse. Their silence speaks volumes about the grim atmosphere and the uncertainty of their situation. Joining them is Purvis, an old man imprisoned for years, highlighting the depth of the DMV's deception.

After breakfast, they are taken to a building with a demolition derby track. The sinister exercise involves the prisoners driving into each other, with the losers having to evade moving vehicles on foot. The grim proceedings are underscored when Danny receives his sister's blood-stained belongings, confirming her death and breaking his spirit further.



Chapter Thirty-Seven

Anxious, Rosita clutching her permit, enters a camp with her group comprising Beverly, Zal, Violet, and Bernard. Their unexpected presence confuses Mr. White and Mr. Black, officials seemingly in charge of the operation. Rosita and Beverly confront them about Jorge's whereabouts, demanding his release, and assert their right to be there using official permits.

Despite the officials' initial resistance, a loophole Rosita exploited in obtaining the permit momentarily confounds them, allowing the group access without being chaperoned. They locate Jorge in a cafeteria, emotionally reuniting with him as the depth of their deception surfaces—Jorge's alleged recruitment and arranged message to them.

Jorge, seemingly employed by the DMV, reveals he knows Todd's whereabouts in a separate re-education camp on the other side of a wall. The group embarks on a daring plan to infiltrate this area. They follow Jorge's lead through a hidden path, discovering a chilling graveyard and murals depicting grim road fatalities, embodying the oppressive atmosphere of the camp.

Successfully crossing into the grim internment camp, they silently maneuver



with Jorge's guidance. Following a group of orange-clad prisoners leads them to Todd. Unnoticed, Rosita sees Todd and is urged by Jorge to remain discreet. Jorge concocts a story with the DMV employee to 'retrieve' Todd alongside Danny, making a smooth exit amidst the chaotic atmosphere of the camp.

Reunited with Rosita, Todd brings along the grief-stricken Danny, deeply affected by his sister's death. The group hastily retreats to the wall they breached, aware of the looming threat of their environment. However, Jorge proposes taking a stand against the oppressive establishment before fully escaping, leaving the group with uncertainty yet a spark of resolve.

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Chapter 37 Summary: Thirty Seven

Chapter Thirty-Seven:

Rosita and her companions, Beverly, Zal, Violet, and Bernard, arrive at a mysterious camp with a singular mission: to rescue Jorge and Todd, who are held captive by a manipulative organization disguised as a modern bureaucracy. The group is greeted by Mr. White and Mr. Black, two intimidating figures associated with the camp. Despite their formal authorization to visit, the unexpected arrival of Rosta and her group puts the two men on edge. As they navigate the complex, feelings of hope rise when the group realizes the camp is unprepared for their arrival. Rosita and Beverly confront Mr. White and Mr. Black about Jorge's whereabouts, only to face resistance. Bernard asserts their intent to retrieve Jorge and Todd, leveraging the validity of their permits. Initially, the camp representatives are visibly shaken by the documents and reluctantly agree to take them to Jorge.

Led to a modern building resembling a college campus, the group finally reunites with Jorge in the cafeteria. A tearful reunion ensues between Jorge and Beverly, coupled with revelations of deceit—Jorge believed Beverly had died of a stroke, manipulated by the camp's tricky narratives.



The group learns that Todd is held in a separate, more grimly named re-education camp across a wall, which their permits do not cover. Despite the ominous nature of the place, Jorge believes he can lead the group across to free Todd. He also reveals his bewildering forced employment at the camp, potentially part of the organization's broader deceptive schemes. Together, they devise a plan to cross the wall. Jorge shares strategic insights, recalling a hidden door within a mural, successfully leading the group into Todd's camp.

On the other side, they encounter a dreary internment camp where Todd is located. Desperation mounts as the group stealthily maneuvers through the facility. They eventually spot Todd among a group of prisoners and conduct a covert extraction amidst tension and fear that grips the atmosphere. As they attempt to leave with Todd and a young boy named Danny, who is also a prisoner, Jorge proposes they take action to stop the camp's operation.

Chapter Thirty-Eight:

Zal, feeling ill-equipped for heroics, faces the daunting task of confronting a dark force hidden within the camp. Jorge leads the group toward a DMV "temple," believing it to be the root of the sinister affairs. Within, Zal recalls previous encounters with mysterious geometric structures and bees, which link this entity to a deeper, ancient malevolence. Hypnotic noises from the



temple intensify confusion and danger, but Jorge urges quick action to destroy the faux-statue made entirely of bees—the symbol of the DMV's god.

With remarkable courage, Jorge attacks the statue with makeshift weapons, triggering a chaotic dispersion of angry bees and revealing the absence of any real structure beneath the insect facade. The statue's destruction disrupts a series of worshippers who collapse to reveal swarms of ants constructing a hideous new form, adding a significant layer of danger. Realizing the danger expands beyond insects, Zal grasps an existential understanding of an ancient evil influencing the DMV, recalling the term "Deus Malum Vehiculum" which embodies this manipulative power.

Jorge insists on locating another key target: a bizarre wax structure emitting the buzzing sound of bees. As they move, the camp transforms into a nightmarish realm, foreshadowing the sinister heart of the DMV. Arriving at a clearing, they face a surreal fleet of vehicles representing the DMV's bureaucratic machinery. Ignoring the absurd threats issued by the vehicles, they target the wax object believed to wield the DMV's ancient power. Their primitive clubs become instruments of disruption against the wax structure, creating a path inside a chamber filled with unsettling beauty and cognitive traps.

Within, Zal reflects on the permeating influence of transportation in history

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as spelled out across the walls. The group is challenged by a shadowy creature epitomizing trapped despair, which they dispatch with collective determination. An epiphany reveals that the DMV's power is entrenched, ancient, and collaborative, manipulating not just human systems but the essence of life, structured like a hive. Their action collapses the temple of wax, temporarily disrupting but not destroying the malevolent entity.

Emerging, they observe chaos overtaking the camp as the DMV's structure fractures. Instinctively deducing the organization's recovery despite the wreckage, they prioritize escape. The camp is left in disarray, sirens blaring amid the breakdown of order, marking a temporary hiatus for the sinister designs of the DMV. As they flee, the group is enveloped by a relief layered with inevitable uncertainty, underscored by the eerie tranquility of returning to the familiar world beyond the camp's confines. Overwhelmed with emotion, Zal acknowledges the transience of their victory, closing with Violet's comforting warmth, hinting subtly at episodic closure.



Chapter 38 Summary: Thirty Eight

Chapter Thirty-Eight and Thirty-Nine Summary:

The set of chapters brings the story to a suspenseful climax followed by significant resolution. Zal finds himself caught in a web of unexpected heroics, holding hands with Violet as they nervously embark on a mission led by Jorge. Their immediate goal is to disrupt a mysterious DMV "temple," believed to be a power center controlled by a strange animate statue made of bees—a deity for DMV cultists. Jorge's plan is to attack this surreal headquarters, while Zal and Bernard target their digital operations. They face opposition, including bizarre hypnotic sounds and threatening bees, but manage to damage the bee figure, revealing it to be a hollow construct.

The temple's underpinnings unravel further as ants reassemble the remnants into a new monstrous figure—an unfolding revelation of "Deus Malum Vehiculum," a primal force controlling transportation and organization throughout history. Faced with the threat of this deep-seated evil, Jorge, Zal, and their team attempt to dismantle the symbolic wax structures connected to it.

Upon escaping the temple and witnessing DMV operations descend into

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chaos, they realize they've only temporarily disrupted something much larger, as the evil behind it is foundational and ancient. Deciding timely retreat is their best course, they flee amidst the pandemonium, knowing the threat may someday return.

Chapter Thirty-Nine transitions back to their drive to civilization, with the DMV chaos seemingly leaking into the outside world revealing more strange occurrences. The crew reflects on their experiences and the enormity of what they've faced. They arrive at a burned-out DMV office, and as a group, ponder the next steps. Bernard and Zal stay behind to leverage their technical skills to continue disrupting the DMV's corrupted systems.

Back home, the group considers how to move on. News breaks about the DMV camps, a revelation sparked by viral footage captured by Violet and Bernard. This courageous exposure thrusts the DMV into the public eye, pushing for change.

Meanwhile, Rosita and Todd contemplate opting out of vehicle reliance altogether. Zal, Violet, Bernard, and the others explore the possibility of a quieter life while maintaining connections. Regular life is within reach again as they engage in tentative social plans and Todd celebrates unexpected career successes, indicating the beginning of a fresh chapter.



Chapter 39 Summary: Thirty Nine

In Chapter Thirty-Nine, the group is returning to civilization after their chaotic experiences at the DMV camp, a place that represents bureaucratic hell. Todd is overwhelmed by memories of the traffic rules he learned at the camp, resonating with the disorder on the roads, marked by accidents and impatient drivers.

Upon reaching the DMV office in the city, they find it burned down, adding a sense of disturbed satisfaction for Todd. The group, cramped and uncomfortable from the tight ride back, gets out to stretch and reflect on what's next. Bernard and Zal, familiar with the computer system, plan to sabotage the DMV's digital operations to disrupt its sinister activities. Although others like Beverly are skeptical that real change could be achieved against such a formidable government entity, Zal is hopeful things could return to normal—at least temporarily.

As the night unfolds, Danny, a youth from the camp who lost his sister, is driven home by Beverly. He remains haunted by his sister's absence and the uncertainty of what awaits him at home. Todd and others accompany Danny, armed with tools as makeshift weapons, as a precaution. When they arrive, Danny finds his mother battered and traumatized, and his father reduced to a lifeless, inhuman form on the floor, indicating the camp's sinister influence has ceased.



Afterward, the camps' existence makes headlines as Violet and Bernard's documentation becomes viral, leading to an investigation by other government agencies. The DMV continues to operate, but Todd and Rosita choose to dissociate themselves by opting for public transport over maintaining traceable driver's licenses.

A month later, the group, including Zal, Violet, and Bernard, visits Todd and Rosita during lunch to update them on their efforts to infiltrate and dismantle the DMV from within. Despite remaining employed, Bernard and Zal are covertly resisting the system by erasing secret programs and enlisting help from former programmers. While reconnecting with Danny might seem an option, the collective decision is to let him heal alone.

The chapter concludes with Todd revealing his recent successes, including an upcoming NPR feature and a book going into its third printing. This semblance of normal life contrasts the previous chaos. As they mull a quiet evening with homemade pasta, Todd offers to walk to the store, possibly symbolizing a desire for quiet reflection and a return to pedestrian simplicity.

