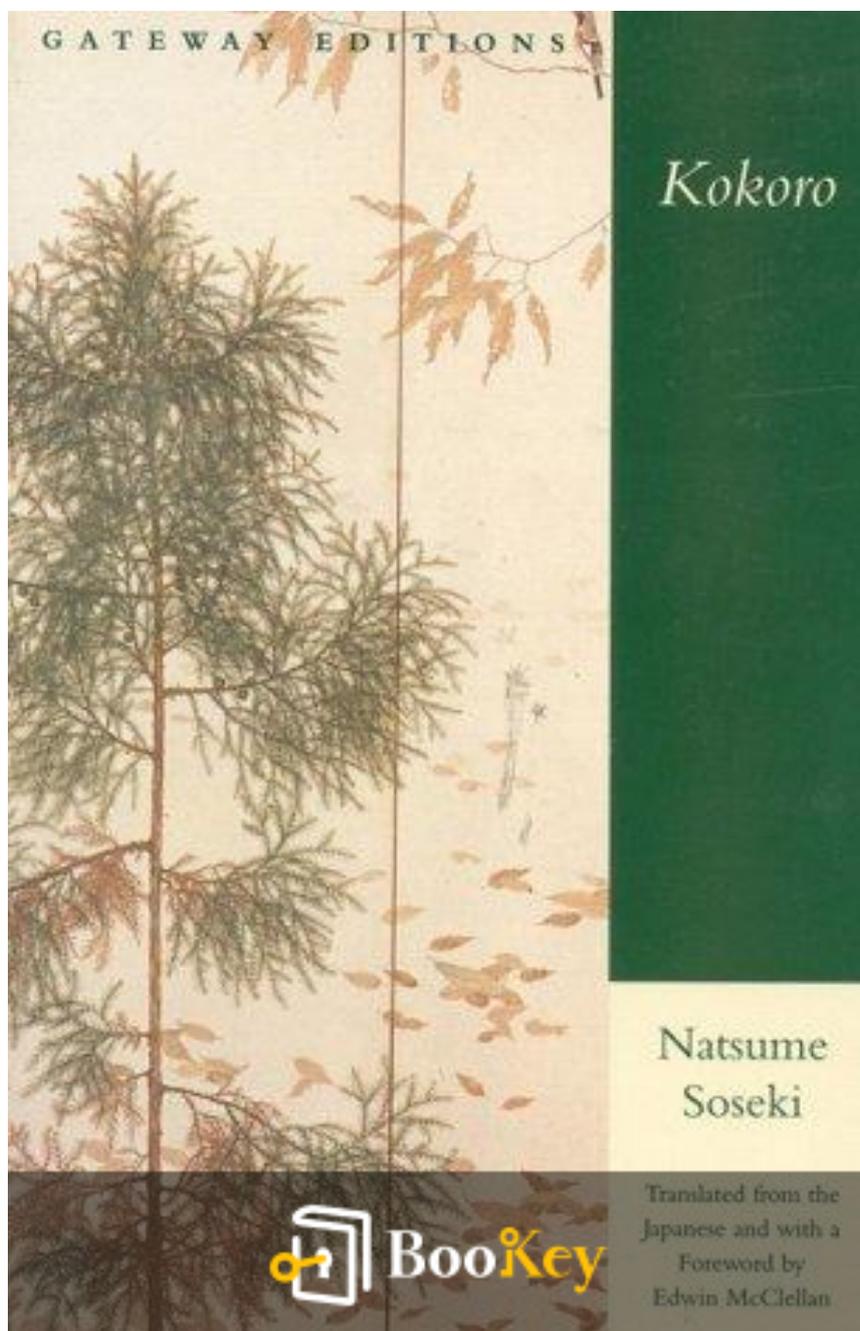


Kokoro PDF (Limited Copy)

Natsume Soseki



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Kokoro Summary

The Struggle Between Isolation and Human Connection.

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About the book

"Kokoro," a profound and introspective novel by Natsume Soseki, delves into the intricacies of the human spirit and the relationships that define our existence. Set in Japan during the Meiji era, the story revolves around the experiences of a nameless student and his enigmatic mentor, referred to as Sensei, whose secrets and existential struggles illuminate the universal themes of love, loneliness, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing society. With eloquent prose and a deep psychological exploration of its characters, "Kokoro" invites readers to reflect on their own lives and the connections that bind us to one another, making it an enduring classic that resonates with anyone who has grappled with the complexities of the heart.

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About the author

Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) was a prominent Japanese novelist and poet, celebrated as one of Japan's greatest literary figures. Born in Ushigome, Tokyo, he emerged during a period of significant social and cultural transformation following the Meiji Restoration, which spurred his interest in both Western literature and traditional Japanese culture. He initially studied English literature, later becoming a professor at the Tokyo Imperial University, but he found his true calling in writing novels that explored the intricacies of human emotions and relationships. His works, including the acclaimed "Kokoro," reflect his deep philosophical inquiries into the nature of self, alienation, and the search for meaning in a rapidly modernizing society. Today, Soseki's influence endures and is acknowledged not only for his narrative prowess but also for his profound insights into the human psyche.

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Chapter 1 Summary:

In Chapter 1, the narrator reflects on the influential figure known as Sensei, whom he chooses to refer to by this title rather than revealing his name. This decision stems from a deep-seated reverence and respect for Sensei, which permeates the narrator's memories. The chapter begins during the narrator's youth, when he travels to Kamakura at the behest of a friend who wishes to enjoy the seaside. However, shortly after their arrival, the friend receives troubling news from home regarding his mother's health, prompting him to leave abruptly.

Left alone in Kamakura, the narrator decides to remain and take advantage of the time before school resumes. The narrative paints a picture of a tranquil seaside town, where the narrator, enjoying the summer, immerses himself in the beach culture amidst crowds of Tokyo residents escaping the city heat. Despite being solitary, he finds joy in the lively atmosphere, swimming in the ocean and basking in the sun.

The beach setting is complemented by communal facilities, where bathers can change and leave their belongings safe while enjoying the water. It is in this bustling scene that the narrator first encounters Sensei. The chapter establishes a sense of camaraderie and the simple pleasures of life, setting the stage for the deeper relationship that will develop between the narrator and Sensei as the story unfolds.

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Chapter 2 Summary:

In Chapter 2, the narrator describes a pivotal encounter with a man referred to as Sensei at Yuigahama beach. The chapter opens with the narrator just emerging from the water and drying off in the sea breeze, when he notices Sensei, who has stripped down for a swim. Sensei stands out because he is accompanied by a Westerner, a striking figure with notably fair skin, dressed only in traditional Japanese undergarments. This sight captivates the narrator, as he recalls observing Western bathers just days before, who had adhered to more modest swimwear.

The narrator's curiosity peaks as he follows Sensei and the Westerner to the water's edge, where both men swim among the crowded shallows before striking out to deeper waters. Their camaraderie intrigues him, especially as they swim efficiently and return swiftly to shore, drying off without rinsing at the well before departing together.

The next day, driven by a desire to understand Sensei better, the narrator returns to the beach at the same hour. Sensei appears once more, now alone and wearing a straw hat, indicating a routine. As Sensei dives into the water, the narrator impulsively decides to swim after him, only to find that Sensei, rather than returning via the same route, has swum in an arc away from him. Their brief moments together emphasize the narrator's growing fascination with Sensei, leaving him with a lingering sense of curiosity and uncertainty



about his identity, suggesting that this encounter might be the beginning of a significant relationship. The chapter sets the stage for deeper exploration of their connection and the mysterious nature of Sensei's character.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of curiosity in forging connections

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, the narrator's curiosity about Sensei serves as a catalyst for personal growth and deeper relationships. As you reflect on this theme, consider how your own curiosity can lead to meaningful encounters and insights. Embrace the moments when you feel drawn to someone or something unfamiliar, for they could open doors to new understandings and bonds. Allow your inquisitive nature to guide you towards exploration and connection, reminding you that every relationship begins with a spark of curiosity that can light the way to profound experiences.

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Chapter 3 Summary:

In Chapter 3, the protagonist finds himself increasingly drawn to Sensei, a solitary figure he observes daily at the beach. Sensei's reserved and aloof demeanor, coupled with his consistent routine, makes him seem unapproachable. Unlike the previous Western companion of Sensei, who has not returned, Sensei appears content in his solitude.

A turning point occurs when Sensei's spectacles fall to the ground while he prepares to put on his kimono. Seizing the moment, the protagonist retrieves the glasses, breaking the ice just enough for Sensei to thank him. The following day, emboldened by their brief interaction, the protagonist swims out to join Sensei in the ocean. The vastness of the water around them creates an intimate space, allowing them to connect amidst the beauty of nature. As they float effortlessly, a sense of camaraderie forms between them.

After their swim, Sensei initiates a conversation about the protagonist's plans to stay longer at the beach. This marks the first time the protagonist addresses him as "Sensei," indicating a shift from observation to a budding friendship. That evening, motivated by curiosity and a desire to know Sensei better, the protagonist visits Sensei's impressive lodgings within a temple complex. During their conversation, Sensei shares that the eccentric Westerner he was previously with is no longer in Kamakura, hinting at his

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own rarity in forming connections.

However, the protagonist's attempt to establish a deeper bond falters when he expresses a feeling of familiarity with Sensei that remains unreciprocated. Sensei's lack of recognition brings about a sense of disappointment for the protagonist, emphasizing the emotional complexity of their budding relationship and foreshadowing the nuances of their interactions to come. Through these encounters, the protagonist begins to navigate the evolving dynamics of friendship, loneliness, and the search for connection that characterize his experiences with Sensei.

Key Point	Description
Protagonist's Interest	The protagonist is drawn to Sensei, a solitary figure he observes daily at the beach.
Sensei's Demeanor	Sensei is reserved and aloof, appearing content in his solitude after the departure of a Western companion.
Turning Point	Sensei's glasses fall; the protagonist picks them up, allowing Sensei to thank him, breaking the ice between them.
Swimming Together	The protagonist swims out to join Sensei, facilitating a connection amidst the natural beauty of the ocean.
First Interaction	After swimming, Sensei asks about the protagonist's stay, marking a shift in their relationship as the protagonist calls him "Sensei" for the first time.
Visit to Sensei's Lodgings	The protagonist visits Sensei's impressive temple lodgings, aiming to know him better.

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Key Point	Description
Divergence in Feelings	The protagonist feels a sense of familiarity, which Sensei does not reciprocate, leading to disappointment.
Themes Explored	Emerging dynamics of friendship, loneliness, and the search for connection characterize the encounters between the protagonist and Sensei.

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Chapter 4:

In Chapter 4, the narrator returns to Tokyo after spending time at a summer resort, reflecting on his complex relationship with Sensei, a figure he deeply admires yet feels repeatedly disappointed by. Upon their parting, the narrator had asked if he could visit Sensei, to which Sensei's seemingly cold response hurt the narrator's self-confidence, leaving him puzzled about Sensei's true feelings. Despite these disappointments, he is drawn to Sensei, believing that closeness with him would fulfill his yearning for deeper connection.

The chapter emphasizes the narrator's youthful innocence and unwavering desire for friendship, suggesting that Sensei's aloofness is not a sign of dislike but rather a manifestation of his own inner turmoil and self-deprecation. The narrator recognizes, in hindsight, that Sensei's curt demeanor was a defense mechanism, possibly to protect himself from emotional intimacy.

After returning to Tokyo with the intent to reconnect with Sensei, the narrator's focus shifts to the vibrant bustle of the city and the excitement of the school year, causing him to temporarily forget his desire to see Sensei. However, as classes begin and life settles back into normalcy, a feeling of emptiness prompts him to seek Sensei once more.

On his initial attempts to visit, Sensei is surprisingly not home, contradicting



what Sensei had previously stated about being averse to going out. Growing resentful and frustrated by this unexpected absence, the narrator lingers at Sensei's front door until he is greeted by a lady, presumably Sensei's wife, who informs him that Sensei is visiting a cemetery to pay respects at a grave. This revelation sparks a spontaneous decision in the narrator to head to the cemetery, hoping to encounter Sensei there. The chapter closes with the narrator feeling a mix of anticipation and determination as he sets off, eager to strengthen their bond.

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Chapter 5 Summary:

In Chapter 5, the narrator encounters Sensei in a graveyard, where he has gone to visit the grave of a friend. As the narrator walks through the cemetery, he reflects on the variety of names inscribed on the tombstones, representing the diverse fabric of humanity—ranging from foreign individuals to those of different faiths. This variety intrigues him but elicits a more somber contemplation from Sensei, who hints that the narrator has not yet grappled with the concept of death.

Their walk leads them to a ginkgo tree, a symbol of beauty in autumn when its leaves turn golden and cover the ground. Sensei holds a fondness for this tree, as he visits it regularly. A brief exchange reveals that while the narrator is curious about whose grave Sensei visits, he learns that it is that of a friend, though Sensei remains reticent about the details of their relationship.

As they stroll side by side, an air of quiet introspection envelops them. Sensei's brevity and the weight of his silence suggest an emotional depth tied to his monthly visits to the cemetery. In this chapter, the themes of mortality, memory, and the connections between life and death begin to emerge, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of Sensei's character and his past.

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Chapter 6 Summary:

Chapter 6 Summary

In this chapter, the narrator continues to deepen his connection with Sensei, a quiet and introspective man who exhibits a serene demeanor yet often appears distant. Their interactions, although consistent, reveal an underlying tension; Sensei remains unapproachable and somewhat forlorn, which intrigues the narrator and compels him to seek a closer bond.

The narrator reflects on a specific incident in a graveyard where he noticed a fleeting shadow of sadness on Sensei's face—an image that lingers in his memory. This moment foreshadows the complex emotional landscape of Sensei, hinting at deeper struggles that are not immediately apparent.

As autumn draws to a close, the narrator engages Sensei in conversation about a ginkgo tree near the grave, speculating whether it has lost its leaves. He expresses a desire to accompany Sensei on his next visit to the grave, suggesting that they can enjoy a walk together. However, Sensei stubbornly insists that his visits are solely for solemn purposes, detaching the act of visiting a grave from casual leisure.

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Despite Sensei's clear reluctance to share this moment with the narrator, who interprets Sensei's insistence as a potential excuse, the narrator presses on, emphasizing his wish to pay respects along with him. But Sensei's demeanor shifts; a shadow of annoyance or fear crosses his face, mirroring the earlier shadow the narrator had witnessed.

In a moment of vulnerability, Sensei finally reveals that he visits the grave for a "particular reason" he cannot disclose, adding layers of mystery to his character. He underscores the significance of this visit by stating that he never even brings his wife, suggesting that whatever emotional burden he carries is intensely personal and not meant for sharing. This chapter encapsulates the subtle complexities of their relationship, balancing the narrator's youthful eagerness against Sensei's guarded and solitary existence.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The complexity of human emotions

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, the nuanced portrayal of Sensei's emotional struggles encourages you to embrace the complexities of your own feelings and those of others. Recognizing that individuals may carry hidden burdens fosters empathy, urging you to connect more deeply with the people around you. Just as the narrator seeks to understand Sensei despite the distance, allowing yourself to confront your own vulnerabilities can lead to richer relationships and a more authentic existence.

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Chapter 7 Summary:

In Chapter 7, the narrator reflects on his growing relationship with Sensei, a reclusive figure who exhibits an intriguing mixture of wisdom and loneliness. The narrator's visits, which he initially views as casual, evolve into a deeper connection that transcends mere curiosity. He recognizes the importance of maintaining a sense of innocence and guilelessness during their interactions, believing that intellectual scrutiny could disrupt their bond.

During one of his visits, Sensei inquires about the frequency of the narrator's visits, revealing his own loneliness. Sensei candidly admits to feeling isolated and expresses gratitude for the company. When the narrator questions why Sensei feels lonely, the conversation takes a perplexing turn as Sensei deflects the question, instead asking about the narrator's age. This highlights a generational divide and prompts the narrator to reflect on his own feelings of loneliness.

Upon returning days later, the warmth of their mutual laughter contrasts with Sensei's somber admission of his loneliness. He hints at the burden of youthful isolation, suggesting that what the narrator perceives as mere companionship is, at its core, a quest for connection. Sensei, aware of his own inability to alleviate the narrator's loneliness, acknowledges that the young often have a compelling desire to engage with the world.

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This chapter captures the poignant essence of their relationship, blending humor, introspection, and an exploration of loneliness that underscores the complex emotional landscapes both characters navigate. It foreshadows the inevitable shifts that will come as the narrator matures, suggesting that their bond may be temporary in the face of life's changing circumstances.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of genuine connection

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, you encounter the profound realization that relationships built on authenticity can provide solace in times of loneliness. The evolution of the bond between the narrator and Sensei serves as a reminder that, even amid life's complexities, it is our sincere connections with others that nurture our souls. Embrace those moments of genuine interaction; allow yourself to be vulnerable and honest, for it is through these exchanges that you can truly combat the isolation we all experience at times. As you navigate your own relationships, remember how meaningful it is to cultivate depth and authenticity, fostering a refuge of understanding and companionship in an often solitary world.

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Chapter 8:

Chapter 8 Summary

In this chapter, the protagonist reflects on his continued visits to Sensei's home, where he feels a mix of curiosity and the awkwardness of youth around women, particularly Sensei's wife. Despite being inexperienced in romantic encounters, he finds her beauty striking; yet, their interactions remain superficial, limited primarily to his role as Sensei's student.

During a visit, the atmosphere is more jovial than usual, and Sensei encourages his wife to join in drinking sake, something she usually avoids. Their playful banter reveals a glimpse of their relationship dynamics. Sensei appears cheerful, while his wife expresses reluctance and even discomfort with drinking. This exchange hints at a deeper melancholy beneath their surface cheer, giving the reader insight into the complexities of their marriage.

The conversation shifts toward the topic of children, and Sensei's wife expresses a desire for them. However, the protagonist's lack of sympathy reflects his inexperience and youthful naivety, viewing children merely as disturbances. Sensei humorously suggests adopting a child, yet he immediately counters it with a somber claim of "divine punishment,"



leaving his wife silent and the air heavy with unresolved emotions.

Throughout this chapter, the subdued atmosphere of their household is evident, marked by a lack of laughter or lively interaction, which contrasts with Sensei's lightheartedness during their conversations. This poignant juxtaposition adds depth to the narrative, highlighting the undercurrents of isolation and unfulfilled longing within their lives.

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 9 Summary:

In Chapter 9, the narrator reflects on the relationship between Sensei and his wife, Shizu. Although he has not lived with them, he observes their interactions and concludes they share a generally good bond, often marked by tenderness. Sensei frequently calls Shizu by name, asking for her help instead of relying on their maid. The couple enjoys shared experiences, like attending concerts and taking vacations together, as evidenced by the postcards they send from trips to places like Hakoné and Nikko.

However, this idyllic impression is shattered when the narrator unwittingly overhears a heated argument between Sensei and Shizu. Recognizing Sensei's voice among the raised tones, he discerns that Shizu is likely crying, which unsettles him deeply, prompting him to retreat home rather than intrude on their dispute.

Later that evening, after a period of restless reading, Sensei arrives at the narrator's lodgings, suggesting they go for a walk. The two men share a beer, though Sensei, typically sparing with alcohol, comments that it isn't having the desired effect. The narrator's lingering discomfort from the argument makes him hesitant to discuss it, until Sensei opens up about his earlier conflict with Shizu. He expresses frustration over a misunderstanding that caused him to lose his temper, revealing his emotional struggle but leaving the narrator perplexed about the depth of Sensei's suffering. This chapter



highlights the complexities of marital relationships, the challenges of communication, and the internal conflicts faced by individuals, establishing a deeper insight into Sensei's character.

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Chapter 10 Summary:

Chapter 10 Summary

As Sensei and I walked home in silence, he unexpectedly broke the quiet. He expressed regret for leaving home in anger, lamenting that his wife would undoubtedly be worried about him. He reflected on the burden of being her only confidant, showing a hint of concern for her emotional well-being. Yet, he underplayed his own weaknesses by questioning how I perceived him—whether he struck me as strong or weak. I responded with "somewhere in between," a reply that seemed to take him by surprise and left him silent again.

When we reached a point near my lodgings, I felt an urge to accompany him further, sensing that parting ways did not feel right. However, he insisted that it was late, and that he needed to return for his wife's sake. Those words resonated with me, providing a sense of warmth and reassurance that lingered into the night, leading me to believe that the conflict between him and his wife was not as dire as it might appear. Their quarrels seemed infrequent, and I learned more about their relationship through my regular visits.

Sensei once confided in me that he had only ever truly known one woman in

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his life—his wife. He asserted that they should be the happiest of couples since they were each other's sole romantic connection. However, his use of the word "should" instead of "are" hinted at an underlying discontent that puzzled me. It made me question whether he was genuinely happy or merely putting on a brave face.

My next visit took place when Sensei was out to see off a friend who was sailing abroad from Yokohama. Unbeknownst to me, he had left his wife with the instruction that I could wait for his return, providing me an opportunity to converse with her. During this unexpected interaction, I sought her perspective on their relationship. This moment of dialogue offered insights into their lives and hinted at the complexities behind Sensei's introspective nature and the dynamics of their marriage, laying the groundwork for questions of love, loyalty, and the human condition.

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Chapter 11 Summary:

In Chapter 11, the narrator, now a university student, reflects on the evolution of his relationship with Sensei and his wife. He has grown more confident and engaged in conversation with her, though the dialogue remains light and indistinct. The narrator's understanding of Sensei deepens, especially as he learns that, despite being a university graduate, Sensei lives an idle life without any public recognition or occupation. This realization troubles the narrator, highlighting the contrast between his admiration for Sensei's intellect and the world's indifference.

Sensei's humility becomes a point of contemplation for the narrator. Sensei himself dismisses the idea of seeking prominence, often exhibiting a contemptuous attitude towards those who do engage in public life, further perplexing the narrator. When he brings up the inconsistency in Sensei's thoughts, Sensei's response is cloaked in a profound sadness that leaves the narrator stunned and speechless.

During a conversation with Sensei's wife, the narrator learns more about her impressions of Sensei's reluctance to take on a more active role in society. She suggests that while Sensei is not sick, there is an underlying barrier that prevents him from pursuing a path that could bring him fulfillment. Despite her sympathetic tone, there is an enigmatic smile on her face, hinting at a complexity to his condition that remains unresolved.

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This conversation leads to unexpected revelations as the wife recalls that Sensei was quite different in his youth, hinting that there were significant changes in him since his student days. The narrator, intrigued by this new perspective, probes her for more, wondering what had led to Sensei's current state. The chapter ends with a sense of mystery surrounding Sensei's past, laying the groundwork for deeper exploration of his character and the reasons behind his choices.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Complexity of Humility

Critical Interpretation: Imagine carrying the burden of your potential within you, like Sensei, who despite his brilliance chooses to remain in the shadows of societal indifference. This chapter urges you to reflect on your own ambitions and the value you place on recognition. It invites you to consider whether the pursuit of prominence is truly fulfilling, or if there is a profound strength in humility—the strength to remain true to oneself amidst societal pressures. You might find inspiration in Sensei's journey to embrace his inner conflict, leading you to appreciate the nuances of your own path, allowing you to cultivate authenticity in a world that often values outward success over genuine depth.

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Chapter 12:

In Chapter 12, the narrative delves into the relationship between Sensei and his wife, revealing their contrasting backgrounds and the complexities of their marriage. The wife, who refers to herself playfully as "not a pure-blood," has roots in Tokyo's Ichigaya district but also traces her lineage back to the provinces. In contrast, Sensei hails from Niigata Prefecture. Despite their differences, the circumstances of their meeting and the details of their romance remain largely undisclosed. The narrator, having developed a close bond with Sensei over time, finds his reticence frustrating.

He speculates on the possible reasons behind this silence, believing it may stem from a generational aversion to discussing intimate matters openly. While the narrator naively hopes for a romantic backstory full of beauty, he is unaware of the dark tragedy that underpins their relationship—one that Sensei has chosen not to share with his wife and which ultimately shaped his life choices.

A poignant memory surfaces during a spring outing to view cherry blossoms in Ueno, where the narrator observes a young couple in love. Sensei's stoic reaction contrasts sharply with the lightness of the couple's affection. He questions the narrator about his own experiences with love, revealing his deeper philosophical thoughts on the subject. Sensei asserts that love, while beautiful, can also be a sin—an unexpected notion that leaves the narrator



astounded and contemplative. This exchange hints at the weight of Sensei's past, foreshadowing the tragic elements of his story that remain veiled for now.

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Chapter 13 Summary:

In Chapter 13, the narrative unfolds in a lively, crowded setting filled with joy, which contrasts sharply with the deep conversation that takes place between the protagonist and Sensei, a mentor figure whose complex views on love and sin become a focal point. As they move away from the crowd into a quieter wooded area, the protagonist broaches the taboo subject of love, asking Sensei if it is truly a sin. Sensei affirms this notion with conviction, suggesting that the protagonist is already feeling a restless yearning associated with love, even if he himself does not recognize it.

The protagonist reflects on this assertion, initially denying any feelings of restlessness or desire. Sensei challenges him by suggesting that this very lack—an absence of a romantic object—creates an inherent restlessness that drives one to seek connection. He emphasizes that this search for love, whether with the same or opposite sex, is essentially part of a natural progression, yet warns that his friendship cannot fulfill the protagonist's deeper need. Sensei's acknowledgment of potential separation evokes a sense of sadness in the protagonist, who wishes to maintain their close bond.

As the dialogue continues, Sensei cryptically references a personal ritual of visiting a friend's grave, hinting at deeper emotional scars which remain unexamined. He expresses regret for causing irritation with his blunt remarks about love as both a sin and something sacred—concepts that

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perplex the protagonist. The chapter concludes with an unresolved tension, as Sensei advises the protagonist to remember his words about love, while simultaneously underscoring the ambiguities that surround their meanings. This conversation leaves the protagonist grappling with both his understanding of love and the nuances of his relationship with Sensei, setting the stage for further exploration of these complex emotions.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Complexity of Love as Both Sin and Sacred

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, you come to understand that love is not merely a simple emotion but a complex interplay of desires and societal taboos. This realization can inspire you to reflect deeply on your own relationships, urging you to confront the tensions that exist between your yearning for connection and the fears that love can evoke. Embracing the idea that love may encompass both sacred and sinful aspects encourages you to navigate your feelings with honesty and vulnerability, ultimately fostering better understanding and deeper bonds with those you hold dear.

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Chapter 14 Summary:

In Chapter 14, the narrator grapples with the tensions of youth and wisdom through conversations with Sensei, a more introspective figure who serves as a mentor. The narrator's youthful enthusiasm contrasts with Sensei's cautious perspective, as he warns that such passions are fleeting and may soon turn into disillusionment.

Despite the narrator's confidence in their conclusions, Sensei emphasizes the importance of maintaining humility and skepticism, not just about others, but also about oneself. He reveals a deeper layer of his character: a profound distrust of humanity, including himself. This distrust stems from a past experience where he felt a shock and subsequent terror from his own actions, prompting his belief that reliance on others is inevitably disappointing.

Their dialogue reveals Sensei's desire to curb the narrator's admiration for him, suggesting that attachment may lead to resentment in the future. By cautioning the narrator against placing trust in him, Sensei attempts to spare both of them from future pain, highlighting the loneliness inherent in their modern existence.

The chapter closes with a poignant reflection on the loneliness that accompanies freedom and self-awareness—a theme that resonates throughout the narrative. The narrator finds himself at a loss for words,

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confronted by the depth of Sensei's convictions and the complexity of their relationship. This interaction underscores the intricate dynamics of mentorship, trust, and the inevitable solitude of the modern individual.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of humility and skepticism

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate through life, let Sensei's advice resonate within you: embrace humility and cultivate a healthy skepticism about both the world and yourself. This perspective encourages you to remain open to learning, to acknowledge that your passions may lead to disappointment, and to recognize the complex nature of human relationships. By understanding that trust can be a double-edged sword, you empower yourself to approach connections with a more grounded and realistic mindset. This not only fortifies your resilience against disillusionment but also deepens your capacity for empathy and connection, ultimately enriching your journey through the often lonely landscape of existence.

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Chapter 15 Summary:

In Chapter 15, the narrator reflects on his complex feelings regarding Sensei and his wife. The conversation he had with Sensei lingers in his mind, as he grapples with the underlying distrust Sensei seems to harbor towards humanity. This distrust raises questions about Sensei's perception of his wife—whether he views her with the same skepticism he has towards the world at large. The narrator, however, is not close enough to Sensei's wife to discern her true feelings, and she consistently presents a façade of normalcy when they meet.

The narrator ponders the origins of Sensei's deep-seated mistrust. He considers whether Sensei's philosophical outlook stems from a dispassionate observation of the world and the human heart, a conclusion that seems to be more than mere theory for Sensei. It resonates with a profound personal experience that shapes his worldview, making the narrator acutely aware of the weight of this mystery.

Intrigued by this enigma, the narrator speculates that a past romantic affair—possibly involving Sensei and his wife—might be the root of his distrust, especially after Sensei's earlier comment that love is a sin. Yet, Sensei's declaration of love for his wife complicates this hypothesis, leading the narrator to consider that the feelings romance can stir might contradict the disdain Sensei feels for humanity.



Additionally, the grave of an unknown friend mentioned by Sensei lingers in the narrator's mind, suggesting an unresolved connection that Sensei feels yet remains hidden from the narrator. This grave, representing a piece of Sensei's past, becomes a barrier rather than a bridge in their relationship, leaving the narrator frustrated in his quest for understanding.

The chapter culminates in an autumn evening when the narrator finds himself alone with Sensei's wife, as Sensei is away attending a dinner. This scenario arises amidst a backdrop of local burglaries, increasing the tension and unease in their home. Sensei requests that the narrator stay with his wife until he returns, leading to an opportunity for more interaction and possibly deeper understanding of the dynamics within their troubled household. The narrator's engagement with Sensei's wife marks a pivotal moment in his exploration of the complexities surrounding Sensei's character and his troubled relationship with love and humanity.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The complexity of human relationships and the impact of trust and distrust.

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate through life, remember that the connections you forge are often layered with complexity and nuance. Sensei's profound distrust of humanity serves as a poignant reminder that trust is not easily given or earned. Reflecting on this, you can embrace the concept that each relationship carries its own weight of experiences, fears, and past disappointments. By acknowledging the intricate dynamics of your relationships, you can approach others with compassion and understanding, recognizing that every person has their own story and struggles that shape their perceptions. This insight can encourage you to foster deeper connections, while also being mindful of the barriers that distrust may create, ultimately enriching your experiences with empathy and a desire for authentic connections.

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Chapter 16:

In Chapter 16, the narrator arrives at Sensei's home during dusk, a time when the soft glow of electric lights begins to illuminate the space. He learns from Sensei's wife that Sensei has just left for an evening engagement, underscoring his punctual nature. As the narrator waits in the study—a cozy room adorned with a collection of beautiful books—he feels somewhat awkward and tense, especially with the eerie stillness surrounding him.

After an uneasy period of waiting, Sensei's wife returns with tea and expresses surprise at the narrator's stiff posture, suggesting that his discomfort may stem from his anticipation of burglars. Their banter reveals a playful yet deep dynamic between them. The narrator attempts to engage her in conversation, questioning Sensei's social tendencies. She explains that he rarely attends gatherings these days and seems to draw away from the world, indicating a tightening bond between them as a couple.

As their conversation unfolds, it becomes clear that Sensei's affection for her has fostered a certain disdain for the outside world. The narrator asserts that the bond between Sensei and his wife is strong, which prompts a light-hearted debate about the nature of their relationship. Sensei's wife, however, counters with the notion that such affection could also breed dislike. The dialogue highlights her perspective on argumentation as a male trait, contrasting her preference for genuine feelings over intellectualized



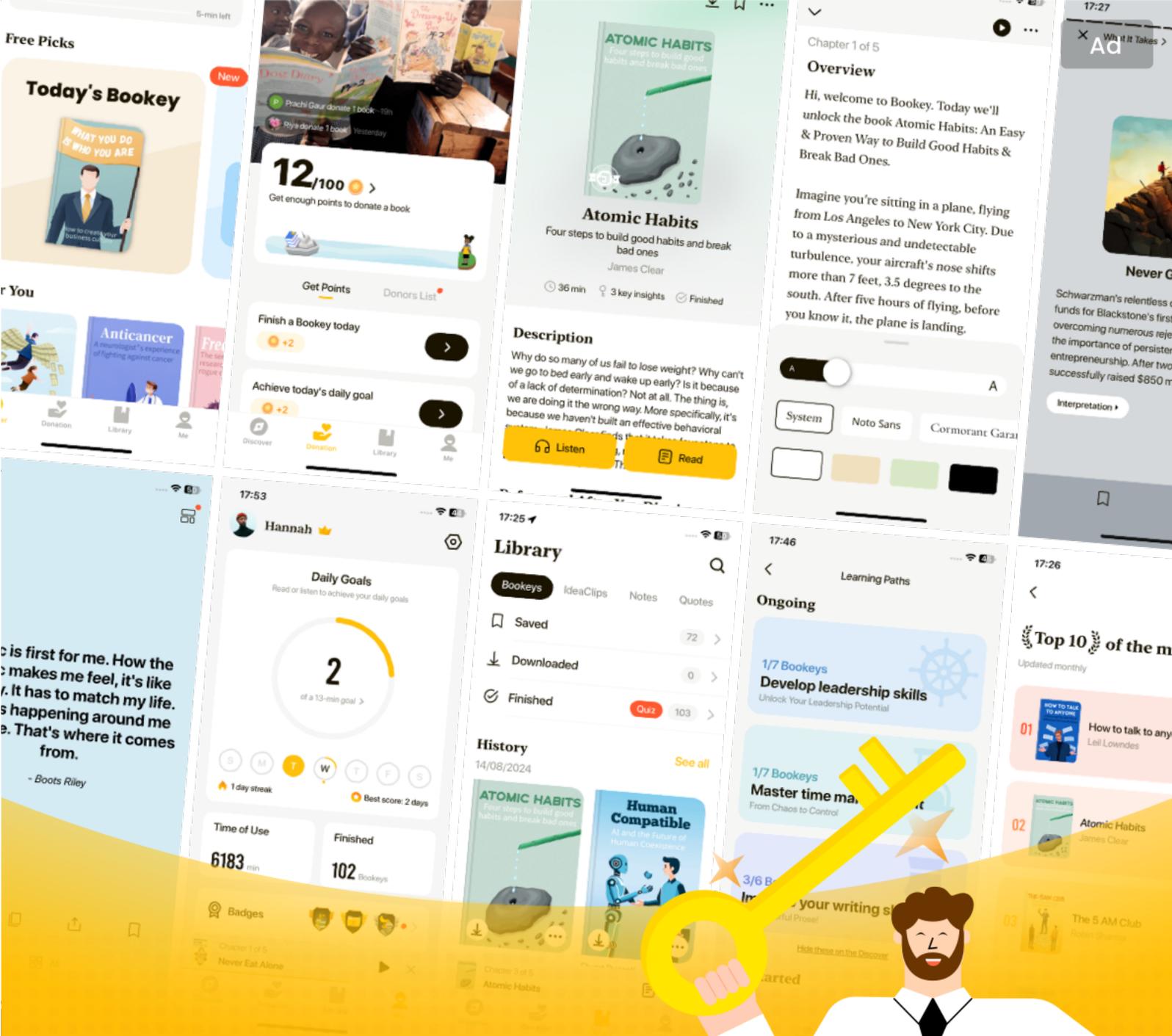
reasoning.

This chapter deepens the reader's understanding of Sensei's character and his complex relationship with his wife. It also reflects the social dynamics of their time, with the narrator's observations revealing underlying emotional currents and illustrating the nuanced interplay of love and isolation in Sensei's life.

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Chapter 17 Summary:

Chapter 17 Summary

In this chapter, the narrator grapples with his thoughts and feelings while sitting with a woman who is trying to maintain a light atmosphere despite their earlier tense conversation. She offers him more tea, attempting to soften the mood and distract from the weight of their discussion by engaging playfully with his choice of sugar. However, the real tension surfaces as they return to discussing the enigmatic figure of Sensei, whose troubled state looms large over their dialogue.

The narrator poses a thought-provoking question: if this woman were to die, would Sensei be able to continue living in the same way? She deflects the question, stating that only Sensei could truly answer it, indicating the complexity of their relationship and his emotional dependence on her. Their exchange shifts deeper as the narrator asks about the woman's love for Sensei, emphasizing that her insight might reveal more about Sensei's own feelings than one would think.

She responds with a mix of confidence and humility, admitting that she believes her presence brings happiness to Sensei, suggesting that without her, he would be despondent and possibly unable to cope with life. Yet, she

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also acknowledges Sensei's broader disillusionment with humanity, which complicates his feelings towards her. While she believes she provides a unique happiness for him, she is painfully aware of Sensei's general disdain for the world, hinting at the profound struggle within his character.

Through this conversation, the chapter underscores the themes of love, dependency, and the weight of existential despair that characterize Sensei's life. The woman's reflections reveal not just her devotion but also illustrate the burdens that come with understanding and loving someone as troubled as Sensei, thereby enriching the broader narrative of their collective emotional landscape.

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Chapter 18 Summary:

In Chapter 18, the narrator reflects on his complex feelings toward Sensei's wife, whose keen insight and atypical demeanor for a Japanese woman captivate him. Despite his youth and limited experience with women, he finds himself unrepelled by her—a stark contrast to his usual reactions. Rather than viewing her through the lens of desire, he perceives her as an honest companion to Sensei, a figure who sympathizes with his struggles.

The conversation delves into Sensei's character transformation. The narrator inquires about the reasons behind Sensei's shift from a once strong and dependable man to someone withdrawn and resigned. Sensei's wife, who has witnessed this change first-hand throughout their marriage, expresses her frustration and pain at being unable to identify the cause of his transformation. Her confusion amplifies when she reveals that Sensei refuses to discuss it, insisting there is nothing wrong—merely that he has become who he is.

Their dialogue is steeped in silent understanding and unspoken emotions. The narrator assures her that Sensei recognizes her efforts to support him, attempting to alleviate her burden of doubt. She reveals her anguish about possibly being the reason for Sensei's state, a thought that deeply saddens her. As she smooths the ash in the brazier, her tears hint at her emotional turmoil and longing for clarity, emphasizing the complex dynamics of her



relationship with Sensei and her desperate wish to help him. Through this interaction, the chapter paints a poignant picture of unrecognized struggles within a marriage and the often painful search for understanding in human relationships.

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Chapter 19 Summary:

Chapter 19 Summary

Initially, the narrator perceives Sensei's wife as insightful and perceptive, yet their conversation reveals layers of complexity in her character. Despite the affection and warmth that flows between her and Sensei, a lingering sense of unease shadows her feelings regarding their relationship. She struggles with the belief that perhaps Sensei views her through a negative lens, influenced by his own cynical perspective on life. However, her attempts to understand the root cause of his demeanor yield little clarity.

That evening, she shares her misgivings, seeking the narrator's honest opinion about Sensei's emotional distance. Despite her hope for reassurance, the narrator recognizes the depths of her confusion and declines to offer a definitive answer, instead affirming that Sensei does not harbor any ill feelings toward her, a truth he gathered directly from Sensei himself.

As the conversation unfolds, Sensei's wife discloses a pivotal moment from Sensei's past that she believes might have contributed to his changed demeanor. She recounts the story of Sensei's close friend from university who died unexpectedly just before their graduation—a death she hints was not from natural causes. This traumatic event marked a turning point for



Sensei, altering his personality and outlook on life.

The wife reveals her concern, questioning whether it is truly possible for someone to be so fundamentally changed by the loss of a friend. The narrator, reflecting on her words, remains skeptical of the idea that a single loss could create such lasting impact, yet recognizes that trauma can manifest in unpredictable ways, shaping one's entire being. Thus, the chapter explores the complexities of love, loss, and the nuanced understanding of emotional struggles within relationships, leaving readers contemplating the connections between personal history and present behavior.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The profound impact of trauma on personal relationships

Critical Interpretation: As you reflect on Sensei's emotional distance and the traumatic loss that shaped his character, consider how your own experiences, whether joyous or painful, influence the way you interact with those you love. This chapter reminds you that each person carries unseen scars that can affect their behavior and relationships. Embracing empathy and striving to understand others' pasts can lead to deeper connections, helping you navigate the complexities of love and loss with compassion.

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Chapter 20:

In Chapter 20, the narrator grapples with the emotional turmoil surrounding Sensei and his wife as they both navigate the uncertainty of their situation. The narrator attempts to offer comfort to Sensei's wife, who is engulfed in her own perplexities and struggles to articulate the sources of her distress. Their interaction feels aimless, as both become increasingly lost in their shared, uncharted worries.

When Sensei arrives home, the atmosphere shifts dramatically. Sensei is in good spirits, and his wife's demeanor brightens noticeably, suggesting a duality in human emotion. This sudden transformation raises questions for the narrator about the sincerity of her earlier distress, yet for the moment, he is simply relieved to see her cheerfulness restored. Sensei thanks the narrator for keeping vigil while he was away and jokingly inquires about the lack of a burglar intrusion, making light of the situation.

As the narrator leaves, Sensei's wife hands him cakes as a parting gift, signifying an attempt at normalcy amidst their turmoil. The next day, while enjoying one of the cakes, the narrator reflects on their seemingly happy life, despite the evident undercurrents of sorrow and confusion.

As winter settles in, the relationship between the narrator and Sensei's wife develops further when he requests her assistance with his clothing. She



views this as an opportunity to relieve her boredom from her childless existence. While mending his hand-woven cloth, which presents her with challenges, her willingness to help him suggests a deeper interaction and connection beyond mere obligation.

Overall, this chapter captures the complexities of human relationships, the nature of happiness amid turmoil, and the ways in which people seek connections and solace in each other's company. The arrival of winter symbolizes not just a change in the season but a period of reflection and quiet growth in their relationships.

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Chapter 21 Summary:

In Chapter 21, the narrator receives a letter from his mother detailing the worsening condition of his father's chronic kidney ailment. Although there was no immediate danger, his mother's concern prompts him to return home. Despite the family's belief that his father's health was stable due to his diligent self-care, a recent fainting spell in the garden raised alarms, which were confirmed by the doctor as related to his illness.

As winter vacation approaches, the narrator initially hesitates to leave his studies, but the thought of his ailing father and worried mother weighs heavily on him. Eventually, he resolves to go home and visits his teacher, Sensei, for a loan to cover his travel expenses.

Sensei, though mildly ill with a cold, welcomes the narrator into his study, where they have a lighthearted exchange about illness. Sensei insinuates that he prefers illness to be serious rather than just a nuisance, reflecting his philosophical attitude toward life and death. The narrator shares his concerns about his father's health and learns that Sensei's wife lost her mother to the same condition. This discussion reveals the gravity of the situation and deepens the emotional resonance of the narrator's decision to go home.

After receiving the loan from Sensei's wife, who expresses sympathy and understanding, the narrator takes the evening train from Tokyo, ready to



confront the familial challenges awaiting him. This chapter encapsulates the themes of family obligation, the fragility of life, and the interconnectedness of human experience through illness.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of familial duty and connection during times of crisis

Critical Interpretation: When faced with the fragile nature of life, as depicted in this chapter, you are reminded of the profound ties that bind you to your family. The narrator's determination to return home for his ailing father reveals that in moments of crisis, the call of family duty outweighs personal desires and obligations. This inspires you to reflect on your own connections, urging you to prioritize those relationships that truly matter. When life feels overwhelming, turning to your loved ones can provide the support needed to navigate through struggles, reinforcing the idea that these bonds are both a source of strength and a reminder of our shared humanity.

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Chapter 22 Summary:

In Chapter 22, the narrator returns home to find that his father's illness is less serious than anticipated. Upon arrival, he discovers his father sitting up in bed, determined to reassure everyone that he is fine. His father humorously claims he is merely staying in bed to avoid causing concern, and his sudden display of vitality seems genuine.

The narrator reflects on the family dynamics: his elder brother is too far away in Kyushu to visit, and his sister is similarly occupied with her own life after marriage. As the only child still in school, the narrator is the one summoned home, and his father expresses gratitude that he chose to prioritize family over studies. Despite his father's apparent recovery, there is an underlying tension regarding his health, prompting the narrator to caution against his father's rashness.

While the father appears lively, the narrator notes his pale complexion, an ongoing issue that they have learned to overlook. He also writes to Sensei, a figure of importance in his life, to inform him of his father's improved condition and to express gratitude for a recent loan. The letter, though casual in nature, is an opportunity for connection, and the narrator is pleasantly surprised to receive a prompt response from Sensei, which he interprets as a gesture of kindness.



As life returns to a semblance of normalcy, the father remains mostly indoors, limited by his health. On a rare warm day, he decides to venture into the garden, prompting the narrator to accompany him for support, which the father humorously declines, showcasing his resilient spirit despite the circumstances. The chapter captures the complexities of family bonds, the tensions of illness, and the significance of communication with mentors, all weaving together personal growth against the backdrop of familial duty.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of prioritizing family and personal connections over other obligations.

Critical Interpretation: In the whirlwind of life, with academic pressures and personal ambitions often pulling you in different directions, this chapter serves as a poignant reminder to anchor yourself to the family bonds that sustain you. When the narrator chooses to return home to support his father rather than remain fixated on his studies, it highlights the value of family connections that can uplift and provide solace. Embrace the moments when you can be present for loved ones, as these relationships not only enrich your life but also lay the foundation for your own emotional resilience and growth.

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Chapter 23 Summary:

In Chapter 23, the narrator describes spending time with his father, engaging in games of shogi—a traditional Japanese board game—around their cozy kotatsu. This arrangement allows both to keep warm while playing, emphasizing a leisurely lifestyle that the father enjoys. He exhibits an indifference to winning or losing, seemingly more invested in the simple pleasure of spending time together than in the competitive nature of the game itself.

Initially, the narrator finds some charm in these quiet moments, but soon grows restless, longing for the vibrant energy of life in Tokyo. He contrasts his father, whom he affectionately depicts as quiet and unrecognized by the world, with Sensei—a significant figure in his life who, though unrelated, has profoundly influenced him intellectually and emotionally. Sensei represents a deeper connection for the narrator, igniting a passionate drive for action that clashes with his father's leisurely existence.

As the narrator continues to visit home, he feels the shift in his family's perception of him. Initially regarded as a special guest, he soon becomes just one of the household members, as his presence loses novelty. The narrator struggles with a growing disconnection from his parents, sensing that they fail to grasp the evolving aspects of his identity—a change that feels alien to the conservative values of their home reminiscent of historical



Confucianism.

Despite these personal conflicts, the narrator finds solace in his father's stable yet frail health. As winter vacation draws to a close, he makes the decision to return to Tokyo earlier than expected, prompting reluctance from both parents, especially his mother and father, who express a desire for him to stay longer. The narrator, however, resolves to stick to his plan, highlighting his internal struggle between familial obligations and his yearning for a life that aligns more closely with his aspirations.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of valuing simple moments with loved ones

Critical Interpretation: In the tranquility of playing shogi with your father, you realize that life's true richness often lies not in grand achievements but in the simplicity of shared experiences. This chapter encourages you to cherish those quiet moments with family and friends, reminding you that connections forged in leisure and warmth can deeply nourish the soul. Instead of rushing towards your ambitions, take a moment to appreciate the people who have always been there, as it is these moments that ultimately shape your understanding of what it means to truly live.

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Chapter 24:

In Chapter 24, the protagonist returns to Tokyo, where the remnants of New Year festivities have vanished, replaced by the starkness of winter. He feels a sense of urgency to visit Sensei, both to repay a debt and to bring a thoughtful gift of mushrooms, which his mother insisted he deliver. The protagonist explains the gift's origin to Sensei's wife, who, in her innocent and frank manner, lightheartedly questions the contents of the box, revealing her simple and genuine character.

During the visit, Sensei and his wife express deep concern for the protagonist's father, who is suffering from kidney disease. Sensei shares a cautionary anecdote about a military officer who died unexpectedly from the same ailment, highlighting the often deceptive nature of such illnesses, which can strike when the patient appears seemingly healthy. This story incites a wave of anxiety in the protagonist, as he contemplates the precariousness of his father's health. Fortunately, Sensei reassures him about the doctor's comments that there is no immediate cause for alarm, although the conversation stirs feelings about the fragility of human life.

Their discussion meanders into philosophical territory, with Sensei reflecting on mortality, contrasting natural deaths with those born from violence—whether self-inflicted or otherwise. This contemplation, while profound, does not deeply affect the protagonist at the moment, as his mind



is more focused on his pressing academic commitments—specifically, the completion of his graduation thesis, which has been an ongoing struggle for him. The chapter encapsulates themes of anxiety about health, the inevitability of mortality, and the pressures of academic life, setting a tone of introspection against a backdrop of winter's isolating chill.

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Chapter 25 Summary:

Chapter 25 Summary

As graduation approaches, the protagonist grapples with an overwhelming sense of dread about completing their thesis by the end of April, a requirement for earning their degree in June. Unlike their diligent classmates, who have long been immersed in research and writing, the protagonist finds themselves paralyzed by procrastination and a lack of direction, despite having a general theme in mind.

To regain focus, the student decides to simplify their approach by primarily gathering and summarizing existing literature rather than developing original ideas. Given the chosen topic's relevance to their mentor, Sensei, the protagonist seeks his guidance on suitable resources. Although Sensei offers some insights and book recommendations, he emphasizes that he is out of touch with the latest developments in the field and suggests consulting professors instead.

During this visit, the protagonist inquires about Sensei's fading interest in reading, prompting a candid reflection from their mentor. Sensei explains that he no longer feels the pressure to read extensively, having come to terms with the idea that ignorance is not necessarily shameful, a perspective

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that seems to stem from a broader acceptance of his own aging and a shift in priorities away from the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake.

Returning home, the protagonist is determined to push through the challenges of thesis writing. Inspired and anxious by stories of friends who faced their own last-minute deadlines, they commit to laboring intensely over their work. Days are spent enveloped in research, shifting from their desk to the library, hunting fervently for valuable texts to support their argument. Seasons change around them, marked by the blooming plum trees and the promise of cherry blossoms, yet they remain steadfast in their academic pursuit. It is only when they finally complete their writing in late April that they revisit Sensei's home, signaling a key moment of transition in their journey toward graduation.

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Chapter 26 Summary:

In Chapter 26, the narrative unfolds in the early days of summer, highlighting the protagonist's sense of newfound freedom after completing a significant milestone—his thesis. As he steps into the world outside, he marvels at the vibrant sights of blooming trees and lush greenery, symbolizing his rebirth and the joy of liberation. Eager to share his achievement, he visits his mentor, Sensei, who acknowledges his success with a lukewarm response. Despite the sense of accomplishment, the protagonist feels a slight deflation from Sensei's lack of enthusiasm.

In a bid to invigorate the mood, he suggests they take a walk beyond the city limits, hoping to relish the beauty of nature together. The two wander through a quiet area that straddles the line between village and town, where the protagonist engages in lighthearted play, demonstrating his carefree spirit. They eventually arrive at a plant nursery, a place both serene and seemingly abandoned, with vibrant azaleas in bloom. Sensei showcases his knowledge of the flora, pointing out various plants, while the protagonist observes the beauty in the diversity of young leaves around him.

As they settle on a bench, enjoying the stillness beneath a clear blue sky, a playful breeze disrupts the moment by whisking away Sensei's hat, adding a touch of whimsy to their tranquil excursion. This chapter explores themes of growth, the contrast between personal achievement and external

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acknowledgment, and the simple joy of connection with nature.

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Chapter 27 Summary:

In Chapter 27, the narrator retrieves a fallen hat for Sensei, who expresses gratitude before posing an unexpected question about the narrator's family finances. This inquiry marks a significant moment, revealing the often unspoken complexities of social status and wealth. The narrator acknowledges that his family is not well-off, owning only a few rice fields and a patch of forest, with meager finances. This discussion prompts the narrator to reflect on Sensei's own circumstances, having long wondered how he sustains a life that appears affluent despite his humble attire and small home, which is maintained by a single maid.

Sensei's surprising confession emerges: he once was wealthy. This revelation both intrigues and troubles the narrator, who is unsure how to respond, caught off-guard by the sudden turn in their conversation. As Sensei shifts focus, he asks about the narrator's father, whose health has been a source of concern due to a chronic illness.

The narrator, unaware of the deeper implications of Sensei's inquiries, responds that he has not received news about his father's condition since January, noting that the monthly letters containing his allowance fail to reveal any signs of decline. While the narrator assumes his father is stable given the lack of recent updates, Sensei's probing questions hint at an understanding of the fragility of such situations, shaped by his own past



experiences.

Thus, the chapter intricately weaves themes of financial status, family health, and the unseen burdens of unexpressed concern, illustrating the complexities of human relationships and the hidden connections between wealth and well-being. The narrator remains oblivious to the underlying significance of these discussions, leaving readers to ponder the weight of the unspoken realities both men face.

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Chapter 28:

Chapter 28 Summary

In this introspective chapter, the protagonist finds himself in a peculiar conversation with Sensei, an elder who often provides guidance but is now exhibiting an unusual practical streak. Sensei expresses concern about the inheritances that come with death, suggesting that the protagonist should address any unresolved matters with his father before it's too late. Although the protagonist dismisses these claims, believing his family shares his nonchalance, he retains a respectful silence due to Sensei's age and authority.

Sensei's remarks take on a bitter tone as he reflects on mortality, emphasizing that death can come unexpectedly, even to the healthiest individuals. Intrigued by familial dynamics, he probes into the protagonist's family; asking about the number of siblings, relatives, and their characters, which leads to a discussion about good and bad people. Sensei argues that labeling individuals as "bad" is overly simplistic; rather, he asserts that generally, people are normal, but extreme circumstances can reveal darker sides.

Before the conversation can deepen, a barking dog interrupts the moment, leading to an encounter with a curious child. The boy scolds the dog before

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addressing Sensei politely, only to discover that his family members are inside when they were assumed to be absent. Sensei shares a friendly exchange with the boy, offering him a small coin as a gesture of goodwill to relay to his mother, before the child races off with the dog and more friends to continue their play, illustrating a light-hearted contrast to the earlier heavy themes of mortality and human nature.

This chapter serves to juxtapose heavy philosophical discussions with the innocence of childhood, emphasizing the complex web of human interactions and the inevitable approach of death.

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Chapter 29 Summary:

In Chapter 29, the narrator reflects on an interrupted conversation with Sensei, a figure who embodies wisdom and moral complexity. The narrator is unable to grasp Sensei's concerns about property, inheritance, and the inherent greed of humans. He recognizes that, due to his sheltered life, issues of money and survival feel distant and abstract. However, one statement from Sensei particularly intrigues him: the notion that anyone can turn bad when faced with dire circumstances.

As they sit together in a serene garden, that tranquility is interrupted by the distant sound of a cart, hinting at the daily lives of villagers. This prompts Sensei to rise from his contemplative state, acknowledging the fading daylight and the need to return home. As they walk back, they encounter a woman and her daughter on the porch, engaged in a quiet domestic task, which adds a touch of normalcy to the scene. After a polite exchange, they continue their journey.

Feeling curious about Sensei's earlier remark, the narrator presses for clarification on what “when it comes to the crunch” means. Sensei, quick to dismiss the depth of his statement, simplifies his response to a commentary on money's corrupting influence, suggesting that even the most virtuous can falter when confronted with greed. The narrator finds this answer unsatisfactory and even tiresome, leading to a moment of tension between



them.

To spitefully demonstrate his disinterest, the narrator attempts to act indifferent, but Sensei perceives the shift in mood, teasingly pointing out the change in the narrator's attitude due to his comments on morality and greed. This playful back-and-forth reveals the complex dynamics of their relationship, where philosophical discussions are interspersed with personal reflections and the tension between youth and experience. The chapter ends with Sensei challenging the narrator's façade of indifference, hinting at the deeper truths that can lie beneath surface interactions.

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Chapter 30 Summary:

In Chapter 30, the protagonist grapples with feelings of resentment toward Sensei, his mentor, and is troubled by the emotional barrier that seems to separate them. As they walk together, a silence hangs between them, reflecting the protagonist's desire to confront Sensei about his earlier excitement—a rare display that caught him off guard. Instead of engaging, he opts for mockery, questioning Sensei's emotional state, hoping to provoke a reaction. Sensei's calm demeanor, however, only fuels the protagonist's frustrations.

Their conversation takes an unexpected turn when Sensei temporarily steps aside to relieve himself, emphasizing his unflappable nature. Moments later, they reengage in dialogue, and Sensei reflects on the earlier discussion about his excitement, admitting he does indeed become passionate about topics of property and justice. This admission surprises the protagonist as he realizes that Sensei carries a deeply vindictive side, contradicting the gentle image he had held of him.

Sensei shares a painful past filled with betrayal from relatives who transformed from seemingly honorable individuals into unscrupulous liars following his father's death. He reveals a lifetime of resentment that he embraces not only for his betrayers but for humanity as a whole, indicating a profound cynicism rooted in his experiences. This profound confession



leaves the protagonist at a loss for words, reflecting how deeply this revelation impacts his perception of Sensei.

Overall, the chapter skillfully navigates themes of betrayal, emotional isolation, and the complexities of human relationships, offering a more profound insight into Sensei's character and the shadows that linger beneath his serene surface. The protagonist's struggle to connect and comfort Sensei underscores the emotional divide that exists between them, as well as the personal struggles that each carries, shaping their identities.

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Chapter 31 Summary:

In Chapter 31, the protagonist reflects on a tense conversation with his mentor, Sensei, which leaves him feeling unsettled. Their initial discussion is superficial, and while riding an electric tram together, they maintain a silence that underscores the weight of unspoken truths. Despite Sensei's apparent cheerfulness, the protagonist senses a deep-seated conflict within him, perceiving a duality between Sensei's jovial demeanor and his underlying misanthropy.

The protagonist seeks deeper understanding and confesses to Sensei that their discussions often feel unsatisfying and incomplete. He believes that Sensei harbors knowledge that he doesn't share openly, attributing this to his past experiences. Sensei challenges this assertion, clarifying that he doesn't deliberately hide his thoughts, but distinguishes between sharing ideas and revealing his personal history. This brings a tension into their conversation, especially when the protagonist insists on the importance of understanding Sensei's ideas within the context of his life experiences.

Their exchange takes a more profound turn when Sensei expresses a rare vulnerability, admitting to a mistrust of others shaped by his past. He reveals a yearning for genuine connection, asking if the protagonist can promise to be someone he trusts completely. This plea for trust echoes the struggles of finding authentic relationships in a world marked by suspicion and isolation.

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Recognizing the sincerity in the protagonist's quest for truth, Sensei agrees to share his story, albeit hesitantly, cautioning that what he reveals may not be as enlightening as hoped. He emphasizes the need for a proper moment for disclosure, which introduces a sense of anticipation and unresolved tension as the chapter concludes. The protagonist returns home, burdened by the weight of their conversation, haunted by the prospect of learning about Sensei's complicated past. This emotional turmoil reinforces the themes of trust, the complexity of human relationships, and the search for meaning in shared experiences.

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Chapter 32:

In Chapter 32, the narrator reflects on the mixed emotions surrounding graduation day. Despite feeling confident about his thesis, the teachers' assessments suggest otherwise. He dresses in formal winter attire, which feels oppressively hot during the graduation ceremony. Once the formalities are over, he retreats to his room, where he examines his diploma, a symbol of transition between his past education and unknown future. Although the certificate holds significance, it also feels somewhat hollow to him.

Later, he visits Sensei's house for a celebratory dinner. Sensei, his mentor, is characterized by his meticulousness, evident in the freshly laundered tablecloth that adorns the dining table. While discussing this, Sensei humorously acknowledges his own psychological fastidiousness despite not caring about his attire. The dinner, however, lacks the excitement typically associated with celebrations. The narrator senses a somber undertone in Sensei's congratulations, reflecting his own mood and the weight of his father's illness that suddenly occupies his thoughts.

As the evening progresses, the narrator is reminded of the importance of sharing this achievement with his ailing father. He inquires about Sensei's own diploma, sparking a discussion that reveals a lack of attachment to the document over time. This exchange underscores the complexity of their achievements and the contrasting significance they carry in their lives.



The chapter captures the tension between external expectations and internal feelings, highlighting themes of accomplishment, familial obligation, and the ephemeral nature of material success.

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Chapter 33 Summary:

In Chapter 33, the narrator finds himself at Sensei's house, where the intimate atmosphere of dining reveals nuances of their relationship. The chapter begins with a meal served by Sensei's wife, who playfully interacts with the narrator while noting his diminished appetite due to the summer heat. Instead of the usual fare, she offers homemade ice cream, a reflection of her seemingly idle state, which allows her to make treats for guests.

As they sit together, the conversation shifts to the future, particularly after graduation—a significant transition point in the narrator's life. Sensei probes the narrator about his plans, but the narrator confesses his uncertainty regarding his future career. This uncertainty leads to a lighthearted exchange about teaching and the civil service, followed by a deeper acknowledgment of the pressures placed on those less fortunate than he.

Sensei's wife points out that the narrator's comfortable financial situation allows him a degree of freedom in his choices, contrasting with those of his peers who are frantically searching for jobs. The narrator reflects on how Sensei's influence may have contributed to his own relaxed outlook. Here, Sensei's insistence on securing inheritance before his father's death looms in the background, hinting at a deeper concern with financial stability, stemming from his own past experiences—a narrative element that adds weight to the conversation.



When the narrator inquires about Sensei's financial standing, Sensei's wife deflects, indicating their modest lifestyle but reinforcing the idea that finding purpose and direction in life is vital. As the conversation unfolds, Sensei hints at his own complex life, caught between leisure and deeper, unresolved issues. The chapter poignantly captures the tension between youthful uncertainty and the societal pressures of adulthood, underlining themes of inheritance, purpose, and the influence of mentors.

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Chapter 34 Summary:

In Chapter 34, the narrator bids farewell to Sensei and his wife late one night, as he prepares to return to his family home within a few days. Despite having graduated, he feels no urgency to return to Tokyo in September, especially during the sweltering August heat. As they converse, Sensei's wife expresses concern for the narrator's father, who is unwell, highlighting the unpredictable nature of illnesses like uremia, a term unfamiliar to the narrator. This term is associated with kidney failure and can have dire consequences if not managed properly.

The discussion shifts to a more existential topic as Sensei humorously questions who might die first between him and his wife, referencing a common belief that husbands typically pass away before their wives. They banter back and forth about their respective health, with Sensei's wife acknowledging his vigor, which leads to a light-hearted yet poignant exchange. However, the mood subtly shifts when she contemplates the grief she would feel at losing Sensei, revealing an underlying fear of loss. She attempts to lighten the conversation with the adage that death arrives unpredictably, but her gaze towards the narrator suggests deep reflections on mortality and the inevitable nature of life's end.

This chapter melds humor and contemplation, echoing themes of life, death, and the bonds of care that exist within relationships, while capturing the

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emotional complexity of nearing the loss of family and loved ones.

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Chapter 35 Summary:

In Chapter 35, the protagonist engages in a poignant and philosophical conversation with Sensei and his wife, Shizu, about life and mortality. As they navigate the topic of death, Sensei reflects on the inevitable nature of life spans, particularly considering the recent passing of his mother and father, who died closely together. This revelation sparks curiosity in the protagonist, prompting him to inquire about the reasons behind their simultaneous demise. However, Sensei terminates the conversation, deeming it pointless and light-heartedly proposing to Shizu that she will inherit their house when he passes.

As they joke, Shizu, feeling the weight of the discussion, expresses discomfort with the subject of death, wishing to redirect their thoughts to more uplifting topics. Sensei, sensing her distress, gracefully shifts focus, enjoying the tranquility of the garden outside. As the visit draws to a close, the protagonist prepares to leave, receiving well-wishes from Shizu who urges him to care for his father, while Sensei casually mentions looking forward to seeing him in September.

Stepping out into the night, the protagonist is momentarily captivated by the fragrant osmanthus bush that has become emblematic of his memories of Sensei's home. The imagery of autumn flowers juxtaposes the warmth of their meeting with the chilling reality of the topics they discussed. As he

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walks away, the light from the house is extinguished, symbolizing the closure of this chapter in his life.

Choosing not to return directly to his lodgings, the protagonist opts for a night out in town to seek both diversion and sustenance after a hearty meal. In the lively streets filled with people, he reunites with a friend from school, and together they indulge in the celebratory atmosphere of a bar, their conversations as effervescent as the beer they're drinking. Eventually, the night stretches into the early hours of the morning, marking a blend of youthful exuberance and sobering reflections on life and death.

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Chapter 36:

Chapter 36 Summary

The next day, the narrator ventured out into the sweltering heat to fulfill a list of purchases that had seemed manageable at first but proved to be a tiresome task. As he rode the streetcar, he found himself cursing the country folk who seemed oblivious to the effort these errands required. Determined to make the most of his summer, he had developed a daily routine centered around studying and gathering necessary books, leaving him little time for idleness.

His first stop was Maruzen bookshop, where he spent a significant amount of time searching the foreign books section that catered to his academic interests. However, his shopping experience wasn't without its challenges. The most daunting item was the ladies' kimono collars on his list. Despite the shop assistant showing him various options, he struggled to choose the right ones, bewildered by the inconsistent pricing—some seemingly inexpensive collars were costly, while others that appeared extravagant were surprisingly cheap. His frustration deepened, and he regretted not bringing Sensei's wife along for guidance.

In the end, he settled for a locally made travel bag with shiny metal fittings,

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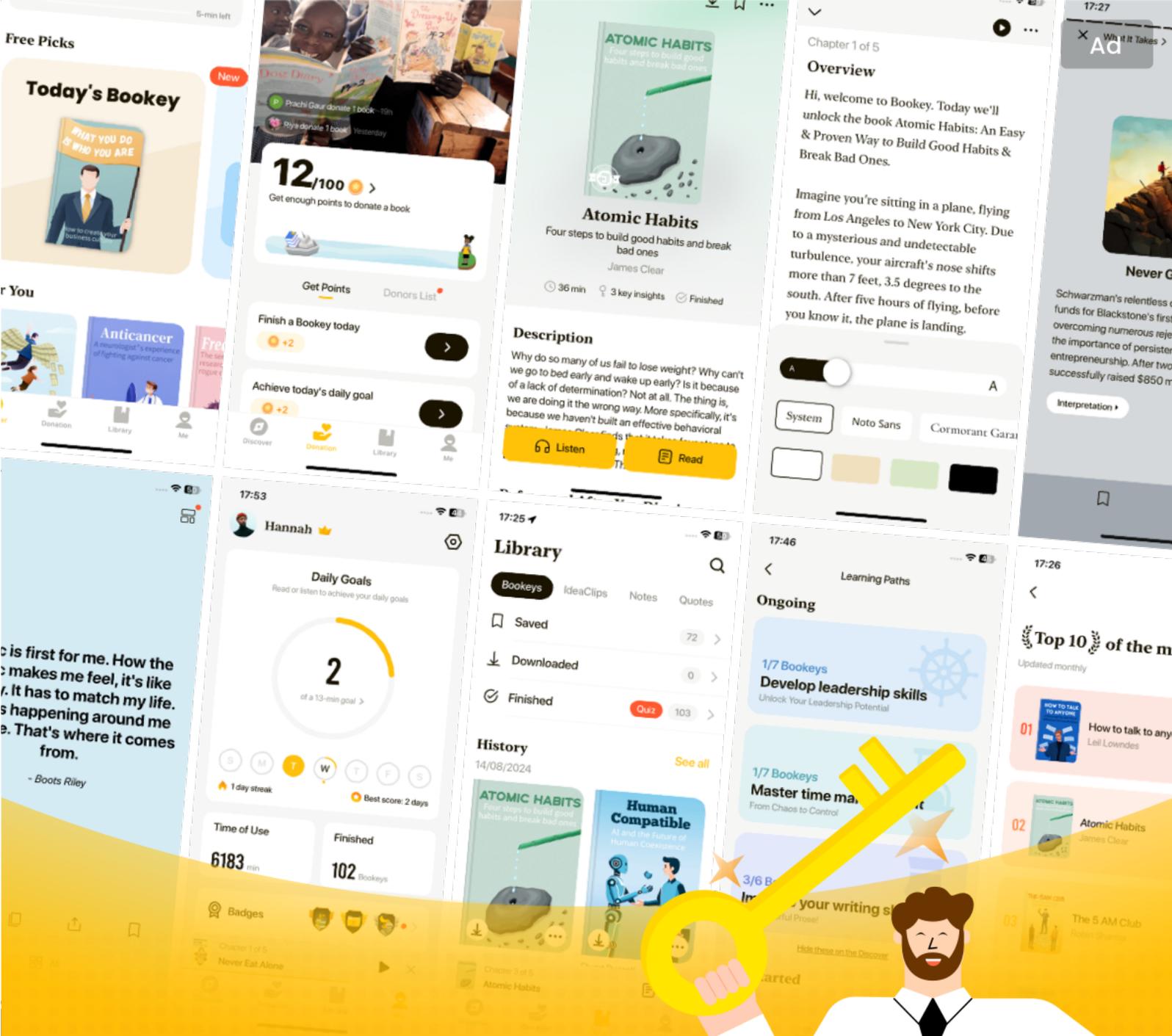
which he bought at his mother's request. He had found his mother's insistence on a new bag amusing, though he appreciated the sentiment behind it.

Three days later, he took the train home as promised to Sensei and his wife.

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Chapter 37 Summary:

In Chapter 37, the protagonist returns home after graduating from university, finding his father's health surprisingly stable. His father, who had been engaged in a task in the garden, greets him with genuine affection, expressing pride in his son's achievement. The father's joyful enthusiasm contrasts sharply with the more cultured but indifferent reaction of Sensei, a significant figure in the protagonist's life. While Sensei's congratulatory remarks seem tainted with disdain, the father's unabashed delight highlights his deep emotional investment in the moment.

As the conversation unfolds, the protagonist dismissively mentions that graduation is a common milestone, prompting a reflective response from his father. The father reveals that his joy extends beyond the graduation itself; he has been grappling with a serious illness and initially anticipated he wouldn't live to see his son graduate. His continued existence to witness this moment brings him immense happiness, emphasizing the personal significance it holds for him, despite the protagonist's youthful ignorance.

The realization dawns on the protagonist that he had failed to consider the emotional weight his graduation carried for his father. Overwhelmed by guilt and shame, he retrieves his diploma, which has been slightly damaged, and shares it with his parents. His father treats the diploma with great care, suggesting ways to properly handle and display it, while the protagonist,



transformed by understanding, allows them to take the lead without protest.

The chapter captures a poignant moment of familial connection and personal growth. The protagonist learns the importance of appreciating his father's perspective, realizing that their differing values and experiences shape their views on achievement and life's milestones. Despite the diploma's imperfection, it becomes a symbol of shared love and pride, highlighting the complexities of parent-child relationships and the deep bonds that persist despite differing outlooks.

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Chapter 38 Summary:

In Chapter 38, the narrator seeks reassurance from his mother about his father's health, curious if it is truly safe for him to be active in the garden after a recent illness. Initially, the mother's calm demeanor surprises him, especially given her earlier distress when the doctor had painted a grim picture of his father's condition. She insists that despite the doctor's grave diagnosis, his father seems to have recovered and attributes this to his father's stubbornness and resilience.

During their conversation, the narrator reflects on a previous visit when his father insisted on appearing strong by getting out of bed and preparing himself for a visit, dismissing any exaggeration about his condition. While the narrator contemplates advising his mother to keep a closer watch on his father, he chooses to share the details he learned about the illness from Sensei and his wife, though he finds that his mother remains largely unaffected by the grim information.

When he speaks with his father, the older man acknowledges the seriousness of his condition but claims he knows how to care for himself, given his life experience. This conversation reinforces the father's belief in his own resilience, as he expresses happiness over the narrator's graduation, believing he has lived long enough to witness this achievement. His mother's perspective, however, implies that his father may underestimate his



conditions, frequently discussing death with a mix of humor and solemnity.

As the chapter unfolds, the narrator grows increasingly concerned about the future—particularly the idea of his mother managing the family home alone after his father’s potential passing. He reflects on these worries, grappling with his obligations and the thought of returning to the carefree life he has in Tokyo. His mother’s sentiments that people often discuss death without showing true signs of dying bring a sense of ambiguity—whether they signify wisdom borne from experience or mere speculation. This internal conflict illustrates the complexities of familial love, duty, and the uncertainty of life and death, setting the stage for deeper reflections on mortality and responsibility.

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Chapter 39 Summary:

In Chapter 39, the narrator's parents contemplate hosting a celebratory meal in honor of their child's graduation, a milestone they view as significant—almost as important as a wedding. However, the narrator is apprehensive about such a gathering, having experienced the discomfort of mingling with unsavory provincial guests who only seem interested in food and gossip. The protagonist's reluctance is due to a long-standing disdain for the raucous nature of these gatherings and the superficiality of their motivations.

Despite the narrator's protests, the mother insists that celebrating this milestone is justified, citing its importance and the social expectations involved. The father agrees but expresses concern about reputation and gossip that may arise if they neglect to follow tradition. He suggests that societal obligations necessitate the party, underscoring the pressure of living in a close-knit provincial community, where appearances carry significant weight.

Feeling cornered, the narrator ultimately concedes to their parents' wishes for the sake of family harmony, even as they grapple with feelings of guilt over complicating matters. The dynamic reveals the tension between the individual's desires and familial expectations, with the father showcasing his dissatisfaction subtly, while the mother, though articulate, becomes



somewhat incoherent under pressure.

As plans are made and a date is set for the gathering, the mood shifts dramatically with the sudden announcement of Emperor Meiji's illness, a significant event that reverberates across Japan. This news casts a shadow over the celebratory plans, leading the father to propose canceling the party, reflecting a shift in priorities as respect for the emperor takes precedence. The narrator recalls the recent honor of the emperor attending their graduation, adding depth to the gravity of the situation and hinting at how intertwined personal celebrations are with national identity and events.

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Chapter 40:

In Chapter 40, a profound stillness envelops the narrator's sprawling, age-old house, contrasting sharply with the bustling energy of Tokyo, where they felt more engrossed and focused. The narrator struggles to concentrate on their reading, often succumbing to drowsiness, lulled by the cicadas' relentless song, which blurs the line between wakefulness and dreams. This profound solitude and the escalating restlessness prompt them to reach out to friends through letters, including a detailed update to Sensei—a mentor figure from Tokyo, whose relationship remains a mystery as he confesses he has no relatives.

The narrative introduces Sensei's housekeeper, a woman from his wife's family, highlighting the isolation that envelops him and the narrator. With each letter penned, the narrator grapples with their loneliness, hoping for replies that seldom come. Meanwhile, the narrator's father, once enthusiastic about their shared pastime of shogi (a Japanese chess), become increasingly preoccupied with the news of the emperor's illness, likening it to his own deteriorating health. This parallel between the emperor and the father illuminates his own fears of mortality, a sentiment that distresses the narrator.

Concerned for her husband's well-being, the narrator's mother suggests rekindling the father's interest in shogi, prompting

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the neglected board. The interplay between family dynamics, the weight of illness, and the struggle for connection through letters encapsulates the personal and societal anxieties that permeate this tumultuous time. Overall, the chapter paints a nuanced picture of isolation, fear, and the longing for connection amidst uncertainty.

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Chapter 41 Summary:

In Chapter 41, the narrator observes the gradual decline of his father's health and spirits, which seems to correlate with the ailing state of the emperor.

The father's straw hat, once an emblem of his vitality, now lies neglected on a dusty shelf, symbolizing his deteriorating condition. While the father still manages some mobility, the narrator, concerned for his safety, urges him to take more care. The narrator's mother attributes her husband's decline to his mental state, linking it to the emperor's illness, but the narrator believes this oversimplifies the situation, suspecting that his father's physical health is genuinely failing.

In contrast to the somber atmosphere, the narrator reflects on the missed celebrations due to both his father's condition and the melancholy surrounding the emperor's death. The impending festivities for the narrator's graduation are overshadowed by these events, saving him from a social occasion he dreads. When the news of the emperor's death reaches the family, the father reacts with a profound groan, indicating how intertwined their lives are with the emperor's fate.

The narrator ventures into town to acquire black mourning cloth, signifying their respect for the deceased emperor. He decorates their home with the mourning cloth and reflects on the exterior of their modest house, which would have evoked different feelings for his friend, Sensei. This



introspection about his home contrasts with the bustling yet dark reality of Tokyo, where his friend Sensei resides, highlighting a sense of isolation connected to both physical and emotional distances.

In an effort to connect with Sensei, the narrator attempts to write a letter about the emperor's death but ultimately finds it futile and discards the attempt. This underscores his loneliness, as he yearns for correspondence and connection with someone who understands the weight of their shared experiences. His unsuccessful outreach serves as a poignant reminder of the deepening void he feels amidst the turbulence of changing times.

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Chapter 42 Summary:

In mid-August, the narrator receives a letter from a friend who has stumbled upon a teaching position at a provincial middle school. The friend, in need of a job himself, initially considered the offer but decided to pursue a better opportunity and offered it to the narrator instead. Despite the tempting prospect, the narrator declines, believing that others in their social circle are also in need and deserving of the chance. Upon sharing this news with their parents, they express no concern over the rejection, reassuring the narrator that good job opportunities will arise in due time. However, beneath their supportive words lies an expectation for the narrator to secure a prestigious position soon after graduation.

The parents perceive a bright future for their child, yet the narrator grapples with the reality of job market challenges and the difference in their professional aspirations compared to their brother's successful path. The father's worries are not only about the sibling comparisons but also about how he will respond to community inquiries regarding his son's post-university plans, revealing the pressure the narrator feels to navigate familial expectations while forging their own path.

While discussing potential avenues for assistance, the mother suggests reaching out to "Sensei," a mentor figure who the narrator respects but who is currently unemployed. This recommendation bemuses the narrator, who



knows that Sensei has previously advised him to secure a share of the family's property before the father's passing, hinting at the complicated nature of their relationship. The father, contrastingly, pokes fun at Sensei's lack of a conventional job, implying that a respectable person should actively contribute to society.

Faced with the mounting pressure of familial expectations, the narrator feels a chasm between their own views and those of their parents. They hesitate to discuss their true thoughts and remain noncommittal when prompted about reaching out to Sensei, ultimately getting up to leave the conversation, underscoring their internal conflict and desire for independence.

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Chapter 43 Summary:

In Chapter 43, the narrator reflects on the complex emotions surrounding his father's declining health. Despite his father's fear of mortality, he avoids confrontation with the doctor, preferring to keep his thoughts to himself. The narrator notes a growing anxiety in his father regarding the future, particularly about what will happen to his mother, whom he envisions remaining in their long-time home after his passing. The narrator understands his father's lament about education, recognizing how it has led to both his brother's distance and his own choice to reside in Tokyo.

This tension between family bonds and independence is palpable. The father feels a mix of pride and sorrow, acknowledging that investing in his children's education may ultimately cause familial separation. While the father wishes for the narrator to find work in Tokyo, he is equally troubled by the thought of his wife being left alone in their expansive house, filled with memories.

In this context, the narrator attempts to seek assistance from Sensei, a former teacher and mentor, by writing him a letter. Despite his belief that Sensei may not respond, he feels it's a necessary step to navigate his job search. His mother, still seeing him as a dependent child, pushes him to act sooner, highlighting a recurring theme of parental expectations and the narrator's struggle with adulthood.



As a week passes without a response from Sensei, the narrator grapples with feelings of unease and attempts to rationalize the silence. He oscillates between the reality of his father's illness and the desire to return to Tokyo, but is also aware of the need to discuss important family matters, such as the division of property, which he has so far avoided, influenced by Sensei's previous advice to be proactive. This chapter encapsulates themes of familial responsibility, the weight of unaddressed issues, and the transition from childhood dependency to adult independence.

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Chapter 44:

In Chapter 44, the narrator is eager to return to Tokyo as September arrives, feeling the weight of unfinished business both in terms of personal aspirations and unresolved relationships. He requests financial support from his father for a little while longer, justifying his need with a promise to seek employment soon, despite his private doubts about finding a job anytime soon. His father, holding traditional views, lectures him on the importance of self-sufficiency and criticizes modern youth for their financial dependency, reflecting a generational divide in perspectives on responsibility and independence.

As their conversation concludes, the narrator departs, trying to ease his father's concerns about loneliness, especially given the father's declining health. Alone in his room, surrounded by his books, the narrator reflects on his father's words and the melancholy evoked by the song of cicadas, particularly the *tsutsukubimushi*, whose call signifies This evokes a sense of nostalgia and contemplation, illustrating how the changing seasons mirror the emotional landscapes of the narrator's life.

He contrasts his understanding of his father with his incomplete understanding of Sensei, a mentor figure who remains a mystery to him. Despite his growing emotional bond with his father, the narrator feels an urgent need to learn more about Sensei's past, fearing that any rift in their



relationship would cause him pain. The chapter ends with the narrator asking his mother to determine an auspicious day for his return, signaling his decision to leave and pursue the answers he seeks in Tokyo, amidst the backdrop of family ties and the passage of time.

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Chapter 45 Summary:

In Chapter 45, the narrator grapples with the impending departure from home, as the looming uncertainty surrounding their father's health grows increasingly grave. It's the second-to-last evening before the narrator is set to return to Tokyo, and a troubling incident occurs when their father suffers another fall. While packing a wicker trunk filled with books and clothes, the narrator's mother goes to assist the father in the bathroom, leading to a moment of panic as they find him exposed and leaning unsteadily against her. Despite the scare, their father insists he is okay, echoing sentiments of resilience he expressed following a previous fall earlier in the winter.

The following day, the father insists on attempting to regain his independence by going to the toilet by himself, although the family urges caution. His statement that he is "fine again" brings a flicker of hope to the narrator, who remembers a past instance when their father's condition improved. However, the doctor remains vague about his prognosis, urging them all to take care.

As the day of departure approaches, the narrator's sense of obligation grows. Despite planning to leave for Tokyo, anxiety for their father's well-being leads to self-doubt. The mother, initially less concerned, has shifted to a state of heightened worry, especially after the latest fall. When the father asks if the narrator's delay is due to him, the narrator hesitates, not wanting to



confirm his father's fears about his deteriorating health. This moment highlights the delicate balance of hope and despair in their family dynamic.

Over the next few days, the narrator remains in a state of limbo, uncertain about their next steps until the father experiences yet another fall, prompting the doctor to prescribe complete rest. The narrator's mother whispers her distress over the situation, revealing a shared anxiety that resonates deeply within the family. Despite the father's condition, he displays an unexpected appetite and insists on enjoying food, belting out lines that reveal both humor and tragedy—his determination to savor life's pleasures in the face of impending decline. The narrator witnesses their father's spirit, which remains resilient despite the circumstances. In a vulnerable moment, the father expresses loneliness to his uncle, revealing the emotional strains that accompany his physical illness. This chapter captures the complexities of familial love, the struggle against the inevitable, and the bittersweet nature of human resilience.

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Chapter 46 Summary:

Chapter 46 Summary

For over a week, my father's health remained precarious, prompting me to write heartfelt letters to my brother in Kyushu and ask my mother to inform my sister about his condition. I felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility, knowing that these letters could be the last milestones concerning my father's deteriorating health. We mentioned in our letters that time was of the essence and that telegrams would be sent to summon them if my father's situation worsened.

My brother's job kept him busy, and my sister was pregnant, making it challenging for them to travel unless absolutely necessary. However, the thought of them arriving too late filled me with anxiety. The doctor, who had arrived from the nearby railway station, reiterated that the danger could arise at any moment, adding to my internal turmoil about the timing of my communications.

After discussing with my mother, we decided that hiring a nurse from the hospital was essential for my father's care. The nurse arrived wearing a white uniform, and my father's reaction was unexpected; while he knew he was ill, he didn't fully grasp how imminent his death was. He spoke whimsically



about future plans, expressing hopes of a trip to Tokyo, insisting that one should pursue all wishes while alive. My mother, humorously yet somberly, remarked that she hoped to join him on such a trip.

Amidst these fragile moments, he occasionally sank into despair, asking me to ensure my mother's well-being after his passing. This utterance struck me deeply, reminding me of a similar conversation I once overheard between my former mentor, Sensei, and his wife. Sensei had casually mentioned his own death, his tone light, while his wife had reacted with alarm. Those words had once seemed abstract, but now they echoed with a chilling reality.

In an effort to uplift my father's spirits, I encouraged him to think positively about his health, reminding him of our dreams for a future trip to Tokyo filled with new experiences. I described the city's transformation with new streetcars and ongoing developments, igniting a spark of interest in him.

As my father lay ill, our home buzzed with visitors, relatives arriving to check on his condition. Despite the illness that loomed over us, the atmosphere shifted from quiet to a bustling hive of family concern. Comments from relatives highlighted my father's resilience; they commented on his ability to converse and remarked that he hadn't lost weight—a hopeful sign amidst the chaos.

However, the reality of his declining health persisted, underpinning my

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mounting worry. After consulting with my mother and uncle, I finally sent the telegrams I had withheld. Responses soon followed: my brother assured he would arrive shortly, and my sister's husband indicated he would come in her stead, as they were taking special precautions after her previous miscarriage. It was a relief to know that family support was on its way, yet the heaviness of impending loss hung over us all.

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Chapter 47 Summary:

In Chapter 47, the protagonist finds himself in a state of unrest amidst a turbulent summer, which is heavily impacted by his father's serious illness. Despite his circumstances, he attempts to maintain a semblance of normalcy by engaging in his studies, although he feels he has fallen short of his academic goals set during his time in Tokyo. This sense of failure weighs heavily on him, adding to his emotional turmoil, which is also exacerbated by his thoughts regarding his father's impending death and his relationship with Sensei—a pivotal figure in his life who represents both wisdom and emotional support.

During a brief interaction with his mother, who is oblivious to the depth of his feelings, she suggests he take a nap and inquires about his father's condition. She expresses a hope for a reply from Sensei, believing it could provide some solace. However, the protagonist recognizes the futility in this communication, knowing that pressing Sensei for a response would likely lead to disappointment and potential scorn. He feels trapped between his duties as a son to comfort his ailing father and his desire to seek guidance from Sensei in person.

As the conversation continues, the protagonist's mother suggests finding a job, believing it would bring joy to his father while he still has time. This adds another layer of guilt for the protagonist, who feels incapable of

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fulfilling his mother's expectations while grappling with the heavy emotional burden of his father's condition. He reflects on how both he and his mother, despite their different approaches to coping with their circumstances, seek comfort and a sense of control in a time of deep uncertainty. Ultimately, he resolves to forgo further correspondence with Sensei, caught in the complex emotions dictated by family loyalty and personal anguish.

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Chapter 48:

Chapter 48 Summary

In this chapter, the narrator reflects on a significant visit from their brother while their father lies in bed, engrossed in the newspaper—an activity that had become a daily ritual for him, particularly since his illness. The family, including the mother and siblings, tend to their father with hesitant indulgence, understanding his need for normalcy despite the seriousness of his condition.

During an initial, light-hearted visit with their father, the brother expresses surprise at how well their father seems, though the narrator notes a disparity between the father's buoyant demeanor and the reality of his health. Once alone with the narrator, the brother raises concerns about their father's newspaper reading, hinting that it might not be wise, given the state of his health. Their sister's husband, who has also joined the visit, provides reassurance, relaying that their father displayed full comprehension during their conversation and was optimistic about his recovery.

This sense of normalcy is shattered when the father reacts strongly to the news of General Nogi's ritual suicide—a significant event in their culture as it symbolizes loyalty and honor. The narrator and their family are left



puzzled and uneasy by their father's unstable outburst, indicating the weight of this news on his mental state.

Amidst the turmoil, the chapter shifts to the narrator's experience upon receiving a telegram from Sensei—an influential figure in their

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 49 Summary:

In Chapter 49, the protagonist writes a long letter to Sensei, presumably seeking guidance or assistance regarding his future. Both he and his mother expect a thorough response, yet instead, they receive a brief telegram from Sensei stating that the protagonist need not come. The mother optimistically interprets this as a precursor to a more detailed letter, reflecting her belief that Sensei would help secure a position for her son in Tokyo, despite the protagonist's skepticism about Sensei's intentions.

The day unfolds with a visit from the doctor, who, along with the head physician from the hospital, tends to the protagonist's ailing father. Since being ordered to rest completely, the father's condition has deteriorated significantly, requiring assistance for basic bodily functions. Initially fastidious about his situation, he has grown apathetic, slowly losing his will to engage with the world around him, including abandoning his newspaper.

During a visit from Saku-san, a childhood friend, the conversation reveals the stark contrasts between their lives—Saku, who has lost his wife and has no children, expresses a mournful acceptance of his own existence, suggesting that good health is meaningless without deeper fulfillment. However, following Saku's visit and the administering of a much-needed enema, the father's spirits visibly lift, indicating a temporary resurgence of his will to live.



Encouraged by this slight improvement, the protagonist's mother decides to share the news about Sensei's telegram as if it confirms a job offer, hoping to give her husband a sense of purpose. The protagonist feels caught between his mother's hopeful narrative and his own uncertainty about the situation. When pressed for details by his family, he finds it impossible to contradict their excitement and instead offers vague responses, reflecting his internal conflict and helplessness as he retreats from the growing expectations surrounding him.

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Chapter 50 Summary:

In Chapter 50, the narrative focuses on the family's emotional turmoil as they confront the impending death of the narrator's father. Despite his deteriorating condition, he has found a measure of peace, free from the agonizing pain that often accompanies terminal illness. Each night, the family prepares for the worst, with a rotating schedule to keep vigil by his bedside, though the narrator's siblings are able to sleep relatively well, considering their father's situation.

The chapter opens with the narrator expressing the tension that hangs over the household, particularly during those restless nights. One night, unable to sleep, he checks on his father and finds his mother asleep beside him, a poignant moment that reflects both the weariness and devotion of caregivers. This tenderness contrasts with the bleak acceptance of their father's fate, as the narrator and his brother, who share a bed under a mosquito net, discuss the burden of their brother-in-law, Seki, who remains at the family home rather than returning to his own life.

Both brothers acknowledge their father's likely end and cautiously express a hope for resolution, though they refrain from discussing it outright. They recognize their father's insistence on maintaining a sense of normalcy, seen in how he meets visitors and apologizes for missing celebratory events. This denial of reality seems to serve as a defense mechanism against the



inevitability of death.

Reflecting on their shared memories, the brothers bond over their past experiences, revealing a complex relationship shaped by distance and differing life choices. While they were not close during their childhood, the gravity of their father's illness brings them together, kindling forgotten affections.

Their conversation turns practical when the narrator inquires about family finances, highlighting both the uncertainty and the burden of impending responsibilities. The chapter closes with a lingering sense of anticipation and concern, particularly as their mother anxiously awaits a letter from Sensei, indicating the ongoing emotional strain that the family endures amid their father's failing health. This chapter encapsulates themes of familial bonds, acceptance of mortality, and the struggle between hope and reality as they navigate this critical moment together.

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Chapter 51 Summary:

In Chapter 51, the tension among the narrator, his brother, and their sick father becomes palpable as they navigate their complex family dynamics, particularly regarding the specter of their father's impending death. The chapter opens with the narrator's irritation toward his brother for not fully understanding who Sensei is—a figure whom the narrator holds in high regard. Though Sensei is not a prominent individual by societal standards, the narrator admires him for his wisdom and introspection, contrasting sharply with his brother's and father's views of what constitutes a man's worth.

The narrator's brother views Sensei as an example of idleness, equating lack of outward achievement with worthlessness. This reflects the family's traditional values, underscoring their perception that success is directly tied to professional recognition and activity. The brother's comments reveal a deeper philosophy that dismisses the inner life as insignificant unless it translates into tangible results.

Amidst his brother's dismissiveness, the narrator grapples with the conflicting expectations from his family. His mother's wish for reassurance about their father's prospects and his brother's urgency for him to fulfill familial obligations weigh heavily on him. The narrator longs for a letter from Sensei that might provide a job opportunity, as it would alleviate his



mother's anxiety and perhaps grant him some fulfillment in the eyes of his family.

As the narrative progresses, the somber realities of their father's decline come to the forefront. The father's health deteriorates, highlighted by an alarming incident of vomiting, which the mother attributes to his prolonged bedridden condition. Here, the narrator feels the sting of his mother's ignorance about the severity of their father's condition, revealing a rift between perception and reality.

The chapter culminates in a discussion between the brothers about the family's future. The narrator's brother suggests he return home to manage their estate, though this proposal is met with silence. The narrator insists that his elder brother should take on this responsibility, but the younger brother's desire to engage with the outside world casts doubt on this suggestion.

Ultimately, the narrator contemplates their father's mortality while grappling with the future of the family. The conversation about their mother's potential move suggests that even as the family stands on the brink of loss, they are already strategizing about survival and responsibilities in their father's absence. The chapter thus navigates themes of familial duty, expectations versus personal aspirations, and the haunting specter of death, all while delving into the psychology of its characters.

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Chapter 52:

In Chapter 52, the narrative centers on the father's deteriorating health and his complex relationship with family, particularly his wife, Omitsu. His delirium often leads him to express feelings of shame and mortality, frequently referencing General Nogi, a historical figure known for his honor and loyalty, which indicates the father's introspection about his own life choices and regret.

As the father becomes increasingly bedridden and unconscious, his wife remains devoted, often visiting him and asking if there is anything she can do. Despite the gravity of the situation, moments of tenderness occasionally pierce the veil of his illness, causing her to recall both the affection and the hardships of their earlier years together. Omitsu reflects on their past, sharing memories of conflict, such as when he had physically reprimanded her with a broomstick. These shared memories reveal a depth of their relationship that transcends anger, now colored by a sense of loss and nostalgia.

Amid the heavy atmosphere of impending loss, there's an unspoken tension around the father's estate and future wishes. The siblings grapple with the necessity of confronting their father about his desires regarding his affairs after his passing, torn between the urgency of the situation and the respect for their father's condition. Their internal debate reveals the family



dynamics and highlights the struggle between duty and sensitivity in the face of death.

As the father's state worsens, he enters a comatose-like condition, causing Omitsu to mistakenly believe he is simply sleeping. This misperception

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Chapter 53 Summary:

In Chapter 53, the narrator experiences an emotionally charged day as their father's health declines significantly. Feeling the urgency of the situation, the narrator's brother admonishes them to remain by their father's side, highlighting the family's collective concern for his unstable condition. Upon entering the sickroom, the father briefly regains consciousness to acknowledge each family member present with nods, expressing gratitude before slipping back into unconsciousness.

The atmosphere is heavy with apprehension as family members gradually leave the room, unable to bear the tension. The narrator, however, is compelled to retreat to their own space, drawn by curiosity and anxiety to read a letter from Sensei, a significant figure in their life. The letter, bulky and intricately written, seems to hold vital insights that the narrator feels they cannot ignore.

As they begin to unfold the carefully penned pages, they find that Sensei has finally chosen to recount his past—a story he had previously refrained from sharing. The urgency of his message is palpable, as he notes the fleeting nature of the opportunity to communicate before circumstances change irreversibly. Sensei's motivation stems from a newfound freedom to share his history, yet it is clear that he is aware of the potential loss of that freedom. Just as the narrator becomes fully engrossed in Sensei's revelations,



a sudden call from their brother jolts them back to reality, filling them with dread that their father may be nearing his end.

This chapter underscores the intertwining of personal and familial crises, revealing the weight of past secrets poised against the backdrop of impending loss. The narrator's internal conflict between the need for understanding and the immediacy of their father's condition creates a poignant tension, highlighting themes of mortality, legacy, and the burdens of communication.

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Chapter 54 Summary:

In Chapter 54, the narrator finds themselves in the tense atmosphere of their father's sickroom, where a doctor is attending to him with an enema amid worsening health. Their brother, visibly shaken, is unable to cope with the situation and steps away, leaving the narrator to assist at their father's bedside. After a brief period of care, the doctor assures them he will return, but the gravity of their father's condition looms large.

With anxiety gripping them, the narrator attempts to read a letter from Sensei, an important figure in their life whose wisdom and insight they seek. However, their focus is shattered by the fear of losing their father, making it impossible to absorb the contents of the letter. As they skim the pages, a chilling line catches their attention: "When this letter reaches your hands, I will no longer be in this world." Overwhelmed by despair, the narrator desperately rereads the letter, wishing for anything that might affirm Sensei's safety, yet they find themselves in vain pursuit of reassurance.

Returning to the sickroom, the narrator checks on their father, who, contrary to expectations, appears lucid and in somewhat better spirits after the enema. Despite this moment of clarity, the narrator feels the urgency to seek medical advice and determine their father's chances of survival. The narrator hastily leaves to find the doctor but discovers he is unavailable. With time slipping away, they decide against waiting and rush to the station.



In an effort to maintain communication, the narrator writes a brief letter to their mother and brother to explain their sudden departure, entrusting it to a rickshaw driver for swift delivery. Finally emboldened, they board a train bound for Tokyo, determined to read Sensei's letter in full, hoping to find guidance amidst the turmoil surrounding their family. Thus, the chapter encapsulates a blend of familial distress, existential urgency, and the quest for understanding through Sensei's words.

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Chapter 55 Summary:

In Chapter 55, the narrator reflects on their recent correspondence with a friend who has been seeking assistance in finding a job. The narrator admits to having received two or three letters from this friend over the summer, but feels a deep sense of guilt for not responding to the latter's request for help. Despite feeling an impulse to assist, the narrator acknowledges their inability to engage due to their own isolation from the social world, which leaves them feeling powerless.

The narrator reveals that they are grappling with existential questions about their own life direction, feeling trapped and cowardly. The thought of trying to alter their life fills them with dread, leading them to prioritize their own struggles over their friend's troubles. They candidly confess that they were not concerned with the friend's job prospects, viewing it as a trivial issue compared to their own emotional turmoil.

In a moment of clarity, the narrator reflects on their failure to respond appropriately to their friend's letters and offers an apology for this neglect. They express a desire to reconnect, indicating that they had even sent a telegram hoping to meet. However, the friend's obligation to care for their ailing father prevents this reunion, prompting the narrator to recognize the inconsistency in their own actions—especially since they had previously advised this friend on the importance of caring for their father.



Ultimately, the narrator acknowledges their flawed nature and the pressures of a complicated past that contribute to their contradictions. The chapter closes with the narrator contemplating the timing of their communication, deciding it is not yet right to share their true feelings, which leads them to send a terse telegram stating that the visit is unnecessary. This introspective journey highlights the complexity of their emotions and the bonds of friendship amidst personal turmoil.

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Chapter 56:

In Chapter 56, the narrator begins a letter, deeply introspective and laden with emotion. Despite his struggles with writing, he feels compelled to express his thoughts and experiences, driven by a commitment to fulfill a promise. His isolation has made him sensitive to obligations, leading to a profound internal conflict when it comes to the idea of not living up to promises—especially to the recipient of the letter.

Throughout his life, he has minimized relationships as a means of self-protection, but the importance of this correspondence weighs heavily on him. Writing is not merely a duty; it is a yearning to share his past, which he regards as his personal treasure. He believes that if not shared, his experiences would merely fade away with him, and yet he hesitates, fearing that they might fall into hands unworthy of their gravity.

He acknowledges an inherent 'moral darkness' that characterizes human existence, framing his own upbringing as one steeped in distinct moral values—values that may differ from the contemporary ideals of the youth. The recipient, a young man he respects for his sincerity and earnest desire to learn, is urged to confront this darkness. Their past conversations reveal a mentor-mentee dynamic, where the narrator has previously withheld his past, sensing the youth's quest for genuine knowledge.

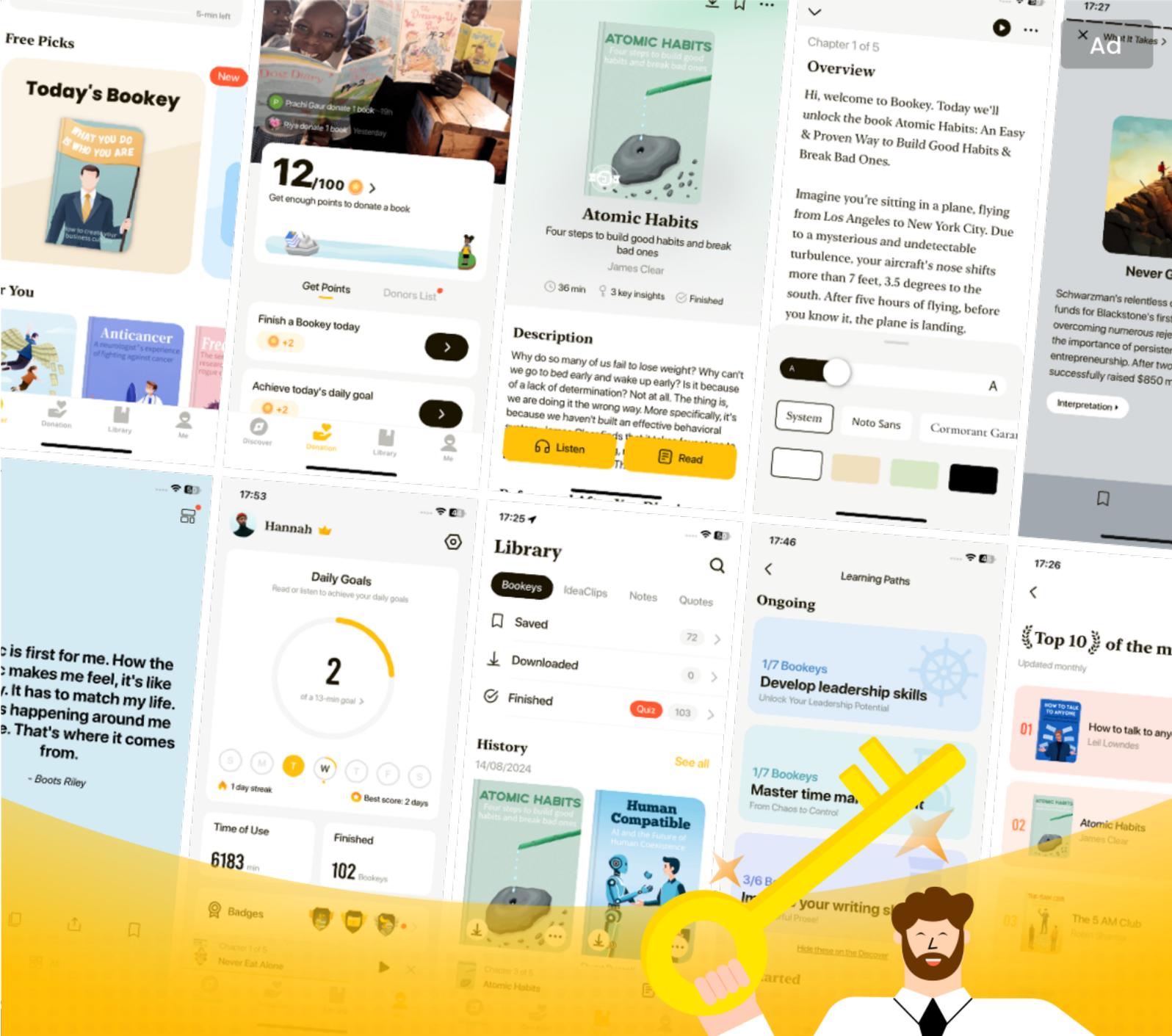


The letter represents a pivotal moment; he resolves to unveil his life's struggles and joys—symbolically pouring out his heart—hoping that, in doing so, he may impart wisdom that could breathe new life into the younger man's journey. The chapter encapsulates themes of obligation, isolation, and the moral complexities inherent in the human experience, marking the narrator's transition from guarded introspection to a willingness to share the depths of his being.

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Chapter 57 Summary:

In Chapter 57, the narrator reflects on the profound loss of his parents, who succumbed to typhoid fever in quick succession. At just under twenty years old, he grapples with feelings of shock and helplessness after their deaths. His father fell ill first, leaving his mother to care for him, ultimately leading to her own infection and demise. The familial wealth and comfort he enjoyed as an only child contrasted sharply with the emotional devastation he now faces.

The chapter captures a poignant memory of his mother's final moments. As she lay dying, she entrusted her brother—his uncle—with his care, indicating her intent to support her son's move to Tokyo. However, in the confusion of the moment, her words were cut short by his uncle's reassurances, preventing her from fully expressing her concerns or wishes.

The narrative explores the mother's capacity for clarity amid her illness, leaving the narrator to ponder whether she was aware of the gravity of her own situation. This foreshadowing of loss creates a framework that erodes the narrator's initial naivety, hinting at a growing tendency to question the honesty and intentions of those around him. The chapter provides insight into the catalysts for his skeptical worldview, which stem from his formative experiences during this traumatic time.



As the narrator pens his thoughts, he notes the quietness of the night, disrupted only by the song of a cricket. His calm demeanor while writing contrasts with the turmoil surrounding his past. Despite the grief, he strives to articulate his thoughts with a tranquil heart, suggesting a nuanced struggle between pain and the need for clarity in his story. Thus, this chapter not only recounts a pivotal moment of loss but also serves as a reflection on how such events shape one's perception and understanding of life and others.

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Chapter 58 Summary:

In Chapter 58, the protagonist faces the harsh reality of being alone in the world after losing his parents. Following his mother's advice, he turns to his uncle for support. His uncle, an entrepreneur and former member of the prefectural government, takes on the role of guardian, fulfilling the protagonist's needs and facilitating his education in Tokyo.

The college life he encounters is markedly more unruly and raw than what might be imagined today, characterized by reckless behavior among students. A vivid incident illustrates this: a fellow student, involved in a drunken altercation, strikes a working man with a wooden clog, leading to a chaotic scene that almost draws police attention. Thankfully, the boy's friends manage to resolve the situation without any scandal reaching the school. The narrator reflects on the simplistic nature of students of that era, which, despite its foolishness, possesses a certain charm that he believes modern students lack.

Financially, the protagonist's monthly allowance from his uncle is modest, yet he finds no need to envy wealthier classmates and instead realizes they might envy him. He enjoys a degree of independence with the additional funds he requests for books and other expenses, demonstrating his passion for reading even as a student.

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His trust in his uncle is unwavering, bolstered by the high regard his father held for the uncle, often praising him for his professionalism and capabilities. The contrast between his father's refined, gentlemanly nature and his uncle's dynamic, worldly demeanor is striking, yet both are connected by mutual respect. The protagonist recalls his father's advice on the importance of maintaining one's abilities and ambitions, especially in contrast to his own experience of inheriting his family's status without having to struggle for it. This wisdom shapes the protagonist's perception of his uncle, who he believes holds a crucial role in his life now that his parents are gone. The chapter highlights themes of family, trust, and the transition from adolescence to adulthood amidst personal loss.

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Chapter 59 Summary:

In Chapter 59, the protagonist returns from Tokyo for summer holidays to find that his uncle and aunt have moved into his childhood home, a significant house formerly belonging to his deceased parents. This arrangement had been made prior to his departure to Tokyo, as he is the only remaining member of the family. The house, well-regarded in the town, posed a dilemma about its future—demolishing or selling it would be difficult with an heir still available, and thus the choice was made for his relatives to stay there instead.

His uncle, involved in multiple local businesses, had originally expressed a reluctance to relocate, humorously suggesting that maintaining his residence in town might be more convenient for his work. Nevertheless, he eventually agreed to move into the protagonist's home while still keeping his town house, allowing him to commute between the two locations. For the protagonist, who retains a childlike attachment to the house that feels like a distant nostalgic dream, the return is bittersweet. Despite the longing for the excitement of Tokyo, he feels a strong pull to the home that has been a significant part of his life.

Upon his arrival, the atmosphere is more lively as the entire family gathers there for the summer, with his uncle's children present for their school break. The protagonist is warmly welcomed back and finds comfort in

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reclaiming his childhood bedroom—a gesture from his uncle, who insists that the house belongs to him.

However, underlying this renewed family joy is a troubling development: his uncle and aunt repeatedly encourage him to consider marriage. Initially taken aback and then resolute in his refusal, he learns that their motivations are practical; they desire him to marry soon so he can return home permanently and fulfill his role as his father's heir. While he understands their reasoning, the young protagonist is still engrossed in his studies in Tokyo and views marriage as a distant prospect, leading him to leave the house without advocating for their wishes. The chapter encapsulates his internal struggle between familial expectations and his own aspirations as he navigates this transitional period in his life.

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Chapter 60:

In Chapter 60, the narrator reflects on the theme of marriage, noting that the carefree attitude of his peers obscured the pressures some faced regarding familial obligations. Despite being at an age where romantic relationships could begin to blossom, he remained blissfully unaware of the external constraints influencing his friends. However, upon returning home for the summer after completing another year of studies, he is confronted by his uncle's persistent and unexpected proposition of marriage.

Returning to the house of his childhood, filled with memories of his deceased parents, the narrator initially finds comfort in the familiar surroundings. Yet, that peace is soon interrupted when his uncle reveals that a prospective wife has been chosen for him: his cousin, the daughter of his uncle. This decision, justified by his uncle with the claim that the narrator's late father had once discussed it, surprises him, although he accepts it as a plausible arrangement.

Despite their close childhood bond, the narrator feels no romantic affection for his cousin. He reflects on the nature of familial intimacy and the difficulty of cultivating romantic feelings when intimacy has long existed. The idea of marrying his cousin is met with indifference, as he believes true romantic love requires a fresh spark and that their existing closeness averse to that possibility.



His uncle suggests deferring the marriage until after his graduation, but insists on the urgency to finalize the agreement sooner rather than later. The narrator, feeling no emotional connection to his cousin, firmly declines, conveying his lack of interest. This rejection brings tears from his cousin, who is not weeping for love lost but rather in humiliation at being spurned. Acknowledging that neither party feels love for the other, the narrator ultimately returns to Tokyo, leaving behind the expectations set upon him.

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Chapter 61 Summary:

Chapter 61 Summary

A year later, at the beginning of summer, the narrator eagerly returns home to their childhood surroundings after completing their final exams in Tokyo. This return home evokes a deep sense of nostalgia, as the air, the scent of the earth, and the memories of their late parents create a world that is both comforting and familiar. Despite the looming issue of a proposed marriage to their cousin, the narrator remains carefree, believing that one can simply decline unwanted situations without consequences.

Upon arriving home, however, the narrator senses a stark change in their uncle's demeanor; the warmth and affection they used to share have seemingly vanished. Initially oblivious to this shift, the narrator gradually recognizes the coldness not only in their uncle but also in their aunt and cousin, who had earlier expressed friendly intentions. This puzzling transformation provokes introspection, leading the narrator to question what might have caused this change in their relatives.

In a moment of reflection, the narrator climbs a hill to visit their parents' graves, blending grief with gratitude. It is here that they pray for guidance, feeling a spiritual connection to their deceased parents. This moment evokes



memories of a previous transformative experience during adolescence, when the narrator first became aware of the beauty in the world, particularly in women. This newfound awareness had drastically altered their perception, making the world feel alive with beauty.

Now, faced with the unsettling shift in familial relations, the narrator is struck by a similar awakening. The realization that their uncle and his family have become "different creatures" fills them with unease. The sudden recognition of this change compels the narrator to consider what actions they might take to navigate the new dynamics in their family, highlighting a turning point in their life shaped by loss, nostalgia, and an evolving understanding of the complexities in their relationships.

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Chapter 62 Summary:

In Chapter 62, the narrator grapples with an urgent need to understand the family home and estate that have remained under the care of their uncle following the death of their parents. The uncle, who leads a frenetic lifestyle, oscillates between the town house and the country estate, leaving the narrator feeling neglected and suspicious. While the uncle presents himself as perpetually busy, the narrator suspects this is merely a ruse to avoid meaningful conversations about the property's future.

Rumors surrounding the uncle circulate, including claims of infidelity and financial struggles, which only deepen the narrator's distrust. An old friend from middle school reveals that the uncle may have kept a mistress, and that his business, once thought to be failing, has seen a resurgence in recent years. These whispers amplify the narrator's suspicions and prompt a desire for clarity on the family estate.

Eventually, the narrator attempts to engage the uncle in discussions about the property, but the encounter deteriorates into a bitter negotiation characterized by mutual distrust and condescension. The uncle, treating the narrator dismissively as a child, exacerbates the tension, making it clear that a peaceful resolution is unlikely.

Throughout the chapter, the narrator reflects on a past conversation about the



nature of good and evil, recalling that they believe people can become corrupt when money is involved—an idea now cast in stark relief against their experiences with the uncle. This leads the narrator to an uncomfortable realization about the ethics of their uncle, whom they view as exemplifying the descent from virtue to greed. The narrator's emotional turmoil intertwines with philosophical musings on human nature, suggesting that despite the complexities of morality, the impact of blood relations and personal history remains profound.

In essence, this chapter underscores the narrator's inner conflict as they confront their uncle's character and the implications it has for their family's legacy, emphasizing a deep-seated betrayal that transcends simple familial ties.

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Chapter 63 Summary:

In Chapter 63, the narrator reflects on the bitter betrayal by his uncle, who manipulated him out of his inheritance during the three years he spent in Tokyo. Initially, the narrator views himself as naïve for trusting his uncle with his finances but also envies the innocence he once possessed. This sense of lost purity leads him to grapple with the harsh realities of life, and he considers himself tarnished by the world, contrasting his current self with the innocent person he was.

One of the driving forces behind his uncle's deceit was the pressure to marry his cousin, a proposal that did not stem from genuine familial concern but rather a desire for personal gain. Although the narrator had no strong feelings for his cousin—neither love nor dislike—he took a measure of satisfaction in defying his uncle's wishes. This small act of resistance becomes a poignant but trivial point in the narrative, as his refusal did not change the fact that he was being cheated.

As tensions rise, other relatives intervene to negotiate the matter of the inheritance, but their motives are suspect in the narrator's eyes, furthering his distrust. He reflects on how, if a man once praised by his father can act so dishonorably, he has little reason to trust anyone else. The mediation concludes with the disappointing realization that the inheritance, now diminished, is far less than he had hoped for, leaving him with the difficult



decision to accept the outcome quietly or confront his uncle in court—an option he fears would prolong his suffering and distract him from his studies.

Ultimately, the narrator decides to sever ties with his past, arranging for an old school friend to help him liquidate his inheritance. Despite warnings against his hurried plan, he is resolute in leaving his hometown and resolving never to see his uncle again. Before departing, he pays a final visit to his parents' graves, a moment loaded with regret and closure.

After settling his affairs, the narrator finds that his assets amount to little more than a few government bonds and a modest sum from the sale, which, despite being significantly reduced, provides him with enough financial security to continue his education. This stability unexpectedly leads him into situations that will shape his future, highlighting how the consequences of betrayal can pivot one's destiny in unforeseen directions.

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Chapter 64:

In Chapter 64, the narrator, now enjoying financial independence, contemplates moving out of a noisy boarding house to find a place of his own. However, he quickly realizes that this plan would require significant effort, from purchasing furniture to hiring a trustworthy servant to manage his new home—tasks that seem daunting.

With the intention of scouting for a suitable house, Hill toward Denzkin Temple. The area has transformed into urban development, but he is reminded of its previous charm, with beautiful green landscapes that used to soothe him. As he strolls through the neighborhood, he finds the current state of decay disappointing.

In search of a house to rent, he asks a local cake-seller if she knows of any available properties. Although she initially cannot suggest anything, she inquires if he would consider lodging with a family instead. This idea intrigues him, as it would eliminate the complications of maintaining a home.

She informs him about the available lodging belonging to a military widow and her daughter, who have moved to a more modest home after the loss of their husband and father in the Sino-Japanese War. The widow and her daughter now feel lonely, prompting them to seek a lodger.



Envisioning the quiet life that such an arrangement promises, the narrator hesitates, afraid that being an unknown student might lead the widow to reject him. However, donning his respectable student attire, especially his school cap—which once carried a sense of prestige—he gathers his courage.

Upon visiting the widow unexpectedly, he introduces himself and explains his interest in lodging with her family. After questioning him about his background and studies, the widow appears reassured and gives her consent for him to move in. The narrator admires her upright character and wonders about the loneliness that such a strong woman must feel, setting the stage for future interactions and deeper exploration of their dynamics.

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Chapter 65 Summary:

In Chapter 65, the narrator describes moving into a spacious room in a student boarding house in the HongM area, which he finds to be a better accommodation compared to other student lodgings. The room features traditional Japanese design—with eight tatami mats, an alcove with shelves, and a built-in cupboard—but lacks windows, relying on sunlight from a south-facing veranda. Upon entering, the narrator notices a flower arrangement and a koto, a traditional Japanese stringed instrument. Despite being indifferent to the decor at first—having a background that values Chinese aesthetics—he realizes they were placed there to welcome him, prompting a faint smile as he reflects on their significance.

As the chapter progresses, the narrator hints at the presence of a young girl—referred to as OjMsan—whose identity has sparked his interest, which he heard about her. His initial encounter with her is marked by awkwardness and fluster, as he has preconceived notions based on her mother's demeanor, leading him to expect OjMsan to embody similar traits. However, upon seeing her, his expectations are dramatically upended, revealing a new aspect of womanhood that captivates him. Consequently, he finds a newfound appreciation for the flower arrangements and the koto, which had previously annoyed him.

As time passes, the flowers wilt but are replaced regularly with new

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arrangements, albeit executed poorly, and the koto is occasionally carried off to another room. The narrator listens to the girl's playing, which lacks skill but brings him unexpected joy. Her music is simple and her singing is faint, often drowned out by the teacher's reprimands, yet he finds delight in her efforts and the clumsiness of her art. This emotional connection to the music and flowers reflects his growing intrigue and attachment to the chapter as a transition in his feelings as he becomes more engaged with his surroundings and the people in them.

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Chapter 66 Summary:

In Chapter 66, the protagonist reflects on his profound disillusionment with humanity, stemming from negative experiences with his family, particularly his uncle and aunt. This pervasive mistrust colors his interactions, even on the train, where he feels an overwhelming sense of depression intertwined with anxiety. His decision to leave the chaotic boardinghouse is largely influenced by this mental state, despite his newfound financial security that allows him to consider living independently.

After moving to Koishikawa, he finds himself in a heightened state of vigilance, observing those around him with an almost predatory gaze. This self-awareness brings on feelings of shame, leading him to liken himself to a thief, though he refrains from stealing. Interestingly, amidst this turmoil, he experiences a budding attraction to OjMsan, a character whose simplicity and innocence through her amateur flower arrangements and musical attempts. Despite his general distrust of people, particularly regarding money, he feels a connection with her that seems untouched by his cynicism, allowing for a complex emotional landscape where contrasting sentiments coexist.

OjMsan, whom he refers to respectfully as Okusan, proves to be a diligent and well-mannered individual. She remains oblivious to his underlying tension, praising his studious nature and even attributing to him

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qualities he struggles to see in himself, such as a generous heart. Initially seeking a lodger of modest means—perhaps an underpaid official—Okusan finds the protagonist's demeanor and financial flexibility surprising. While she interprets his willingness to spend as a sign of inherent kindness, he understands it as a product of privilege rather than true generosity.

This chapter delves into the protagonist's internal conflict, juxtaposing his guarded distrust of humanity with his innocent affection. This chapter sets the stage for further exploration of relationships and emotional growth.

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Chapter 67 Summary:

In Chapter 67, the protagonist begins to feel a significant shift in their emotional state due to the warm, accepting nature of Okusan (the mother) and her daughter, OjMsan. This newfound tranquility household remains cheerful and unperturbed by the protagonist's earlier wariness—an internal struggle marked by shifty glances and anxiety. Okusan's deliberate kindness or her obliviousness to the protagonist's nerves fosters a comforting atmosphere that gradually allows the protagonist to form closer bonds with the family.

The protagonist finds joy in social interactions, often sharing lighthearted moments with Okusan and OjMsan over tea and cakes. Between the demands of study and the allure of conversation, the protagonist relishes the companionship. OjMsan, engaging and supportive, relieves the burdens of schoolwork, habitually seeks out the protagonist for these interactions, often at the threshold of their room, inquiring about their studies. This anticipation heightens the protagonist's nervous energy, revealing a deeper emotional complexity as he tracks the evolving dynamics of the relationships.

As they spend more time together, there's a juxtaposition between the protagonist's feelings of unease and OjMsan's carefree presence. The protagonist experiences inner turmoil when they find themselves alone with

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OjMsan, sensing a disconnect between their uncharacteristic relaxed nature. Though OjMsan occasionally seemed necessary, the protagonist begins to recognize her not just as a child, but as a confident young woman navigating her own budding maturity.

Overall, this chapter illustrates an important transition for the protagonist as they confront their feelings, acclimatize to familial dynamics, and embark on a journey of self-discovery amidst personal interactions that challenge their previous apprehensions.

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Chapter 68:

In Chapter 68, the narrator reflects on the complex dynamics between

himself, OjMsan (the daughter), and Okusan (the mother). When Okusan leaves his room, he experiences a mix of relief and lingering dissatisfaction. This emotional turmoil stems from the contrast between his yearning for closeness with OjMsan and the ambiguous feelings he has for Okusan.

Okusan rarely leaves the house, and when she does, she ensures that her daughter is never alone with him. The narrator contemplates whether this is intentional on Okusan's part. His observations lead him to feel that Okusan is torn between wanting to facilitate a bond between him and her daughter while also being protective and suspicious. His interpretation of Okusan and her motivations is influenced by a recent betrayal from his uncle, leading him to question the authenticity of her intentions. This inner conflict causes him to grapple with his misguided assumptions about women, attributing their unpredictable nature to their gender.

Despite his self-admitted disdain for women, the narrator finds himself drawn to OjMsan, describing his feelings for her as devotion, elevating her beyond mere physical attraction. This affection contrasts sharply with his growing resentment toward Okusan, complicating their relationship triangle.



As the narrator continues to ponder their interactions, he comes to a new realization. His earlier assumption that Okusan's contradictory behaviors must be a facade shifts; instead, he begins to perceive that both her desire for connection and her protectiveness coexist within her. He understands that her watchfulness stems from a concern for OjMsan's norms, rather than from malice. Though he feels no physical desire towards OjMsan, he acknowledges that Okusan's anxieties are a legitimate concern for her daughter's innocence and the social proprieties of the time. This newfound understanding leads him to rethink his negative judgments about Okusan, recognizing the complexity of her emotions and motivations.

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Chapter 69 Summary:

In Chapter 69, the protagonist reflects on the complex web of trust and suspicion that has developed in their relationship with the household they have become a part of. It becomes apparent to the protagonist that the family, especially the women, trust him implicitly, which is a surprising revelation given his own previous doubts about their motivations. He muses on the intuitive nature of women, pondering whether it contributes to their vulnerability to deception. Ironically, despite vowing never to trust anyone again, he finds himself completely trusting OjMsan, feeling an odd discomfort about her mother, Okusan's, unwavering faith in him.

As he navigates conversations with Okusan, he initially maintains a guarded approach, avoiding sharing details about his tragic past, particularly the loss of his parents. However, when he finally confides in her about his decision to abandon his former life—now marked only by grief—Okusan is visibly moved, and OjMsan's tears confirm the emotional impact. This sharing solidifies the familial bond he feels, leading Okusan to treat him more like a relative. Yet, his protective instincts surface, igniting a new wave of paranoia.

A seemingly innocuous incident ignites seeds of doubt in the protagonist's mind, leading him to suspect that Okusan may have ulterior motives in

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fostering a relationship between OjMsan and himself
uncle. This shift in perception casts a shadow over what was once perceived
as genuine kindness, transforming it into a calculated strategy. The
protagonist's inner struggle intensifies as he oscillates between skepticism of
Okusan and his deep, unyielding love for OjMsan.

His contemplations spiral into despair when he begins
may also be part of a larger deception. This inner turmoil, marked by
conflicting emotions, leaves him trapped between trust and distrust, unable
to reconcile his faith in OjMsan with the encroaching
deceit. The chapter captures the protagonist's torment, showcasing the
psychological complexities of love, trust, and the fear of betrayal.

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Chapter 70 Summary:

In Chapter 70, the protagonist struggles with a profound sense of disconnect between his academic life and personal emotions. Although he continues attending college, the lectures seem distant and meaningless to him, reflecting an internal turmoil that makes it difficult for him to focus on his studies. This feeling of detachment is compounded by his withdrawal from social interactions—he becomes taciturn, allowing others to misinterpret his silence as deep contemplation. Savoring this accidental facade, he relishes the freedom from social expectations, even as he experiences occasional bursts of frustration-driven exuberance.

The household environment adds to his sense of isolation. Visits from guests are infrequent, typically limited to acquaintances of in his life who embodies a quiet presence. This unsettling dynamic leaves the protagonist feeling like an unwitting host, while timid around him. Reflecting on this, he notes a stark reversal of roles that does not particularly distress him but adds to his overall sense of disquiet.

A tipping point occurs when he overhears an unfamiliar male voice in the house, which triggers a wave of anxiety. The voice—soft and indistinct—leaves him grappling with questions about its owner, amplifying his feelings of frustration and helplessness. Despite his eagerness for clarity, the fear of intruding on the family's privacy restrains him from seeking

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answers. When the men eventually depart, he learns the visitor's name but struggles with a mix of disappointment and self-doubt about the laughter exchanged among his family members regarding his reaction.

Amidst this inner chaos, he recognizes his freedom to make choices regarding his future, including the possibility of proposing to Okusan's daughter. Historically cautious and scarred by previous experiences of deception, he wrestles with the fear of rejection and its potential impact on his life. Yet, the prospect of marrying her does not deter his drive—he is instead fueled by an intense desire to avoid becoming anyone's pawn again. This backdrop underpins his frustrations and gives insight into his character's motivations and emotional layers as he navigates the complexities of love, fear, and autonomy.

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Chapter 71 Summary:

In Chapter 71, the narrator reflects on his spending habits, primarily focused on purchasing books while neglecting to invest in adequate clothing.

Okusan, likely his caretaker or an elder figure, points out his lack of suitable attire, as he only owned simple cotton robes made in his hometown. This was typical for students of that time, as they generally avoided wearing anything luxurious, such as silk. The chapter references an amusing incident involving a wealthy friend who reluctantly wore a fine silk underrobe that ultimately became infested with lice, leading to its disposal in a ditch—a memory the narrator cherishes without recognizing the waste involved.

Despite being of an age where developing a sense of responsibility regarding clothes would be expected, the narrator remains dismissive, proclaiming that he needs only books until he matures further. His attitude shifts, however, when he expresses a desire to buy a gift for OjMsan, who has been kind to him, which prompts him to ask Okusan to help him purchase some new clothes.

Reluctantly, he agrees to accompany Okusan and her shopping trip, revealing the societal norms of their time that made it unusual for a young man to be seen in the company of women. On the excursion to Nihonbashi, OjMsan dresses elegantly, drawing attention which the narrator finds unsettling.



The shopping experience becomes a lengthy endeavor as Okusan frequently seeks his opinion on fabric choices, indicating his growing involvement in their lives, despite his initial hesitation. After an extensive outing, they conclude their day with a meal at a small restaurant, further illustrating Okusan's local knowledge and the cultural landscape of the time.

Upon returning home late at night, the narrator retreats into solitude the following day, only to be met with playful teasing from a classmate who saw them shopping. This interaction affirms the societal implications of his spending and companionship, drawing attention to his developing identity in the context of friendship and societal expectations.

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Chapter 72:

In Chapter 72, the narrator returns home and shares a story with Okusan (the mother) and OjMsan (the daughter). Okusan finds her conversation shifts to a more serious tone, probing into the implications of marriage for her daughter. She reveals that while there have been several proposals, she is in no rush to marry OjMsan off, valuing her looks and the behavior of potential suitors carefully, given that OjMsan is the

The narrator, grappling with his own feelings and distrust, refrains from expressing his thoughts about proposing to OjMsan, but he does inquire about Okusan's intentions. As the conversation unfolds, he learns about the complexities of OjMsan's future, but in doing so, he loses his own voice and feelings. When the discussion turns to the idea of early marriage, both Okusan and the narrator agree that patience is wise.

At this point, a new character enters the story—a man whose arrival will significantly alter the narrator's life and relationships. Despite Okusan's reservations about him moving into their household, the narrator insists on bringing him in, believing it to be the right choice. This decision, made without fully understanding the implications, ultimately casts a shadow over his future.

The chapter captures the tension between personal desires and family



expectations, setting the stage for the narrator's choices and the unforeseen consequences they bring.

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Chapter 73 Summary:

In Chapter 73, the narrator reflects on his enduring friendship with K, who has been a companion since childhood. Their bond is rooted in their shared hometown and the social milieu surrounding it. K, the son of a Pure Land Buddhist priest, was adopted by a wealthy doctor's family, allowing him access to educational opportunities that his original family might not have afforded. This adoption occurred while they were still in middle school, and the narrator recalls the surprise of seeing K's name change on the school roll.

As they transitioned to life in Tokyo for their studies, K and the narrator moved into a dormitory together, sharing a room that felt both confining and protective amidst the intimidating pulse of the city. Within this small space, they often vented their disdain for the outside world while simultaneously nurturing aspirations of greatness. K, forged in the ideals of discipline due to his temple upbringing, embodied a steadfast commitment to his ambiguous life goals, which he articulated in terms of self-dedication inspired by Buddhist philosophy.

Despite K being sent to Tokyo with the expectation of pursuing a medical career, he stubbornly declared his intention to reject this path, which raised concerns for the narrator about the implications of deceiving K's adoptive parents. Yet, K remained unapologetic, believing that his decision aligned with a higher calling he had not fully articulated. While the narrator had



difficulty grasping the full scope of K's intentions, he admired his friend's conviction, recognizing the youthful tendency to romanticize such ideals.

At the same time, the narrator felt a sense of responsibility in supporting K's chosen path, even if he at times harbored doubts about it. This acknowledgment foreshadows deeper complexities in their relationship, hinting that the decisions made in their youth would carry significant weight as they navigated the challenges ahead.

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Chapter 74 Summary:

In Chapter 74, the narrative centers on the contrasting academic journeys of the protagonist and his friend K. Both enter the same faculty, but while K pursues his studies with a laid-back attitude—demonstrating a defiant rejection of familial expectations—the protagonist is consumed with anxiety about the consequences of K's choices. As K rents a room in a temple over the summer, he immerses himself in his studies, adopting a monastic lifestyle adorned with Buddhist rosary beads, which he mindlessly counts each day. This ritual, perplexing to the protagonist, symbolizes K's deepening philosophical engagement, as he strives for spiritual exploration.

Intriguingly, while K has previously only engaged with Buddhist texts, the discovery of a Bible in his room hints at his broader spiritual curiosity. He expresses a desire to read not only the Bible but also the Koran, intrigued by ideas of spreading faith through both written word and force. This eclectic approach may reflect K's searching nature, suggesting an evolving outlook that transcends traditional religious boundaries.

As summer vacations unfold, K faces familial pressure and reluctantly returns home during his second summer, but he remains secretive about his studies, highlighting the disconnect between student life and parental understanding. Upon his return to college, he feigns indifference when asked about his visit, despite the weight of unspoken truths that lie beneath his



calm demeanor.

The protagonist, grappling with personal upheaval during his own summer at home—marked by anger and isolation—fails to see the parallels with K's experiences until they reconnect in September. Unbeknownst to the protagonist, K has taken a bold step of confessing his deceit to his adoptive parents through a letter, indicating his unwillingness to maintain a facade now that he is in university. This revelation implies a turning point for K, as he seeks acceptance for who he is, even if it risks confrontation with his past. The chapter ends on a note of uncertainty about both their futures, caught between familial expectations and the pursuit of individual identity.

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Chapter 75 Summary:

In Chapter 75, K finds himself in a precarious position after receiving harsh letters from both his adoptive and biological families. His adoptive father is furious with K for deceiving them, expressing in a strongly worded reply that he will not fund K's education any further. K also receives a letter from his biological family, which condemns him for abandoning them, hinting at a failed obligation that reinforces their refusal to support him. Caught between these two families and the implications of each relationship, K faces a dilemma: whether to return to his birth family or compromise with his adoptive parents to maintain his status in their household.

As the discussion turns to practical matters, K reveals he is considering teaching at an evening school to fund his college education. Reflecting on the more accessible job market of that era, the narrator believes this solution could sustain K. However, burdened by feelings of responsibility stemming from his earlier support for K's decision to pursue his own path, the narrator offers financial assistance. K, valuing his independence and adamant about standing on his own feet as a university student, firmly rejects the offer.

Despite quickly securing a part-time teaching job, K struggles with the demands on his time, which detracts from his studies. The narrator becomes increasingly concerned about K's health under the pressures of both work and academia, but K, determined and seemingly unfazed, brushes off these



concerns with laughter.

As tensions rise with his adoptive family, K becomes isolated, communicating less frequently with the narrator. Though a mediator attempts to encourage K to reconcile with his adoptive family, K steadfastly refuses, insisting he cannot leave his studies mid-term. This obstinance exacerbates the rift with both families, leading the narrator to write a conciliatory letter that sadly goes unanswered.

Eventually, K chooses to officially return to his biological family's register, which necessitates that they repay his educational fees. However, this decision backfires as K's biological family effectively disowns him, deepening his sense of alienation. He grapples with the absence of a nurturing maternal figure in his life—his mother had died when he was young—and considers how the sternness of his father, a priest with a samurai-like adherence to moral codes, may have shaped this estrangement.

Overall, the chapter highlights K's struggle for autonomy amidst familial expectations and his relentless pursuit of independence, even as these choices lead to increasing isolation and conflict with both his adoptive and biological families.

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Chapter 76:

In Chapter 76, the opening reveals that K's crisis, primarily stemming from his recent struggles and disenchantment, is beginning to ease, as I receive a lengthy letter from the husband of K's elder sister. The significance of this man is rooted in his connection to K's adoptive family, which grants him substantial influence regarding K's situation. He reaches out to inquire about K's well-being following the severance of family ties, emphasizing his wife's concerns for her brother. K has always been closer to this sister, who married into a modest household, than to his elder brother, the heir of the family temple. This familial dynamic sheds light on K's emotional turmoil and longing for support, as his sister, despite her limited resources, yearns to help him.

K reveals to me that he has previously received letters from his sister, assuring her that he doesn't need her worry, given her financial constraints. In my response to her husband, I echo a posture of reassurance and offer support should any issues arise, signaling my defiance toward the families who have ignored us.

The chapter then transitions into a reflection on K's life post-annulment of his adoption during his first year at university. He struggles to support himself, leading to a deterioration of his mental and physical health. As K approaches the midpoint of his academic journey, he becomes increasingly



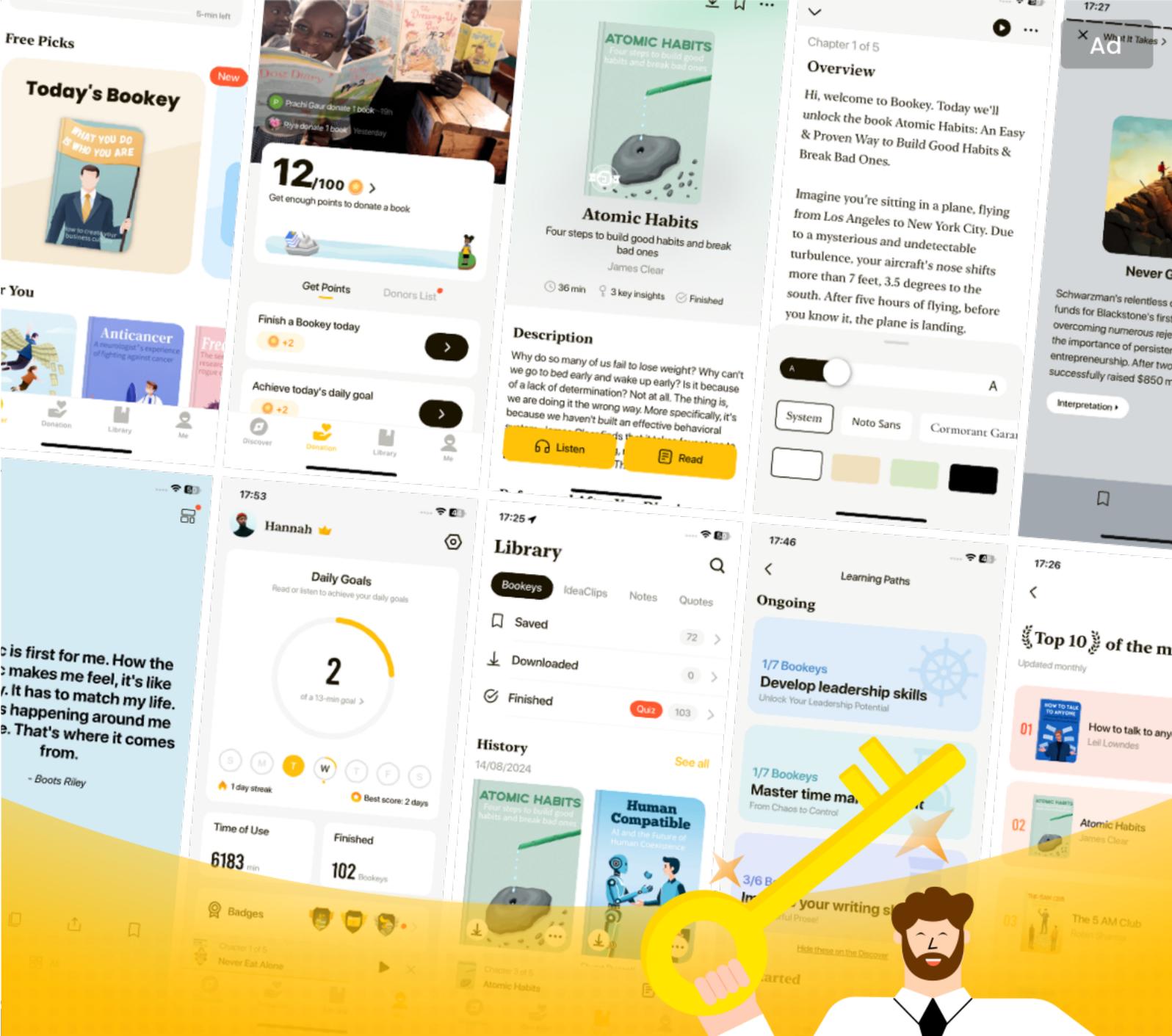
despondent, overwhelmed by anxiety about his future and burdened by the weight of his decisions. Observing this decline, I find it necessary to intervene and try to soothe his stress.

I suggest he relinquish unnecessary work to focus on relaxation and

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Chapter 77 Summary:

Chapter 77 Summary

The chapter begins with a description of the protagonist's living arrangement, which necessitates passing through a small four-mat room to access his own larger room. This small anteroom serves little practical purpose but becomes important as a space where K, a friend in need, decides to live. Initially, the protagonist sets up two desks side by side, suggesting they would share the larger space, but K opts for the small room, preferring solitude despite its cramped conditions.

The protagonist reflects on Okusan's initial objections to K moving in. Okusan, who runs the lodging house, expresses her concerns that bringing a stranger like K into her home could be problematic. She argues that while sharing was acceptable in typical lodgings, her home is not intended to be a business. The protagonist defends his choice by noting that he had earned her trust, countering her worries by emphasizing that K would be no trouble. Okusan persists, suggesting that living with K might be detrimental to the protagonist.

Despite the circumstances, the protagonist feels emotionally compelled to help K. He acknowledges that financial support in cash form would not suit

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K's fiercely independent nature. Instead, he chooses to house K, covertly providing money to Okusan for meals, all while keeping K unaware of the depth of his financial struggles. The protagonist describes K's strained relationships with his adoptive family and his original family, framing his support as an attempt to save a troubled soul.

Eventually, Okusan relents and agrees to K moving in. K arrives with his belongings, unaware of the protagonist's negotiations for his well-being.

Okusan and her daughter, OjMsan, assist K in settling in. The protagonist feels grateful for their warmth, K remains his usual reserved self. When asked for his opinion on the new living situation, K responds with a tepid "Not bad," which the protagonist finds disappointing, given that K had been living in dismal conditions prior to this move. K's Buddhist upbringing influences his dismissive attitude toward comfort, leading him to think that a focus on material needs is morally questionable.

The protagonist resolves to persist with a positive attitude, hoping that with time and kindness, K's icy demeanor will thaw, allowing him to recognize the new opportunities and comforts available to him.

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Chapter 78 Summary:

In Chapter 78, the narrator reflects on the positive impact that Okusan's nurturing environment had on his own well-being and hopes to extend this effect to his friend K. Aware of their contrasting temperaments, the narrator recognizes K's formidable willpower and intelligence; during their school years, K consistently outperformed him academically. However, the narrator feels a sense of superiority in convincing K to move in with him, believing he is acting with greater wisdom.

As the narrator observes K's challenging nature, he contemplates how external stimuli shape human capacities, both mental and physical. He draws a parallel between this concept and the way doctors prescribe varied diets to strengthen a person's stomach, signifying that gradual exposure to different experiences can bolster one's resilience. He worries that K, in his pursuit of enduring hardship, is actually weakening himself rather than toughening up. K's approach is built on the misguided belief that through repetition of pain, he can desensitize himself to discomfort.

Yet, the narrator understands that articulating this concern to K would likely provoke defensiveness. K could easily counter with examples of stoics and saints who thrived under suffering, failing to recognize their differences from his own situation. K's unwavering conviction can be intimidating, and the narrator fears that pushing back could exacerbate K's precarious mental



state. Thus, rather than challenge K directly, the narrator chooses to remain silent, hoping that the more supportive atmosphere of their shared living situation will ultimately ease K's burdens without provoking conflict. He resolves to wait and observe how K responds to this new environment, holding onto a sense of hope for transformation.

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Chapter 79 Summary:

In Chapter 79, the narrator reflects on the challenges faced by a friend, K, whose isolation and curt demeanor stem from his past neglect of social interaction. Convinced that K's lack of communication has hindered his emotional growth, the narrator, alongside Okusan (likely a maternal figure) and OjMsan (a younger woman), seeks to bridge the warmth of human connection.

Okusan describes K as unapproachable, recounting an awkward interaction where he dismisses her offer to help with a brazier, despite feeling cold. This reinforces the sentiment that K's rough exterior makes him difficult to engage with, but the narrator sympathizes with both K and Okusan, feeling responsible for fostering better social interactions among them.

Determined to help K connect with others, the narrator consistently encourages K to join their conversations and activities, despite K's reluctance and occasional abrupt departures. K's disdain for what he sees as idle chatter highlights his focus on higher intellectual pursuits, yet the narrator believes that such exchanges are crucial for K's emotional development.

As the chapter unfolds, it becomes evident that the narrator's motivations go beyond mere friendship; he is also nurturing feeling

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persistent efforts to integrate K into social settings, the narrator witnesses a gradual transformation in K. The once-isolated man begins to recognize the humanity in others, including women, whom he had previously dismissed as inferior. K ultimately acknowledges that women are not the despicable beings he once thought, realizing that there's value in viewing the sexes with distinction.

This shift in K's perspective elates the narrator, who takes silent joy in aiding his friend's personal growth while also harboring his own romantic feelings for OjMsan. Together with Okusan and OjMsan, they the progress made, reflecting a poignant theme of connection and the power of relationships to cultivate emotional resilience and understanding.

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Chapter 80:

Chapter 80 Summary

In this chapter, the narrator reflects on the daily life shared with K, a fellow student in a different field of study. Their interactions are minimal; they acknowledge each other briefly as they come and go at irregular times. The narrator, who often returns home after K, experiences a shift in the household dynamics one evening.

After a delayed return from an errand in Kanda, the narrator overhears OjMsan, K's companion, in K's room. This raises questions of their interaction, especially since it is unusual for the two of them to be alone in the house without the presence of Okusan (K's mother) or the maid. When the narrator enters and greets them, OjMsan's unusual absence of Okusan creates a feeling of tension.

Despite the awkwardness, the narrator engages in light conversation. After changing, the narrator and K share a meal with Okusan, who explains her absence was due to a trip to buy food after the usual fish seller failed to deliver. The incident is punctuated by OjMsan's inappreciation, which is cut short by Okusan's reprimand, highlighting her mother's authority in the household.



The chapter concludes with a sense of normalcy returning as they gather around a new dining table that the narrator provided for the family, symbolizing their growing familiarity and intimacy despite underlying tensions. The narrator's thoughtful observations about interactions and dynamics within the home serve to enrich the reader's understanding of the characters' relationships and the evolving atmosphere within their shared living space.

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Chapter 81 Summary:

In Chapter 81, a week has passed since the events of the last chapter, and the narrator finds himself in a familiar setting where Okusan is in conversation. Upon catching sight of him, OjMsan, the narrator, perplexed, chooses to ignore it and retreats to his room without asking for clarification. This moment highlights a growing tension, as OjMsan later remarks at dinner that he is an "odd person" for the narrator to notice Okusan's watchful gaze directed at her.

After dinner, the narrator and K venture out for a walk in the Temple and around the botanical gardens. The two friends, both reserved in nature, engage in minimal conversation, primarily focused on their upcoming final exams. The narrator attempts to discuss his studies, but K's responses are brief and evasive, revealing that he is far more absorbed in his academic pursuits. He delves into a complex analysis of Swedenborg, demonstrating his intellectual fervor.

Both boys successfully pass their examinations, earning congratulations from Okusan, who boasts of her daughter's imminent graduation. K comments dismissively on the educational shortcomings of girls, selectively ignoring OjMsan's skill in traditional arts such as sewing and arranging. The narrator, who holds OjMsan in high esteem, is irritated by K's generalization, signaling an undercurrent of jealousy towards



his friend.

Seeking to deepen their friendship, the narrator proposes a summer getaway to the B Mshk Peninsula. However, K hesitates, expressing a desire to stay home and read instead. This reluctance hints at K's growing relationship with the women in their household, a situation that concerns the narrator, despite being somewhat contrived by his own actions. Aware of their impasse, Okusan intervenes and facilitates their agreement to travel together, resolving the tension and launching the boys into an anticipated adventure.

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Chapter 82 Summary:

In Chapter 82, the narrator and K embark on a journey to the coastal region of B M s h k , disembarking at the unwelcoming fishing arrival is met with the unpleasant stench of fish and treacherous waves, which leave them battered and bruised by submerged rocks. Despite the challenges, K maintains a stoic demeanor, contrasting sharply with the narrator's growing impatience and discomfort.

Eventually, they leave Hota for more favorable shores at Tomiura and Nako, both popular among students seeking respite by the sea. Here, they find stunning beaches and enjoy the clear waters revealing vibrant fish. While the narrator seeks solace in reading, K remains silently contemplative, prompting the narrator to wonder about the nature of K's thoughts.

This quiet tension is punctuated by the narrator's frustration and mounting jealousy, particularly concerning K's calmness, which he misinterprets as indifference to his own feelings. The narrator harbors a romantic interest in O j M s a n , a girl who has been a topic of concern between rivalry raises suspicions about K's intentions, leaving the narrator increasingly agitated. He questions whether K's tranquility stems from a renewed confidence in his life's direction or deeper which the narrator cannot bear to acknowledge.



Thus, the chapter portrays a complex interplay of friendship, jealousy, and unspoken desires, highlighting the emotional turmoil experienced by the narrator as he grapples with his feelings and K's apparent oblivion to them.

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Chapter 83 Summary:

In Chapter 83, the narrator grapples with the internal conflict of wanting to confess his feelings for K, a close companion with whom he shares a deep, albeit intellectually focused bond. He laments the peculiar cultural context that stifles emotional expression, reflecting on how those around him were hesitant to discuss matters of the heart, an influence of either lingering Confucian values or personal shyness. Despite their frequent conversations about literature, aspirations, and self-improvement, topics of love remain elusive, hovering just out of reach.

The narrator feels a growing frustration as he yearns for a breakthrough in their relationship, comparing K's emotional reserve to a sealed vessel that repels his warmth. K's principled demeanor sometimes offers reassurance, yet the narrator's self-comparison leads him to perceive K as superior—more attractive, capable, and appealing. These feelings of inferiority compound his struggle to voice his sentiments.

Their vacation takes a physical toll as they navigate the scorching sun along the peninsula, with K suggesting a return to Tokyo, a thought the narrator initially resists, revealing his desire to maintain their companionship. As they persist in their journey, dodging heat-induced fatigue with occasional dips in the sea, the narrator recognizes a blend of desperation and camaraderie, underscoring both his longing for connection and the burden of



his unsaid feelings. The interplay of physical exhaustion and emotional turmoil sets the stage for deeper introspection and the complexities of their relationship.

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Chapter 84:

In Chapter 84, the heat and fatigue of their journey begin to take a toll on the narrator and K, creating a disorienting sense of detachment and altering their relationship. The intimacy they shared is paired with rising tensions, reminiscent of wandering peddlers traveling together without delving into their usual deep intellectual discussions. This shift in dynamic leads them to ChMshi, but not before an unforgettable detour to K

At Kominato, the village is steeped in history as the birthplace of the Buddhist priest Nichiren, who is said to have brought good fortune to the area by the miraculous appearance of sea bream after his birth. Intrigued, they hire a boat to witness the abundant fish swimming beneath the surface. While the narrator is enchanted by the spectacle, K's focus shifts to Nichiren and the nearby TanjMji (Birth Temple). Despite their appearance—K losing his hat to the sea and both of them in sweat-stained robes—he insists on meeting the head priest.

Reluctantly, the narrator accompanies K to the temple entrance, expecting rejection. Instead, they are welcomed and introduced to the priest. K eagerly engages in conversation about Nichiren, though the narrator, disinterested in spiritual matters, finds K's fascination tiresome. A moment of frustration arises when K expresses disdain for the priest's comments about Nichiren's cursive writing, revealing K's own insecurities about his writing ability,



which is not nearly as esteemed.

After leaving the temple, K passionately recounts their conversation, but the narrator, exhausted, minimally engages. The strain between them escalates the following evening after a long day of travel. K criticizes the narrator for

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Chapter 85 Summary:

In Chapter 85, the narrator reflects on his use of the term "human," a word he adopted in an effort to highlight the perceived lack of genuine human feelings in his companion, K. K, a character deeply entrenched in spiritual discipline and asceticism, challenges the narrator's choice of words, claiming that any perceived absence of humanity in him is a sign of his ongoing spiritual struggles rather than a deficiency in his humanity. This exchange reveals the tension between their differing perspectives on life: the narrator is drawn to the emotional and personal, while K's focus is on spiritual elevation and the austere practices of ancient ascetics, whom he looks up to for their relentless pursuit of spiritual fulfillment.

The narrator, caught up in this intellectual sparring, feels a sense of pity for K rather than hostility, prompting him to realize that their dialogues often skirt around deeper truths. As they return from their exhausting journey, the narrator is consumed by regret for not expressing his true feelings about K and his own emotional experiences, particularly regarding who has stirred his affections. He acknowledges that instead of engaging in theoretical debates, he missed an opportunity for an honest confession.

Once back in Tokyo, the heat and weariness transform their focus from abstract concepts to the vividness of urban life. Stripped of their earlier discussions, both K and the narrator feel rejuvenated by the bustling

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environment. Upon returning home, they are surprised by Okusan's reaction to their exhausted appearances, which only deepens the narrator's sense of joy as he reconnects with his surroundings and the vibrant laughter of Okusan, engulfing him in a newfound happiness that frustrations. This chapter poignantly illustrates the interplay between existential musings and the simple pleasures of life, suggesting that true fulfillment may lie not in lofty ideals but in meaningful human connections.

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Chapter 86 Summary:

In Chapter 86, the story delves into the evolving dynamics between the narrator, OjMsan (the lady of the house), and K, a friend of theirs. Returning home after a journey, the narrator feels a subtle yet noticeable shift in OjMsan's attitude, as she bestows attention primarily upon him rather than K. While her behavior is decorous and understated, it creates a sense of delight for the narrator, who finds himself secretly reveling in this newfound attention while K remains oblivious.

As summer gives way to mid-September, the resumption of lectures brings a return to the routine of busy schedules, with both the narrator and K coming and going at different times. The narrator often arrives home later than K, never noticing any signs of OjMsan in K's room. Their interactions are characterized by the usual mundane exchanges, suggesting a comfortable but unremarkable coexistence.

One afternoon in mid-October, after rushing to class still dressed in informal home attire, the narrator unexpectedly returns home early. Upon entering, he overhears K's voice accompanied by OjMsan's laughter, an exchange that piques his curiosity. However, as he enters the room, he finds K seated at his desk alone, while OjMsan hurriedly departs, leaving the narrator with unanswered questions about her sudden exit.



The narrator's unease grows as he observes OjMsan's visits with K, often visiting his room and forging a bond that feels exclusive.

Although she might just be performing normal household tasks, the narrator's growing jealousy leads him to interpret these visits as a conscious choice to favor K. He grapples with his possessive feelings but feels trapped by the purpose of K's stay in their home; asking K to leave would contradict the very reason he was invited.

This chapter effectively captures the undercurrents of jealousy and denial, portraying the narrator's struggle as he navigates his complex feelings toward both K and OjMsan. It sets the stage for the conflicts that will continue to play out in their intertwined lives.

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Chapter 87 Summary:

Chapter 87 Summary:

On a bleak and rainy November day, the narrator leaves Genkaku Temple, passing the fierce Enma image that often evokes contemplation. Upon arriving home, he finds K's room cozy with a freshly lit charcoal brazier, while his own brazier is cold and empty, shifting his mood to one of displeasure. Okusan, the warm-hearted caretaker of the household, helps him out of his damp overcoat and into a casual kimono. Curious about K's whereabouts, he learns that K had returned but was out again for unclear reasons, leaving the narrator puzzled by his absence on a day when K's schedule usually had him home later.

Feeling engulfed by the cold and quietude of the house, which amplifies the early winter chill, the narrator longs for the vibrancy of human interaction. As the rain finally eases, he decides to venture out with an oil-paper umbrella, down a steep, narrow, and muddy street that has yet to see improvements. The roads are treacherous, forcing pedestrians to pick their way across a slim rut to avoid the muck.

Unexpectedly, he encounters K, who is abruptly blocking his path. Their brief exchange reveals little, as is typical of K's diffident demeanor. As the



two maneuver past one another, the narrator is surprised to see a young woman behind K—OjMsan, whom he recognizes immediately. She resembles the fashion of the time, with neatly swept hair and a slightly flushed complexion, but he is momentarily struck by her appearance.

After stepping aside for her to pass easily, the narrator continues along through the mud, but he struggles to decide where to go. The world around him feels bleak and heavy, and after aimlessly wandering through the sodden streets, he ultimately decides to return home, still engulfed in his despondence. The chapter captures a moment of disconnectedness, reflecting the narrator's inner turmoil amidst the harsh winter landscape and the complexities of his relationships, particularly with

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Chapter 88:

In Chapter 88, the narrator reflects on his complex feelings and his growing jealousy of K, who has recently joined their household. The chapter opens with the narrator asking K if he and OjMsan are together. K clarifies that they met by chance in Masan's home together, leaving the narrator curious about OjMsan. He considers asking OjMsan the same question but is deterred by her laughter, which frustrates him. This set of events ignites a mix of jealousy and introspection in the narrator, who is increasingly aware of his emotional turmoil.

He grapples with the duality of his feelings—the love he feels for OjMsan and the jealousy brought on by K's presence. This jealousy, though painful, forces him to acknowledge that it may be an intrinsic aspect of love. Despite feeling an overwhelming urge to propose marriage to OjMsan, he is caught between his romantic ideals and the fear that she may prefer K. The narrator is acutely aware of the social pressures that guide romantic relationships in Japan, noting that he believes OjMsan lacks the courage to be forthright about her feelings.

As the chapter unfolds, the narrator reveals his inner conflict: he views romantic love as a noble endeavor, yet he wrestles with his insecurities and apprehensions about vulnerability. Despite opportune moments to confess

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his feelings, he refrains, believing traditional customs and a lack of frankness would undermine any honest exchange. His failure to act is not due to cowardice but is rooted in his idealism about love and a deep-seated fear of rejection. The chapter encapsulates a poignant struggle between desire, jealousy, and the constraints imposed by societal expectations, all of which drive the narrator's longing for a genuine con

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Chapter 89 Summary:

In Chapter 89, the narrator reflects on a sense of paralysis, akin to being aware yet immobile, as he navigates his complex relationships and daily life. The chapter marks the transition from the previous year to spring, emphasizing a period of stagnation for both the narrator and his companion, K.

The story unfolds as Okusan, a maternal figure, suggests that K invite friends over for a traditional New Year card game, a customary Japanese pastime involving poem cards known as Hyakunin Isshu. K reveals he has no friends, a fact that underscores his isolation and lack of social connections. Despite having acquaintances, they are not close enough for such gatherings, highlighting K's loneliness.

Okusan then turns to the narrator for potential guests, but he is apathetic about the idea and offers a noncommittal response. E, another character in the household, insists that they play the game together with just the four of them. The atmosphere remains subdued, as K's reticent nature clashes with the playful spirit of the evening. The narrator tries to provoke K's knowledge of the poem cards but finds E misinterpreting the narrator's remarks, comes to K's defense, creating a subtle tension.



A few days later, Okusan and OjMsan leave to visit the narrator and K alone in the house. In this quiet space, both characters fall into a contemplative silence, suggesting a comfortable yet emotionally charged distance between them. Around mid-morning, K breaks the silence by approaching the narrator, prompting a conversation about the whereabouts of Okusan and OjMsan. Their exchange about the familial relationships and traditions surrounding New Year visits, while also emphasizing the narrator's growing complexity in feeling overshadowed by K's presence in matters concerning

This chapter serves to deepen our understanding of K's character as a solitary figure, and it highlights the intricate dynamics among the characters as they navigate their interdependence and isolation within the context of social traditions.

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Chapter 90 Summary:

In Chapter 90, the narrative centers on a tense and revelatory conversation between the protagonist and K, who, despite his previous indifference, becomes fixated on the topic of Okusan and OjMsan, their world. Okusan is often seen as a maternal figure, while OjMsan represents a youthful romantic interest. The stark shift in K's attitude raises curiosity, prompting the protagonist to inquire about his unexpected obsession.

K initially remains silent, his anxiety evident in his physical demeanor, which suggests a brewing struggle beneath the surface. When he finally speaks, his confession unfolds with a weighty heaviness: he declares his passionate love for OjMsan. The protagonist is caught off guard, though he has been turned to stone by K's words. This revelation sends him into a whirlwind of emotional conflict, blending terror and regret as he realizes that he has been outpaced in the race for OjMsan.

As K earnestly articulates his feelings, the protagonist is engulfed in his own distress, sensing the bitter taste of rivalry and inadequacy. Though K's confession lacks the dynamism one might expect, its monotony is punctuated by the intensity of his sincerity, leading the protagonist to a grim realization of K's emotional strength. Instead of articulating his own feelings, the protagonist is rendered mute, paralyzed by his internal turmoil.



and the weight of K's heartfelt words.

During a subsequent lunch, the atmosphere is thick with unspoken tension, as the two men sit in silence, more preoccupied with their unexpressed thoughts about OjMsan than with their unappetizing waiting for Okusan and OjMsan's return, symbolizing and the emerging rivalry that shadows their relationship moving forward.

This chapter serves as a crucial turning point, highlighting the complexities of love, jealousy, and the struggle for emotional expression.

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Chapter 91 Summary:

In Chapter 91, the protagonist finds themselves deeply introspective and troubled after a poignant encounter with K, who has just confessed his feelings. The chapter begins with both characters retreating to their separate rooms, consumed by silence and regret. The protagonist grapples with the missed opportunity to express their own feelings, feeling that their earlier silence was a significant mistake. They replay K's confession in their mind, haunted by remorse and the desire to respond.

As the hours pass, the protagonist's anxiety grows, exacerbated by K's unexpected quietness. They become increasingly restless, contemplating what K might be thinking behind the closed doors that separate them. Despite their longing to confront K, the protagonist feels unable to break the tension, paralyzed by the weight of their silence and the missed chance to reciprocate K's emotions.

In an effort to distract themselves, the protagonist leaves their room and wanders through the streets adorned with New Year decorations. Yet, instead of finding solace in the festive atmosphere, they remain fixated on K. Questions swirl in their mind regarding K's sudden vulnerability and the intensity of his feelings, leaving the protagonist both confused and somewhat drawn to the mystery of K's character. They sense an inexplicable power in K, imagining that he might have cast an "evil spell" over them,



leaving them enamored yet repelled.

Ultimately, the protagonist returns home exhausted and lonely, with K's room still silent, reinforcing the emotional distance between them. The chapter closes on a note of unresolved tension and longing, underscoring the complexities of their relationship and the consequences of their hesitations.

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Chapter 92:

In Chapter 92, the narrator returns home to the sound of a rickshaw, marking the end of an uneventful outing. Upon arrival, he and his companion K are greeted by two ladies, Okusan and OjMsan, who have a rare excursion and are in high spirits. This upbeat atmosphere starkly contrasts the gloomy mood of the two men.

As they sit down for dinner, the tension is palpable. The narrator's replies are curt, displaying his inner turmoil, while K remains even quieter, exacerbating the atmosphere. Okusan, sensing their discomfort, inquires about their well-being. The narrator admits to feeling unwell, which is a true reflection of his emotional state. K, on the other hand, doesn't offer much explanation, merely stating he doesn't feel like talking. The narrator, interpreting K's silence as deep thinking, adds to the discomfort.

Later that evening, the narrator retires early, where he is unexpectedly visited by Okusan, who brings him buckwheat soup, a gesture of care that he reluctantly accepts and drinks under her watchful eye. As he lies in the dark, his thoughts spiral endlessly around unresolved issues, highlighting his turmoil.

Curiosity about K's activities prompts the narrator to call out to him, establishing a fragile connection through their shared restlessness. K reveals



he is still awake, and the two exchange brief words, with K preparing for bed as night deepens. Their conversation, however, takes a hesitant turn, revealing the narrator's longing to revisit a difficult discussion from the morning, but K's reluctance to engage creates a sudden apprehension in the narrator, underscoring the emotional distance and tension that permeates their interactions.

The chapter concludes with the two men isolated in their thoughts, encapsulating both the intimate bond and the crippling barriers within their relationship.

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Chapter 93 Summary:

Summary of Chapter 93

In this chapter, the tension between the protagonist and K intensifies following K's recent confession of his feelings. K remains withdrawn and resistant to discussing the matter, which frustrates the protagonist. Despite the need for privacy, as they live with Okusan (a maternal figure) and OjMsan (a family guardian), the protagonist feels confident in addressing the issue.

The protagonist observes the daily behaviors of Okusan and OjMsan, noting their unchanged demeanor since K's confession, which reassures him that K has not revealed his feelings to anyone but the protagonist. This thought offers some comfort, prompting the protagonist to wait for a natural opportunity to bring up the topic instead of forcing the matter.

As they continue their routine, attending lectures together, an air of tension lingers beneath their familiar interactions. Eventually, seizing a moment during their walk home, the protagonist confronts K, seeking clarity on whether K's confession was exclusive to him or if he had shared it with Okusan and OjMsan. K's response—that he has not shared it with anyone else—brings the protagonist a sense of relief, solidifying his trust in K.



despite previous doubts.

The protagonist presses K about his intentions regarding the confession, curious whether it was merely an expression of feelings or if he intended to pursue a relationship. However, K remains silent, choosing not to engage further on the topic, which leaves the protagonist feeling frustrated and uncertain. The chapter concludes with the protagonist reflecting on their complex emotional landscape, unable to resolve the tension or fully understand K's feelings.

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Chapter 94 Summary:

Chapter 94 Summary

In this chapter, the narrator recounts an unusual visit to the university library, prompted by a task from his supervisor to research a specific topic within his field. Seated at a sunlit desk, he browses through newly arrived foreign journals but struggles to find the necessary information. His concentration is interrupted when K, a close acquaintance, approaches him quietly, breaking library etiquette by leaning over the desk to call his name.

K's close proximity unnerves the narrator, who responds to K's inquiry about his studies with a brief explanation of his search. K then requests that they go for a walk, which the narrator agrees to, though he expresses a need for a moment to finish up. As K sits down across from him, the narrator feels a growing distraction, suspecting that K has come with a significant purpose.

They leave the library together, aimlessly wandering eventually reaching Ueno Park. It is here that K finally opens up about the emotional strain he's been experiencing, particularly regarding his feelings for Ojisan, a woman who has captured his heart. K is in an internal crisis, seeking validation and guidance about his turbulent emotions—an unusual behavior for someone known for his decisiveness and

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courage, especially considering past familial challenges.

K admits he feels "at a loss," uncertain about whether to pursue his feelings or retreat from them entirely. The narrator is struck by K's vulnerability and anguish, noting the stark contrast to K's usually bold demeanor. Despite his natural inclination to offer comfort and support, the narrator finds himself at a loss, too, caught in a moment where his own emotions might overshadow his ability to provide the reassurance that K desperately needs. The chapter captures the nuances of their friendship, highlighting the struggles they face—K grappling with love and uncertainty, while the narrator confronts his conflicted feelings about offering empathy in this delicate moment.

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Chapter 95 Summary:

In Chapter 95, the narrator observes K with the intensity of a combatant facing an opponent skilled in a different discipline. K, embodying innocence and vulnerability, lacks awareness of the emotional trap being laid for him. The narrator recognizes that K is lost in a maze created by his ideals and reality, a disconnect that makes him an easy target for emotional manipulation.

The narrator's strategy is to confront K with a statement he previously uttered: "Anyone without spiritual aspirations is a fool." This moment is not one driven by mere revenge but rather a calculated move to obstruct K's path to love. K, who was raised in the Pure Land sect—a Buddhist tradition that allows priests to marry—had developed a more ascetic approach towards relationships as he matured. He believed in the importance of "spiritual austerity," which involves much more than self-control; it demands that one sacrifices personal desires in pursuit of enlightenment, even viewing selfless love as a potential hindrance to spiritual growth.

In their earlier interactions, the narrator had defended the importance of desires in life, while K had looked down upon these sentiments with a sense of pity mingled with contempt. Now, the narrator's choice to echo K's own words serves to deepen K's internal conflict. Interestingly, the narrator's intent is not to undermine K's beliefs but to ensure that K remains rigidly

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committed to his ascetic principles, which align with the narrator's self-interest.

When the narrator reiterates the idea that K is a fool for lacking spiritual aspirations, K's reaction is one of shock and contemplation. He halts, overwhelmed by the weight of the words, momentarily resembling a cornered figure stripped of power. This vulnerability reveals K's internal struggle, though he ultimately chooses to continue walking, burdened by the implications of the conversation.

The chapter highlights the deep emotional complexities of their relationship, illustrating the power dynamics at play. As the narrator attempts to manipulate K, K's steadfast commitment to his beliefs is tested, setting the stage for further conflict in their turbulent connection.

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Chapter 96:

In Chapter 96, the protagonist finds himself walking alongside K, a morally upright yet vulnerable individual who has recently been struggling with their ethical principles. The protagonist is on edge, mentally preparing to confront K over a sensitive topic that K seems reluctant to discuss. This inner turmoil reflects a battle between the protagonist's instinctual aggression and the social conditioning instilled in him. He grapples with the fear of appearing cowardly, especially in front of K, whose character is marked by honesty and goodness.

As their conversation unfolds, K asks to drop the subject, expressing a sadness that prompts a cruel response from the protagonist. He captures K's honesty as a weapon against him, questioning the moral resolve K often claims to possess. In this moment, K's demeanor shifts; he seems to shrink, revealing his inner conflict as the protagonist feels a twisted sense of satisfaction from his dominance in the exchange.

Their conversation ends abruptly as they begin their journey home through a desolate, leafless park, hinting at the emotional coldness between them. The protagonist reflects on the stark winter landscape, which mirrors their strained relationship. Upon returning home, their silence continues at the dinner table, further indicating K's discomfort. While K retreats early to his room, their interaction leaves a palpable tension in the air, suggesting

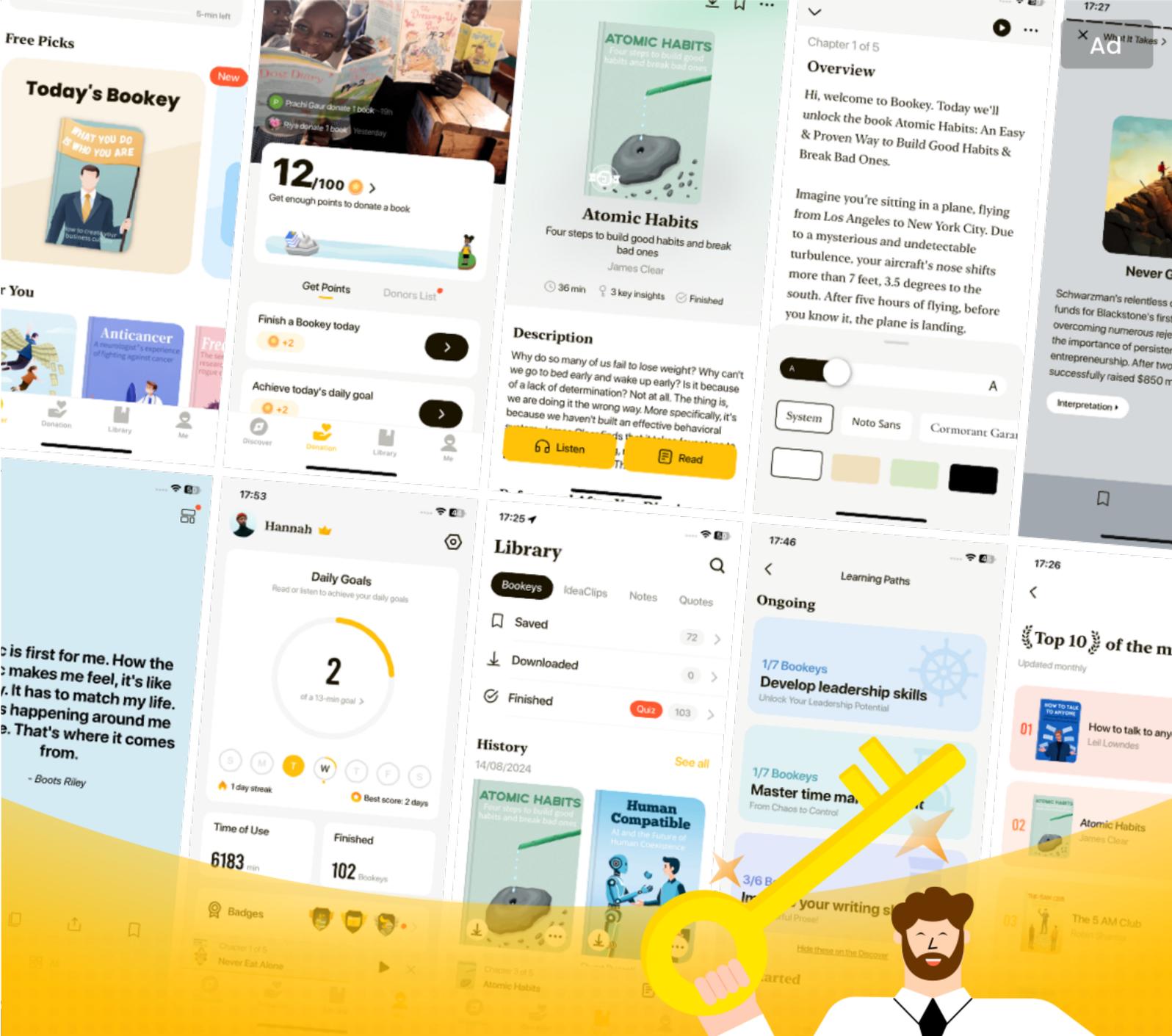


unresolved feelings that linger beyond the day's events. This chapter highlights the complexity of their friendship and the conflicting emotions that stem from their differing moral compasses.

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Chapter 97 Summary:

Chapter 97 Summary:

The narrative opens in a transitional phase for K, who stands at a crossroads, unable to embrace the idea of "the new awakening" or a transformed life. Despite being surrounded by contemporary ideologies urging personal reinvention, K is paralyzed by his admiration for his past, which he views as noble and significant. This past serves as a vital component of his identity, making it difficult for him to leap towards love or change. The deeper truth is that K's passion is tempered by his fixation on what has come before, creating a barrier to his personal evolution.

The narrator describes a calm evening in K's presence, where he finds a sense of peace—a rare moment where he feels momentarily superior despite K's obvious strengths. As they share a quiet companionship, the narrator engages in idle chatter, trying to bridge the emotional distance between them. However, this tranquility quickly shifts when the narrator is unexpectedly awakened by K's presence later that night. K appears at the sliding doors, an almost ghostly figure, checking in on the narrator, but the ambiguity of K's intentions leaves the narrator feeling unsettled.

The following morning, the narrator recalls the encounter with confusion

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and a hint of strangeness. Despite casual breakfast conversation, the incident lingers in his mind, prompting him to question K's motivations, which are met with vague responses. This interaction emphasizes K's pride and his determination not to revisit certain emotional subjects, including his earlier declarations about "resolve." For the narrator, this leads to an oppressive realization about the weight that this word—and the concept of commitment itself—now holds over him.

As the chapter unfolds, it becomes evident that K's inability to move past his past, entwined with the narrator's growing anxiety about their conversations, creates a complex emotional landscape that both characters must navigate. The struggle for resolution—between the past and future, fear and desire—acts as a central theme, compelling both men toward a deeper exploration of their identities and relationships.

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Chapter 98 Summary:

In Chapter 98, the narrator reflects on the character K, who is typically decisive but is currently displaying unusual indecision. This moment sparks a deeper contemplation about the nature of "resolve" and its potential meanings, particularly concerning K's feelings for Ojmsan, who has captured both K's and the narrator's attention. The narrator, believing they understand K's dilemma, feels compelled to act before K can establish his intentions toward Ojmsan.

Motivated by a desire to take control of the situation, the narrator decides to take decisive action but struggles to find an appropriate moment to speak to Okusan, K's caretaker and a key figure in his life. Despite waiting patiently for several days, the narrator is constantly thwarted in the present, making private conversation impossible.

In a desperate bid to expedite his plans, the narrator pretends to be ill, lying in bed until the household has been quietened by K and Ojmsan. When he finally ventures out, Okusan, concerned for his well-being, encourages him to rest, but the narrator, feeling well, engages her in casual conversation. The moment is tense as he tries to find a natural path to broach the subject of K and Ojmsan.

After a roundabout exchange, the narrator gathers his courage and asks

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Okusan if K has mentioned anything to her recently—a question that takes her by surprise, prompting her to inquire if K has confided in the narrator instead. This exchange sets the stage for an important conversation about relationships, intentions, and the dynamics at play between the characters. The chapter expertly weaves together the narrator’s internal conflict and keen observations, leading to a moment filled with tension and anticipation about unspoken feelings and decisions yet to come.

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Chapter 99 Summary:

In Chapter 99, the narrator has a crucial conversation with Okusan regarding his desire to marry her daughter, OjMsan. Initially, in his confession about his feelings, the narrator lies to Okusan, which makes him uncomfortable. However, he quickly transitions from his unease to a bold declaration of his intent: “I wish to marry OjMsan.”

Surprisingly, Okusan does not react negatively but instead takes a moment of silence to consider this unexpected proposal. The narrator urges her to allow the marriage, explaining that his feelings are genuine, despite the suddenness of his request. Okusan, embodying a calm and rational demeanor, questions whether he has contemplated this decision thoroughly. He insists that the impulse to marry OjMsan comes from a deep conviction.

After a straightforward discussion that lasts only about fifteen minutes, Okusan unexpectedly agrees to the marriage, stating that she would convey the decision to her relatives and that OjMsan herself she wouldn't force her into a marriage against her will. This practical approach both reassures and unnerves the narrator, who is more traditional and believes that obtaining OjMsan's consent is essential.

Once back in his room, he feels a mix of relief and anxiety about how easily

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the conversation unfolded, yet he is filled with anticipation for the future.

Later, he approaches Okusan to ask when she plans to get engaged. She indicates that she can tell her daughter as soon as she returns from her lessons, which the narrator agrees is the best course of action.

Feeling uneasy about waiting and listening to Okusan's conversation, he decides to take a walk outside. On his way, he encounters Okusan, who is unaware of the turn of events. Their conversation heightens the narrator's sense of urgency as he navigates the complexities of love, duty, and societal expectations. With the chapter ending on this tension-filled note, the narrator continues to grapple with the configuration of his desire, familial responsibilities, and the uncertainty that lies ahead.

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Chapter 100:

In Chapter 100, the narrator embarks on a familiar route through

Sarugaku-chō and Shinbanchō, normally dedicated to bookshops. This time, however, their thoughts are consumed by the anticipation of Okusan's return home and the conversation they have with Okusan, the narrator's caretaker and mother figure. As they navigate the city, the emotional intensity of their preoccupation with home overshadows everything else, including their usual companion, K.

Upon arriving home, a sense of guilt washes over the narrator upon encountering K, who, as always, is engrossed in his reading at his desk. Unlike their usual exchange, K inquires about the narrator's health, showing concern rather than offering a casual greeting. This unexpected moment evokes a deep remorse, and the narrator feels a compelling need to apologize for their previous actions. Yet, the presence of others inhibits this impulse, leaving the narrator feeling conflicted and ashamed.

At the evening meal, K's demeanor is subdued, and his absence with genuine confusion, while Okusan remains blissfully unaware of the underlying tensions. Although Okusan tries to maintain a cheerful atmosphere, the narrator is preoccupied with guilt over the secrets shared since Okusan's arrival.

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As K grapples with his uncertainties, Okusan seems to understand more than she lets on, and the narrator breathes a sigh of relief when the conversation does not veer towards the dreaded topics. However, the narrator's internal conflict intensifies as they contemplate how to confront K about their emotional distance, painfully aware that their justifications would crumble in the face of their shared history and the complexities of their relationship. The chapter leaves the reader with a sense of looming tension, questioning how the narrator will navigate the chasm that has formed between them and K amidst their troubled heart.

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Chapter 101 Summary:

Chapter 101 Summary:

In the days following the revelation of his romantic narrator wrestles with overwhelming guilt and anxiety regarding K, a close friend who now stands at an emotional distance. Aware that the family dynamic has shifted and fearing that Okusan and OjM reveal his secret at dinner, the narrator feels that he must communicate with K about their changed relationship. However, he is paralyzed by shame, torn between his desire to act with integrity and the fear of confessing his perceived failings to Okusan and OjMsan. The narrator grapples with the fragility of trust that comes with impending marriage and grapples with the fear of losing OjMsan's faith in him.

As tensions rise, Okusan directly confronts him about not yet informing K of the situation. Her reproach shocks him, as she reveals that K appeared unsettled by the changes without knowing the full story. When pressed for details, Okusan reveals K's calm and gracious response to the news of the narrator's intentions toward OjMsan. K had simply expressed concern over his inability to afford a wedding gift. Despite K's composed demeanor, the narrator feels a profound sense of pain upon hearing this, indicative of the emotional turmoil he experiences as he



navigates the complex landscape of love, friendship, and integrity. The chapter concludes with the narrator's heart tightening at the weight of K's graciousness contrasted against his own internal conflict.

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Chapter 102 Summary:

In Chapter 102, the narrator grapples with the unsettling realization that K has not reacted to the news of their engagement, shared with him by Okusan days prior. Despite his outward composure, the narrator is weighed down by guilt and shame, feeling inferior to K, whom he believes must harbor deep disdain for him. Caught in a cycle of self-doubt and indecision, the narrator postpones confronting K until the following day.

That night, however, tragedy strikes. The narrator awakens to an unusual chill and discovers that K has taken his own life. Initially met with shock, the narrator's mind races as he processes the heartbreaking scene. He observes K's lifeless body, sensing the enormity of the moment—realizing that their lives are irrevocably altered.

Amidst this turmoil, the narrator finds a letter addressed to him on K's desk. Initially fearful of its content and what it might reveal about K's feelings, he is relieved to find it void of vengeance or accusations aimed at him. K expresses his struggles with weakness and despair, acknowledging his decision to end his life. He expresses gratitude for the narrator's past kindness, requests that the narrator manage his affairs posthumously, and extends apologies to Okusan for the burden he has caused. Notably absent is any mention of OjMsan, a detail that hints at deeper relationship.



The letter closes with a poignant revelation: K believes he should have died sooner, leaving the narrator consumed with reflection over K's pain and his own role in the tragedy. As he prepares to notify others of K's death, he is faced with a haunting sight—blood has marked the sliding doors, a stark reminder of the irreversible loss and the chaos that now lies ahead.

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Chapter 103 Summary:

In Chapter 103, the narrator grapples with the devastating aftermath of K's suicide. Overwhelmed by sorrow, he initially cradles K's lifeless head, only to recoil from the heaviness and horror of the sight. This moment evokes a profound fear within him, not just of death itself but of an uncertain future. As he returns to his room, he finds himself in a state of paralysis, caught between the instinct to act and the realization that there's nothing he can do to change what has happened. He paces aimlessly, embodying a trapped animal, haunted by the weight of the tragedy that befell his friend.

In the depths of his despair, he contemplates waking Okusan, K's mother, but believes it would be cruel to expose her to such a gruesome reality, particularly for the sake of her daughter, Ojmsan. In marking time as if the oppressive night might never end. As daybreak nears, he reluctantly decides to awaken the maid, conflicted about breaking the news.

When Okusan joins him in his room, he swiftly closes the door to K's room, signaling that something terrible has transpired. He delivers the tragic news of K's suicide gently, fearing the reaction it may invoke. Upon hearing this, Okusan is left speechless and visibly shaken. In a moment of desperation, he kneels before her and expresses remorse for the unimaginable loss, feeling responsible for what has occurred. Though his apology is meant to



encompass K's memory, it ultimately serves as an expression of his own guilt.

To his relief, Okusan reassures him, asserting that such events are beyond anyone's control. However, her deep shock is evident as her body remains rigid with dread, highlighting the emotional devastation that has suddenly engulfed their lives. This chapter encapsulates the profound grief and guilt experienced by the narrator while also emphasizing the fragility of life, particularly in the face of unexpected tragedy.

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Chapter 104:

Chapter 104 Summary

In the aftermath of a devastating suicide, the narrative reveals the complex interplay of emotions and responsibilities faced by the characters involved. The protagonist, who had recently closed the sliding doors to K's room, reopens them, only to confront the harsh reality of K's death. K, who tragically slashed his own carotid artery, left behind a grim scene marked by blood, representing the violent force of life now extinguished.

Okusan, K's practical and composed wife, steps into a commanding role, controlling the chaotic situation with clarity. She sends the protagonist on necessary errands to inform the doctor and police, ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed despite the shock of the tragedy. The protagonist, grappling with the visceral remnants of K's life, helps clean the room with Okusan. They manage this grim task efficiently, comforting themselves in the knowledge that the immediate surroundings are not as severely stained as they could have been.

Once the practicalities are addressed, the emotional toll becomes evident when the protagonist encounters Okusan and her daughter, enveloped in the smoke of burning incense, a traditional gesture of

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mourning. OjMsan weeps for her lost father, and Oku
own grief. In this moment of shared sorrow, the protagonist allows himself
to feel the weight of grief that had previously eluded him, providing a
painful yet necessary balm for his tightly clenched heart.

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Chapter 105 Summary:

In Chapter 105, the narrator reflects deeply on the events surrounding the suicide of his friend K during a journey back from K's funeral. The tragedy weighs heavily on him, as he repeatedly faces questions from various people—including K's family and reporters—about why K might have taken his own life. Each inquiry stings the narrator's conscience, leading him to internal guilt, as he almost hears an accusatory voice suggesting he bears responsibility for K's death. In response, he simply recites the last words K penned to him, avoiding any further elaboration, which only heightens his sense of guilt.

Following the funeral, the narrator expresses concern about how K's story might be portrayed in the media. A friend shares two newspaper articles: one claims K was driven to suicide by despair over his disinheritance, while another suggests madness as the cause. The narrator, who has been too enmeshed in his own turmoil to read the news, is particularly worried about the potential impact of these reports on K's mother (Okusan) and sister (OjMsan).

To escape the painful memories tied to their previous home, the narrator, along with Okusan and OjMsan, decides to move to a couple of months, he graduates from university, and six months later, he marries OjMsan. Although the narrator feels a sense



witnesses the happiness of his new wife and mother-in-law, a dark undercurrent shadows this joy. He suspects that their seemingly perfect life may harbor a sorrowful fate connected to K's demise.

Unexpectedly, OjMsan suggests they visit K's grave, a wave of discomfort in the narrator. He questions why she would bring up K, but upon agreeing to the visit, they go to ZMshigaya, who performs a ritual of respect, pouring water over K's grave, offers flowers and incense, believing they are honoring K by sharing their marriage news with him.

As the narrator processes the juxtaposition of his new life, his wife's naïve admiration for the gravestone he chose, and the stark reality that K is no longer alive, a chill of irony washes over him. In that moment of realization about life's cruel twists—new love setting beside the grave of a lost friend—he mentally vows never to return to K's grave with his wife again, feeling the weight of guilt and an understanding of the fragility of happiness.

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Chapter 106 Summary:

In Chapter 106, the narrator grapples with unresolved feelings for his deceased friend, K, which cast a shadow over his new marriage. Despite the joy typically associated with weddings, a deep sense of disquiet festers within him. He had hoped that his marriage might signify a turning point for his mental state, unlocking a new chapter in life. However, the presence of his wife, who embodies everything he desires, ironically serves as a constant reminder of K. This ongoing internal conflict creates an emotional distance between him and his wife, eliciting her confusion and hurt.

As his wife perceptively notices his withdrawal, she occasionally confronts him about his apparent melancholy. Her sincere inquiries about his feelings challenge him, and he often deflects her concerns with forced laughter, all while feeling a sense of torment that stems from his inability to express the truth. Despite countless urges to confess his soul's turmoil, an inexplicable force compels him to remain silent, driven not by a desire to protect himself but by the wish to preserve his wife's idealized memories—he cannot bear to taint her innocence with the darkness he harbors.

A year passes without any change, and the narrator's heart remains unsettled. In his attempt to escape, he delves into studying, hoping that his academic endeavors might lead to something fulfilling. Yet this distraction proves futile, as he cannot derive genuine pleasure from self-deception or phony

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aspirations. His emotional paralysis deepens as he observes the world from a detached perspective.

His wife, unaware of the true source of his malaise, interprets his behavior as mere ennui stemming from their comfortable lifestyle, facilitated by her mother's wealth and the absence of financial pressures in his life. While the narrator acknowledges his past reliance on comfort, he grapples with a deeper issue: the betrayal he felt from his uncle had instilled a fierce independence in him, but K's demise now leaves him with the disheartening realization that he shares darker qualities with the uncle he despises. This epiphany leads to a profound self-loathing, compounding his sense of isolation from both his wife and himself, leaving him feeling repulsed by the very fabric of his identity.

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Chapter 107 Summary:

In Chapter 107, the narrator grapples with profound despair and self-destructive tendencies following a significant loss, particularly the death of a close friend named K. Unable to escape his sorrow in the solitude of books, he turns to alcohol, though he recognizes his lack of genuine affinity for it. Despite his efforts to drown his feelings, drinking only leads him deeper into despair. Aware of the detrimental impact of his behavior, he experiences moments of clarity amid his intoxicated haze, yet he finds himself caught in a cycle of apology and self-loathing. His beloved wife and her mother watch his downward spiral with concern, though they never confront him directly about his drinking.

The narrator's relationship with his wife grows strained; her criticisms, which often stem from worry, only heighten his feelings of isolation. She laments how he has changed since K's death, provoking guilt and resentment in him as he internalizes her pain without offering her an explanation for his actions. After hitting rock bottom, he eventually decides to quit drinking, not out of a desire to change for her, but from a deep-seated disgust with himself.

Resuming his earlier refuge in books, his reading becomes aimless, reflecting his disconnection from life. He feels more alone than ever, consumed by the weight of K's death and the belief that it was rooted in a

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complex interplay of loneliness and ideals. This realization casts a shadow over him, as he begins to fear he may follow a similar path as K, whose struggle with isolation and despair ultimately led to his tragic fate. This chapter underscores the themes of loss, isolation, and the search for understanding in the wake of emotional turmoil, revealing the narrator's internal battle and foreshadowing a potential tragic outcome if he cannot bridge the gap between himself and the world around him.

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Chapter 108:

In Chapter 108, the narrative unfolds with the illness of the protagonist's mother-in-law, which the doctor deems incurable. This event catalyzes the protagonist's shift from a state of idleness to one of purposeful action. Devotedly caring for his dying mother-in-law not only stems from love for her but also serves as a means of atoning for his perceived failings and reconciling his disconnection from humanity.

After her passing, the protagonist is left in a vulnerable position with his wife, who views him as her sole remaining source of trust. He feels a profound sense of sorrow for her plight—realizing the irony that she must rely on someone who has lost faith in himself. Despite his efforts to show kindness, their conversations reveal deeper layers of misunderstanding. The wife expresses confusion over his cynical demeanor and questions whether genuine emotional connection between men and women is truly achievable.

Around this time, the protagonist experiences episodes of overwhelming darkness, initially perceived as external forces but later recognized as internal struggles. This profound awareness of human sin compels him to return regularly to K's grave, highlighting his unresolved guilt and need for self-punishment. His caring actions towards both his mother-in-law and his wife are underpinned by this conscience-pricking awareness, marking a stark contrast to the joy he provides them.

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Ultimately, the protagonist grapples with troubling thoughts of self-harm and even considers suicide, resolving to live as though he were already dead. Despite years of peaceful coexistence with his wife and a semblance of happiness in their lives, this inner turmoil remains an incomprehensible shadow in their relationship. The chapter closes with a poignant reflection on the protagonist's pity for his wife's inability to grasp the depth of his emotional struggle, illustrating the chasm between their experiences and understanding of love and life.

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Chapter 109 Summary:

In Chapter 109, the narrator grapples with an intense internal struggle, feeling trapped in a state of emotional paralysis. Though he has resolved to lead a life devoid of passion, external stimuli can momentarily awaken his heart. Yet, just as he feels the urge to break free from his stagnant existence, a mysterious force emerges, compelling him back into immobility and whispering words of limitation and despair. This force represents the weight of his own consciousness, reminding him of his perceived obligations—a voice that enforces a sense of unworthiness and exclusion from life's possibilities.

The narrator reveals his bitter internal conflict, exacerbated by a sense of shame and helplessness. His wife seems to be the only anchor preventing him from taking the drastic step of suicide, a thought that haunts him. He reflects on the deep emotional bond they share, illustrated by her words after the death of her mother—words that cemented his resolve not to leave her alone in the world. Despite feeling imprisoned by despair, moments of her sorrow pierce his conscience, causing him to question his own painful existence.

The chapter reveals the protagonist's cyclical journey of indecision. He recalls how this contest of will began when he first met his wife and how it continued to shape their relationship. Life felt like a charade; even as they



shared moments together, he lived under a constant shadow, haunted by thoughts of mortality and failure.

A pivotal moment occurs with the death of Emperor Meiji, signaling a broader sense of loss and change for the narrator. He interprets this event as a metaphor for his own stagnation and impending obsolescence, feeling that his generation, heavily influenced by the Meiji legacy, faces a bleak future. His wife's teasing suggestion that he could die with the emperor only underscores the disconnect between their perceptions of life and mortality, highlighting the weight of tradition against the fleeting nature of existence.

Ultimately, this chapter richly conveys the narrator's inner turmoil—a poignant snapshot of a man caught between the demands of life, the love for his wife, and the haunting allure of death.

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Chapter 110 Summary:

In Chapter 110, the narrator reflects on the phrase “to die with your lord,” which evokes memories of loyalty and sacrifice in the context of Japan's changing societal landscape during the Meiji era. This nostalgia is triggered by a jest from his wife, leading him to compare his allegiance to the spirit of the Meiji era itself.

As a month passes, he describes the moment of General Nogi's funeral cannon—symbolizing the end of the Meiji period and the general's own life. General Nogi had long been plagued by his perceived failures during the Satsuma Rebellion, yearning for redemption through death. The narrator contemplates the weight of those thirty-five years filled with regret versus the final act of seppuku, or ritual suicide, that Nogi embraced.

Confronted with his own despair, the narrator decides to end his life, though the reasoning behind such a drastic choice might seem unfathomable to others, possibly reflecting the differing values of their respective eras or individual predispositions. He resolves to leave quietly, ensuring that his wife remains unaware of the violence of his decision, hoping she believes his departure was swift and without madness.

Over the past ten days, he has poured his thoughts into this memoir, intending to articulate his inner life and share insights about humanity in

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hopes that his struggles may resonate with others. He acknowledges inspirations from figures like Watanabe Kazan, who postponed his own suicide to complete a painting, underscoring the complex motivations behind such decisions.

As he concludes his memoir, he expresses a desire for it to serve future readers, while also requesting that his wife's memory of him remain pure and untainted by the truth of his actions. He implores that this writing remain a secret between the narrator and the intended reader, protecting his wife's memory from the darker realities of his life as he prepares to exit the world.

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