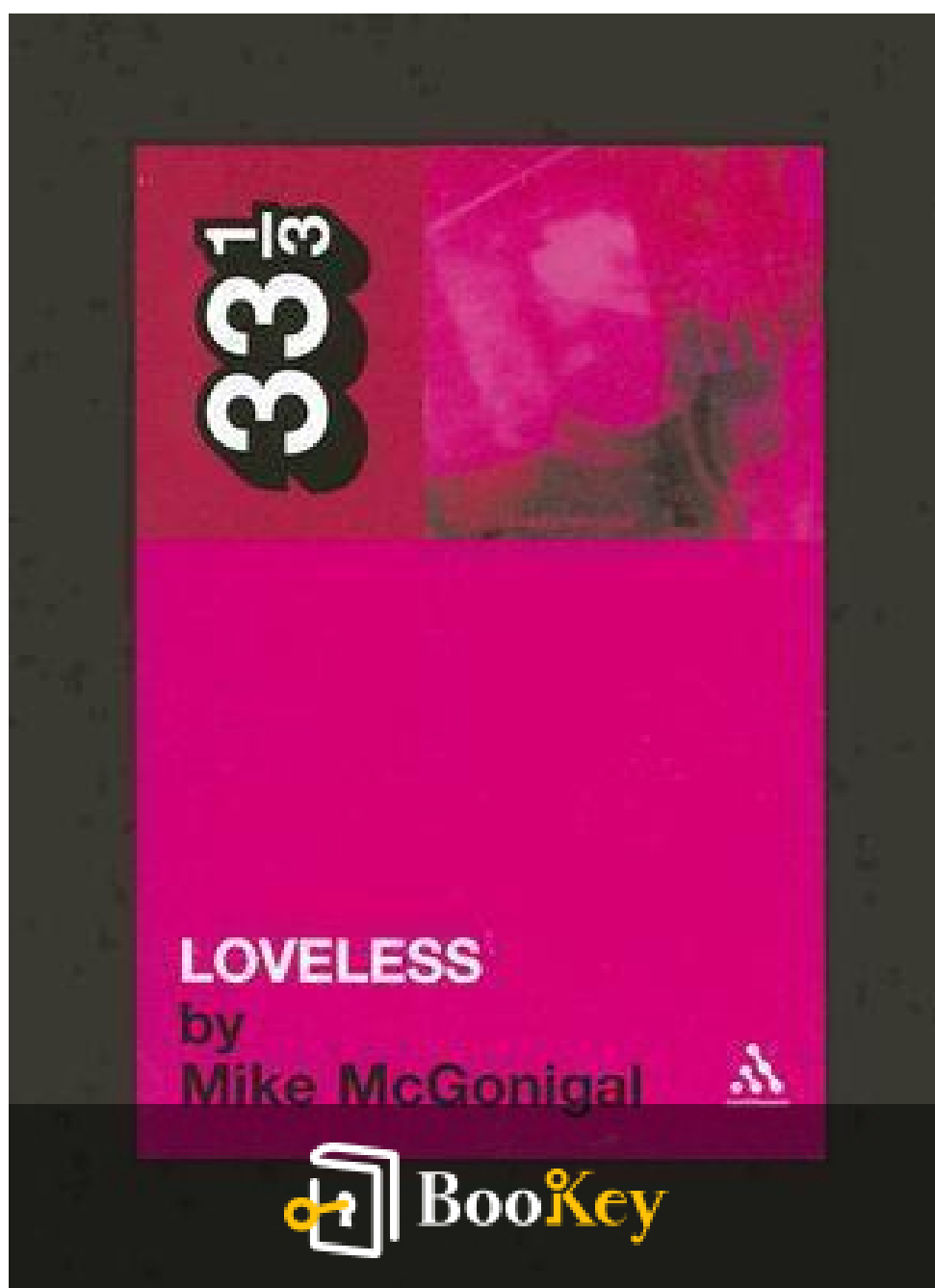


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Loveless By Mike Mcgonigal Summary

Exploring the Depths of Heartbreak and Connection.

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About the book

In "Loveless," Mike McGonigal delves deep into the complexities of modern romance and the intricate emotions that accompany our most intimate relationships, challenging the conventional narratives of love and attachment. Blending personal anecdotes with astute cultural observations, McGonigal exposes the often unspoken barriers that prevent us from fully connecting with others, raising provocative questions about the nature of desire, vulnerability, and the fear of loneliness. As he navigates the landscape of emotional disconnection in an increasingly digital age, readers are invited on a thought-provoking journey that encourages them to confront their own fears and misconceptions surrounding love, ultimately seeking clarity and understanding in a world that often feels loveless.

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About the author

Mike McGonigal is a distinguished writer, editor, and music enthusiast, widely recognized for his insightful contributions to the world of music journalism and contemporary literature. With an extensive background that includes editing for notable publications and a significant presence in the independent music scene, McGonigal's work often explores the intersections of personal experience and cultural commentary. His unique perspective is informed by a deep passion for various musical genres and a keen understanding of the emotional depths that they evoke. In "Loveless," McGonigal combines his profound insights and narrative skill to delve into the complexities of love and longing, delivering a poignant exploration that resonates with readers seeking authenticity in their experiences.

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Chapter 1 Summary: You Made Me Realize

Chapter One Summary: You Made Me Realize

In 1992, at a My Bloody Valentine concert in Pennsylvania, the audience is engulfed in an overpowering sonic experience during the band's performance of "You Made Me Realize." The intensity of the noise makes it difficult to hear anything at first, akin to stepping into blinding sunlight after being in darkness. The euphoria comes to a head during the song's notorious noise section, which has become legendary among fans, known for its deafening volume and overwhelming presence.

The chapter reflects on the intricate cover artwork of their earlier EP, released in 1988, hinting at the band's aesthetic—a blend of goth and vibrancy. The lyrics, though difficult to discern during performances, convey themes typical of the band, but the focus lies more on the visceral experience rather than the lyrics themselves. The author reminisces about the local music scene and his friends Rusty and Mark, who had connections to My Bloody Valentine and introduced him to their music.

As the concert unfolds, the noise initially feels painful and chaotic, causing audience members to react wildly, with some fleeing and others slamming into each other in a dance of adrenaline. Through the cacophony, the author



recalls previous loud concerts, emphasizing the primal reactions elicited by extreme sound.

Yet, as the overwhelming noise sustains, something transformative occurs—a shift from sheer aggression to an almost ethereal beauty manifested in harmonics that rise above the chaos. The author experiences a psychotropic moment of bliss, a euphoric high where sound and emotion intermingle in a manner akin to hearing a symphony emerging from the noise. This transformation leads him to ponder the nature of the experience—was it a matter of auditory adjustment, or did the melody only emerge after enduring the initial onslaught?

The author forms a connection between this live experience and the band's acclaimed album, "Loveless," pondering if the chaotic energy of the concert laid the groundwork for the meditative layers of that record. Years later, he approaches guitarist Kevin Shields about the creative process behind "You Made Me Realize," only to discover that the chaos was often an improvised experience, not a calculated experiment, contradicting his earlier hopes for a more structured artistic intention.

Following the concert, the author lingers with the band and proposes releasing a record of the extended noise section. Excitement fills the air as plans are made—yet, over time, the reality of the music industry and Shields' meticulous nature leads to disappointment when the recordings are deemed



unworthy for release. This interaction symbolizes a broader theme of unattainable perfection within the band's work, as "Loveless" becomes an almost mythical creation that has yet to find a successor.

Through the dichotomy of noise and bliss, the chapter encapsulates the profound impact of My Bloody Valentine on its audience, marking not only a pivotal moment in the author's musical journey but also calling into question the nature of art and accessibility—a haunting echo of sound that lingers long after the concert has ended.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Loveless

Chapter Two Summary: Loveless

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the influential album "Loveless" by My Bloody Valentine, emphasizing its intricate soundscapes and enigmatic presentation. The record cover features a blurred image of a Fender Jazzmaster from a music video, symbolizing the dreamy aesthetic of the band. Notably, both the band name and album title are printed in a somewhat elusive style, blending seamlessly into the background.

The first track, "Only Shallow," kicks off with a burst of drums that quickly fades into the expansive wall of sound that characterizes the album. Once the energetic drums retreat, listeners are enveloped in layers of guitars and breathy, indecipherable vocals. This heavy yet ethereal sound creates a hypnotic atmosphere, inviting repeated listenings and altering the auditory experience depending on the playback equipment used.

"Loomer," the second track, amplifies this immersive quality, blending beautiful guitar feedback and synths into a cohesive auditory tapestry. Its ghostly and bright aura evokes the layered yet deconstructed works of painter Gerhard Richter, reflecting the disorienting yet compelling nature of the sound.



Track three, “Touched,” a brief interlude composed by drummer Colm O'Ciosoig, showcases experimental sampler techniques, stripping down song structure to focus on atmospheric sound, a departure from traditional lyrical content that some listeners consider a pivotal moment in the album's transcendence.

The fourth track, “To Here Knows When,” draws listeners in with its shifting guitar drones, creating an unsettling but engrossing listening experience, while the fifth track, “When You Sleep,” provides a more conventional melody intertwined with the band's signature sonic intricacies that would inspire numerous alternative rock bands in the coming years.

“I Only Said,” track six, is a whirlwind of sound, demonstrating an intense complexity that can overwhelm listeners with its abundance of auditory detail, prompting a need for momentary respite. The subsequent track, “Come in Alone,” offers a slightly more accessible ballad-like structure yet still retains the pervasive dreamlike ambiance that defines the album.

Track eight, “Sometimes,” echoes the warmth of earlier shoegaze sounds, harmoniously combining gentle vocals with rhythmic guitar. It is contrasted sharply by “Blown a Wish,” which showcases a brighter, more melodic approach, standing out for its less cluttered sonic layering that brings vocals to the forefront.



As the album progresses, “What You Want” bursts with energy and an uptempo beat, urging listeners to stick closely to the volume controls. It exemplifies how My Bloody Valentine treats their track arrangements as reflective experiences, mirroring themes of exploration and discovery.

Finally, the chapter culminates with “Soon,” a track that bridges dance music and alternative rock, encapsulating the joyous spirit of the album while introducing programmed drum beats in a way that felt revolutionary at its release. The mix of spontaneity and structured rhythm invites listeners to embrace the energy freely, reinforcing the album's legacy as a cult classic that resonates on both emotional and experiential levels.

Through an imaginative lens, the chapter paints "Loveless" not just as an album but as a transformative experience that transcends traditional music listening, intertwining personal memories and broader cultural reflections on a generation defined by experimentation and exploration.

Aspect	Description
Album Focus	"Loveless" by My Bloody Valentine, known for its intricate soundscapes and enigmatic presentation.
Album Cover	Features a blurred image of a Fender Jazzmaster; names are printed in an elusive style.
Track 1: Only	Starts with drums leading into a wall of sound with layered guitars

Aspect	Description
Shallow	and breathy vocals.
Track 2: Loomer	Blends guitar feedback and synths, reflecting disorientation akin to Gerhard Richter's art.
Track 3: Touched	Brief interlude focusing on atmospheric sound, showcasing experimental techniques.
Track 4: To Here Knows When	Utilizes shifting guitar drones for a compelling listening experience.
Track 5: When You Sleep	Features more conventional melodies intertwined with sonic intricacies.
Track 6: I Only Said	Complex sonic details can overwhelm listeners, prompting breaks.
Track 7: Come in Alone	Accessible ballad structure that maintains a dreamlike ambiance.
Track 8: Sometimes	Combines gentle vocals with rhythmic guitar, echoing earlier shoegaze sounds.
Track 9: Blown a Wish	Features a brighter, melodic approach with less cluttered layering.
Track 10: What You Want	Energetic with an uptempo beat; invites close volume control.
Final Track: Soon	Bridges dance music and alternative rock with programmed drum beats, embodying joy.
Overall Impression	"Loveless" is a transformative experience, intertwining personal memories with broader cultural reflections.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace the transformative power of immersive experiences

Critical Interpretation: This chapter reveals how 'Loveless' by My Bloody Valentine transcends conventional music, inviting you into a hypnotic auditory journey that alters your perception. By embracing such immersive experiences, whether through music, art, or any form of creativity, you can enrich your life, allowing you to connect deeply with your emotions and the world around you. This invites growth, exploration, and a profound pleasure in the nuances of your surroundings, reminding you that life's richness often lies in the layers waiting to be discovered.

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Chapter 3 Summary: Paint a Rainbow

Chapter Three: Paint a Rainbow

In the musical landscape of the late 1980s, *My Bloody Valentine* (MBV), a Dublin-based band, emerged from humble beginnings that were disappointingly uninspired. Initially, they blended the least compelling elements of groups like *The Cramps*, *Joy Division*, and *The Birthday Party*, which was fitting considering the band chose a name derived from a lackluster Canadian horror film. Kevin Shields, the band's guitarist, recalls that their awkward name was the brainchild of their singer, Dave Stelfox, humorously noting that they had far worse options in mind, such as "the Burning Peacocks." Stelfox, a flamboyant and charismatic frontman, lent a catchy presence to performances, though the early records featuring his vocals and the keyboard contributions of his girlfriend Tina were critically panned.

In examining MBV's evolution, it's notable that very few bands transition from mediocrity to groundbreaking excellence. They offer a glimmer of hope for struggling artists everywhere, suggesting that genius may lie dormant within, waiting for the right moment to emerge. Kevin Shields, originally from Queens, New York, found his musical trajectory altered when he moved back to Ireland at age ten. Enamored with glam rock's



energy and androgyny, he later discovered the punk sounds of the *Ramones*, a revelation that led him to appreciate music not just as a practiced skill but as a fine balance of sound creation.

At sixteen, Shields met Colm O'Coisog, who was two years younger. The two quickly bonded and soon formed their first band, *The Complex*. The Dublin music scene was sparse at the time, and after forming MBV with Stelfox, they found limited opportunities for success. Influenced by fellow musician Gavin Friday of the *Virgin Prunes*, they explored their potential beyond Dublin, leading to gigs in Holland and Berlin where they initially recorded their first album, *This Is Your Bloody Valentine*.

As the band relocated to London, they began to shed the influences of Goth music in favor of more distinctive styles, leading to a twelve-inch EP released in 1986. The departure of Tina coincided with the arrival of Debbie Googe on bass. Googe's introduction to MBV stemmed from her connection to a friend in the Berlin music scene, showcasing the interconnectedness of the underground music community. When she received a cryptic message about an audition, she took a leap of faith, ultimately integrating herself into the band through a series of rehearsals that solidified her place.

Simultaneously, Bilinda Butcher entered the picture after hearing about the band's search for a backing vocalist. Nervous about stepping into a band with seasoned members, her talent became apparent when she impressed the



group with her rendition of a Dolly Parton song during tryouts. The addition of her vintage ambulance also proved beneficial for transporting equipment, as the band began to coalesce into a more cohesive unit.

With the release of “Sunny Sundae Smile,” MBV moved away from their earlier, unremarkable style, embracing a burgeoning new direction. Two mini-albums from 1987, **Ecstasy** and **Strawberry Wine**, represented a significant turning point for the band, ushering in a more sophisticated and introspective sound, rich with a reimagined pop sensibility that drew inspiration from the jangly melodies of the Byrds. Making this transition marked a pivotal moment, as the band began to carve out their unique identity within the music scene.

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Chapter 4: We're So Beautiful

In Chapter Four, titled "We're So Beautiful," the narrative delves into the origins and rise of Creation Records, founded in 1984 by the charismatic Glaswegian Alan McGee, along with his bandmate Dick Green and Joe Foster from the influential band the Television Personalities. McGee's entrepreneurial spirit is exemplified by his initiation of the Living Room club on London's Tottenham Court Road, which quickly became a hotspot for indie music. This backdrop is essential, as it sets the stage for the label's future significance in the music scene, especially as it was named after a pioneering yet underrated band of the 1960s.

Creation Records established itself by releasing music from notable acts like The Loft, The Pastels, and Felt, but it was the Jesus and Mary Chain's debut single "Upside Down" that marked a significant breakthrough. Their notorious live performances and striking image captured media attention, propelling the label and McGee into the limelight. Subsequently, the label expanded its portfolio to include bands like Primal Scream and then Oasis, crucially influencing the Britpop movement of the 1990s.

The chapter also recalls the notable partnership between My Bloody Valentine (MBV) and Creation Records, initiated after McGee and Green watched the band perform in 1988. Recognizing their potential, they quickly arranged for MBV to record the impactful "You Made Me Realize" EP,



which garnered critical acclaim. Edward Ball, another key figure and early employee at Creation, recounts his first encounter with McGee, reflecting the label's community of musicians who often became collaborators.

The chapter emphasizes how MBV was rapidly evolving and progressing

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Chapter 5 Summary: Glider

Chapter Five Summary: Glider

In the late 1980s, the British press coined the term "shoegazer" to describe a genre of bands that, despite their loud and melodious sound, performed in a seemingly detached manner, often staring at the floor. This label, akin to other musical classifications like grunge, carried a hint of condescension but ultimately resonated with audiences. My Bloody Valentine (MBV), with their 1988 album **Isn't Anything**, is frequently credited with defining the shoegaze sound, characterized by their heavy, melodic guitar work and innovative techniques, which other bands in the genre embraced.

Kevin Shields, the band's leader, discusses his approach to guitar playing, emphasizing a focus on rhythm rather than flashy techniques. He recounts how he utilized unique chord structures, open tunings, and the tremolo arm of the Jazzmaster guitar to create a distinctive sound that diverged from typical rock styles. Shields notes that many shoegazer bands, such as Swervedriver and Ride, borrowed from his method but did not replicate his specific use of the tremolo arm, a device that allows players to modulate pitch and add texture to their sound.

Reflecting on his musical influences, Shields acknowledges iconic guitarists

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like Johnny Ramone and J. Mascis of Dinosaur Jr., who inspired his style while he also revered avant-garde artists like Sonic Youth. He recalls the early development of his bending guitar sound, first captured in the MBV song "Slow." This sound was crafted using borrowed equipment and showcases a harmonious blend of different musical influences, from alt-country to surf rock.

Shields articulates the challenge of mastering the tremolo arm technique, explaining how modifications were necessary for achieving the desired bending quality. He believes that this approach brings rock music closer to a range of cultural musical traditions beyond the Western twelve-note scale. He draws parallels with Neil Young's subtler use of the tremolo arm, which similarly amplifies the perceived size of his sound. By the time they created *Loveless*, MBV's music led listeners to believe that countless guitars were in play when, in fact, fewer layers produced an expansive auditory effect.

This chapter illustrates Kevin Shields' profound connection to his craft, blending influences and innovations to carve out a unique sonic landscape. His reflections not only shed light on the technical aspects of his guitar playing but also highlight the emotional and expressive dimensions that drive his music.



Chapter 6 Summary: Come in Alone

Chapter Seven Summary: Come in Alone

In this chapter, the author navigates the tumultuous and myth-laden journey of My Bloody Valentine in creating their seminal album, **Loveless**. The prologue reflects on the monophonic nature of the album, which was recorded over nearly two years in various studios—a chaotic process that left its mark on those involved, including the band members themselves. The production team mainly credited includes Kevin Shields and Colm O'Ciosoig, alongside a multitude of engineers whose contributions have since sparked debate among fans and critics alike.

Much of the lore surrounding the recording revolves around perceptions of Shields' unyielding creative process. Some fans imagine him tirelessly layering sounds only to erase them, reminiscent of artist Harry Smith's notorious disregard for his own work. Meanwhile, detractors have criticized Shields for appearing idle during studio sessions, suggesting that without engineers like Alan Moulder, the final product would have been poorly realized. This tension highlights the disparity between public perception and the reality of the band's intricate, often frustrating creative process.

The chapter also touches on early recording sessions at Blackwing Studios,

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which Shields dismisses as mostly unproductive. Tensions with their record label, Creation Records, further complicated matters, as label head Alan McGee expected the band to replicate their previous success in a fraction of the time. As the band experimented with new sounds, McGee's insistence on continuity from their earlier works created friction—a dynamic that showcases the difference between a record label's commercial expectations and an artist's vision.

As the recording progressed, the band moved from one inexpensive studio to another, encountering a series of engineers who struggled to understand their unorthodox methods. These experiences fueled an attitude of defiance toward industry standards, exacerbated by frustrations with engineers who lacked alignment with My Bloody Valentine's creative intent. Throughout this turbulence, Shields remained focused on achieving a sound that blurred conventional audio frequencies; he aimed for consistency across playback devices, leading to unique recording decisions that set Loveless apart sonically.

Even amidst the chaos, the significance of mixing engineer Alan Moulder emerges. His presence provided much-needed validation and support, affirming the band's vision during periods of self-doubt. Moulder's understanding of their artistic direction bolstered Shields' gradual unraveling of the sonic tapestry that would define Loveless.



In a notable contrast, the chapter also mentions Debbie Googe, who, despite not being heavily involved in the recording, experienced the peculiar nature of the lengthy process. She describes a sense of limbo, emphasizing the emotional toll of waiting as the album materialized with little immediate involvement.

Ultimately, *Chapter Seven: Come in Alone* reveals the adventurous and often arduous quest of My Bloody Valentine to create *Loveless*—an album defined not just by its sound, but by the stories, frustrations, and mythologies that surrounded its making.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Chaos as Part of the Creative Process

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate your own creative ventures, let the tumult and uncertainty inspire you rather than deter you. Just like My Bloody Valentine faced resistance and setbacks during the creation of **Loveless**, you too might find that the unpredictable journey breeds innovation and personal growth. Embrace the chaos, and recognize that the struggles and frustrations are integral to creating something impactful and unique. Allow yourself to experiment freely, knowing that even in moments of doubt, your vision can shape something extraordinary.

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Chapter 7 Summary: Swallow

Chapter Eight: Swallow

In the 1980s, the intersection of indie music with hip-hop and dance music was notably fraught, especially in the UK, where dance genres were slowly gaining a foothold. Indie musicians generally held prejudices against rap, a sentiment echoed by Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine. He recalls how many listeners reduced rap to repetitive sounds without recognizing the complexities within it. For Shields, artists like the Beastie Boys brought attention to these prejudices, yet he found profound inspiration in the evolving rhythms and phrasing of hip-hop.

Shields admired the production techniques of the Bomb Squad, particularly their work with Public Enemy, influencing his own recordings. This influence is evident in the band's song "Slow," featured on their 1988 EP "You Made Me Realize," where the percussive style and rhythmic phrasing borrow elements from hip-hop—though Shields clarifies that the song was not an attempt to rap.

Upon the release of their groundbreaking album "Loveless," critics reacted with mixed feelings. Some reviewers, like Simon Reynolds from Melody Maker, criticized the album for not being sufficiently experimental or



dance-oriented. Others, such as Dele Fadele from NME, noted the band's departure from dance and reggae influences, which was a point of contention among fans. Shields insisted that his intent was not to create a "weird" record but an "organic" one, emphasizing a natural and emotional connection to the sounds.

Shields elaborates on the transformative nature of seemingly minor changes in music production, demonstrating how technology could reshape auditory experiences. "Loveless" showcased innovative uses of samplers, moving beyond traditional sampling to create new sonic landscapes. The band often sampled their own unique guitar feedback, manipulating it into layered compositions. For instance, the legendary opening of "Only Shallow" features Shields' guitar parts sampled at different layers, creating an organic sound that contrasted sharply with the technology-heavy production styles then prevalent in the industry.

Throughout the album, their creative process included experimenting with vocal samples and manipulating familiar sounds, such as in "Soon," where a section mimics Belinda Butcher's voice through a sampled delay unit. Shields acknowledges their quest was clumsy yet groundbreaking; they sought to use technology in ways that would not reveal its presence. While other bands of the time emphasized the machine-like quality of samplers, My Bloody Valentine aimed to impart a natural, human touch to their music, forever altering the landscape of pop music production.



In conclusion, "Loveless" not only challenged listener expectations but also redefined the use of samplers in music, blending the organic with the innovative in a way that set a standard for future artists.

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Chapter 8: To Here Knows When

Chapter Nine: To Here Knows When

In the aftermath of the release of the **Glider** EP, My Bloody Valentine (MBV) immersed themselves in recording, primarily at Protocol Studios in Holloway, beginning in May 1990. This marked the intense development of both new tracks for their anticipated album **Loveless** and additional songs for a subsequent EP. Guy Fixsen, the chief engineer at Protocol, joined the team after the completion of **Glider**, recalling that he spent his twenty-second birthday recording tambourine tracks for the **Tremolo** EP. Fixsen noted the bizarre and inspirational nature of working on **Loveless** over the span of eighteen months—longer than any engineer had previously spent on an album.

Despite initial skepticism from Creation Records about the sonic quality of “To Here Knows When,” which was thought to sound faulty, both the **Tremolo** and **Glider** EPs were crucial indicators of what fans could expect from **Loveless**. Though “Tremolo” entered the UK charts at number twenty-nine, the creative process behind **Loveless** was fraught with delays and challenges. Kevin Shields, MBV’s frontman, struggled with various technical faults and the pressure mounting from both the record label and the band’s fans, which made the environment tense.



Debbie Googe, the band's bassist, noticed the escalating frustration from Creation toward the slow pace of recording, especially as costs ballooned. Her efforts to maintain communication with the label alongside Ann Marie (Shields' sister and the band's manager) highlighted the growing discontent. By March 1991, the situation worsened when producer Alan Moulder left the sessions permanently to work with another band, heightening the stakes for MBV.

As Shields grappled with a series of technical glitches while trying to achieve his ambitious sound, the increasing pressure from the label began to affect creative motivation. Fixsen reflected on the odd nature of the recording process, characterized by a surreal blend of creativity constrained by frequent technical problems. There was a growing concern that MBV might be pushing Creation Records to the brink of bankruptcy, a point debated by various associates.

Ed Ball illustrated the strained relationship between the band and the label through an amusing theory about the titles of MBV's tracks serving as signals to Alan McGee, Creation's founder, showcasing the frustrations and delays in a humorous light. This theory, though dismissed by Shields, underscored the chaotic nature of the recording process, which had taken a toll on both the band and the label.



Amid navigating personal turbulence—such as Shields' complicated relationship with band member Bilinda Butcher and external pressures from her volatile ex—Shields reflected on the paradox of being stuck in a creative endeavor while facing overwhelming stress. They had turned down lucrative offers from major labels to maintain independence, which left them in

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Chapter 9 Summary: Forever and Again

Chapter Ten Summary: Forever and Again

In this chapter, we delve into the elusive presence of drummer Colm O'Ciosoig in the creation of My Bloody Valentine's groundbreaking album, **Loveless**. Although Colm contributed to the band's live performances and past recordings, during the making of **Loveless**, he effectively became a “phantom”—his impressive drumming mostly replaced by electronic programming due to personal struggles.

The creative process faced significant challenges as Colm battled with homelessness and personal crises, including the deportation of his girlfriend back to the U.S. His health deteriorated, impacting his ability to perform. As bandmate Bilinda Butcher notes, Colm struggled to maintain a functional role in the studio, thereby forcing band members to rely heavily on electronic drum programming, which heightened the stress within the group. They faced financial instability as they navigated the difficulties posed by their record label, Creation, which was also undergoing financial strain.

Despite the production challenges, band member Kevin Shields emphasized the sonic integrity of the album, asserting that the programmed drum tracks matched the quality of Colm's live performance. He mentions that out of the



entire album, only two tracks featuring live drumming by Colm were recorded—most notably, "Only Shallow."

The chapter also introduces the notion of disconnection felt by Colm's bandmates. Debbie Googe, credited as the bassist, expressed feelings of alienation as she didn't contribute to the record despite being part of the band. She acknowledged Kevin's role as the creative force behind the album and respected his artistic vision, even if it sidelined her input. Bilinda echoed these sentiments, revealing that the process could feel isolating, with limited opportunities for her and Debbie to contribute creatively.

Despite these hurdles, the sound of *Loveless* was marked by seamless drumming, a testament to the band's collaborative effort to mask the challenges they faced. Kevin noted that even when drum tracks were sequenced or sampled, they maintained the essence and energy that Colm would have brought to live performances.

Overall, this chapter intricately explores the interplay of personal hardship, artistic vision, and collaborative dynamics in the creation of an album that would later become iconic in the shoegaze genre. It highlights both the resilience of the band members and the complexities of their creative process, ultimately leading to a sound that defined a moment in music history.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resilience in the face of personal hardship

Critical Interpretation: Imagine a moment in your life where everything feels overwhelming, where personal struggles weigh heavily on your spirit. The story of Colm O'Ciosoig serves as a powerful reminder that even amidst our darkest challenges, resilience can lead to the creation of something beautiful. Through his battles, the music of **Loveless** emerged, not just as an album, but as a testament to the strength of collaboration and the transformative power of art. Let this inspire you to push through your own difficulties, knowing that your struggles can contribute to something greater, forging connections and creativity that resonate long after you're gone.

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Chapter 10 Summary: I Only Said

Chapter Eleven: I Only Said

In this chapter, we explore the unique vocal style of My Bloody Valentine (MBV), particularly as it relates to their iconic album, **Loveless**. The ethereal quality of the band's vocals, often described as a blend of 60s backing harmonies and the haunting sound of the Cocteau Twins, is integral to their music. Both Kevin Shields and Bilinda Butcher contribute to this distinctive sound, which is characterized by layers of breathy, indistinct vocals that are intentionally buried in the mix, creating a rich, textured auditory experience.

Kevin Shields explains that the process of recording these vocals was intricate and time-consuming. Over many years, he developed melodies that were ultimately recorded in **Loveless**, emphasizing that he wanted the vocals to function as part of the overall sound rather than stand out clearly. This resulted in a collection of vocal tracks, where he and Bilinda would harmonize similarly, allowing for the layering of up to seventeen tracks on one reel. The layered vocals create a palpable thickness, a sonic tapestry that enhances the dream-like quality of their music.

The lyrics of MBV are notoriously indecipherable, adding to the band's



enigmatic character. Unlike most bands, MBV does not print their lyrics on their album covers, except in Japan, where the translations are often humorously inaccurate. This deliberate obscurity allows listeners to engage with the music in a way that prioritizes sound over explicit meaning. Kevin jokes about the various interpretations of their lyrics found on fan sites, noting that they are mostly incorrect and often "stupid and pretentious" compared to the original intent.

Shields describes his songwriting process as instinctual—a blend of spontaneous creation and subconscious expression. Sometimes, the lyrics come together in ways that may seem nonsensical, yet make sense within the context of a song. This abstraction resonates with listeners who appreciate the mystery and beauty of ambiguous lyrics. The chapter reflects on the author's personal connection to music that feels both profound and perplexing, recalling how certain songs became puzzles to decipher, evoking a sense of wonder.

Bilinda contributes to the lyric-writing process, realizing that lyrical depth is essential, even if the words remain unclear. Shields emphasizes the significance of lyrics in their music, suggesting that bad lyrics can disrupt the listener's experience, pulling them away from the overall enjoyment of the sound. For MBV, the art of crafting lyrics involves diligence and collaboration, ensuring that every word resonates within the soundscape without overshadowing the music's essence.



As we delve deeper into the creative techniques behind *Loveless*, it's evident that My Bloody Valentine has cultivated an innovative approach to music that redefines traditional rock norms, showcasing the interplay between sound, meaning, and emotional impact.

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Chapter 11 Summary: When You Wake You're Still in a Dream

Chapter Twelve: When You Wake, You're Still in a Dream

In this chapter, the conversation centers around the band My Bloody Valentine (MBV) and their experiences with sleep deprivation and dream-like states during the recording of their iconic album **Loveless**. Guy Fixsen acknowledges Kevin Shields' ongoing sleep issues, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of how sleeplessness influences creativity, particularly in music.

Shields and his bandmates, particularly Bilinda Butcher, reveal their fascination with altered states of consciousness, often channeling these feelings into their music. MBV's sound is characterized by chaotic, disorienting layers that mirror the confusion often found in dreams. The discussion touches on various songs that embody these themes, such as "(When You Wake) You're Still in a Dream," emphasizing how their music captures a sense of loss and disconnection from reality.

Despite rumors suggesting rampant drug use within the band, Butcher clarifies that their substance consumption was minimal, with drugs like ecstasy and cocaine appearing occasionally but not dominating their artistic

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process. Instead, Shields preferred the hypnagogic state—the twilight zone between wakefulness and sleep—to inspire his songwriting. This stage is often marked by hallucinatory experiences that deepen his artistic vision.

Through anecdotes, Shields describes nights spent in a remote studio where his lack of sleep led to surreal experiences that felt as real as his waking life. He recounts feelings of being surrounded by unseen presences and hallucinations—an extraordinary fusion of reality and dream that fueled his artistic output. This blend of consciousness and creativity parallels historical art movements, particularly Surrealism, which aimed to express inner realities rather than social commentaries. Though Shields admits only a passing familiarity with Surrealist literature, he intuitively grasps its essence in his work.

The chapter also ties in the experiments of the 1960s, particularly those by artists Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs, who manipulated light frequencies to induce trance-like states. Shields recounts a personal experience at a festival where intense strobe lighting produced profound psychological effects, leading him to consider a deeper exploration of these phenomena to expand his creative repertoire.

As MBV transitioned from the creation of **Loveless** into their tour, they sought visual elements that harmonized with their music. Despite financial constraints, they managed to incorporate abstract looping visuals, aligning



with the tour's intention to create an immersive experience that demanded the audience's attention in both sonic and visual realms. This effort reflects their desire not just to replicate the effects of substances like LSD but to invoke a psychedelic experience through pure sound and imagery.

In summary, Chapter Twelve delves into the depths of artistic exploration within MBV, illustrating how sleep deprivation and dream states played crucial roles in shaping their music. Through an amalgamation of personal anecdotes, historical references, and philosophical musings, the chapter captures the ethereal quality of creativity bound by the borders of consciousness and the subconscious.

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Chapter 12: Honey Power

Chapter Thirteen: Honey Power

In this chapter, the narrator takes a break from work and visits Kami and April, two thirty-something dancers at Magic Gardens, a well-known strip club in downtown Portland. Set in an area previously thriving as Chinatown and now undergoing renovations for a more tourist-friendly atmosphere, Magic Gardens holds a reputation as the best club in a city noted for having the highest number of strip clubs per capita in the United States. It attracts rock stars who often stop by late at night after concerts.

While at the club, the narrator reflects on a conversation with Kami, who playfully dismisses his claim that the song "Sometimes" is played for him. This interaction prompts an exploration of the emotional depth of the music, which contrasts with the typical atmosphere of the club. Despite her reservations about dancing to "Sometimes," Kami's performance is captivating, bathed in red light as she moves gracefully across the stage. The ambiance of the club, characterized by patrons maintaining a respectful distance rather than cramming dollars into g-strings, adds to the gentler vibe of the evening.

The narrator reminisces about the complex themes of the music from "My



Bloody Valentine" (MBV), referencing the band's earlier album that featured straightforwardly sexual song titles and lyrics. In contrast, their seminal record "Loveless" embodies a more ambiguous and layered sense of sexuality, hinting at sensuality without overtly stating it. The interplay between Kevin Shields' and Bilinda Butcher's vocals provides an interesting

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Chapter 13 Summary: No More Sorry

Chapter Fourteen: No More Sorry

In this chapter, titled "No More Sorry," the narrative dives into the emotional turmoil surrounding the recording of the album "Loveless" by the band My Bloody Valentine. The title, seemingly abstract, is revealed through discussions with band members Kevin Shields and Bilinda Butcher, hinting at the disintegration of their romantic relationship amidst the creative process in the studio, marking a poignant tension between artistic expression and personal strife.

Kevin reflects on the challenge of discussing love's complexities, emphasizing that while the album's lyrics encapsulate their relationship, they also cover broader themes influenced by external turmoil. His comments convey a sense of melancholy regarding the process of creating "Loveless," which was overshadowed by a dreary atmosphere. Bilinda echoes this sentiment, stating that although the music was brilliant, their collaboration became a struggle due to the emotional and interpersonal difficulties they experienced during production.

Bilinda fondly reminisces about her initial attraction to Kevin, describing him as soft-spoken and slightly nerdy, which draws a contrast to their



current struggles. She reveals more about her personal life upon joining the band, noting that she was facing significant challenges, including a tumultuous relationship with her son's father, who exhibited violent tendencies. This backdrop complicates her integration into the band and her evolving relationship with Kevin.

As their romantic involvement developed, Bilinda and Kevin's bond flourished initially, but the recording of "Loveless" transformed their dynamic. Bilinda articulates a profound disconnect during this phase, where both were physically present but emotionally distant. Despite living together, they struggled with their relationship, leading to uncertainty about their future as a couple.

The chapter poignantly captures the complicated interplay between love and artistic creation, where personal and relational conflicts seep into their music-making process. Bilinda acknowledges the pain of their split post-tour, despite their enduring care for one another, highlighting the bittersweet nature of their shared experiences and the lasting impact of love, even amid challenges. Their relationship serves as a backdrop for the album, symbolizing the struggle between closeness and the need for individual space within both love and art.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The complexity of love intertwined with art can inspire us to embrace our personal struggles as catalysts for creativity.

Critical Interpretation: In 'No More Sorry,' the emotional turmoil faced by Kevin and Bilinda during the recording of 'Loveless' illustrates how deeply personal experiences can fuel artistic expression. This serves as a powerful reminder that our own challenges, no matter how difficult, can lead to profound creativity. It encourages us to channel our struggles into our passions, transforming moments of heartbreak and disconnection into powerful expressions of art and identity, and reminds us that beauty often arises from the depths of our most trying times.



Chapter 14 Summary: Blown a Wish

Chapter Fifteen: Blown a Wish

In late 1989, as the Berlin Wall stood firm and Nelson Mandela remained imprisoned, artist Kevin Shields and his band, My Bloody Valentine, embarked on creating their influential album, "Loveless." The global political landscape was tense, marked by events such as the impending Gulf War, which the crew absorbed through the lens of television within the confines of Protocol studios.

When "Loveless" was finally released on November 4, 1991, it entered a music scene already resonating with groundbreaking albums like Nirvana's "Nevermind" and Massive Attack's "Blue Lines." Despite its eventual critical acclaim, the album did not make significant waves in the United States, peaking at just number twenty-four on the UK charts.

Critics largely lauded "Loveless," albeit with some minor criticisms. While many appreciated its innovative sound, a few writers expressed a desire for a more electronic feel. American critic Robert Christgau, for instance, assigned the album an A- rating, noting the polarizing effect of its sound—recognizing the challenge in embracing its dissonant guitars and ethereal vocals, yet ultimately appreciating its transformative appeal.



However, not all opinions were favorable. Notable critic Chuck Eddy dismissed the band, labeling them one of the worst acts in rock history. In his critique, he took issue with what he perceived as a misguided elevation of "dream pop" to an artistic plateau. He suggested that the band's fans were as problematic as the music itself, implying that the reverence for My Bloody Valentine only served to cloud genuine criticism. His remarks navigated a fine line between valid critique and personal bias, ultimately suggesting that the band suffered from overhype.

Despite detractors like Eddy, many reviews celebrated "Loveless" with phrases like "translucent," "shimmering genius," and "glorious." Such acclaim often veered into hyperbole, contributing to an almost mythical reputation for the album—a cornerstone in musical discussions, particularly on platforms frequented by devoted music fans like ILoveMusic. Over the years, "Loveless" has been hailed as one of the defining albums of the 1990s and has secured a place in the broader canon of music history, being ranked as one of the greatest albums of all time by several prominent publications, including a notable position on Rolling Stone's list.

Thus, "Loveless" etched itself into cultural consciousness, not only as a musical work but as a topic of fervent debate and admiration, illustrating the profound impact it had on the landscape of modern music.



Chapter 15 Summary: We Have All the Time in the World

Chapter Sixteen: We Have All the Time in the World

This chapter delves into the aftermath of My Bloody Valentine's critically acclaimed album **Loveless**, emphasizing that the subsequent developments in the band's history are as significant as the album's production timeline. Following their departure from Creation Records, the band signed with Island Records in October 1992, which initially promised a robust support system. With a substantial advance, Shields planned to construct a recording studio in a house in Streatham, London, but complications arose when the newly-installed mixing desk malfunctioned. This issue resulted in financial strain and an operational crisis for the band, described by Shields as a "semi-meltdown."

Colm O'Ciosoig and Kevin Shields began crafting a follow-up to **Loveless**, influenced by the burgeoning drum and bass scene they discovered on underground radio stations. They aimed to create a unique sound, blending traditional elements with new rhythmic forms. However, the ambitious project ended up largely unrealized, much to Kevin's disappointment. Bilinda Butcher reflected on the chaotic process of recording, which was accompanied by interpersonal tensions and difficulties



in communication with the record label. Amidst the disorder, Colm adapted to the technology required to produce the music.

Adding to the colorful narrative, McGee paints a picture of Shields struggling with the pressures of managing the studio, which was humorously complicated by a burgeoning "chinchilla problem." The story contains anecdotes about their life in the house, where Bilinda fondly remembers their numerous pets while reflecting on the challenges of their musical endeavors.

The chapter also explores the wider literary theme of creativity and its pauses, referencing Enrique Vila-Matas's **Bartleby & Co.** to illustrate artistic stagnation. While the band members have pursued various projects during their hiatus—Shields engaged in remix work and collaborations, and Colm formed **The Warm Inventions** with Hope Sandoval—there remains a sense of unfinished business among them. Bilinda expresses a longing for the music that never materialized, suggesting unresolved creative ambitions.

Meanwhile, Deb, a former band member, is involved in other musical projects and community performances, but admits the group's future seems uncertain. Despite these individual journeys, Shields articulates hope for a potential reunion, indicating that their bond remains strong and that plans for new music are on the horizon. As the chapter closes, it leaves readers with the tantalizing notion that time may be flexible, and the story of My Bloody



Valentine is far from over.

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Chapter 16: What You Want

Chapter Seventeen Summary: What You Want

In this chapter, the author reflects on feedback from editor David Barker regarding the conclusion of the book. Barker suggests that the ending could be more uplifting, implying that despite the struggles endured, the protagonist, Kevin Shields, could emerge with a sense of freedom and success in his artistic endeavors, particularly with his ability to create music on his terms.

As the author contemplates this advice, they express a strong attachment to the existing narrative, believing that the significance of the album "Loveless" speaks for itself. They indicate that Shields has the potential to release new music that may surpass his earlier works, although his contributions to the "Lost in Translation" soundtrack were hindered by the need to imitate a previous style, rather than showcasing his own unique creativity.

Despite some tensions in the relationships that arose during the album's creation, it appears that Kevin and his bandmate, Bilinda Butcher, have developed a supportive friendship. Their mutual respect is evident as they continue to meet during holidays and share their enthusiasm for music,



fostering a strong bond that contrasts sharply with the author's own experiences with past relationships.

The influence of "Loveless" is undeniable, having given rise to a genre that artists and fans alike continue to reference and draw from. Critics note its

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