A Clockwork Orange

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ANTHONY BURGESS

Anthony Burgess was born in Manchester in 1917. In 1918, his mother and sister died in an influenza pandemic, and he grew up with his father and a stepmother. In 1940, Burgess graduated from the University of Manchester with a degree in English Literature. Thereafter, he started his service in Britain's Royal Army Medical Corps and Army Educational Corps during World War Two. His service lasted until 1946 and brought him to Gibraltar as a teacher. Following the war, Burgess's work in the British Colonial Service led him to Southeast Asia, to teach at Malay College. In this time, he published his first novels. However, in 1959, Burgess was struck by a debilitating illness that was incorrectly identified as a terminal brain tumor. This diagnosis inspired Burgess to return to England and write extensively, in order to support his family after his death. Between 1959 and 1962, Burgess wrote several novels, among them *A Clockwork Orange*. In 1968, his first wife, Lynne, died, and he remarried later that year and settled in several European countries. Throughout the 1970's and 80's, once his terminal diagnosis appeared to be mistaken, Burgess produced art extensively. His output ranged from novels and nonfiction to symphonies, ballets, and musicals. Other decorated Burgess works include his 1980 novel *Earthly Powers*. In November 1993, Burgess died in London at the age of 76.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A Clockwork Orange's concern with a thought-regulating government, coupled with its use of Slavic-inflected slang, shows a clear preoccupation with Cold War politics and the intensifying rivalry between the Soviet Union and Western democracies. 1962, the year of the book's publication, saw the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which the United States and the Soviet Union faced off in a tense confrontation that threatened worldwide nuclear warfare.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

A Clockwork Orange's distinctive style makes it difficult to group with other works of literature. However, its dystopian science-fiction tendencies and probing ethical investigations were undoubtedly influenced by George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published in 1949. In turn, Burgess's novel has also influenced subsequent works. Other novels that deal with profound moral dilemmas in perverse future scenarios include Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, as well as the 1984 book *Neuromancer* by William Gibson.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *A Clockwork Orange*
- **When Written:** 1962
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1962
- **Literary Period:** Postmodern science-fiction
- **Genre:** Science-fiction
- **Setting:** Dystopian England in the not-so-distant future
- **Climax:** Alex's suicide attempt
- **Antagonist:** The government
- **Point of View:** First person narrator (Alex)

EXTRA CREDIT

Play It Again. In addition to being a novelist, Burgess was an avid composer. He claimed to have written a symphony when he was just 18 years old!

All's Well That Ends Well? *A Clockwork Orange* has been further immortalized by Stanley Kubrick's seminal film adaptation, which notably omits the final, uplifting chapter of Burgess's book.

PLOT SUMMARY

In a strange slang dialect that mixes non-English words and elevated diction, Alex recounts hanging out with his three "droogs," Dim, Pete, and Georgie. The group decides to rove the streets, and they beat and rob an elderly scholar. Later, the droogs come across a rival gang-leader named Billyboy. After a gang fight, the droogs break into a young couple's country cottage. They rape the wife in front of the husband and destroy the husband's manuscript for a book called *A Clockwork Orange*. Later that night, Alex's domineering behavior offends his droogs after the droogs don't act respectfully as some music is being performed. They part ways antagonistically.

The next day, Alex skips school. His Post-Corrective Adviser, P.R. Deltoid, visits his house to caution him against misbehaving, but Alex ignores him. That evening, Georgie and Dim inform Alex that they will no longer tolerate his abusive leadership. Alex fights them, prevails, and resumes his role as leader. The boys then decide to rob an elderly woman's house. Alex breaks into the house. The woman and her cats attack him, and he retaliates brutally. He hears sirens and attempts to escape, but Dim strikes him in the eyes and the rest of the droogs abandon him to be captured. The next day, in police

custody, Alex learns that his attack on the old woman has killed her.

Part Two begins two years after Part One. Alex is serving a fourteen-year sentence in the State Jail ("Staja"). In prison, Alex works for the prison chaplain. The chaplain mentions a procedure, which deprives criminals of their ability to choose to misbehave. Later that day, a new prisoner is introduced to Alex's cell. He tries to molest Alex, and Alex and his cellmates take turns beating him in retaliation. This beating proves fatal, and the other cellmates blame Alex. The Minister of the Interior decides Alex will receive the experimental treatment—Reclamation Treatment—that the chaplain alluded to earlier.

Under the supervision of Dr. Brodsky and Dr. Branom, Alex is given injections and forced to sit through hours of violent films. He is restrained in a chair that makes it impossible for him to close his eyes or turn away from these films, and even though the violence begins to viscerally sicken him, the doctors simply subject Alex to film after film. One film, which plays Beethoven's Fifth Symphony over footage of Nazi war crimes, makes Alex especially furious, because it causes him to associate his favorite music with visceral sickness. Finally, Alex is ready for release. He is brought in front of an audience and assaulted, but his aversion to violence makes him unable to fight back.

In Part Three, Alex returns to his home and finds that his parents have replaced him with a lodger named Joe. Homeless, Alex resolves to kill himself. By chance, he is spotted by the scholar he assaulted years earlier. The old man and his friends beat Alex until police arrive to break up the fight. Dim and Billyboy are among the responding policemen, and they take Alex to the countryside, rape him, and abandon him. Alex unknowingly returns to the same cottage he ransacked with his droogs, and the male homeowner—not recognizing Alex—takes him in and nurses him back to health.

The homeowner is named F. Alexander, and his book *A Clockwork Orange* is a polemic against Reclamation Treatment. He hopes to use Alex as a political device to further this agenda. Some of his cohorts take Alex to an apartment. There, Alex is locked in a room and forced to listen to classical music; the pain is so great that he jumps out a window in a suicide attempt. Alex wakes up in the hospital to find that he has received a blood transfusion, which has nullified his Reclamation Treatment. In the hospital, he finds out that F. Alexander has been imprisoned because the author, after realizing that Alex was responsible for the lethal rape of his wife, made threats on Alex's life. Alex then returns to his old lifestyle with a new group of droogs. However, he is less interested in causing violence and mayhem than he was when younger. After reencountering his former droog Pete, who now lives a tame, married life, Alex decides that he has grown up, and wishes to settle down and live harmlessly.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Alex – The narrator and protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex is a smart "nadsat" [teen] boy with a penchant for what he calls "ultra-violence," as well as a deep love for classical music. He is a manipulative sociopath, and he rarely feels remorse for his reprehensible actions. After being sent to prison when he is caught after committing heinous acts such as rape and murder, Alex elects to undergo Reclamation Therapy in order to be released from prison. This therapy makes him unable to even think about violence without experiencing pain, and also keeps him from enjoying music—but it does not seem to actually teach him about right and wrong. Post-therapy, he is so anguished by the sound of music that he attempts suicide, and survives only after receiving a blood transplant, which also reverses the Reclamation Therapy. Years after splitting from his first gang of "droogs," Alex finds a newly-married Pete in a coffeehouse, and seems stirred to settle into a more moral life.

F. Alexander – A writer who lives in the cottage called HOME that Alex and his droogs break into, proceeding then to rape and murder his wife. Later, F. Alexander unknowingly takes Alex in after Alex coincidentally returns to his home to seek help. F. Alexander is writing a book called *A Clockwork Orange*, which is an activist polemic against Reclamation Therapy. When he discovers that Alex was responsible for the rape and murder of his wife, he is determined to harm Alex and ends up imprisoned himself.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Dim – A physically imposing, mentally deficient droog in Alex's first gang. After Alex hits Dim for behaving boorishly, he and the rest of the droogs betray Alex. Years later, Dim becomes a policeman and, with his colleague Billyboy, unjustly apprehends and then rapes Alex.

Pete – The most even-tempered and conciliatory member of Alex's group of droogs. At the end of the book, Alex comes across Pete and his new wife in a coffeehouse. Pete's new, tame lifestyle seems to inspire Alex to settle down and live a more respectable life.

Georgie – One of Alex's original three droogs, who has some ambitions of leading the group. Georgie is killed while Alex is in prison.

Billyboy – The leader of a rival gang of droogs whom Alex fights. Later, Billyboy becomes a police officer and, with Dim, beats and rapes Alex.

The Prison Chaplain – Also called "The Charles," he is a cleric who takes a liking to Alex while the latter is in prison. The chaplain is deeply disturbed by Reclamation Therapy, as he believes that goodness should be a choice, not a compulsion.

The Minister of the Interior – A high-ranking government official and a champion of Reclamation Treatment.

The Staja Governor – The commander of the jail where Alex is imprisoned. He is skeptical about the merits of Reclamation Treatment as compared to old-fashioned imprisonment.

Dr. Brodsky – The slick doctor in charge of Alex's Reclamation Therapy.

Dr. Branom – An assistant to Dr. Brodsky.

Pee and Em – Alex's names for his mother and father. His parents treat him with fearful deference.

Joe – A lodger who moves into Alex's room when he is imprisoned. When Alex returns home, he finds that Joe has become a second son to his parents. Joe is later mistreated by the police, and moves back to his hometown to recover.

P.R. Deltoid – Alex's world-weary Post-Corrective Adviser, assigned to keep tabs on the boy's behavior. Deltoid seems genuinely, if a bit warily, concerned for Alex. But he is so disgusted after Alex gets arrested for rape and murder that he visits Alex in custody and spits in his face.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

LANGUAGE

A Clockwork Orange's ingenious use of language is one of the book's defining characteristics. Beginning with the novel's arresting opening, readers are inundated with "nadsat" slang, the part-Cockney, part-Russian patois Alex uses to narrate the story. Alex's language, like the novel as a whole, is a chaotic amalgam of high and low. Just as the plot juxtaposes grotesque violence with poignant art, Alex melds disparate linguistic influences in his narration: nadsat jargon mingles with archaic formalities into a self-conscious collage. In this way, the book's specific language is a constitutive part of its overall message—it would not be the same work of art if paraphrased in different words.

The book's jarring contrasts in speech styles also illustrate how socially marginal the "nadsats" and their niche lexicon are. Characters' linguistic differences articulate their social differences, and this allows Alex to shrewdly shift between registers of speech to suit his needs. To deceive adults into letting down their guard, Alex affects a "gentleman's goloss [voice]," an almost laughably courteous mannerism punctuated by "pardons," "sirs," and "madams." Throughout the book, Alex performs an assortment of these golosses, from "shocked" to "preaching." His judgments about others derive largely from their manner of speaking, as well. This hyper-sensitivity to speech registers allows Alex to mask his insensitivity to other social cues. Much of the time, he relies on his affect to replace genuine emotion. However, although Alex's linguistic manipulations make him seem cold-hearted and unemotional, Burgess's clever use of language throughout the novel validates his protagonist's views: language really *is* the means by which we understand the world. As the novel itself illustrates, the very words in which something is told are inextricable from its meaning, and this gives us insight into human beings and literature alike.

SADISM AND SOCIETY

Another of the work's stylistic trademarks is its frequent and graphic depiction of violence. In the first chapters of the book, Alex savagely beats a doddering scholar, rapes women and girls, and murders an elderly shut-in. But although Alex stands out as a merciless sadist in the earlier part of the work, later events reveal that other members of his society are also capable of similar behavior. The doctors who administer gruesome films to Alex seem thrilled by the violence. When the old scholar from the beginning of the book reencounters Alex, he and his cohort give the now defenseless youngster a vicious beating. When Alex implores the police to rescue him from his assailants, the "millicents" instead beat him and rape him with impunity. Even F. Alexander, the principled crusader for criminal rights, is overcome with bloodlust when he discovers that Alex was responsible for the fatal rape of his wife.

This societal susceptibility to sadism demonstrates a cynical view: that individuals are predisposed towards barbarism. Moreover, society seems somewhat arbitrarily to punish these impulses in some people, while allowing others to manifest such tendencies with impunity, and to withhold for itself the right to exert violence whenever it wishes. Important, too, is that the act of reading and enjoying *A Clockwork Orange* itself represents a relishing of violence. By producing such a grisly work, Burgess forces self-aware readers to assess their own barbaric tendencies and come to terms with the way in which society does and does not sanction these impulses.

FREE WILL VS. THE "CLOCKWORK ORANGE"

The title of the novel is an allusion to its central ethical dilemma. The phrase "A Clockwork Orange" appears within the book as the name of F. Alexander's polemic against Reclamation Treatment, the state-sponsored aversion therapy that Alex undergoes. Reclamation Treatment renders criminals unable to think about violence without experiencing extreme pain themselves, thus removing a significant amount of

their free will. In this way, the treatment turns individuals into "clockwork oranges"—nadsat speak for "clockwork men." The prison chaplain is particularly attuned to the moral quandary inherent in this treatment: "What does God want?" he muses, worried of the consequences of Alex's therapy. "Does God want woodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some ways better than a man who has the good imposed upon him?"

The complexity of this problem is best illustrated by the predicament of the activist F. Alexander, who attempts to use Alex as the poster child of his campaign against Reclamation Therapy. On one hand, F. Alexander is morally opposed to stripping criminals of free will. However, the activist later recognizes Alex as the perpetrator of the brutal, lethal rape of his wife—a devastating tragedy that he feels the overwhelming need to avenge. For F. Alexander to maintain his ethical stance, he would need to advocate for restoring Alex's ability to commit further, equally heinous crimes. This position is, unsurprisingly, impossible for the activist to support, and he is locked away after making threats on Alex's life. Readers are left to resolve the question on their own: is it just to reintroduce a criminal to society by removing the free will that impelled him to act abhorrently? Or is it more moral to lock him in prison, while he remains unrepentantly and ineradicably sadistic—but mentally unfettered?

ART AND HUMANITY

Burgess's malevolent protagonist is humanized, somewhat, by his reverent appreciation for the fine arts. Even though Alex is a bloodthirsty sociopath and a public menace, he is not utterly nihilistic. The sound of his favorite classical music seems to induce a more humane, respectful temperament in him. For example, when Dim behaves boorishly in a diner while a girl sings nearby, Alex punches him and reprimands him harshly. This altercation precipitates the droogs' betrayal of Alex. In this way, Alex's reverence for music ends up distancing him from his inhumane lifestyle as well as his inhumane tendencies.

Accordingly, when the Reclamation Treatment deprives Alex of the fundamental human characteristic of free will, he is also robbed of his fundamental human ability to treasure music. When Alex hears music after being administered the treatment, it causes him so much anguish that he attempts suicide. "I slooshied [listened] for two seconds in like interest and joy, but then it all came over me, the start of the pain and the sickness, and I began to groan deep down in my keeshkas [guts]," he narrates. This scene demonstrates that art taps into the same fundamental aspect of the human psyche as the violence Alex was conditioned to abhor. Humanity is a complicated concept in Burgess's novel: it is simultaneously the best and the worst in Alex. The free will that compels him to murder and rape is also what fosters his earnest, edifying esteem for masterful art. Without this free will, Alex is a clockwork man—which, it seems, is hardly a man at all.

CONFORMISM

In any society, individuals forfeit some of their autonomy in exchange for protection against a world that is too dangerous to navigate alone. The universe of *A Clockwork Orange* is no exception. Throughout the book, Alex is forced to reconcile his arrogant individualism with his inability to live completely self-sufficiently. Droogs band together to protect themselves from other gangs, and Alex's selfish individualism alienates his own droogs to catastrophic results. Prisoners band together to protect themselves, and when Alex is singled out from his cellmates he is forced to undergo Reclamation Treatment. Society as a whole forces its members to balance moral considerations with their own self-interest—the prison chaplain, for example, initially does not speak out against Reclamation Treatment because he worries about his career. And, of course, the tension between absolute self-assertion and socialized life is at the center of Alex's maturation as a human being.

Some characters, like Dim and Billyboy or Dr. Brodsky, find ways to bend rules and manifest their inappropriate impulses while still remaining within the realm of the socially acceptable. For Alex, this tension is finally resolved at the end of the book, when, as a somewhat older person, he concludes that the benefits of socialized life are in fact worth the constraints it imposes on individual autonomy. He understands that to live peacefully and settle down with a family he must in turn subscribe to some aspects of socialized life that he might previously have considered oppressive. Now that he has matured, however, Alex recognizes that the benefits of social assimilation far outweigh the costs.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity encapsulates the ethical dilemma at the core of the novel. The book's only religious figure, the prison chaplain, is particularly bothered by the way that Reclamation Treatment deprives Alex's capacity for moral choice. The chaplain worries about the theological implications of this lack of free will: "What does God want?" he asks. "Does God want woodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some ways better than a man who has the good imposed upon him?" In contrast to the chaplain's skepticism about the therapy, Dr. Brodsky asserts that Reclamation Treatment has turned Alex into the "perfect

Christian." Alex even inadvertently compares himself to Jesus, when, after his treatment, he is unable to resist violent treatment from an orderly: "If that veck had stayed I might even have like presented the other cheek." Thus, the debate about whether or not Alex is truly a Christian extends to the debate about Reclamation Treatment as a whole: is a clockwork man a moral one, or a will-less machine?

"WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE THEN, EH?"

The phrase, "What's it going to be then, eh" is a recurring motif in *A Clockwork Orange*. Each of the book's three parts opens with these same seven words, and Burgess often repeats this question within chapters, filtered through different characters' voices. Although the phrase's exact wording is preserved in each appearance, its meaning is never exactly the same. The question is deployed in a wide variety of contexts, ranging from Alex's restlessness anticipation of a night of violence, to the prison chaplain's chastising of an unruly group of inmates, to addressing the reader's uncertainty about Alex's fate in prison. By showing that an identical linguistic phrase can serve so many different purposes, Burgess reinforces his theme of the versatility and power of language and speech contexts, which is a central focus of the book.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the W. W. Norton & Company edition of *A Clockwork Orange* published in 1995.

You came back to here and now whimpering sort of, with your rot all squaring up for a boohoohoo. Now that's very nice but very cowardly. You were not put on this earth just to get in touch with God. That sort of thing could sap all the strength and the goodness out of a chelloveck.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex crosses paths with a man who is high on drugs (hallucinogens in the "milk" he's drinking). The man is babbling to the point where he's almost impossible to understand (like Alex's nadsat slang, of course). Alex is dismissive of the man's experience. Though the man suggests that drugs are bringing him closer to a religious experience, Alex calls the man a coward and accuses him of sacrificing all his strength.

Alex's willingness to berate another character for his incoherence suggests his hypocrisy and self-centeredness: there are plenty of people who'd find Alex just as incoherent as the man. But more importantly, Alex demonstrates that he is a man of action: his "drugs" aren't chemical at all (although he is currently drinking milk laced with stimulants); rather, he takes a nearly-religious pleasure in acts of mindless violence.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

But poor old Dim kept looking up at the stars and planets and the Luna with his rot wide open like a kid who'd never viddied any such things before, and he said:
"What's on them, I wonder. What would be up there on things like that?"
I nudged him hard, saying: "Come, gloopy bastard as thou art. Think thou not on them. There'll be life like down here most likely, with some getting knifed and others doing the knifing. And now, with the nochy still molodoy, let us be on our way, O my brothers."

Related Characters: Alex, Dim (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 21

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex's follower, Dim, looks up at the stars and moon (Luna) and asks, half rhetorically, what might be on other planets. Alex dismisses Dim's question and urges his gang members to focus on the "here and now."

The passage is important because it reminds us why Alex is the leader of the gang, not just another member. Even Alex's followers, like Dim, seem to find it difficult to experience so much violence and bloodshed without, at the very least, taking a break--Dim seems to look up to the stars because he's wearying of beating up innocent people. Alex, on the other hand, seems to never tire of violence and sadism, and as a result, he acts as the leader and role model for his gang of Droogs.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

He'd taken a big snotty tashtook from his pocket and was mopping the red flow puzzled, keeping on looking at it frowning as if he thought that blood was for other vecks and not for him. It was like he was singing blood to make up for his vulgarity when that devotchka was singing music. But that devotchka was smecking away ha ha ha now with her droogs at the bar, her red rot working and her zoobies ashine, not having noticed Dim's filthy vulgarity. It was me really Dim had done wrong to.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker), Dim

Related Themes:

Page Number: 32-33

Explanation and Analysis

Alex and his gang of droogs have come to a bar. There, they hear a girl singing a song from an opera of which Alex is quite fond. Because his follower, Dim, is making obscene jokes and interfering with the music, Alex punches him in the mouth. Dim is surprised and seemingly a hurt by Alex's violence. Meanwhile, Alex continues listening to the singing, which--much to his relief--has continued on, just as it was before.

Notice that Alex claims that he, not the singer, was the real victim of Dim's "vulgarity." Burgess suggests's Alex's extreme narcissism, but also his near-religious devotion to certain kinds of art (notably music). Dim has ruined Alex's experience of the music, not the music itself, so Dim's "crime" is against Alex. Also notice the obvious irony in Alex's critique of Dim's vulgarity--after a night of brutal violence, it's a couple dirty jokes that qualify as "vulgar."

Oh, bliss, bliss and heaven. I lay all nagoy to the ceiling, my gulliver on my rookers on the pillow, glazzies closed, rot open in bliss, slooshying the sluice of lovely sounds. Oh, it was gorgeousness and gorgeosity made flesh. The trombones crunched redgold under my bed, and behind my gulliver the trumpets three-wise silverflamed, and there by the door the timps rolling through my guts and out again crunched like candy thunder. Oh, it was wonder of wonders. And then, a bird of like rarest spun heavenmetal, or like silvery wine flowing in a spaceship, gravity all nonsense now, came the violin solo above all the other strings, and those strings were like a cage of silk around my bed. Then flute and oboe bored, like worms of like platinum, into the thick thick toffee gold and silver. I was in such bliss, my brothers.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Alex savors the classical music playing from his record player. He praises the music with effusive, imagistic language, much of which is barely comprehensible. Nevertheless, it's clear that Alex conceives of the classical music in physical, often violent terms: words like "guts," "cage," and "crunch" illustrate the connection that Alex makes between high art and physical cruelty.

Alex, as we've realized by this point, is a bizarre, self-contradictory character. He loves cruelty and violence, yet he's also a fan of classical music and goes into raptures over experiencing beauty. What makes Alex so frustrating for reader is that while we're disgusted with his violence, we can't entirely "dismiss" his point of view: his love of music humanizes him. Alex is, in short, the perfect antihero: we hate him, but we feel a strange, perverse bond with him nonetheless.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

Just because the police have not picked you up lately doesn't, as you very well know, mean you've not been up to some nastiness.

Related Characters: P.R. Deltoid (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 42-43

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex is interviewed by his post-corrections officer, P.R. Deltoid. Deltoid has been keeping a close eye on Alex: he's eager to have Alex arrested for breaking the law. Nevertheless, Deltoid has yet to witness any of Alex's crimes. Deltoid himself acknowledges his problem: he knows very well that Alex has been up to no good, but has no evidence that can be used to put Alex away.

Unbeknownst to Alex, Deltoid's statement foreshadows the "solution" to the problem of violence that the government will attempt in the second part of the book. Left to his own devices, a young, reckless hoodlum can be a danger to other people--moreover, no amount of surveillance or law enforcement can ever completely control such a person. But if Alex is conditioned to avoid violence--i.e., if his mind

and spirit themselves are constantly being surveilled and monitored--then there will be no more "nastiness."

Part 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

More, badness is of the self, the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this. But what I do I do because I like to do.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 44-45

Explanation and Analysis

In this important passage, Alex offers a strange justification for his actions. Alex claims that he has been "born this way"--i.e., born to be violent, dangerous, and yet totally free. Because "God" (or perhaps the devil, "Bog") has created Alex with the gift of free will, Alex has the ability to hurt and kill other people--because that's what he likes to do. Alex is, one could say, the very embodiment of free will in all its glory.

And yet Alex also points out that there is a constant conflict between free will and authority figures. Governments, judges, and schools--in short, civilization--want to limit free will. Civilization cannot tolerate people like Alex, who rape and pillage without any self-restraint. As a result, society establishes laws, police officers, and education as means of controlling man's natural capacity for freedom and violence.

In short, Alex draws a contrast between man in his natural state of free will, and society with its natural inclination to subdue man's freedom.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Quotes

Bog murder you, you vonny stinking bratchnies. Where are the others? Where are my stinking traitorous droogs? One of my cursed grahzny bratties chained me on the glazzies. Get them before they get away. It was all their idea, brothers. They like forced me to do it. I'm innocent, Bog butcher you.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker), Dim, Pete, Georgie

Related Themes:

Page Number: 71

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex is arrested by the police for robbing a house and savagely beating the two owners of the house. He has also been attacked by his former allies, the droogs: they've beaten him up so that he can't run away before the police arrive. In one fell swoop, Alex loses his position in society altogether: he's betrayed by his gang members (who have become irritated with Alex's bullying manner and arrogance) and arrested by the police.

Amusingly, Alex howls his innocence, even claiming that "they," the droogs, forced him to rob the house and beat the occupants. Alex's protests are a far cry from his previous speech (see the quote above!), in which Alex boasts of his freedom and individual agency. When it's convenient for Alex to be free, he's free--but when it's convenient for him to have been "forced" to do something, Alex claims that he was forced.

Part 1, Chapter 7 Quotes

"Righty right, boys, we'll start off by showing him that we know the law, too, but that knowing the law isn't everything."

Related Characters: Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 75

Explanation and Analysis

Alex is arrested for robbery and assault and taken into a police station. The police officers in the station are amused when Alex cockily says that he wants his lawyer: they decide to teach Alex a lesson about "the law." The officers attack Alex, proving that they don't abide by the traditional laws of prisoners' rights. It would seem that many of the people in Alex's society are just as violent and amoral as Alex himself--they just hide it better by conforming to society's rules. In Alex's world, there are strong people and weak people, and the law barely counts for anything. Up until now, Alex has always been one of the strong--now, however, the shoe's on the other foot.

The passage is interesting because it shows Alex as a victim. Strangely, the biggest "bully" in the novel isn't Alex himself--it's the mysterious, corrupt state that controls England in

Burgess's dystopian future. Alex will be thrust into a battle of wills between his self and the English state--and at times, we'll be forced to throw our support to Alex.

Part 2, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ ...and that was the end of traitorous Georgie. The starry murderer had got off with Self Defence, as was really right and proper. Georgie being killed, though it was more than one year after me being caught by the millicents, it all seemed right and proper and like Fate.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker), Georgie

Related Themes:

Page Number: 87

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex receives a visit from his parents during his time in jail. During the visit, Alex learns that his old droog, Georgie, has been killed in self-defense by a homeowner whom Georgie was trying to rob. Alex is satisfied with Georgie's death, since Georgie was one of the droogs who turned on Alex by betraying him to the police. Alex is so self-centered (narcissism is, after all, one of the classic marks of a psychopath) that he sees no contradiction in objecting to his own punishment for robbery but rejoicing in Georgie's.

It's also interesting that Alex is willing to bring in a concept like Fate without much hesitation. Previously, Alex has cited the principles of freedom and free will--in prison, however, he seems to become more comfortable with the larger, more abstract concepts of Fate and destiny, a foreshadowing how Alex's own free will be compromised soon.

❝ Himself has grave doubts about it. I must confess I share those doubts. The question is whether such a technique can really make a man good. Goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man.

Related Characters: The Prison Chaplain (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex is preparing to volunteer for a complicated treatment called the Ludovico technique. Such a technique can condition a human being to avoid bad behavior of any kind--rape, violence, etc. Alex's Chaplain (the "charlie," as Alex calls him, an allusion to Charlie Chaplin) points out that the Ludovico technique only *appears* to make its subjects good. In reality, true goodness of the soul (the kind the Chaplain is concerned with) can never be the product of conditioning: one can only choose to be good or bad, voluntarily.

The Chaplain's words illustrate the tension between control and freedom in the second part of the novel. Scientific conditioning can foster the appearance of perfect morality, yet it does so by tyrannizing the spirit, forcing its subject to behave a certain way against their will.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ Common criminals like this unsavoury crowd...can best be dealt with on a purely curative basis. Kill the criminal reflex, that's all. Full implementation in a year's time. Punishment means nothing to them, you can see that. They enjoy their so-called punishment. They start murdering each other.

Related Characters: The Minister of the Interior (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 102

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex is introduced to the Minister of the Interior, a government official who gives the go-ahead to experiment with violent prisoners like Alex. The Minister gives a quick explanation of the problem, as he sees it. The Minister's job is to reduce crime. But the traditional methods of reducing crime—sending criminals to jail—don't really work for everyone. There are some, like Alex, who will never be rehabilitated, because they genuinely enjoy violence; moreover, they seem to genuinely enjoy being sent to jail, since jail is just another opportunity for violence. As we'll see, the Minister's solution to the problem will be to send Alex and his peers to be conditioned with the Ludovico technique, thus removing their very freedom to choose and enjoy criminal behaviors.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝❝ It may not be nice to be good, little 6655321. It may be horrible to be good. And when I say that to you I realize how self-contradictory that sounds. I know I shall have many sleepless nights about this. What does God want? Does God want woodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some ways better than a man who has the good imposed upon him...You are passing now to a region where you will be beyond the reach of the power of prayer. A terrible terrible thing to consider. And yet, in a sense, in choosing to be deprive of the ability to make an ethical choice, you have in a sense really chosen the good.

Related Characters: The Prison Chaplain (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 106

Explanation and Analysis

In this important passage, Alex--about to begin scientific treatment that will render him unable to be violent or criminal--meets with the Prison Chaplain once more. The Chaplain warns Alex that he won't enjoy his treatment at all. The Chaplain's other reasons for discouraging Alex from the Ludovico technique are complicated and subtle. As the Chaplain sees it, conditioning violates man's most sacred gift: the gift of free will. God has created human beings with the potential to be wicked: if God wanted, he could have *forced* men to be good, but he didn't. With the Ludovico technique, the Chaplain believes, human beings are essentially taking the "short cut" that God himself did not take: they're forcing each other to obey the law, at the cost of free will.

In the end, the Chaplain doesn't seem to have a clear-cut answer, even for himself. He believes that free will--i.e., the rights of the individual--is crucial to one's humanity (and the state of one's soul in a Christian worldview), but he also recognizes that society as a whole would benefit from fewer criminals. Furthermore, the Chaplain recognizes that Alex himself has *chosen*to be robbed of choice--so in a sense even the Ludovico technique requires free will and a decision to *want*to be good.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝❝ This was real, very real, though if you thought about it properly you couldn't imagine lewdies actually agreeing to having all this done to them in a film, and if these films were made by the Good or the State you couldn't imagine them being allowed to take these films without like interfering with what was going on.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 116

Explanation and Analysis

As Alex begins his conditioning treatment, he is shown a series of films depicting various horrible acts--gang rape, murder, etc. As Alex watches these films, it occurs to him that the government has actually commissioned the films, and probably commissioned individuals to commit the heinous acts being depicted (the acts are "very real"). Alex is surprised that the government would approve of such crimes being committed: ironically, in order to prevent people like Alex from committing crimes, the government has had to sponsor similar such crimes.

Alex's observation suggests that the government of his country isn't really any more moral than he is: rather, people who work in the government (like the police officers who beat up Alex!) have simply found a convenient outlet for their violence and bad behavior. In short, Alex is a bully and a sadist, but the people who work for the government are bullies and sadists, too.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Quotes

❝❝ I do not wish to describe, brothers, what other horrible veshches I was like forced to viddy that afternoon. The like minds of this Dr. Brodsky and Dr. Branom and the others in white coats, and remember there was this devotchka twiddling with the knobs and watching the meters, they must have been more cally and filthy than any prestoopnick in the Staja itself. Because I did not think it was possible for any veck to even think of making films of what I was forced to viddy, all tied to this chair and my glazzies made to be wide open.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker), Dr. Brodsky, Dr. Branom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 119

Explanation and Analysis

Alex refuses to comment on the other films that he is forced to watch as a part of his conditioning treatment. The content of the films is so horrific that Alex didn't know such filth was humanly possible. Interestingly, Alex observes that the doctors who made him watch the films are seemingly worse than any of the people he encountered in his prison, in that they don't seem to mind witnessing such horrors. Subtly, Burgess implies that the government officials who sponsor Alex's conditioning aren't any more moral than Alex himself: they've simply found ways of indulging in their own desires for cruelty and sadism, without the repercussions of the law. Alex's observations also underscore the point that the government isn't truly interested in conditioning Alex for moral reasons at all: rather, the government is conditioning Alex for the practical reason that it wants to cut down on crime and save money.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ Stop, you grahzny disgusting sods. It's a sin, that's what it is, a filthy unforgivable sin, you bratchnies!... Using Ludwig van like that. He did no harm to anyone. Beethoven just wrote music.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 127

Explanation and Analysis

Here Alex is forced to watch one more film: footage of Nazi war crimes, accompanied by the music of Beethoven. Alex, who previously loved classical music, is horrified by the use of his favorite composer for such a horrible film. He cries out that it is a "sin" for the scientists to use Beethoven as a part of his conditioning.

After a hundred pages of bullying, robbing, raping, and killing, Alex is--out of nowhere--portrayed as the voice of morality, the most "moral" person in the room. Notice how Alex uses words like "sin" and "unforgivable" to criticize the doctors for their sadism. Naturally, it's hard to take Alex totally seriously (he seems more upset about the bastardization of music itself than about the specific crimes he's watching). And yet Alex has a point: the scientists who are subjecting Alex to the torture of the Ludovico technique are in some ways less moral and "human" (because they lack appreciation for music and beauty) than Alex himself.

Unlikely as it might be, Burgess portrays Alex as both the victim and the moral authority of the chapter.

❝ And what, brothers, I had to escape into sleep from then was the horrible and wrong feeling that it was better to get the hit than give it. If that veck had stayed I might even have like presented the other cheek.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 135

Explanation and Analysis

Alex has just finished his scientific conditioning, and to test whether the conditioning has worked, a man hits Alex in the face. Instead of fighting back, as Alex was once apt to do, Alex cowers on the floor--he wants to defend himself, but at the same time he feels a deep sense of pain and disgust, the product of his conditioning.

The passage includes a sly allusion to a famous Biblical verse, in which Jesus Christ urges his followers to "turn the other cheek" if an enemy hits them. Where Christ wanted his followers to choose to be righteous pacifists, Alex has no real choice but to submit to his enemies' authority. Alex is *behaving* morally, but he's not a moral agent: he's just a puppet, pushed and prodded into submission by the Ludovico technique he's just completed.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ He has no real choice, has he? Self-interest, fear of physical pain, drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice.

Related Characters: The Prison Chaplain (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Prison Chaplain stands up on behalf of Alex, now conditioned to avoid any violence or sexuality

whatsoever. Alex has been displayed before an audience of important government officials, all of whom are delighted with Alex's clear inability to commit a crime of any kind. The only person who criticizes Alex's conditioning is the Chaplain, who objects that Alex has surrendered his free will, and thus his humanity.

The Chaplain is perhaps the only character in the novel who is presented in an entirely positive light. He doesn't approve of Alex's crimes, but he's also wise and generous enough to defend Alex's rights as a human being, and above all, Alex's right to make his own choice--in a sense, Alex's right to *choose* to commit crimes and do evil. One could say that the Chaplain is the only defender of human freedom in the audience--everyone else believes that the ends justify the means (i.e., Alex's inability to commit any kind of crime justifies the sacrifice of his free will and his transformation into a "clockwork orange").

He will be your true Christian...ready to turn the other cheek, ready to be crucified rather than crucify, sick to the very heart at the thought even of killing a fly.

Related Characters: Dr. Brodsky (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 143

Explanation and Analysis

In response to the Prison Chaplain's objection that Alex's scientific conditioning has rendered him incapable of making the most basic free decisions, Dr. Brodsky--one of the men responsible for organizing and supervising Alex's treatment--offers a spirited defense. Brodsky, recognizing that the Chaplain is attacking the Ludovico treatment from a Christian standpoint, insists that Alex has become the perfect Christian. Brodsky argues that Alex will be selfless and moral at all times--he'll "turn the other cheek," as Christ urged his followers to do.

Brodsky's words are ironic and contradictory on many different levels. As we know very well, Alex's instinct to "turn the other cheek" is a bastardization of Christianity. Alex doesn't choose to be selfless, as Christ advocated; rather, he's forced to behave morally by a physical sense of disgust and pain. In a broader sense, then, Alex's inability to exercise free will contradicts the strong emphasis on individual freedom that has always been a cornerstone of the Christian faith (in most denominations). Finally, it's important to remember Dr. Brodsky's sadistic attitude during Alex's treatment--he enjoyed causing Alex pain, and even seemed to enjoy watching some of the films that caused Alex disgust. Brodsky is hardly a "true Christian," making his sanctimonious speech particularly hard to swallow.

Part 3, Chapter 1 Quotes

You've made others suffer...It's only right you should suffer proper. I've been told everything that you've done, sitting here at night round the family table, and pretty shocking it was to listen to. Made me real sick a lot of it did.

Related Characters: Joe (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 155

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, we're introduced to Joe, the lodger who lives with Alex's parents after Alex is arrested for robbery and murder. Joe has heard everything about Alex and Alex's crimes. So when Alex returns to his old home, Joe immediately attacks Alex for causing so many other people pain and suffering.

Joe isn't a major character in the novel, but he embodies the iron law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Joe believes that pain must be balanced out with pain--every one of Alex's crimes must be inflicted upon Alex for the sake of "justice." The problem with the "eye for an eye" rule, as we've already seen, is that it gives rise to a sadistic middleman: the executioner whose job is to inflict the proper punishment upon the criminal. As bad as Alex is, his jailers, doctors, wardens, and supervisors are in some ways worse--and yet these "middlemen" have found a way to channel their cruelty into the socially acceptable form of law enforcement.

Part 3, Chapter 2 Quotes

It was that these doctor bratchnies had so fixed things that any music that was like for the emotions would make me sick just like viddying or wanting to do violence. It was because all those violence films had music with them. And I remembered especially that horrible Nazi film with the Beethoven Fifth, last movement. And now here was lovely Mozart made horrible.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker), Dr. Brodsky, Dr. Branom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 157

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Alex discovers that his conditioning has left him incapable of enjoying classical music. During the procedure, Alex was made to listen to Beethoven's music--as a result, he's come to associate all music (not just Beethoven) with pain and nausea.

It's possible to pity Alex and despise him at the same time. On one hand, Alex has been unfairly punished for his crimes: the sadistic scientists who administered his treatment have deprived him of his ability to commit acts of violence, but they've also stolen away his free will and ability to appreciate beauty. This certainly doesn't mean that Alex is innocent and the doctors are guilty; rather, it suggests that society is divided into the strong and the weak. When he was a strong man, Alex bullied those who were weaker than he. Now that Alex is weak, the strong have treated him cruelly and sadistically, depriving him of his love for music and therefore of his love for life.

Part 3, Chapter 3 Quotes

It is not right, not always, for lewdies in the town to viddy too much of our summary punishments. Streets must be kept clean in more than one way.

Related Characters: Billyboy (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 168

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex "reunites" with some old droogs, Billyboy (his former rival) and Dim (his former follower). To Alex's surprise, Dim and Billyboy have found a new line of work: they've become police officers. As officers, the former droogs take a clear delight in beating up the weak and defenseless, just as they always have. The difference is that now, the law is on their side: nobody can arrest them for their cruelty or sadism.

When Billyboy and Dim find Alex, they naturally take the opportunity to beat him. As Billyboy explains, he and Dim will take Alex to a "private area," where they'll be able to hurt Alex without anyone knowing about it. Billyboy's speech illustrates the full corruption and hypocrisy of Alex's society: it condemns one kind of violence (the unlawful kind practiced by Alex and his droogs) and yet permits another kind of violence (the legal kind practiced by law enforcement officers)--even when it's being practiced by exactly the same people, Dim and Billyboy.

Part 3, Chapter 4 Quotes

You've sinned, I suppose, but your punishment has been out of all proportion. They have turned you into something other than a human being. You have no power of choice any longer. You are committed to socially acceptable acts, a little machine capable only of good. And I see that clearly—that business about the marginal conditionings. Music and the sexual act, literature and art, all must be a source now not of pleasure but of pain.

Related Characters: F. Alexander (speaker), Alex

Related Themes:

Page Number: 174

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alex ends up back in the house that he broke into in the first part of the novel. The house's owner, F. Alexander, recognizes that Alex must have been a dangerous criminal, but doesn't realize that Alex was the very man who raped and (unknowingly) murdered his wife.

Ironically, F. Alexander acts as Alex's protector, delivering a long speech in which he criticizes the government for depriving Alex of his free will--something far more precious than a lower crime rate. Alexander, an artist, is especially moved that Alex has been conditioned to despise music of all kinds--as Alexander sees it, Alex's newfound hatred of music is proof of the barbarism of his scientific conditioning. The question now becomes: what will Alexander do when he discovers that Alex was the man who killed his wife? In other words, does Alexander really value Alex's free will more highly than Alex's ability to commit crimes, when such crimes become intimately personal to Alexander's experience?

Part 3, Chapter 5 Quotes

When I woke up I could hear slooshy music coming out of the wall, real gromky, and it was that that had dragged me out of my bit of like sleep. It was a symphony that I knew real horrorshow but had not slooshied for many a year, namely the Symphony Number Three of the Danish veck Otto Skadelig, a very gromky and violent piece, especially in the first movement, which was what was playing now. I slooshied for two seconds in like interest and joy, but then it all came over me, the start of the pain and the sickness, and I began to groan deep down in my keeshkas. And then there I was, me who had loved music so much, crawling off the bed and going oh oh oh to myself and then bang bang banging on the wall creching: "Stop, stop it, turn it off!"

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 186-187

Explanation and Analysis

It's now clear that F. Alexander suspects that Alex was the man responsible for killing F. Alexander's wife. (F. Alexander recognizes Alex's nadsat slang, and, it's implied, he finally realizes that Alex knew Dim, one of the other droogs responsible for Alexander's wife's death). Previously, F. Alexander was willing to treat Alex as a respected guest--he pitied Alex for his conditioning. F. Alexander always knew that Alex was a dangerous criminal, but now that F. Alexander knows that Alex murdered *his* wife, he's determined to get his revenge. Sadistically, Alexander plays music, knowing that Alex now responds to all music with nausea and intense pain.

The scene is important because it suggests the interplay between personal and abstract motives. F. Alexander had piously claimed that free will is more valuable than a low crime rate, and therefore, Alex's conditioning is "immoral." But now that F. Alexander seems to know the full truth about Alex, he can't be so pure--in short, his personal motives override his abstract commitment to justice. At the same time, F. Alexander finds a clever way to kill two birds with one stone--he tortures Alex in an especially sadistic way, thus arranging for Alex to commit suicide. In this way, F. Alexander will avenge his wife's rape and murder (personal motive) while also turning Alex into propaganda against the government (abstract motive).

Oh it was gorgeosity and yumyumyum. When it came to the Scherzo I could viddy myself very clear running and running on like very light and mysterious nogas, carving the whole litso of the creeching world with my cut-throat britva. And there was the slow movement and the lovely last singing movement still to come. I was cured all right.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 199

Explanation and Analysis

In the final sentences of this chapter, Alex recovers from his conditioning. He's no longer afraid of classical music, rape, or violence--in short, he's returned to the state of mind he was in before being sent to prison. As Alex rejoices in his liberation from the Ludovico technique, he seems to pick up right where he left off: with thoughts of rape and murder, backed up with an ecstatic experience of beautiful classical music.

While Burgess criticizes the tyrannical government that strips Alex of his free will, that doesn't mean that Alex is automatically the hero of the book. On the contrary, Alex is just as brutal and sadistic as the government that imprisons him--the only difference is that the government is big and powerful, while Alex is one man. There is, in short, no real morality in Alex's society: the only law is that the strong will dominate the weak. Alex beats up drunk old men; later, the state, the police officers, and F. Alexander hurt Alex; and finally, when he is cured of his conditioning, Alex prepares to get back to beating up drunk old men.

(Notice that Burgess never actually shows Alex returning to his old ways; only preparing to return to them. In the final chapter of the book--included in the British edition only--Burgess will show Alex turning a new leaf altogether.)

Tomorrow is all like sweet flowers and the turning vonny earth and the stars and the old Luna up there and your old droog Alex all on his oddy knocky seeking like a mate. And all that cal. A terrible grahzny vonny world, really, O my brothers. And so farewell from your little droog. And to all others in this story profound shooms of lipmusic brrrrrr. And they can kiss my shames. But you, O my brothers, remember sometimes thy little Alex that was. Amen. And all that cal.

Related Characters: Alex (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel (at least in the British edition), Alex claims to have turned a new leaf and "gone soft." He renounces violence and sadism altogether and prepares to begin a calmer, more peaceful way of life. Alex's behavior suggests that his "ultraviolence" was just a youthful phase, one which all people, even bloodthirsty Alex, outgrow sooner later.

The passage--the final paragraph of the novel--underscores why it's so important to allow people the freedom to choose what to do. The government's justification for conditioning Alex was that Alex was incurably violent and cruel. But as Burgess shows, Alex isn't incurable at all--on the contrary, he matures into a calm, seemingly peaceful man. Free will is humanity's most important gift--it enables people to change from hopelessly violent into peaceful and voluntarily obedient. Of course, it's been suggested that Burgess is being ironic: the fact that Alex's final words are delivered in nadsat (the same youthful slang he's been speaking all along) might suggest that Alex hasn't really changed that much after all--perhaps, like the doctors who conditioned him, he's just found new, socially acceptable outlets for his violence.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

In a strange slang dialect that mixes non-English words and elevated diction, Alex recounts sitting in the Korova Milkbar and making plans with his three "droogs," Dim, Pete, and Georgie. The gang has plenty of cash, and thus doesn't need to assault anyone and steal their money, but Alex reflects that "money isn't everything." He sees three "devotchkas" seated nearby and reflects that he would pursue them if there weren't four boys in his gang. He considers drugging Dim's milk and leaving him behind, as Dim is very ugly and stupid, but figures that Dim's fighting skills make him a bad person to cross.

The book's violent opening is arresting, and quickly characterizes an unfamiliar and alienating world. Readers are addressed in Alex's disorienting dialect with no warning and no ability to decipher much of what he says. Moreover, the four characters appear not to be bound by some of the most basic social conventions—namely, the ones that prohibit random theft and violence.

Next to Alex sits a man who is high on drugs and babbling incoherently. Alex recalls the sensation of using drugs, which he considers to be a cowardly act. It may bring a man closer to God, but that experience can make a man weak.

Alex has no time for spiritual or moral considerations, as he is entirely fixated upon real-world immediate gratification. To compromise his worldly situation for ethical or religious reasons would, in his mind, constitute weakness.

Alex decides to leave, and strikes the babbling man on his way out. The street is abandoned—because, Alex explains, of a police shortage and the presence of youngsters like him and his droogs. The group then comes across a doddering old man with his arms full of library books, a rarity in this day. The four smiling boys surround the man, and Alex politely asks to see his books. The man fearfully hands them over, and Alex accuses them of being pornography, even though their titles are scientific. The droogs start ripping the books apart, and then brutally beat the man. They rifle through his pockets and leave him to stagger off, bloody.

These first instances of the droogs' random violence are particularly shocking. Alex and his friends have absolutely no motivation for the extreme violence they wreak, and they seem completely remorseless. At the same time, this startling violence forces the reader to recognize their own reaction to that violence—whether horror, or illicit thrill, or both. Also noteworthy is the way Alex bends social conventions to his advantage: he affects a formal voice in an attempt to disarm the old man, and he uses social condemnation of pornography as a false pretense for assaulting the innocent scholar.

To create an alibi and spend some of their cash, the droogs go over to another bar, the Duke of New York. They order drinks for themselves and for three old women, who are leery of the boys. They also purchase food for the women. The boys then leave the bar and head to a shop, where they assault the owner and his wife. Once the proprietors have been subdued, the boys empty the cash register and take some cigarettes for themselves. Alex considers raping the owner's wife, but decides he will have sex later that evening.

The boys' apparent altruism towards the old women is merely a calculated move to craft an alibi. Alex's calculating, emotionless nature is also apparent in the utterly matter-of-fact way he contemplates raping the shopkeeper's wife.

The boys return to the bar and tell the old women that they've been in the bar the whole time. The women knowingly play along. After some time, the police arrive and ask what the boys were doing this evening. The old women corroborate the alibi, and the police leave.

Society's safety mechanisms appear to have deteriorated to the point that the droogs can run riot with impunity. The police are content with the boys' flimsy alibi, and there is no institutional framework that compels the boys to acknowledge and pay for their wrongdoings.

PART 1, CHAPTER 2

The droogs leave the bar, and find an old man singing drunkenly outside. Alex is disgusted by the man's condition, and Dim punches the man several times. The man tells the droogs that he's tired of living in a world where the young mistreat the old, and would be relieved if they killed him. The boys beat the man, but he keeps on singing; finally, they leave him in a mess of blood and vomit.

Part of Alex's contempt for drugs likely stems from drugs' ability to remove a user's power to control his situation. It is particularly frustrating, therefore, that Alex is incapable of controlling the drunk man outside. Despite their best and most brutal efforts, they cannot silence his ability to sing out of his own free will.

Alex and the droogs come across a rival named Billyboy and his gang of five droogs. Billyboy's gang is in the midst of assaulting a girl, who runs off when Alex's droogs arrive. The groups exchange insults and begin to fight. Even though Alex's droogs are outnumbered, they outfight Billyboy's gang, because Dim is an exceptionally strong and vicious fighter. As Alex knife-fights Billyboy, the police arrive and the gangs scatter.

This encounter with a rival gang reinforces the image of Alex's world as one where violent chaos is constant and allies are hard to come by. Everyone outside of the droogs' immediate circle is presumed to be an enemy, and confrontations are brutal and dangerous. Alliances between droogs seem to be made more out of necessity than out of genuine caring.

As the gang walks, Dim glances at the sky and asks Alex what might be found on other planets. Alex rudely shuts Dim's question down, and the gang goes off to steal a car. In their stolen vehicle, the gang drives past two young lovers, whom they beat up. Then they head to a village outside of town, hoping to break into a house and harm its occupants.

Alex's distaste for non-worldly concerns comes through once again in his callous response to Dim's innocent query. At this point, the gang's ultra-violent night is so saturated with wrongdoing that it has become almost surreal.

The group reaches a cottage with a sign that reads "HOME." Alex knocks and, speaking in his gentlemanly voice, tells the young woman who answers that his friend has taken ill. He asks to make a phone call, but the woman says they have no phone; he then asks for a glass of water and the woman tells him to wait. While the woman is gone, Alex reaches past the door and undoes the chain, and he and his droogs storm into the house, wearing masks to hide their identities.

Yet again, Alex takes advantage of social convention to enact his violent ambitions. He affects a respectable voice and manipulates others' altruistic tendencies in order to place himself in a position of power.

Inside, the young woman cowers in a corner. A young man seated before a typewriter accosts the trespassing droogs. Alex grabs a stack of papers on the man's desk: it is a book, entitled *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex derisively reads the book's first line, then begins to rip the pages apart. Dim starts beating the writer. Alex then tells the group it is time for "the other vetsch [thing]." The droogs force the writer to watch while they take turns raping the young woman. Once finished, the droogs smash some of the writer's possessions, and then drive off.

The text's self-reference in this scene implies that Alex's destructive tendencies may go on to destroy the work as a whole. Furthermore, his actions—pre-empting his droogs in the gang-rape order, forcing the writer to watch his wife being violated, and so on—indicate that he is obsessed chiefly with power, rather than sexual or financial gratification.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3

The boys drive until the car runs out of gas, and they then push it into a canal. They walk to a nearby train station and ride back into the city center. Once in the center, the droogs walk back to the Korova Milkbar. The babbling man is still there, and Dim strikes his foot, but the man is too drugged to notice. The bar is full of carousing "nadsats" [teens]. A girl nearby begins to sing, and Alex suddenly gets goosebumps. He recognizes the song as part of a German opera. Alex then notices Dim making vulgar jokes, and is furious that Dim would disrespect the music. Alex reaches over and punches Dim in the mouth. Dim, puzzled, asks why Alex punched him, and Alex tells him he is behaving inappropriately. Dim, indignant, tells Alex that he resents his authority. As the two bicker, Pete tries to resolve the conflict, but Alex asserts his authority further. Alex tells the group that he is the one who gives orders. Even though Pete and Dim have voiced disapproval with Alex's behavior, all the droogs reluctantly go along with Alex's words.

Alex's conduct here is out of character. Up until this point, he has completely disregarded social norms; suddenly, the presence of music makes him hyper-respectful. Throughout the book, Alex's appreciation for the fine arts clashes with his sociopathic tendencies and complicates his character. This exchange itself encapsulates the conflicting aspects of Alex's persona: on one hand, his reverence for music is admirable, yet on the other, this same reverence exacerbates his tendency to dominate his droogs.

Dim suggests that the droogs all go home, and they agree to meet the next day at the Korova Milkbar. Alex walks back to the apartment he shares with his parents. When he enters, his parents are asleep, but his mother has left him dinner. After eating greedily, Alex goes to his room and plays a classical music recording. His parents will not bother him about the noise, because he has "taught" them not to. Alex lies on his bed and listens joyfully to the music. Beethoven and Bach make him think more about the meaning of *A Clockwork Orange*, and he reflects that if he could go back to the cottage called HOME, he would assault its occupants even more viciously.

Alex's home dynamic affirms that no force in his life prevents him from being governed by his immediate impulses. Instead of deferring to his parents, he has manipulated and frightened them into accommodating his whims. He finds gratification in loud music, without regard for whether it will disturb others. The beautiful classical music he loves is again connected with violence, and for him there seems to be a kind of beauty in violence, in breaking with social convention and causing torment.

PART 1, CHAPTER 4

Alex wakes up early the next morning, but decides that he doesn't feel like going to school. His mother encourages him to attend class, but Alex tells her that he needs to sleep off a headache. Alex's mother and father leave for their jobs, and leave Alex breakfast in the oven.

Alex's parents' deference to their son's obvious deception make it clear that no one dares discipline the boy. His every need is provided for, but his lack of responsibility allows him solely to pursue his reprehensible impulses.

Alex drifts back to sleep and experiences an uncanny dream. In it, Georgie wears a military general's clothing and commands Dim to whip Alex, because Alex has dirt on his clothing. Dim chases Alex around, striking him with the whip—each strike coincides with a buzzing sound.

This dream is a clear allegory for Alex's social insecurities. He fears insubordination from Georgie and Dim and tries to suppress the behavior with violent, authoritarian outbursts. Still, this dream illustrates that Alex's attempts to solidify his power may not be as effective as he hopes.

Alex wakes up with his heart racing, and he realizes that the buzzing noise was his real-life doorbell. P.R. Deltoid, Alex's haggard Post-Corrective Adviser, has come to check in on the boy for missing school. Deltoid warns Alex to keep his behavior in line. Alex protests that he hasn't been caught committing any wrongdoing, but Deltoid counters that he has heard of Alex's misdeeds, even if there is not enough evidence to justify an arrest. Deltoid tells Alex that he is ripe for a punishment if he continues his misbehavior, but Alex continues to feign righteousness.

Because he has yet to be caught red-handed, Alex is, on paper, still a well-behaved boy. Thus, there is little that society can do to govern him, be it through parental discipline or the counseling of P.R. Deltoid. Alex understands this, and thinks that he simply needs to maintain a mask of virtue in order to avoid punishment. However, despite Alex's well-behaved façade, it is clear to those around him that he will soon have to suffer the consequences of his lawlessness. Deltoid's name seems to directly imply the "muscle" of the state that will enact those consequences.

After P.R. Deltoid leaves, Alex brews tea and reflects on the adviser's warnings. Alex acknowledges that he leads an immoral life, but isn't deterred by the possibility of imprisonment—if he gets caught, he'll simply pick up his violent lifestyle when he finishes his sentence. "Badness," to Alex, represents a manifestation of the "self" as God intended it. Governments and institutions impose rules of behavior to suppress the self, and history is composed of struggles to assert the self in the face of these institutions.

To Alex, laws seem to exist only to restrain him, rather than to protect others. He believes that his freedom to act as he pleases must be absolute, in order for him to be free at all. His invocation of religion is surprising, particularly because religious institutions are often responsible for precisely the sorts of restrictions on autonomy that he seems to decry—this may be yet another instance of Alex manipulating social conventions to suit him only when it is convenient.

While he eats breakfast, Alex browses the newspaper and comes across an article on "Modern Youth." Such articles are common, and Alex views them cynically—but he appreciates being considered newsworthy. As he listens to classical music and dresses for the day, Alex recalls one article that argued that "A Lively Appreciation of the Arts" would "civilize" troubled youth. Alex comments that his lively appreciation for the arts simply makes him feel more compelled to act abhorrently.

Alex's response to the newspaper article illustrates that morality and social obedience cannot be reduced to simple criteria, like "A Lively Appreciation of the Arts." After all, Alex seems in some ways to be an ideal young man—and in many more ways to be a menace. Violence and art are deeply connected, and an affinity for one does not represent a rejection of the other, no matter what social norms may try to dictate.

Alex sets out for the day. He muses that while nighttime belongs to him and his droogs, the daytime is the realm of law-abiding adults and policemen. He enters a record store and finds two preteen girls browsing pop records inside; to Alex, they seem to pretentiously think they are very cultured. Alex purchases a copy of Beethoven's Ninth, but before he leaves to play the record at home, he is struck with an idea. He begins to speak coyly with the girls, and offers to take them out to eat at a restaurant around the corner. They eat greedily, and Alex is repulsed, but decides he will give them an "education" after lunch.

Alex's view of the young girls recalls the attitudes about conformism that he espouses earlier in the book. He seems disgusted by how readily the girls mimic social conventions in order to seem sophisticated. Alex values the assertion of one's self and one's desires over societal restrictions. Given that, and what else we've seen from Alex, the "education" he hopes to offer them seems likely to be a perverse illustration of the self prevailing above institutional and legal norms.

After lunch, Alex brings the girls back to his apartment. He gives them liquor and plays records, while they dance around his room. After some time, the girls have undressed. Alex then injects drugs into himself, puts on the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth, and proceeds to rape the girls. At first, the girls are too drunk to understand what Alex is doing to them. Later on, however, they begin to regain their senses. As they put their clothes back on, they curse at Alex, calling him a "beast and hateful animal." The girls leave, and Alex falls asleep on his bed as the Ode to Joy plays once more.

This vignette once again complicates Alex's character by juxtaposing horrifying violence and refined artistic beauty, in order to show that these two poles of human behavior are not mutually exclusive. The unfortunate girls call Alex an "animal," and he indeed behaves like one—but at the same time, his appreciation for Beethoven illustrates a profoundly human reverence for art.

PART 1, CHAPTER 5

Alex wakes up in the evening. His parents are dining at home, and he emerges from his room. In his "loving only son" voice, he tells his parents that he feels much better and is ready to go out to his nighttime job. His parents are suspicious about how he earns money, but Alex deflects their questions with evasive answers. Alex's father explains that he is concerned because the night before, he had a dream in which Alex was beaten up by his friends. Alex is intrigued, as this parallels his nightmare as well. However, he assures his dad that all is well, and thinks to himself that "dreams go by opposites."

Alex tries to appease his parents with linguistic affectations, but his dissimulations are not rock-solid. His parents seem to drop their questioning more out of fear than out of contentment. What's more, his father's ominous dream further foreshadows the omens set forth by Alex's dream and Deltoid's visit. Alex cannot maintain his virtuous appearance and sustain his evil behavior without having to take responsibility for his actions.

Before leaving, Alex hands his father some money to buy liquor. He is surprised to find Dim, Pete, and Georgie waiting for him outside his apartment—the droogs explain that they wanted to meet him because they were concerned they had offended him last night. Alex tries to resume his usual condescending, authoritative rapport with the droogs, but Georgie tells him that there is a "new way" the group will operate. The droogs are growing up, Georgie explains, and they are ready for bigger and better heists. Alex carries himself calmly, but in his mind he angrily realizes that his dream has come true.

Finally, Alex is beginning to be held in some way accountable for his reprehensible treatment of others. Unlike his father, whom he bribes with liquor money, Alex cannot keep his droogs under his thumb. Typically, however, Alex has no desire to compromise. Instead of learning from others' reactions to him, he is jealously preoccupied with reestablishing his power.

The droogs decide to head over to the Korova Milkbar. On the way, however, Alex decides that rather than stew in his anger, he should act more impulsively. He hears a snippet of Beethoven coming from a house's radio, and is inspired. He draws his knife and challenges Georgie to a duel. While Alex and Georgie circle one another, Dim moves to intervene, but Pete stops him. Alex lands a glancing blow on Georgie's hand, causing him to drop the knife. Alex then challenges Dim. Though Dim lands a blow with his chain, Alex manages to incapacitate him by cutting his wrist. The other droogs are worried Dim will bleed to death, but the blood flow stops once he is bandaged.

Once again, beautiful art motivates Alex to commit abominable actions. The impulses of his subconscious seem to motivate him both to enjoy Beethoven and to fight his friends. Alex's handling of this situation also illustrates the tenuousness of his relationship to his droogs. He has no issues seriously harming his peers, and while this conduct may seem to reinforce his authority on paper, it is likely to foster further resentment and mutiny down the line.

Satisfied that he has taught his droogs their place, Alex leads them back to the Duke of New York. They again purchase drinks for the old women. Dim sits in a daze, mumbling that he could have beaten Alex in the fight. After Alex ensures that things are as they were before, the group decides—at Georgie's suggestion—to rob the house of a rich old woman who lives in a house called "The Manse."

Though the droogs find themselves in the same situation as the night before, the below-the-surface dynamics are clearly different. Alex's leadership may be nominally restored, but Dim's discontent promises future unrest, and Alex's deafness to social cues makes him unlikely to anticipate it.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6

The droogs head to the old part of town, hoping to loot antiques. They arrive at "The Manse" and see an old woman feeding her cats inside. Alex rings the doorbell and, in his gentlemanly voice, explains that his friend has fallen ill and that he needs to make an emergency phone call. The woman says she won't fall for his tricks, and threatens to shoot him. Alex pretends to leave the doorstep and summons his droogs to hoist him onto Dim's shoulders. This allows Alex to break into the house through a window. He hears the woman talking to her cats, and decides that he will demonstrate his leadership by committing this episode of "ultra-violence" all on his own. Alex enters the living room and accosts the woman. He grabs a valuable-looking statue off of a shelf, and then notices a bust of Ludwig van Beethoven. Captivated by the bust, Alex fails to watch his step and slips on a cat's milk saucer. Alex falls on the ground and the old woman beats him with her cane; soon, however, Alex grabs the cane and makes the woman fall over. Once she is downed, Alex kicks the woman in the face. As Alex again makes his way towards the Beethoven bust, the woman's cats attack him. Alex falls to the ground again and is set upon by the woman and her cats. Enraged, Alex hits the woman in the head with the statue he is holding. Alex then picks himself up from the floor and hears police sirens approaching.

Notably, Alex's linguistic tricks have no effect on the old woman. She is sufficiently removed from society that his astute manipulations of social cues mean little to her. Alex's behavior inside the Manse is simultaneously pathetic, comical, and utterly horrifying. His clumsy mismanagement of the break-in reminds readers that he is still a fifteen-year-old boy, rather than a savvy criminal. All the same, his brutal assault on the elderly woman erases any sympathy with which one might view his predicament. Notably, it is Alex's love for Beethoven that makes him vulnerable in this scenario; perhaps this is a subtle nod to the redemptive power of his affection for art.

Alex exits the house and sees Pete and Georgie running away, while Dim stands on the doorstep. Alex tells Dim that the police are coming, and Dim replies, "You stay to meet them." He hits Alex in the eyes with his chain and tells him that it was "not right…to get on to me like the way you done, brat." Alex writhes on the ground, blinded by the blow, and Dim runs off. The police arrive and are delighted to apprehend the boy, whom they call "little Alex" because they are familiar with his lawless antics.

At last, Alex receives his comeuppance for mistreating his allies. Importantly, his determination to pull off the heist alone and reject social collaboration was what allowed his droogs to conspire against him and betray him. Also noteworthy is the fact that retribution from the droogs coincides with retribution from society as a whole. Without one social support network, Alex loses his position within society as a whole. Now that Alex has been abandoned by his friends, larger societal enforcers, like the police, are free to discipline him.

Alex is thrown into a police car and carted off to the station. All the while, he rails against his "stinking traitorous droogs" and tries to foist the blame upon them. When the car reaches the station, the police violently haul Alex inside, and Alex realizes that "I was going to get nothing like fair play from these stinky grahzny bratchnies, Bog blast them."

Paradoxically, Alex's complete self-centeredness motivates him to view himself as the only person capable of sound leadership and decision-making, while at the same time attributing all mistakes to his friends. Both Alex and his droogs are willing to betray one another at the slightest provocation, and this indicates that social relationships in Alex's universe tend to be largely self-serving for everyone involved. The minute it stops being convenient for Alex to align with his droogs, he pivots and tries to snitch on them for his own benefit. What's more, the dysfunction of Alex's own relationships may indicate a larger societal problem.

PART 1, CHAPTER 7

In the station, a higher-ranking official comes to inspect Alex. Alex says he won't speak until he has a lawyer, and the official responds that "knowing the law isn't everything." A policeman then strikes Alex in the stomach. Alex responds by kicking him in the shins, and this provokes the rest of the policemen to set upon Alex.

In much the same way that Alex will instantly backpedal on his rhetoric and betray his droogs, the police will also compromise their ethical obligations in order to exact petty vengeance. While Alex's violent, deceitful behavior may be particularly reprehensible, the misconduct of other members of society illustrates that Alex's behavior is different only in degree, and not in kind.

After this beatdown, P.R. Deltoid enters the station. He expresses weary, unsurprised disappointment to see Alex arrested. The police official offers to hold Alex down and let Deltoid punch the boy. Deltoid instead draws close to Alex, spits in his face, and leaves.

Deltoid's character is a difficult one to decipher. He may have been genuinely concerned for Alex's well-being, and his insulting gesture may be meant to signify his profound disappointment. On the other hand, Deltoid may simply be the same sort of gleeful sadist as the policemen who beat up Alex earlier in the evening.

A stenographer appears to transcribe Alex's testimony. Alex decides to tell of his violent escapades in their entirety, and makes sure to implicate his droogs in the crimes as well. After Alex tells his story, his is sent to a cell. Several prisoners try to molest him, and he brawls with them until some policemen come to subdue the other prisoners.

Because Alex is narrating his own story, it is easy to lose track of how young and immature he really is. The prisoners' eagerness to molest Alex shows that, despite his sociopathic bravado, he is still often perceived as a vulnerable boy. Just as Alex's love for classical music complicates his persona, so does his status as a child. Is he really as heartless as he appears to be, or is he simply a teenager, immature , rebellious, and vulnerable to being influenced and taken advantage of by others?

Alex falls asleep in the cell. In his dream, he hears Beethoven's Ninth symphony, but with words that threaten retribution for the violence Alex has committed. Alex is awakened by a policeman, who tells him that "lovely news" awaits. Alex is taken to speak with the high-ranking official. The boy addresses the official sarcastically, and from the official's manner he correctly predicts the news he'll receive: the old woman has died from her wounds.

In this dream, Alex's respect for music actually appears to correlate to positive behaviors—just as the columnist who venerated "A Lively Appreciation of the Arts" had predicted. Though Alex's manner upon waking shows that he has a great deal to learn, his dream does suggest that whatever humanity lies beneath his sadism may someday help him learn to differentiate right and wrong.

PART 2, CHAPTER 1

Alex resumes the story two years after Part 1 concluded. He is serving a fourteen-year sentence in the Staja [state jail], and is now known as 6655321 instead of Alex. Alex catalogs the abuses of imprisonment, which include violence and unwanted sexual advances. Alex recalls when his parents visited one year ago to tell him that Georgie has been killed by a homeowner in a botched break-in. The killer was acquitted on Self Defense grounds. Given Georgie's mutinous behavior, Alex thinks this episode "all seemed right and proper and like Fate."

Though Alex complains of the wrongs he has suffered in prison, he does not seem to dwell long on whether or not he deserves the punishment he receives. It is interesting, then, that he is so quick to evaluate Georgie's death as an appropriate outcome of justice. This style of thinking yet again highlights Alex's self-centered immorality. He is indignant to have to suffer the consequences of his own crimes, but is all to happy to see Georgie punished for his.

It is Sunday, and Alex is assisting with a fire-and-brimstone sermon conducted by the prison "charlie." Someone makes a disrespectful noise from the back of the room, and a prisoner is hauled off by guards while he complains that he didn't make the noise.

The arbitrary disciplining of the prisoner clashes with the chaplain's message of personal accountability. Throughout the book, true moral responsibility is often pitted against rule-following, and it is no coincidence that the chaplain's message of moral duty conflicts with the arbitrary punishments and rewards that his institutional environment provides.

The chaplain has taken a liking to Alex, as Alex has devoted himself to studying the bible. This is a ruse to listen to classical music, which plays during Alex's study sessions. After the sermon is finished, the chaplain asks Alex to update him on prison rumors. Alex knows that the chaplain reports this information to the Governor, and Alex mixes true stories with made-up ones. After regaling the chaplain with a story of a bogus drug-smuggling scheme, Alex asks if the chaplain knows anything about a rumored alternative to imprisonment, which ends imprisonment immediately and ensures against recidivism. The chaplain explains that this is an untested procedure called Ludovico's Technique. The chaplain is skeptical of the procedure; he doubts that it is holy to behave well simply because one is compelled to do so.

Alex's admirable pursuit of classical music may truly enrich him, as it leads him, albeit disingenuously, to take on another admirable pursuit: religious enlightenment. This interaction with the chaplain is particularly important, as it introduces a main plot point of the novel. The ethical question that the chaplain ponders—is it moral to behave well when one has no choice but to do so?—is a central problem with Ludovico's treatment, and an issue that the text poses aggressively. It can also be seen as a moral issue within society, in which one could argue that people act morally because of laws and fear of punishment rather than from their own inherent desires.

Once his work with the chaplain is finished, Alex is escorted back to his cell. His cellmates are reprehensible criminals, but Alex is relieved that none of them are interested in molesting him. After dinner, the cellmates all sit and smoke together, when a new prisoner is thrust into the already-full cell. This new prisoner yells and complains about how his rights are being abused until a warder is sent to quiet him down.

Alex seems to have settled into as comfortable a routine at the Staja as he could possibly have cultivated. Still, he is eager to restore his freedom. His recent discussion with the chaplain foreshadows an important decision he will have to make: is his freedom to be returned to society worth sacrificing another aspect of his freedom—his free will?

PART 2, CHAPTER 2

The entrance of this new prisoner sets in motion Alex's release from Staja. The new prisoner is a boastful, quarrelsome man, who picks on Alex and tries to molest him in the middle of the night. Alex retaliates by punching his assailant in the face, and the rest of the cellmates join the assault. When Alex tries to report the new prisoner's behavior to the warders, they claim that Alex was likely the instigator.

Alex's sociopathic behavior has placed him in a "boy who cried wolf" situation. He is so eager to shift blame from himself onto others, that other people have begun to assume Alex is guilty even in cases when others are at fault. Notably, however, Alex's cellmates are on his side in this situation. He would have been more at risk without these allies, just as his attempt to rob the Manse alone led to his downfall.

Back in the cell, the occupants bicker. The new prisoner calls a Jewish inmate an offensive slur, and despite some cellmates' efforts at mediation, a fight breaks out. One cellmate holds the new prisoner down while the others take turns punching him; Alex hits the man especially zealously. Afterwards, Alex falls asleep and dreams a bizarrely sexual dream in which he plays a phallic wind instrument in an orchestra, and is berated by his conductor.

The confusing nature of Alex's dream signals that more ambiguous—but likely trying—times await in his near future. On one hand, Alex's dream is pleasurable, but on the other, he is scolded by an authority figure. This foreshadows that Alex will again suffer at the hands of those more powerful as a consequence of gratifying some of his baser impulses.

That morning, the cellmates discover that the new prisoner has died of a heart attack during the night. The cellmates all agree that it was Alex's overenthusiastic beating that killed the man. That day, the prison is locked down. An important-looking man, accompanied by the prison Governor, comes to Alex's cell. The man speaks of curing the criminal impulse, and decides that Alex can be the first to undergo a transformative procedure at the hands of someone named Dr. Brodsky. This decision, Alex recalls, marks the beginning of his liberation.

This event illustrates yet again the importance of social networks and alliances—only this time, these alliances have conspired to shut Alex out and scapegoat him. On his own again, Alex is incapable of refuting the allegations against him. His cellmates' complicity in the killing doesn't matter, just as his droogs' involvement in the Manse robbery is ignored by the police.

PART 2, CHAPTER 3

The next morning, Alex is brought into the prison Governor's office. The Governor explains that the man Alex met yesterday was the Minister of the Interior. The Minister is, according to the Governor, full of "ridiculous" ideas about transforming evil into good. Alex is scheduled to undergo such a transformation at the hands of Dr. Brodsky, and he is expected to be released from state custody in two weeks' time. With the Governor's warning that the treatment is not a "reward," Alex signs a form to consent to this procedure, called "Reclamation Treatment."

Alex, confident in his self-sufficiency and eager to get out of prison, pays relatively little attention to his choice to undergo treatment. Because Alex has such a powerful sense of self, he assumes that he will be able to outwit any of the government's attempts to reshape his personality. It will be important to recall the casual manner in which Alex makes this choice, because his choice to undergo Reclamation Treatment will color his future much more than he could have predicted at the time. Would it be fair to hold Alex accountable for the rest of his life for a choice he makes under these circumstances?

After his meeting with the Governor, Alex is summoned to the prison chaplain's office. The chaplain tells the guards to wait outside, and explains that he has strong ethical objections to Reclamation Treatment, but will not protest it for fear of his career. The chaplain ponders whether God would value a human who does not choose to be good, but instead has goodness forced upon him. He continues, and assures Alex that he has had no part in administering the treatment to Alex. The chaplain begins to cry, and Alex, noticing the man has been drinking, laughs to himself. Finally, the chaplain breaks out into a hymn, and the warders escort Alex out of the office.

The chaplain appears to be one of the few characters in the book who is motivated by genuine care for others and sincere moral concerns, and these are what provoke his ethical objections to Reclamation Treatment. However, even the chaplain is not outside the grasp of real-world social considerations. He does not fully fight against the administering of the treatment to Alex because he fears that it will hinder his career—in this way, society influences his moral actions, too. Alex, of course, does not apprehend these deep moral issues, but the chaplain's singing should remind readers of the drunk, singing man—another character that Alex was too immature to understand or control.

The following morning, Alex is escorted to a newly constructed medical compound near the prison. Dr. Branom, an assistant to Dr. Brodsky, conducts a physical and explains Reclamation Treatment to Alex. The therapy will involve showing Alex a number of films and administering a series of shots—though the doctor is vague about what these vaccinations contain. Alex is fed an ample meal, and as he eats he reflects on how easy life will be once he is released from prison. He considers assembling a new gang of droogs, and vows to avenge himself against Pete and Dim. Alex reminds himself to be careful not to get caught again. It would be unfair to let everyone down after they have naively given him another chance at freedom. After Alex finishes his meal, a nurse administers him a shot. Then an orderly appears with a wheelchair and Alex, surprised by how weak he feels, allows himself to be wheeled out of his room.

Alex naively presumes that, when he is released, he will still have the agency that he used to have in the outside world. He never for a moment seems worried that this therapy will change his desires or his ability to act on them. Furthermore, his thought process about getting caught illustrates that his imprisonment has taught him absolutely nothing about right and wrong. Instead of vowing never to behave poorly again, he simply decides that he must avoid being caught. He does not see any moral problems with his behavior, as long as it is not known to others. However, despite his arrogance, Alex's unexpected weakness at the end of the chapter suggests he may not be in control of the situation to the degree he thinks he is.

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

The orderly wheels Alex into a strange room with a projector, a sound system, and a series of meters. At its center, facing the screen, there is a chair. An orderly straps Alex into the chair and affixes an apparatus to ensure that he cannot turn his head away from the screen. Alex says that there's no need to restrain him, but the orderly continues, even clipping the skin on Alex's forehead so that he cannot shut his eyes.

The restraints, which deprive Alex of even basic control of his body, illustrate that he will not be able to assert himself over and withstand his treatment in the way he expects. They also imply that the government has the power to control Alex to whatever degree it pleases. In some sense the government is forcibly exerting its will upon Alex in the same way that he has up until now forced his will on others.

After a cap covered with wires is affixed to Alex's head, Dr. Brodsky enters the room and gives the order to begin the film. The movie begins: it is a professional-quality production that shows an old man walking down the street. Suddenly, two young men appear and begin to brutally beat the old man. After some time, the boys run away, and the film zooms in on the man's bloodied face. Alex marvels at how these real-world colors seem more real when viewed on screen.

Alex is, not surprisingly, not shocked by this reprehensible video. However, it is worth noting that his experience of watching violence on film makes him fetishize that violence even more than he did previously: the colors, sensationalized by film, somehow seem more real than they do in real life. Filtering violence through media can make it seem fun.

After this film, Alex begins to feel ill—he attributes this to malnourishment from prison food. A new film starts immediately. This movie shows a woman being gang-raped, and Alex is aghast that such footage could be shot for governmental purposes. As the film plays, Alex begins to feel like throwing up. He hears Dr. Brodsky commenting on his reactions.

The aversion Alex feels is unfamiliar to him, and suggests that he may no longer be fully in control of his emotions. In addition, the fact that this horrible film was made on government orders suggests that Alex's captors are no more moral than he is—their fixation on violence has simply found a more socially-acceptable outlet than Alex's.

Alex is shown a handful of other films, all as graphically violent as the first. He sees Brodsky watching with glee. During a film that shows the Japanese military torturing soldiers during the Second World War, Alex's physical discomfort is so great that he begs the doctors to turn off the films. However, instead of granting Alex's wishes, the doctors simply laugh and tell him that the treatment has only just begun.

The doctors' perverse enjoyment of the sickening films—and of Alex's own suffering—affirms that they, too, have the same sorts of sadistic impulses that they aim to eradicate in Alex. This calls into question the overall "goodness" of the treatment Alex receives. Can these highly flawed doctors really be expected to tamper with Alex's temperament in a beneficial way? Are they truly better or more moral than he is, or have they merely found socially acceptable ways to indulge in the same sort of immorality?

PART 2, CHAPTER 5

Alex refuses to detail the other horrors he was forced to see on film that day. He conjectures that the doctors are far more perverted than any of the Staja prisoners. After an absolutely miserable day full of the films, he is finally allowed to return to his room. Alex is given a cup of tea, and Dr. Branom enters to discuss the day. The doctor explains that Alex is being made healthy—the therapy is teaching his body to regard violence with the repulsion that a normal human would experience. Alex is skeptical of what the doctor says, particularly because the doctor seems to have been able to mathematically anticipate Alex's moods.

If there is one thing Alex loathes, it is being controlled by others. This is why he finds it particularly unsettling that Dr. Branom appears able to predict his moods mathematically—Alex seems to be unable to command one of his most intimately personal attributes. Important also is the way that Branom hypocritically presents an aversion to violence as normal and healthy, even though he and his cohorts clearly delight in certain sorts of violence—such as utterly controlling Alex.

After Branom is done consulting with Alex, a Discharge Officer comes to speak to Alex. The Discharge Officer ensures that Alex will have a place to stay when he is released, and offers to help Alex choose what employment he would like to have when he is reintroduced to society. Before he leaves, the Discharge Officer asks Alex if he would like to punch him in the face. Alex, nonplussed, takes a swing at the man, but the officer dodges the punch and walks out of the room, laughing. Afterwards, Alex feels for a few minutes the same sort of sickness he experienced when he watched the movies.

This encounter shows that Alex's treatment has begun to influence his everyday actions. While he still retains the ability to lash out at others, his treatment has begun to cause him pain whenever he does so. At this moment, Alex is on the threshold between his life as a free-willed individual and his future as a forcibly reformed criminal. Clearly, he has not learned that certain actions are bad *because they harm others—he will only learn that they are bad because they cause him pain through association. He's not being educated or enlightened; e's being trained.*

Alex eats dinner and goes to sleep. He has a dream in which he and a group of young men are assaulting a girl. Suddenly, he begins to feel sick, and the other boys laugh at him. He wakes up feeling like he will vomit, but gets over the nausea and falls back into a dreamless sleep.

Alex's dreams previously foretold events in his life, and there is little to suggest that this dream is any different. Importantly, the effects of his treatment are beginning to be felt in the most private areas of his life—he cannot avoid his sickening aversions even in his dreams.

PART 2, CHAPTER 6

The next day, Alex is subjected to more violent films, and they cause him so much pain that he begs the doctors to turn them off. Even footage of less horrifying transgressions, like a violent robbery, is enough to make Alex feel throbbing pain and nausea. Dr. Brodsky is delighted to observe Alex's reactions, and tells the boy that he only has one film left to watch that day.

Alex's constant suffering makes it clear that despite their governmental role, the doctors do not necessarily have his best interests at heart. Furthermore, his newfound aversion to minor crimes shows that he has begun to internalize more specific social conventions and develop biases that are less clearly warranted than an aversion to violence.

The doctors show Alex a clip of Nazi war crimes, set to the last movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Alex is sickened and particularly outraged that Beethoven's music would be used in such a reprehensible context. "It's a sin," he says, "…using Ludwig van like that. He did no harm to anyone. Beethoven just wrote music." Alex vomits, and the doctors unstrap him from his chair. While Alex drinks water, Branom and Brodsky discuss their surprise at Alex's reaction to the music. They conjecture that, by having associated Beethoven with nausea, they have punished Alex for his crimes by ruining something he loves. "The sweetest and most heavenly of activities partake in some measure of violence," like music, Brodsky observes—this is why Alex may be aversively conditioned to music.

This is the most distressing side-effect yet of Alex's treatment. His appreciation for Beethoven was one of his most deeply human characteristics, and by stripping him of the ability to enjoy music, his therapy strips him of a large part of his human character. More disturbing yet is the suggestion that Alex's violent tendencies may go hand in hand with his refined, human appreciation for the arts. Despite the doctors' best efforts to separate human experience into "good" and "bad" impulses, Alex's sudden aversion to beautiful music shows that black-and-white brand of thinking has disastrous effects in practice.

Brodsky then explains to Alex that his injections administered a substance that conditions him to associate violence with nausea. Alex protests furiously, then feigns repentance. Brodsky is not convinced, and Alex must finish out his fortnight in treatment. For days and days, he submits to the same battery of horrifying films. One day, when the nurse comes to administer the injection, Alex punches her, but a group of orderlies comes to restrain him.

Alex's usual tactics of deception are ineffective against the doctors. His attack on the nurse shows that when driven to desperation, he still acts violently. Therefore, his treatment is incomplete. When the orderlies arrive to administer Alex's injection, it is made even more apparent that Alex is incapable of rebelling against this institution on his own. The doctors' orders will be carried out no matter what Alex does in protest.

Alex endures more of the sickening movies. One morning, he is not given an injection, and he is told that he can walk to the screening room on his own. He is forced to watch more films, and is baffled that he still reacts with tears and nausea. The Ludovico's injection is now in his blood, and will continue to affect him indefinitely. That night, Alex decides that he must escape. He cries out as if in pain; after some time, a skeptical orderly comes into the room. Alex hides from him and plans to assault him, but the thought of hurting the man makes Alex cripplingly nauseous. The orderly taunts Alex and punches the boy in the face for his deception. Alex then goes to sleep in order to escape a fearful feeling that it may be better to receive a blow than to deal one. **"If that veck had stayed I might even have like presented the other cheek,"** he observes.

Alex has now internalized his therapy to the point that he can no longer choose how he acts. He must behave peacefully or else face crippling pain. Alex's thoughts after his failed attack on the orderly present an ironic twist on Christianity. While Jesus teaches his followers to voluntarily "turn the other cheek" when presented with violence, Alex is simply forced to do so by psychological conditioning that is outside his control. Alex's unintentional, robotic adherence to Christ's principles is likely a far cry from the thoughtful righteousness that the Bible aims to teach.

PART 2, CHAPTER 7

The day before Alex's release has arrived. He is given his knife and his regular clothes to wear, and he is then brought to the same room in which his films were screened. However, the room has been reorganized. Alex is now before a sizeable audience, and in it he recognizes the Minister of the Interior, the Staja Governor, and the prison chaplain. Dr. Brodsky introduces Alex and announces that his changed behavior will now be demonstrated.

By being given his street clothes and his knife, Alex is symbolically restored to his pre-imprisonment, pre-treatment status. This suggests that something more fundamental to his identity has been altered by his treatment. His presence on stage before an audience suggests that he is more of a novelty than an individual—a source of entertainment, rather than an object of concerned empathy.

Two spotlights appear on the stage, illuminating Alex and an unfamiliar, sleazy-looking man. The man begins to insult and hit Alex, while the audience guffaws. Offended, Alex reaches for his knife to fight back. As he does, however, he envisions the man being hurt, and this reminds the boy of the pain he now associates with violence. Instead of reaching for his knife, he reaches to offer the man a cigarette, but the assault continues. Alex humiliates himself further and further, hoping to get the man to stop. The confrontation only ends when Dr. Brodsky calls it off; the doctor then explains to the audience that Alex's evil impulses now drive him towards doing good.

The audience, full of model citizens, is disturbingly amused by Alex's humiliating hardships. Clearly, they are able to relish violence just as much as Alex was before his treatment. The events on stage reveal also that Alex has not only been rendered unable to harm others, he has also been rendered unable to defend himself from unfair harms. Clearly, being a functional member of society requires some degree of restraint, which Alex lacked. But that ability to function also requires a baseline of free will, which Alex now lacks.

Brodsky asks if the audience has any questions, and the prison chaplain speaks up. The chaplain protests that Alex is no longer able to make ethical choices. Brodsky responds that the therapy's concerns are pragmatic, not moral. The crowd begins to argue amongst itself, and Alex speaks out to ask if his agency matters. An audience member stands up and tells Alex that he elected to receive the treatment; thus all of its consequences are a result of his own choice. The chaplain again denounces this sentiment. The Governor appears displeased with the chaplain's protests.

Finally, the chaplain has chosen to disregard his social constraints and speak out against the moral problems with Reclamation Therapy. This is one of very few instances in the book where a character inconveniences himself to take a stance on principle. It is clear that the audience has no sympathy for Alex: he is held entirely responsible for his individual choices, even though he had no way of knowing the true nature of the situation he had gotten himself into.

The audience discusses the issue further, and the word "love" is introduced to the debate. This prompts Dr. Brodsky to bring a beautiful young woman onto the stage. Upon seeing her, Alex is overcome with an urge to have sex with her, but this brings back his pains. He bows before her and begins to offer lofty promises of protection and devotion. His pain ceases. The woman leaves the stage, and Alex feels bizarre at having performed an act to avoid pain. He also notices members of the crowd staring lecherously at the girl. To conclude the presentation, Dr. Brodsky claims that Alex has been made into a "**true Christian**" by the treatment.

While Alex here has been engineered to be capable only of flowery, publicly-acceptable proclamations of love, love consists of more than flashy displays. Alex's therapy has rendered him unable to think of the physical act of love without being nauseated. He has thus been stripped of an essential human function—a function that many members of the audience evidently still enjoy—and turned into a flat, sanitized, and unrealistic model of behavior, a kind of robot programmed to act by the tenets of Christianity.

PART 3, CHAPTER 1

After his onstage humiliation and a day full of media interviews, Alex is released from the treatment facility. He has a bag of his possessions and a pocketful of money from the authorities, but little else. Alex decides to get breakfast, and makes his way to a working-class café near the Staja. In the café, Alex buys a copy of the newspaper, and he finds a propaganda article, advertising him as the poster-child of successful Reclamation Treatment. He is disgusted by the government's boastfulness and throws the paper onto the floor.

Alex's treatment has made him into something less than a human being, and the government's use of the boy as a mere propaganda piece affirms this. Alex is simply a tool to serve the government's political ends. This lack of personhood and agency that is the most arduous aspect of Alex's new life, which illustrates that humans cannot be safely reduced to unthinking pawns.

Alex catches a bus to his family's apartment building. Once there, he is surprised by how well-kept the area appears. He opens the door to his apartment and discovers his parents eating breakfast with a bulky man. The unfamiliar man thinks Alex is an intruder and threatens to throw him out, while Alex's parents sit in silence. His mother then laments that Alex must have escaped, and begins to cry. Alex's father also voices distress at seeing Alex years before his prison sentence is set to finish.

After he is released from prison, everything is foreign to Alex. He cannot control or anticipate his own emotions and desires, and now, even his own family appears to have replaced him and seems distressed to see him return.

Alex's mother introduces the man as Joe, a lodger who has taken up residence in Alex's old room. Joe lambasts Alex for his heartless treatment of his parents. Alex, offended that he has been replaced, opens the door to his old room and discovers that his possessions are gone—even his stereo. His father explains that per government policy, Alex's belongings were sold in order to fund care for his elderly victim's cats.

If he had not done so before, Alex is certainly paying for his transgressions now. He thought he was entitled to luxuries like a home and possessions, but because he has removed himself from society's rules, he can no longer enjoy the benefits that socialized life confers.

Alex asks his parents what they expect him to do if he cannot live at home, and they tell him that they have no choice but to keep Joe around. The lodger has already paid his rent. Joe adds that he owes it to Alex's parents to keep them away from their abominable son. This rejection causes Alex to burst into tears. He tells his parents he wishes he were back in jail, and hopes his misfortune weighs upon their consciences. Joe comforts Alex's crying mother while her son stumbles out of the apartment.

Social conventions, like Joe's lease agreement, have bound Alex's parents and made them unable to take in their own son. Alex's wish to be back in jail is not entirely illogical: at least in the Staja, it was clear how he fit into society. Now, he is completely unmoored, and it is unclear if he has anywhere to go or anyone who may help him.

PART 3, CHAPTER 2

Back out in the winter cold, Alex walks around, directionless. He returns to his usual record store, but instead of finding the familiar clerk, he is attended to by a teenager. Alex asks for Mozart's Fortieth Symphony and goes to a listening booth. The clerk, ignorant of classical music, plays a different Mozart composition. As Alex listens, he recalls that the Reclamation Treatment has made him associate music with violence. He begins to feel ill, and stumbles out of the record store.

Not only has Alex been deposited into an unfamiliar and unwelcoming world, he can no longer derive any enjoyment from the art that used to move him. This is the ultimate tragedy of Alex's treatment: it has taken away not just his human capacity to delight in barbarism, but his human capacity to delight in anything at all.

Alex next goes to the Korova Milkbar, where he orders a large helping of intoxicants. He drinks in a private booth and has an intense hallucination. His consciousness leaves his body, and he begins to see the entire world—including himself in the booth, babbling incoherently. He then sees a group of statues drawing nearer, which he recognizes as God and God's Angels. Alex feels ecstatic, as though he has completely lost his identity. Suddenly, the vision begins to collapse. The statues shake their heads disapprovingly at Alex, and he is returned to his original state of consciousness in the drinking cubicle.

Alex has sunk into behavior that he deplored at the beginning of the novel. He is no better than the drunk he and his droogs beat up at the very same bar. This moment in Alex's saga may be his rock-bottom: he is so fundamentally disturbed that he cannot bear any reminder of his own identity. But at the same time, he is unable to break from this identity. He has a kind of Christian vision that seems like it might free him from his "imprisonment" within himself, but the vision collapses. After all, he is only "programmed" to act like a Christian.

After this vision, Alex understands that he wants to kill himself. He considers cutting his wrists with his knife, but the thought of such violence makes him ill. He decides to go to the public library to find a book on committing suicide painlessly.

The dehumanizing power of the Reclamation Treatment is so great that it deprives Alex of the basic choice of whether or not he can continue his life.

The library is full of decrepit old men. Alex tries to consult some reference books, but finds them impenetrable. **He grabs a Bible off a shelf and begins to read it instead**, but the accounts of violence threaten to sicken him. Alex is near tears when a nearby man asks him what is the matter. The boy explains that he wants to kill himself; a man reading geometry books nearby shushes him. Alex speaks again, and the man shushes a second time—this time, he and Alex make eye contact and recognize one another. The reading man is the scholar whom Alex and his droogs assaulted years before.

The revulsion Alex experiences while reading the Bible illustrates that even something that many consider to be purely "good"—religion—contains elements of "badness" and violence. It seems, then, that Reclamation Treatment has not made Alex into the "perfect Christian" after all, if he is unable to stomach reading the Bible itself. Or, perhaps, that the Bible itself is here revealed as not being "perfectly Christian." Even religion, after all, indulges in violence.

Alex tries to flee the library, but the scholar and his geriatric peers descend upon him. They beat Alex mercilessly, and ignore Alex's claims of penitence. After some time, a library attendant comes along to investigate the disturbance. Alex surprises himself by begging the attendant to call the police. The beating continues, and Alex puts up no resistance for fear of feeling ill. Finally, the police arrive on the scene.

The elderly scholar's eagerness to assault Alex shows that every member of society is susceptible to the same sadistic impulses that Alex has been punished for displaying. This does not excuse Alex's crimes, of course, but it does make it more problematic to separate him so absolutely from the rest of allegedly law-abiding society.

PART 3, CHAPTER 3

The police escort Alex away from his assailants. Alex watches two policemen gleefully beating the elderly men, and thinks they seem familiar. Indeed, they are Dim and Billyboy, and they recognize Alex. Alex is aghast, and asserts that the two are much too young to hold police jobs. Dim and Billyboy assure Alex that they have grown up; Dim tells Alex not to call him "Dim" anymore. Billyboy proposes that Alex should be given "summary" punishment instead of usual police protocols. They conjecture that Alex was likely responsible for the fight, and drive him towards the outskirts of town in their police car.

Just like the scholar's willingness to delight in violence, the presence of Dim and Billyboy in the police force shows that sadism permeates most areas of law-abiding society. Dim's assertion that he has grown up suggests a small hope that Alex will be treated fairly, but the policemen's immediate dishonesty suggests that fair treatment is far from likely.

Dusk has fallen, and Alex, Dim, Billyboy, and the police car's driver have reached the remote countryside. Dim and Billyboy take Alex out of the car while the driver sits behind the wheel, smoking and reading a book. Though Alex does not go into much detail about what happens next, the "panting and thudding" he describes Dim and Billyboy engaging in behind him suggests that the two policemen rape Alex. The two policemen then put their clothes back on and leave Alex lying in the cold. Alex cries to himself and then begins to walk in search of help.

Billyboy and Dim have not reformed their barbaric ways, they have simply found a socially-sanctioned way to indulge these impulses. Indeed, their dishonest and despicable behavior shows that Alex's society is hardly as virtuous as it may try to appear. Alex, outside of all social support structures, is entirely vulnerable to mistreatment from every angle, be it from his cellmates in prison, elderly men in the library, or badge-carrying police officers. And his inability to fight back makes him a victim of everyone.

PART 3, CHAPTER 4

Alex walks through freezing rain and comes across a familiar-looking hamlet. Bruised and disheveled, he walks up to a cottage with a sign that reads "HOME." He knocks on the door, explains that he has been left for dead by the police, and asks for help. A man opens the door and invites Alex in to help him. When he sees this man, Alex realizes why the cottage looked familiar: it is the same place he and his droogs stormed several years earlier. The man does not recognize Alex because he and his droogs wore masks to disguise themselves.

Alex's cry for help is an inversion of his robbery at HOME from Part 1. This time, his pleading is sincere. Importantly, the same sort of altruism that allowed Alex to break into the house years before, when the woman left the door unattended to get a glass of water, is what prompts the man to take Alex in and save him from dying outside the cottage.

The man tends to Alex's wounds. Meanwhile, Alex recalls that the man was writing a book called *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex reminds himself not to betray this knowledge, because he needs the man's kindness. Alex resents the prison doctors for making him dependent on others' kindness—and willing to treat others kindly in return.

To Alex, kindness and altruism remain cumbersome commodities rather than virtues. He was never able to live completely self-sufficiently, and his current condition only makes this more evident. Alex needs the help of others to survive, and he needs to stop thinking of this need as a weakness if he hopes to advance towards true self-sufficiency.

After Alex is given a bath, clean clothes, and a generous meal, his host recognizes him from the newspapers as the poster child of Reclamation Treatment. The man commiserates with Alex and tells the boy he has been sent by "Providence." He listens intently while Alex recounts the story of his crimes. The man then launches into a speech condemning the way the government has stripped Alex of agency and forced him to behave well, making even things like music and art sources of pain to him. "A man who cannot choose ceases to be a man," he observes.

This scene is rife with dramatic irony. Readers know that Alex's ability to choose was what led him to break into this house years before, and this makes the homeowner's rant against Reclamation Treatment somewhat painful to read. Perhaps, if the homeowner knew the true identity of the boy he had taken in, he would not exalt free will as highly as he does now.

While the homeowner was occupied with his tirade against Reclamation Treatment, he distractedly dried the same plate for a long time. Alex points out the man's inattentiveness, and the man explains that his wife used to do his chores. Trembling, the man reveals that his wife died after being savagely beaten and raped in this very house. Alex remembers his actions that night and begins to feel sick. Seeing the boy lose composure, the homeowner tells Alex to head upstairs to bed.

Alex's generous host is in a devastating predicament. On one hand, his philosophical opposition to Reclamation Treatment compels him to pity Alex and wish to restore the boy's agency. On the other hand, Reclamation Treatment is the only thing stopping Alex from committing more crimes like the rape and murder of the man's wife.

PART 3, CHAPTER 5

Alex wakes up in his host's home feeling safe and well-rested. He decides to look for a copy of *A Clockwork Orange* so he can figure out the man's name. Upon reading a copy, Alex discovers the man is named F. Alexander. The book itself is an impassioned polemic against the government's attempts to mechanize citizens, and Alex does not like the style in which it is written. He wonders if F. Alexander has been driven mad by his wife's death.

The two characters' similar names set them off as foils to one another. Their evolutions as characters are nearly opposites: by behaving barbarically, Alex ends up being subjected to Reclamation Treatment and becoming a more obedient citizen. In turn, by being subjected to barbarism, F. Alexander devotes himself to noble idealism and becomes a dissenter against the violence perpetrated by society. In the eyes of the law, Alex may be a far more upstanding citizen at this stage—even though F. Alexander is unambiguously a more noble human being.

Alex comes downstairs for breakfast, and F. Alexander explains that he has been up for hours making phone calls. Alex remarks that he thought the man didn't have a phone in his house, and F. Alexander suddenly perks up and asks what reason Alex would have to think that. Realizing that he accidentally referenced something F. Alexander's wife said the night she was raped, Alex backpedals.F. Alexander tells Alex that his tragic experience with Reclamation Treatment can help the incumbent government lose the upcoming election. Its attempts to control its citizens border on totalitarianism, the author complains. F. Alexander explains that he has written an article under Alex's name, decrying Reclamation Treatment. He gives it to Alex to read, and though Alex finds the writing "weepy," he compliments the piece in typical nadsat slang. This vocabulary again raises F. Alexander's hackles—the author suspiciously asks what Alex's slang means, and Alex explains that it is common to youths.

The visceral reaction that Alex's speech provokes in F. Alexander illustrates the profound power of language. To the author, Alex's vocabulary is deeply tied to his identity. Similarly, the author's diction is what leads Alex to believe he has been driven mad by his past trauma. In both cases, language is at the center of the way individuals characterize themselves and others. Words are not a neutral medium for content—as this encounter demonstrates, words themselves are charged with meaning, memory, and emotion.

Three of F. Alexander's political allies come to the house to meet Alex. Alex greets them in typical nadsat fashion, and F. Alexander's suspicions are raised again—the author remarks that he and Alex have certainly met before. The three confederates seem excited to use Alex to achieve their goals, but they answer evasively when Alex asks how he himself will benefit by helping the men. Alex protests that he wants to be returned to his pre-therapy state, and complains that he is not a "dim" creature who can be used.

Although Alex has certainly received better treatment from these men than he has from the various branches of government, he is still clearly seen as more of a piece of clockwork than a true human being. These activists are less preoccupied with practicing their message of liberty than they are with exploiting Alex to serve their goals.

F. Alexander fixates on the word "dim" and recalls that it sounds like a familiar name. Alex replies by asking "What do you know about Dim?" The boy then notices that F. Alexander has acquired a strange look in his eyes, and Alex moves to gather his belongings and leave. Meanwhile, a wild-eyed F. Alexander remarks that he "could almost believe" that Alex was the one who raped his wife years ago, and says that he'd tear the boy apart if it were true. The author's cohorts comfort him and prevent Alex from leaving. While F. Alexander tries to recall why he recognizes the word "Dim," Alex gets dressed and is driven to an apartment building by the author's three collaborators. The three men drop Alex off in a comfortable apartment that will be his new home. Before leaving, one of the men asks Alex if he really was the one responsible for the incident that ruined F. Alexander's life. Alex responds that he has paid for his crimes, and for those of his droogs.

Everyone in this scene is motivated by self-interest rather than genuine concern for others. F. Alexander works himself into a fury that contradicts his noble rhetoric, Alex worries about escaping alive rather than reconciling with the man he has wronged, and F. Alexander's cohorts focus not on consoling their comrade but on spiriting Alex away so that he can be used as a political tool. These dysfunctional interrelationships demonstrate that when opportunities for personal gain are on the line, conventional social obligations—including general respect for others—tend to collapse.

Once the men leave him, Alex goes to sleep. When he wakes up, he hears music playing—it is a familiar symphony that he has not heard in years. Initially, he is delighted and interested by the music, but he soon begins to feel overwhelmed by sickness. He pounds on the walls until his hands are bloody, begging for the music to stop, but it continues. After staggering around his apartment in agony, Alex finally decides to kill himself. He opens the window and jumps into the bustling street below.

Though it is never stated outright, it is implied that this music is a scheme by F. Alexander's cohorts to drive Alex to suicide for political gains, which illustrates that even those with good intentions are not above resorting to violent methods (even if they commit that violence in indirect ways) to achieve them. Furthermore, Alex's suicide attempt illustrates that his affinity for the arts was so deeply tied to his humanity that he no longer thinks it worthwhile to continue existing as a human being once this affinity has been destroyed.

PART 3, CHAPTER 6

Alex's body is damaged extensively from his fall, and while this causes him extraordinary pain, it does not kill him. He remains conscious long enough after hitting ground to notice that few of the shocked pedestrians seem to be genuinely interested in helping him. His next memory is of regaining consciousness in a hospital, wrapped in bandages. He spots an attractive nurse next to him and tries to proposition her bawdily, but his words only come out as groans. The nurse is surprised to see that Alex has regained consciousness.

Alex's last memory before waking up in the hospital is of complete abandonment by society. Ultimately, this abandonment—this failure to feel like and be treated like a human being—is likely what causes him to attempt suicide. This supports F. Alexander's impassioned assertion that "a man who cannot choose ceases to be a man."

Several people come to visit Alex, including the prison chaplain, who reveals that he has left the penal system to preach on his own. F. Alexander's cohorts also arrive to triumphantly tell Alex that his actions have ruined the government's chance of reelection. After these men leave, Alex loses consciousness again. He dreams about delighting in violence, rape, and theft, all without feeling any of the usual pain he has been conditioned to feel.

Though Alex's guests deliver inspiring messages of morals triumphing over social pressures, his dreams illustrate a worrying trend: despite the best efforts of the penal system, he has retained all of his predispositions to barbarism.

After he wakes up from these dreams, Alex is able to speak more clearly. His parents show up to visit him, and he speaks to them indignantly. Alex's father apologizes for turning him away and tells his son that he is free to move back in, as Joe the lodger has left town after being harassed and beaten by policemen. Alex's mother weeps, and Alex quiets her with a nasty threat. Alex's father reprimands Alex for snapping at his mother, but Alex tells him that if he is to move back in, things will have to be different—Alex will be the "boss." His father quickly capitulates and tells Alex he can return on any terms he wishes.

Things seem to be returning to the status quo, for better and for worse. Once again, Alex profits off of injustice: he is only able to move back into his house because Joe has been wronged by the police. He also seems to be able to again use bullying and manipulation to his advantage. Indeed, with Alex's return to society comes a return of many of his least desirable attributes, along with a restoration of his comfort and safety.

Alex's parents leave. A nurse tells Alex that he has been hospitalized for a week after suffering significant blood loss from his fall. Alex asks her if his brain has been tampered with at all, and the nurse assures him that every action has been taken for his benefit. A few days later, two doctors show Alex pictures and ask questions to test his reactions. When presented with a picture of a bird's nest, Alex expresses a desire to destroy all the eggs inside. When shown a picture of a young woman, Alex expresses a desire to rape her violently. The doctors seem pleased by Alex's reactions, and tell him that he has been "cured."

Because the Ludovico's solution was in his blood, Alex has been cured of his aversions to violence via a blood transplant. The doctors' enjoyment of Alex's reprehensible reactions to the pictures illustrates that society is by no means uniform in the way it enforces morals. While Alex's violent impulses got him into trouble years earlier and were deemed deeply unhealthy, they are now being lauded by the establishment as a sign of his return to good health.

More time passes, and Alex is notified that he will receive an important visitor. That afternoon, the Minister of the Interior shows up in Alex's room, accompanied by a press corps. The Minister speaks conciliatorily with Alex, and explains that the real people who sought to harm Alex were the ones like F. Alexander, who tried to use the boy as a political tool. The Minister goes on to explain that F. Alexander has been imprisoned after making threats on Alex's life. The author discovered that Alex was in fact responsible for the rape and murder of his wife. The Minister then assures Alex that the government will take good care of him once he is discharged from the hospital, and thanks Alex for his help. This thank-you is punctuated by a staged photo op of Alex shaking the Minister's hand. Finally, the Minister presents Alex with a new stereo, and Alex exults in Beethoven's Ninth. Someone asks him to sign a document, and he does so absentmindedly. As he enjoys the music and fantasizes about hurting people with his knife, Alex reflects that he has indeed been cured.

The fate of F. Alexander underscores the precarious situation of the idealist. The author and activist is among the most noble characters in the book, committed both in theory and in practice to treating others with compassion. However, the uniform application of his morals is too much to bear in this particular case, and he succumbs to the same sadistic impulses that nearly every other character in the book exhibits at one point or another. By juxtaposing the failure of the well-intentioned F. Alexander with the triumph of the insincere Minister of the Interior, Burgess illustrates the way in which society often rewards self-interested people like Alex and the Minister, who simply pay lip-service to its norms; rather than to nobler spirits like F. Alexander. At the same time, the novel asserts that violent feelings and urges are present in everyone, *even the most noble.*

PART 3, CHAPTER 7

Alex sits in the Korova Milkbar with his three new droogs: Len, Rick, and Bully. As the oldest member of the group and a minor celebrity, Alex gives the orders—though he suspects that Bully may desire more control. Alex now works in the music department of the National Gramodisc Archives, which provides him with a decent salary and free music discs. A drunk man babbles nearby. The droogs spot three attractive girls at the bar, and Bully tries to convince the others to leave Len behind, while Len advocates a one-for-all spirit.

Alex's current situation is clearly meant to parallel the book's opening. If Alex has simply reverted to his depraved self after the Reclamation Therapy has been nullified, then Burgess presents a fairly cynical picture of humankind. Especially distressing is the fact that Alex's actions have actually raised his social station—this suggests that cooperating with society can reward even someone as evil and sadistic as Alex.

A wave of restlessness comes over Alex; he claims he has recently felt "bored" and "hopeless." He punches the nearby drunk in the gut and the droogs exit into the winter night. As they walk down the street, Bully, Len, and Rick assault and rob a passing man. The droogs then go to the Duke of New York for a drink, where they encounter the same old women Alex bribed at the beginning of the story. Alex is initially reluctant to buy the women drinks with his "hard-earned" cash, but he eventually relents. His droogs are puzzled by his behavior, and Alex says he has "some thinking to do."

Although his behavior still recalls his earlier barbarism, Alex seems more reluctant than usual to engage in his familiar brutality. The eerily familiar setting in particular highlights Alex's change in demeanor. Alex's commitment to his job suggests that he has assimilated into society more than he had at the beginning of the book, but whether this assimilation can conquer his sadistic tendencies remains to be seen.

Alex pulls some money out of his pocket. In doing so, he accidentally pulls out a cute picture of a baby that he had been carrying around, which he had cut out of a magazine. His droogs notice the picture and tear it up derisively, while Alex struggles to recover it. After some contemplation and banter with his droogs, Alex decides that he doesn't feel up to carrying out mischief that night. He tells the others to continue with their plans to rob a store and then leaves the bar.

This scene shows Alex in a striking moment of vulnerability. For the first time in the entire novel, he shows himself to be motivated by conventional human emotions. It's hard to imagine the cold-hearted Alex from the beginning of the novel treasuring a picture of an adorable baby, so perhaps he truly has matured out of his mischief-making stage.

Now walking alone, Alex reflects that the culture of "ultra-violence" is being diminished due to a heightened police presence. He also reveals that he has started to become "soft"—he has lost interest in violence, and even his musical preferences have acquired a romantic bent. He comes across a coffee shop filled with harmless, law-abiding citizens, and decides to enter. Inside, a wholesome-looking girl catches his eye, and he recognizes the boy with her as Pete, his former droog, who is now nineteen.

Alex's habits are changing with his values, and his entrance into the mainstream coffee shop signifies his assimilation into a less marginal branch of society. Never before had he associated with "soft," bourgeois citizens before, and his decreased appetite for ultra-violence is what allows him to enjoy the benefits of socialized life. The emphasis on Pete's age, and by extension Alex's, suggests that Alex is growing up and his diminishing interesting in committing violence is a part of that growing up.

Alex and Pete converse, and Alex is aghast to learn that Pete's female companion is his wife. Pete now speaks in a grown-up voice, and his wife giggles at Alex's "funny" manner of speaking. After Pete briefly describes his tame, married life, he and his wife leave to go to a wine and word-game party at a friend's house. Alone again, Alex wonders if he, too, is outgrowing his lifestyle.

While Alex may be showing some signs of maturity, Pete's transformation shows just how full a droog's redemption can be. Pete is now a full-fledged adult—his metamorphosis is underscored by his changed manner of speaking—and his example further illustrates to Alex the appeal of adhering to societal conventions.

After he leaves the café, Alex walks the winter streets and thinks about his future. He is struck by an appealing fantasy: he envisions himself at home, with a wife and infant child. "Youth must go," he opines, and compares being young to being a mechanical wind-up toy. Alex reflects that he will likely be unable to prevent his own son from behaving like him. He then resolves to find himself a wife.

The comparison Alex makes between youth and mechanical toys is an interesting one in light of A Clockwork Orange*'s subject matter. Alex's analogy suggests that he was as much a slave to the impulses of his youth as he was to the impulses imbued in him by Reclamation Treatment. This opens a larger question of whether or not it is appropriate to hold youth accountable for their actions, when they may be compelled to act as they do by biology that borders on clockwork.*

To conclude the story, Alex addresses the reader directly. He is not young anymore, he explains; he has grown up. Alex's next journey is one he will take on his own. He mixes reverent appreciation for the world with brash nadsat put-downs, and implores readers—his "brothers"—to "remember sometimes thy little Alex that was."

Alex has certainly undergone a heartening change in character, but his diction shows that he is still in many ways the droog that he was at the beginning of the novel. By speaking in a collage of registers, Alex symbolizes the competing influences working within him. His conventional speech shows his new urge to enter normal society, but his nadsat refrains imply that he has not completely forsworn his past identity despite growing beyond it.

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Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. W. W. Norton & Company. 1995.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1995.