American Psycho

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF BRET EASTON ELLIS

Ellis was born in 1964 and grew up in a middle-class family in southern California. His parents divorced when he was a teenager, and Ellis early-on cited his father as an inspiration for the "American Psycho" himself. (He later revised these statements, staying that he actually drew more on himself for inspiration.) Ellis studied music at Bennington College in Vermont before moving towards writing and releasing his acclaimed first novel, *Less Than Zero*, at the age of 21. Though the initial controversy surrounding *American Psycho* somewhat stalled the rise of his career, the book's later elevation to cult classic and growing academic interest has secured Ellis's position as a significant contemporary American writer. In the years since *American Psycho*, he has written several other novels and screenplays, including a film adaptation of his own novel *The Informers* and the 2012 independent film *The Canyons*, which starred Lindsay Lohan. Several of his novels, including *American Psycho*, have been adapted into films. Throughout Ellis's career, he has largely deflected questions regarding his sexuality, but after receiving backlash for a series of tweets in which he criticized Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" campaign, he came out publicly as a gay man.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The novel takes place in New York City in the late 1980s, on the tail end of the Wall Street boom of the decade. It is late in Ronald Reagan's second term as President of the United States – an administration that was marked by immense economic growth, de-regulation of industry, the expansion of capitalism, and a crackdown on violence, crime, and drugs. The economic upswing was halted on October 19, 1987 ("Black Monday"), when markets across the globe experienced a crash. Though Bret Easton Ellis does not state a specific year (or set of years) during which *American Psycho* takes place, it can be assumed that the action of the novel is occurring prior to, or perhaps just on the brink of, this major crash. With the economic upturn also came an immense increase in consumption of popular culture. This decade saw the launch of MTV, which brought pop culture and music into the homes of Americans in a completely new way, as well as then-record highs in subscriptions to home cable services like HBO. These were also the final years of the Cold War, a conflict between the capitalist USA and communist USSR that had been building ever since the end of World War II. This war would end in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and a series of revolutions throughout Eastern Europe which toppled many of the world's communist regimes.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Bret Easton Ellis is known for featuring his characters across several different novels. Patrick Bateman first appears briefly in Ellis's 1987 novel *The Rules of Attraction*, in which his brother, Sean Bateman, is a main character and narrator. Sean also appears briefly in his brother's novel, *American Psycho*. In Ellis's 1998 novel *Glamorama*, both Patrick Bateman and Christian Bale (the actor who played Bateman in the *American Psycho* film adaptation) make appearances. In his 2005 mock-memoir *Lunar Park*, Ellis is interrogated by detective Donald Kimball about a number of grisly murders suspected to have been committed by Bateman. Ellis is also often associated with a literary "brat pack" of 1980s authors, which includes himself, Tama Janowitz (*Slaves of New York*; *By the Shores of Gitchee Gumee*; her 2016 memoir *Scream*), and Jay McInerney (*Bright Lights, Big City*; *Story of My Life*; *Brightness Falls*; *Bright, Precious Days*).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** American Psycho
- **When Written:** the late 1980s and early 1990s
- **Where Written:** New York City
- **When Published:** 1991
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary American Fiction, Postmodernism, Satire
- **Genre:** Novel
- **Setting:** New York City, the late 1980s
- **Climax:** Bateman's police chase and his confessional voicemails to his lawyer, Harold Carnes
- **Point of View:** First-Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Take Your Money and Go. *American Psycho* was originally slated to be published by Simon & Schuster. However in November of 1990, the company, citing "aesthetic differences," dropped the book over its graphic and misogynistic content. Bret Easton Ellis got to keep the money anyway. Later that year, it was picked up and published by Vintage Books.

Is He or Isn't He?. Bret Easton Ellis revealed in a 2016 interview with Rolling Stone that he's never made a firm decision about whether or not Patrick Bateman is truly committing the heinous crimes he describes in the novel, saying, "That was what was so interesting to me about it. You can read the book either way."

PLOT SUMMARY

American Psycho begins with a quote from Dante's *Inferno*: "**Abandon all hope ye who enter here**" is graffitied across the side of a bank in blood-red paint. It is the late 1980s in New York city. The reader is introduced to the novel's narrator, Patrick Bateman, a 27-year-old Wall Street investment banker. Bateman, who relays the action of the novel, as well as his innermost thoughts, opinions of others, and musings on popular culture, is with his friend, Timothy Price, on their way to have dinner at the home of Bateman's girlfriend, Evelyn Richards. Evelyn's best friend, Courtney Lawrence, with whom Bateman is having an affair, will also be in attendance, along with two friends of Evelyn, Stash and Vanden, strange, artistic types who graduated from Camden.

From this first dinner, Bateman goes on to relay the stream-of-consciousness musings and events of his highly-regimented life. He describes his morning routine, which consists of a fitness regimen, skin-care regimen, and a carefully planned breakfast. He watches "**The Patty Winters Show**" (a daytime talk show) religiously, often calling his friends to ridicule the guests for their strange habits, fears, or perversions, and is always renting and returning VHS tapes of his favorite films. Bateman and his circle of Wall Street friends – which often includes Price, Craig McDermott, and David Van Patten – dine at only the chicest and most expensive restaurants, wear only the finest designer clothes, and pay attention to only the most physically attractive women (those they deem "Hardbodies").

What may appear at first to be the perfect life for a wealthy man immersed in the capitalist, materialistic society of 1980s Wall Street, however, has a dark underbelly. Not only is Bateman unhappy in his relationship with Evelyn, he has a sex obsession and occupies most of his evenings with lovers, porn, and prostitutes. He and his friends are also heavy drinkers and drug users; cocaine is the drug of choice for the men, while Courtney and the novel's other women tend more towards anti-depressants and other pills. Despite spending lots of time together, Bateman and his crowd have little-to-no real connection with one another. They focus solely on the clothes they wear, the places they are seen, and who they are with. They despise and mock anyone who does not have their wealth or taste, especially the homeless, who they often ridicule and taunt. In his world of extreme capitalism and consumption, where people are simply other objects to be valued or discarded, Bateman and his vices are isolated inside his own mind.

To top it all off, Patrick Bateman is revealed as a sociopathic serial killer. Early in the novel, Bateman fantasizes about committing violent acts. When he is out to dinner with Evelyn or at a nightclub with his friends, for example, he will describe the painful things he would like to do to others; he also references murders he has committed in the past, though it is initially unclear whether or not these events truly transpired. As the novel continues, however, Bateman's violent thoughts are accompanied by violent actions, as he describes in detail acts of rape, torture, and murder.

Patrick Bateman kills people who he believes are devoid of value. One of the first attacks the reader experiences through Bateman's narration is the murder of a homeless man named Al and his dog. Bateman spots him sitting on the sidewalk and stops to taunt him, calling him worthless and disgusting and asking why he doesn't simply "get a job." Al begins to cry, and then Bateman suddenly stabs him in the eye. After slicing and gouging out one eye, Bateman goes after the next. Al's dog begins to bark, and Bateman stamps on his legs, breaking them. He tosses a quarter at the man and walks away. (Later in the novel, he will see Al again and stab him to death on the street.)

Bateman also describes to the reader the torture and murder of a number of women. He hires call girls to come to his apartment (or occasionally takes a woman home after a date), gets them drunk or high, and has sex with them. The sex, which he describes graphically, is often coercive and very rough and leads into Bateman raping the women, tying them up, and slowly torturing them to their deaths.

The most prominent murder committed by Bateman in the novel is that of Paul Owen, a fellow Wall Street investment banker who Bateman despises. Owen is the manager of the mysterious "Fisher account," a bank account Bateman is obsessed with and always asking after. On top of that, Owen is constantly confusing Bateman for another banker named Marcus Halberstam. One night, Bateman (or, rather, Halberstam) takes Owen out to dinner. He gets him incredibly drunk, has him pay the check, and the two go back to Owen's apartment. There, Bateman murders Owen with an axe. He cleans up the scene, packs a suitcase of Owen's things, and books a one-way ticket to London to throw off any suspicions surrounding Owen's disappearance. Bateman disposes of Owen's body, but will later use his apartment for other murders and leave a number of dead bodies behind.

One day, while at work, Bateman's doting secretary Jean (or, as he calls her, "my secretary who is in love with me") tells him that a detective has come to see him. The detective, Donald Kimball, tells Bateman that he has been hired by Paul Owen's girlfriend to investigate his disappearance. He wants to ask Bateman for some general information about Owen and details of Bateman's whereabouts on the night of the disappearance. Bateman tells Kimball that Owen was "part of that whole Yale thing" and "ate a balanced diet" and that he had a (fictional) date with a woman named Veronica on the evening in question. When Bateman asks Kimball if Paul Owen has been seen by anyone in London, he replies that, yes, two people have mentioned possibly spotting him on the other side of the pond. Somewhat relieved, Bateman ends their conversation.

Meanwhile, Bateman is growing more and more erratic in his

behavior and sadistic and reckless in his crimes. His drug use increases heavily, as he begins adding to his cocaine habit an addiction to a number of different pills, leading to frequent hallucinations. On one day, he describes to the reader a reaction to pills that leaves him sick and stumbling through the streets of New York, before ending up in a diner where he is so high he isn't even able to place an order. His torture and murder of young women also escalates. The killings become much more drawn out, and often include Bateman performing sex acts on his victims' dying or dead bodies. In one particularly gruesome moment, he disintegrates a woman's vagina with acid until he is able to stuff it with cheese and then insert into it the end of a cage—where he has been keeping a rat which he found in his toilet. He describes to the reader the rat eating away at the woman's flesh and crawling around inside her body, only to be revealed later when Bateman cuts off the woman's head. He also descends into cannibalism, at one point taking the reader through the meticulous preparation and consumption of a woman's flesh. Bateman also stops reserving his killing for people who may not be missed; he murders his ex-girlfriend Bethany after getting her drunk at lunch and even stabs a young child to death in a public park.

One night, as he is walking through New York, Bateman sees a man playing saxophone on the street corner. Bateman quickly pulls out a gun and shoots the man to death, not noticing that he is within sight of a police car. This begins a police chase throughout Manhattan during which Bateman kills several other people, including a taxi driver whose car he hijacks. The chase ends with Bateman hiding in his new office, as SWAT teams and helicopters surround the building. Hysterical, Bateman makes a phone call to his lawyer, Harold Carnes, and confesses all of his crimes, including the murder of the missing Paul Owen. Bateman begins to hallucinate, staying in the office until the sun starts to rise, and then breaks from the action to detail to the reader the entire career of the band **Huey Louis and the News**.

Days later, Bateman (somehow still free and living his normal life) returns to Paul Owen's apartment, preparing to be greeted with the smell of rotting corpses. Instead, he finds the apartment open and miraculously clean; a realtor is showing the apartment to potential buyers. She asks Bateman if he "saw the add in The Times." Bateman looks around in disbelief, and quickly leaves.

Several weeks later, at the opening of a new club, Bateman spots his lawyer across the room. He decides to go over and confront him about the voicemails he left the night of the police chase. Carnes, his lawyer, is amused, mistaking Bateman for someone else and teasing that the "joke" was unbelievable because Bateman is "such a bloody ass-kisser" that he would never be able to commit the acts described in the voicemail. What's more, Carnes tells him, Bateman couldn't have killed Paul Owen because he dined with Owen twice just the week before.

The novel ends much like it began: with Bateman out for drinks with his friend, discussing clothing, their work, and other vacuous topics. The reader is left to wonder how Bateman's scattered life of drugs, sex, and violence will continue, as his eye is caught by a sign hung on the wall of the bar. The sign reads: "**This is not an exit**."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Patrick Bateman – Patrick Bateman is the novel's protagonist and narrator. He is a 27-year-old Harvard graduate who now lives in New York City and works on Wall Street as an investment banker. He religiously watches "**The Patty Winters Show**" and idolizes **Donald Trump**. He is meticulous about his cleanliness and health – his morning routine boasts an impressive array of exercises and beauty products – and he is interested in nothing but the finest, most expensive things – from shoes, to dining experiences, to women and friends. Patrick Bateman is also a serial rapist and murderer. He is a man filled not only with anger but also with the sadistic desire to enact his most violent and twisted fantasies on other people, especially on those whose lives he does not see as having value, like prostitutes and the homeless. Throughout the course of the novel, he takes the reader through the events of his life and into the darkest parts of his mind, and as his addictions to drugs, sex, and violence grow, the reader follows Bateman down a graphic spiral of torture, hallucination, and insanity.

Paul Owen – A fellow Wall Street investment banker, Paul Owen manages "the Fisher account," a fact Patrick Bateman obsesses over, though the reader never learns the significance of this particular account. Paul confuses Bateman for Marcus Halberstam, another banker, so often that, when in his presence, Bateman calls Evelyn "Cecilia," the name of Marcus' girlfriend. Bateman despises (and is likely jealous of) Paul, and eventually plots to kill him, taking him to dinner (while pretending to be Marcus Halberstam), getting him incredibly drunk, and killing him in his own apartment with an ax. This particular murder, however, is often considered to be a possible hallucination of Bateman's, as others report Paul being seen in London and, in the final pages of the novel, Bateman's lawyer, Harold Carnes, tells Bateman he had dinner with Paul just the week before.

Evelyn Richards – Evelyn is Patrick Bateman's fiancée. Though the two of them are both unhappy in their relationship and Bateman quite often treats Evelyn rather cruelly, they stay together largely for appearances. Like Bateman, Evelyn is shallow and materialistic, focusing on how others view her (and how much they enjoy her Christmas Party). She is often gossiping and expects nothing but the finest things as gifts from

her fiancé. She values objects and money over real, intimate love and connection. Eventually, Bateman dumps her (after tricking her into eating a chocolate-covered, used urinal cake).

Courtney Lawrence – Courtney, one of Evelyn's closest friends, is in a highly-unfulfilling relationship with Luis Carruthers and having an ongoing affair with Patrick Bateman. In contrast to Evelyn, Courtney is often out on the town with Bateman and the rest of his male friends. She has a penchant for pills, mostly anti-depressants, and is often described by Bateman as being spaced out or completely wasted, though still very physically attractive.

Jean – Jean is Patrick Bateman's secretary, or, as he refers to her, "my secretary who is in love with me." She does, indeed, seem to care deeply for Bateman, doting on him in the office and following whatever orders he may give her, whether it be a business task, making a reservation at a restaurant, or dressing or acting in a particular way when in his presence. Throughout the course of the novel, the two appear to grow closer (Bateman even takes Jean to dinner one night) but he ultimately shirks off her affection and nothing more comes of it.

Luis Carruthers – A closeted gay man and Wall Street colleague of Patrick Bateman's, Luis Carruthers is the boyfriend of Courtney Lawrence, who seems highly uninterested in the relationship. Later in the novel, when Bateman attempts to kill Luis in a bathroom stall, Luis mistakes his advance for a display of secret affection and spends much of the remainder of the novel in a hopeless and pitiful pursuit of Bateman's interest.

David Van Patten – David Van Patten is a fellow Wall Street banker and another member of Patrick Bateman's main social circle. He has a girlfriend who he regularly cheats on and is the first person the reader sees wave a dollar bill in front of the face of a beggar, only to snatch it away and run off cackling.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Timothy Price – Timothy Price is a fellow Wall Street banker and a member of Patrick Bateman's main social circle, which includes Price, Bateman, Craig McDermott, and David Van Patten. He is often aggressive and angry, homophobic, and always seeking attention and validation from others.

Craig McDermott – Craig McDermott is a fellow Wall Street banker and another member of Patrick Bateman's main social circle. He is well-connected, often able to score reservations at exclusive restaurants, and, like his friends, is interested in attractive women, who he discusses and treats as nothing more than objects.

Sean Bateman – Patrick Bateman's younger brother who is similarly wealthy, materialistic, and concerned with status, fashion, and power.

Mrs. Bateman – Patrick Bateman's mother, who seems to live in an assisted living facility of some kind.

Donald Kimball – The detective hired to investigate Paul Owen's murder.

Harold Carnes – Patrick Bateman's lawyer.

Al – A homeless man who Patrick Bateman attacks.

Bethany – Patrick Bateman's ex-girlfriend from Harvard, and one of his murder victims.

Sabrina – A prostitute Patrick Bateman hires but does not kill.

"Christie" – A prostitute Patrick Bateman hires multiple times and eventually kills; he gives her this name.

Elizabeth – A woman Patrick Bateman takes on a date and murders.

Jeannette – A woman with whom Patrick Bateman has an affair.

Marcus Halberstam – Another Wall Street banker, for whom Paul Owen often mistakes Patrick Bateman.

Scott Montgomery – Another Wall Street banker; Patrick Bateman is mesmerized by his **business cards**.

Todd Hamlin – Another Wall Street banker.

Robert Farrell – Another Wall Street banker.

Taylor Preston – Another Wall Street banker.

George Reeves – Another Wall Street banker.

Armstrong – Another Wall Street banker.

Ted Madison – The coke dealer at Tunnel.

The Dry Cleaners – An older, Chinese couple; they clean Patrick Bateman's blood-stained linens.

Abdullah – A cab driver who recognizes Patrick Bateman from a wanted poster and robs him.

Vanden – A Camden student and friend of Evelyn Richards; Stash's girlfriend.

Stash – A friend of Evelyn Richards; Vanden's boyfriend.

Scott and Anne Smiley – Camden graduates and friends of Courtney Lawrence.

Tom Cruise – The movie star; he lives in Patrick Bateman's building.

Bono – The rock star; Patrick Bateman and his friends attend his concert and, in a hallucination, he appears to Bateman as **the devil**.

Patricia – A model Patrick Bateman goes on a date with.

Daisy – A model Patrick Bateman goes on a date with.

Helga – The woman Patrick Bateman gets his facials from.

Alison Poole – A woman Patrick Bateman assaulted at the Kentucky Derby.

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.

MATERIALISM AND CONSUMPTION

In *American Psycho*, Patrick Bateman and his band of incredibly wealthy Wall Street colleagues live lives of utter excess, purchasing nothing but the finest things, wearing only the finest clothes, eating at only the chicest restaurants, and looking down on any who fall short of their standard. These characters are exaggerated stereotypes of the 1980s Wall Street "yuppie" class that Ellis means to critique – often to the point of satire – in his novel. Ellis engages in this critique not through any attempt at realism, but rather by amplifying the characters' obsession with materiality and abandonment of all values other than wealth to extreme degrees.

Every time Bateman encounters another person, he describes in detail what they are wearing and the high-end designer labels of their clothes. His meticulous descriptions and severe judgments reveal a character who calculates a person's worth based entirely on their wealth and outward appearance. Bateman and his friends' obsessions with their own images – being seen in the right places, with the right people, looking the right way – displays a hollowness of self, suggesting that the shallowness of this "yuppie" class may be connected to feelings that they exist within a culture that says the only way for them to attain self-esteem, value, and place in society is to buy it. Bateman and his associates also have a practice of ridiculing homeless people and beggars. Bateman, for instance, describes one homeless woman as "ugly" and "old," and makes a practice of dangling money in front of beggars' faces, only to gleefully snatch it away and enjoy their anguish and tears. Bateman and his Wall Street friends are model citizens in a capitalist society: they work, make money, and spend it. Because beggars and the homeless do not have the wealth and possessions that they do, they are seen as devoid of value and humanity, not worthy of respect or care.

But Ellis pushes even further (the novel isn't called *American Jerk* after all; it's *American Psycho*). Bateman's hatred and mistreatment of the homeless turns violent when he first interrogates and then attacks a homeless man, Al, and his dog. After telling him to "get a job" and ridiculing him for "reek[ing] of… shit," Bateman slowly and meticulously drives a blade into the man's eyes and stomps on his dog's legs. He goes on to kill a number of other homeless people, including Al. These attacks indicate, obviously, that not only does Bateman believe that the homeless are beneath his care, but that they are undeserving even to live. They also suggest a kind of desperation on Bateman's part, however: he kills the homeless not just because he can, but because his worldview means he must. A homeless person being allowed to live suggests that people have inherent worth that has nothing to do with their wealth. By this logic, only by murdering and torturing the homeless – only by asserting that they have *no worth* – can Bateman fully believe that his wealth and possessions and status give *him* worth.

The novel, then, pushes Bateman and his friends' ideas about homeless people to their furthest logical extensions until the result reveals the insanity – the psychotic-ness – of the original belief. The novel does the same with the idea of "consumption." Bateman and his wealth- and possession-obsessed friends believe that consumption, the purchase of material goods, is all that matters. As it progresses, the novel graphically relates Bateman's consumption of material goods – the best clothes, electronics, fine dining – to a cannibalistic consumption, as he starts eating the remains of his victims and consuming their own flesh in front of them. At one point, for instance, the novel describes "the fresh smell of blood cooking" and a pair of cooked breasts lying, "rather delicately, on a china plate I bought at the Pottery Barn." Here, Ellis compares the insanity of Bateman's meticulous materialism to the methodical consumption of human flesh. As cannibalism is a human eating the flesh of another human, the novel suggests that materialism is eating away at Bateman's own humanity and his ability to value others as anything other than flesh to be used. Bateman's sociopathic appetite for violence and disregard for others' humanity, the novel insists, is just the ultimate end point for a capitalist, consumer culture that values only wealth and materialism and sees no inherent value in anything else.

IDENTITY AND ISOLATION

Throughout the novel, instances of consumed and mistaken identity contribute to a growing experience of isolation on the part of both the reader and narrator. Bateman is repeatedly mistaken for other people; when he is out with his friends it is not uncommon for someone to greet him as someone else and not be corrected. These constant moments of mistaken identity suggest that, within the world of the novel, it isn't really important who somebody is because the characters' value and knowledge of one another is entirely superficial. In a community where no one has any real relationships, no one truly to truly know or connect with, Bateman ends up isolated inside his mind, where he eventually begins to crumble and go insane. In fact, Ellis borrows the idea that isolation is inherent in a capitalist society from the communist thinker Karl Marx, and creates for his narrator and reader an experience of isolation in a hyper-capitalist community.

Ellis amplifies this notion for the reader by surrounding

Bateman with a rotating group of fellow Wall Street bankers (who almost always refer to one another by last name) and offering little-to-no introduction for new minor characters. While this can lead to immense confusion, it also sets up a world in which people are interchangeable, not worth getting to know, and exist more as objects than humans. With no other characters to get to know, the reader is left alone and isolated with Bateman and his (increasingly psychotic) mind. Ironically, the one person who seems to truly care for and be interested in Bateman is his secretary, Jean ("who is in love with me"). For the majority of the novel Bateman treats her rudely, telling her what she should be wearing and how to behave and ordering her around coldly. Despite this, Jean has an affection for Bateman that is evident nowhere else in the novel, and she often attempts to better get to know him. But just when it seems as if the two may be nearing a closer and intimate connection, Bateman brushes off her affection and friendship. Unwilling (or unable) to open up to her (to engage with and reveal his true self and identity) Bateman recedes into his isolation.

This connection between mistaken identity and isolation comes to a head surrounding the murder of Paul Owen. After killing Owen, Bateman buys a ticket to London in Owen's name and then sets up Owen's New York apartment to make it look as if Owen has left town. When a private investigator looking into the disappearance comes to speak with Bateman, he mentions this and says that Owen has been possibly sighted in London. Knowing that Owen is dead, Bateman assumes that these witnesses were mistaken. But when Bateman later approaches his lawyer regarding a voicemail in which he confessed to the murder, his lawyer tells him that he "had dinner… with Paul Owen… twice… in London… just ten days ago." Suddenly a number of questions arise: Is Paul Owen alive or dead? Did Bateman simply imagine or fantasize about killing him? Did Bateman kill someone else he only thought was Owen? But Ellis (or Bateman) never gives the reader more knowledge, and it's never even clear if it is Ellis or Bateman who is leaving the questions unresolved. And so, suddenly, the reader who has been in Bateman's head through his first-person narration is thrust *out* of Bateman's head, leaving Bateman alone and isolated with the truth of what he has done, alone with his own questions, guilt, or confusion.

The novel suggests that Bateman is the ultimate result of a society where identity is tied solely to material worth, and so he is unable to connect with others and recedes into his own mind – unable even to recognize or understand other people, and in the end is driven so far into his own mind as to be inaccessible even to the reader.

MONOTONY AND DESENSITIZATION

Patrick Bateman leads a monotonous life. This affects both his behavior and the way he communicates with the reader. In the novel's second chapter, titled "Morning," Bateman describes his fastidious and meticulous morning routine, involving exercise, multiple skin- and hair-care products, and a highly-organized breakfast. By introducing the reader to Bateman's life in this way, Ellis sets up an understanding of our narrator as someone who lives a very specifically regimented life with day after day of identical, repeated routine. This monotony then extends into Bateman's relationships and social life.

It is Bateman's violence that, at first, interrupts the monotony of his life. Early in the novel, it comes by way of his fantasizing about a violent act while at dinner with Evelyn or his friends, and it later evolves into full-blown torture, murder, and cannibalism. It can be imagined, then, that one of the things leading Bateman down his spiral of violence is this very monotony that both he and the reader experience: Bateman has become entirely desensitized to life, and torture and murder are a cure for his numbness.

The revolving door of interchangeable people, restaurants, clothing, and events in Bateman's life is, at first, difficult for the reader to follow, but by repeating these patterns continuously, Ellis demonstrates the insignificance of the details and allows the reader to become desensitized to this high volume of similar information and experience. The numbness to the monotony of Bateman's life that Ellis creates for the reader is joined by an identically-created numbness to Bateman's violent acts. Though the novel's vivid and graphic depictions of sex, torture, and murder can be initially unsettling, the sheer volume and detail of these descriptions allows the reader to experience a desensitization to upsetting material. As the volume of graphic violence described and the intensity and perversion of the gore both increase, the reader grows more and more accustomed to the language and images. The methodical listing of violent acts thus becomes not unlike Bateman's methodical descriptions of his daily hygiene routines or meticulously detailed descriptions of the clothes that everyone around him is wearing. Ellis creates an environment in which the reader can become as unfazed by intense sexual and physical violence as Bateman, and while the reader may not have the affection for and addiction to it that Bateman has, they are slowly and steadily brought down his spiral with him.

By creating a parallel between the numbing monotony of Bateman's life contributing to his appetite for violence and the monotony of the descriptions of these violent acts numbing the reader to their upsetting nature, Ellis creates similar experiences for his novel's narrator and his reader, leading the reader to contemplate that the violent acts of Patrick Bateman my be something we are each potentially capable of.

VICE AND VIOLENCE

Patrick Bateman seems to live off sex and drugs as much as he lives off expensive food, alcohol, and clothing. Early in the novel, his appetite for sex and drugs remains concurrent but distinct from his violent acts, however as things develop and his addictions grow beyond his control, the lines between sex and violence and between drugs and violence are blurred, and Bateman's vices become intertwined in his torture and murder. This leads him down a path of even more perverted and reckless behavior.

Bateman is obsessed with sex. He is constantly sizing-up women and renting porn videos. Many of his victims early in the novel are prostitutes he hires (often two at a time) for aggressive, coercive sex. Early on, though, there is a distinction between sex and violence: he will have sex (albeit rough) with the women and then move into torturing and murdering them afterwards. This distinct progression from sex to violence changes as Bateman descends further into madness, and the lines between sex and violence blur. The sex itself becomes more violent, and Bateman begins incorporating his torture tactics into sex more and more. Furthermore, towards the end of the novel, Bateman seems to really get sexual satisfaction directly from killing; he often describes himself as having an erection while torturing women. He also begins to commit sex acts on dying women and dead bodies, for example in the chapter "Girl," when Bateman tells the reader, "She only has half a mouth left, and I fuck it once, then twice, three times in all." Instead of sex moving into torture and murder, the acts become one and the same.

Bateman and his friends are also heavy drug users. Early in the novel, Bateman's cocaine use is largely social, but he later does more and more of the drug and his attitude towards it become increasingly aggressive. Bateman begins taking pills, too – downers like Halcion, Valium, and Xanax. At first, he claims to be taking them for his anxiety, but he eventually becomes so addicted that his "body has mutated and adapted to the drug." As the variety, volume, and frequency of Bateman's drug use increases, he begins to have less and less control over himself and his violence, leading to reckless behavior that would be highly uncharacteristic for the meticulous and image-conscious man we met at the beginning of the novel. For example, in the chapter "A Glimpse of a Thursday Afternoon," Bateman has such a strong reaction to taking pills to fend off "a pounding migraine" and "a major-league anxiety attack" that he ends up stumbling through the streets and, ultimately, he kills people in public and without protecting his identity. This public killing leads to a massive police chase and also results in Bateman being recognized, threatened, and robbed. While at the beginning of the novel he was meticulous about who he would kill and how, he loses control and care for such considerations as he spirals further down into drugs.

Throughout the novel, Ellis shows that Bateman's excessive behaviors with sex, drugs, and violence are uncontrollable. While he was, at the beginning of the novel, able to separate these behaviors and keep them, like all other aspects of his life, organized and compartmentalized, his vices and violence quickly begin to spill over and control all facets of his life. This is, perhaps, Ellis's gesture to discuss morality in the novel. Even for a man as regimented and married to his set of values as Patrick Bateman, it is impossible to resist the overpowering nature of vice, and the reader follows Bateman as his vices lead him to lose track of even the things most important to him, such as appearance and order. In doing this, Ellis slightly humanizes Bateman; though his actions are horrific and inhuman, he is as vulnerable to vice as the rest of us.

THE TRUTH

Patrick Bateman is an unreliable narrator. By pairing the reader with a storyteller who may or may not be trustworthy in a landscape of drug-addled confusion and hallucination, Ellis creates a world for the reader that is constantly in flux and unstable, mimicking the experience of being inside the mind of a deranged and depraved serial killer and, ultimately, revealing the possibility for the spark of an "American psycho" to be dormant within each of us.

The relationship between the events Bateman talks us through and when those events actually take place in time is often unclear. In the chapter "Girls," Bateman moves immediately and without transition from describing how "Christie has kept on a pair of thigh-high suede boots from Henri Bendel that I've made her wear" to "Elizabeth, naked, running from the bedroom, blood already on her, is moving with difficulty as she screams out something garbled." The passage of time between chapters is also often left unclear. Sometimes when Bateman refers to "yesterday," he will describe the events of the previous day he has relayed to us. But more often, especially when moving from one chapter to the next, it will at first seem to the reader that time has been continuous until Bateman mentions events of "yesterday" that do not align with what we have seen in the timeline we've been following. Not only does this make Bateman's story difficult to follow, but it leads to questions about whether or not Bateman's portrayal of events is honest and trustworthy. Is he leaving things out intentionally or unintentionally? What and why? Is his memory faulty?

Early in the novel, Bateman describes hypothetical violent acts to the reader, as well as violent acts he has committed in the past – people he has tortured and killed. It is unclear in these moments whether or not he is being honest. The reader does not yet know if Bateman is someone who fantasizes about violence and tells fake stories about it or someone who actually commits these acts. As Bateman's descent into heavier drug use and more violence continues, the truth becomes even more difficult to discern. In "Chase, Manhattan," Bateman describes a

large and elaborate police chase which ends with him hiding in his new office while multiple police cars, SWAT teams, and helicopters surround the building. The chapter then ends abruptly and moves onto a detailed description of **Huey Lewis and the News**. We never learn more about what happened during the night of the police chase, and there do not seem to have been any consequences for Bateman. Though we later learn that he definitely left the voice messages he describes leaving during the case (because his lawyer discusses receiving them) this huge event is left unresolved and unclear. Did Bateman hallucinate the chase or did he intentionally exaggerate the events for the reader?

As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult for the reader to hold onto an understanding of truth. As time moves more erratically and Bateman's descriptions (or lack thereof) of his life become wilder and more unreliable, the reader is left to question the entire novel, which now exists somewhere in a limbo between the truth, Bateman's honesty and forthcoming in telling his story, and the memories and perceptions of a drug-addicted psychopath. The largest nail in the coffin of truth is Harold Carnes' assertion that he had lunch the previous week with a very much alive Paul Owen in London. The reader is left to wonder if Owen's murder, one of the novel's most central events, happened or not, and, thus if the events of the entire novel can be trusted. It is entirely possible (and intentionally left open by Ellis) that Patrick Bateman never committed a single violent act, but instead either hallucinated or fabricated his tales based on his personal fantasies of violence. But whether he did or did not rape, torture, and murder multiple people, the reader realizes that it doesn't really matter if Bateman committed the violent acts he's described throughout the novel. In leading the reader to this realization, Ellis proposes that even a person who is *not* torturing and murdering strangers and friends could have the desire and capability for such violence inside of them, especially when under the influence of drugs and sex. Bateman's existence in a capitalist society has bred in him a violence; Ellis doesn't need him to act on this violence in order to critique the hyper-capitalist, materialistic, and shallow society he saw growing to dominate American life and culture in the late 1980s. The truth – erratic and fleeting throughout the novel – is, in many ways, unnecessary to the novel's argument.

SYMBOLS

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

THE DEVIL AND HELL

The novel both begins and ends with quotes from famous works of literature involving the Devil and Hell. The red graffiti described in the opening line of the novel ("Abandon all hope ye who enter here") is a quote from Dante's *Inferno*, the first part of his epic poem, in which the poet Virgil guides Dante through Hell, and the text on the sign Bateman sees at the end of the novel, and the novel's final words, ("This is not an exit") is an allusion to Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist play *No Exit*, which depicts deceased people locked in a room together for eternity. Furthermore, not only can Bateman's actions be seen as satanic, but the devil himself appears in the form of Bono during a hallucination Bateman has while at a U2 concert. By including this imagery, Ellis is drawing a comparison between Bateman's world and hell, thus critiquing the dark underbelly of the shiny, elite Wall Street world.

BUSINESS CARDS

Business cards feature most prominently in the chapter "Pastels." Bateman, Van Patten, Price, and McDermott are out to dinner and showing off their newest business cards to one another, obsessing over the fonts, paper color and thickness, and style of the cards. Another banker, Scott Montgomery, joins them and leaves his card, and Bateman is completely mesmerized by it. The nearly-phallic obsession with business cards and one-upping each other through them is another example of those in Bateman's world focusing only on a shallow, materialistic valuing of other people. The person with the most well-designed business card is the person with the most value, and Bateman seems to have thought that this would be a battle he would easily win. When Bateman becomes entranced by Montgomery's business card, however, the reader can infer a sense of insecurity on Bateman's part, a feeling which he would never talk openly about, even directly to the reader.

"THE PATTY WINTERS SHOW"

"The Patty Winters Show" is a fictional daytime talk show not unlike the real-life shows of Jerry Springer, Sally Jesse Raphael, and Greg Geraldo, which were very popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is also Patrick Bateman's favorite television program. Every day he watches the show, noting the bizarre topic of the episode ("UFOs that kill," "nuclear war," "a new sport called Dwarf Tossing") and often calling his friends on the phone to ridicule the new batch of guests on each day. Bateman's obsession with the show is a reflection of the wild secrets he is keeping from the rest of the world. While he may outwardly appear to be a perfect member of a mainstream (though still highly exclusive) society and culture, the secret life and personality he shares only with the reader show him to be not dissimilar from the "freaks" that are guests on the show. Furthermore, the recurrence of "The Patty Winters Show" and its wild topics is routinely cited in analyses of the book as a litmus test for Bateman's mental state; the

stranger and more unbelievable the day's topic or guests on the show are, the more likely Bateman is in a hallucinatory state in the moment he recounts the show to the reader.

DONALD TRUMP

Long before he became President in 2017, Donald J. Trump was a businessman, author, and celebrity. In *American Psycho*, he is the person Patrick Bateman idolizes above all others. Bateman talks about him constantly, citing incredibly specific details of his life of luxury, and is often distracted by the thought of seeing Trump or his wife Ivana out in New York City. Bateman's obsession often irks Evelyn, who wishes her boyfriend would talk about something other than Trump. Ellis's inclusion of Trump as an idol in the novel (he never actually appears) grounds the book in a reality of late 1980s Wall Street New York and also shows the obsessive nature of Bateman's mind. His love for Trump clearly indicates to the reader the things that Bateman values most in another person: wealth, success, extravagance, and beautiful women.

LES MISÉRABLES

The musical adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables* opened on Broadway in 1987 and instantly became a smash success. The show was everywhere, with its logo and music being seen and heard around New York and the rest of the country. It was, for a time, very difficult to get a ticket to, as going to see the show was the hot new thing for all New York elites and other theatergoers to do. The show, its poster, and its music appear incredibly often throughout the novel (until its popularity seems to be usurped by a fictitious production of *The Threepenny Opera* in the last two chapters). That Bateman and his friends all know and have seen the musical shows their status as wealthy enough to get a ticket and their connection to popular culture, while simultaneously grounding them in the real pop culture of the time period.

The musical itself is a melodramatic tale about the 1832 June Rebellion in Paris. While the causes of the actual 1832 rebellion were complex, the musical largely portrays it as an uprising of the poor against their oppressors. The musical is, then, primarily about class struggle, "the haves and the have-nots," and the tensions created when the gap between the most wealthy and the poorest members of a society begins to greatly increase – just what was happening in New York in the 1980s. The reader is reminded of this parallel between the musical's content and *American Psycho*'s own dealings with class each of the many times the musical is referenced. The fact that it is the wealthy characters of the novel who love and attend *Les Misérables* as a kind of status symbol without ever coming close to absorbing its themes about inequality and inhumanity only heightens the irony of the symbol.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Vintage edition of *American Psycho* published in 1991.

April Fools Quotes

❝ ABANDON ALL HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE is scrawled in blood red lettering on the side of the Chemical Bank near the corner of Eleventh and First and is in print large enough to be seen from the backseat of the cab as it lurches forward in the traffic leaving Wall Street and just as Timothy Price notices the words a bus pulls up, the advertisement for *Les Misérables* on its side blocking his view...

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Timothy Price

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which opens the novel, begins with a quote from Dante's *Inferno*, an epic poem detailing the author's journey through the circles of hell. This is the first instance of devil and hell imagery which appears throughout the novel, and serves to establish the dark, painful, and sadistic tone of the novel and its narrator, as well as connecting that notion directly to the Wall Street world in which Bateman lives – this is done by depicting these words directly on the walls of a bank. The graffiti scrawl and color of the words additionally evokes the image of blood, which will be prevalent throughout the novel as Bateman's gruesome killing spree begins – this image will even be directly referenced later when Bateman uses real blood to scrawl a message on the wall of Paul Owen's apartment.

Notably, the words are quickly covered by a bus advertisement for the musical "Les Misérables" – another first appearance of a recurring symbol. The musical, which dominated culture in the late 1980s and is primarily focused on class warfare and the plight of the poor in pre-revolutionary France, serves as a constant reminder of the novel's dealings with capitalism, wealth, and class. Ellis emphasizes the "haves and have nots" juxtaposition of Bateman and his friends' lifestyle as contrasted with that of the poor and homeless whom they often mock and mistreat.

"I'm resourceful," Price is saying, "I'm creative, I'm young, unscrupulous, highly motivated, highly skilled. In essence what I'm saying is that society can*not* afford to lose me. I'm an *asset*."

Related Characters: Timothy Price (speaker), Patrick Bateman

Related Themes:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

In this introductory moment, Timothy Price makes incredibly clear the value he believes he brings to the world – he, and the others in his circle, are the cream of the crop, contribute to society and humanity more than any other, and should be held up as people with far greater inherent value and worth than others.

Interestingly, the qualities listed here by Price are likely not the only reasons he believes he has such value. Price, Bateman, and the rest of their friends, as will be revealed throughout the rest of the novel, believe themselves to be "assets" to society because of their wealth and fixture as the wealthy elite. Their confidence comes from what they have, what they are able to buy, and the extravagant and luxurious lifestyles they lead. In this particular quote, Price's egocentrism, though comical, introduces the reader to an attitude maintained by almost all of the novel's characters, especially Price and Bateman: the idea that they are better than all others around them, and those who are below them should serve and be grateful for them.

Tunnel Quotes

All of the men outside Tunnel tonight are for some reason wearing tuxedos, except for a middle-aged homeless bum who sits by a Dumpster, only a few feet away from the ropes, holding out to anyone who pays attention a Styrofoam coffee cup, begging for change, and as Price leads us around the crowd up to the ropes, motioning to one of the doormen, Van Patten waves a crisp one-dollar bill in front of the homeless bum's face, which momentarily lights up, then Van Patten pockets it as we're whisked into the club, handed a dozen drink tickets and two VIP Basement passes.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), David Van Patten, Timothy Price

Related Themes:

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

This passage clearly displays the class distinctions that are at play in the novel and which were important realities in the real-life 1980s (as they are today). Historically, the 1980s were a decade of incredible economic and technological expansion in the United States. On Wall Street, real men (and women) like Bateman and his friends amassed vast sums of money and lived lavish lifestyles filled with sex and drugs. At the same time, the 1980s, especially in New York, were a moment of dire difficulties for the poor and homeless in cities. The popularity of crack cocaine and law enforcement crack-downs ravaged poor populations and left many people homeless and in great need. The rich were very much getting richer and the poor were very much getting poorer. Ellis uses this historical juxtaposition well and often in his novel, amplifying it in passages such as this one.

This is also the first instance of the "game" Bateman and his friends enjoy playing with homeless beggars: dangling a dollar in front of them, only to snatch it away and mock their disappointment. Bateman and his friends are incredibly wealthy, and they believe this makes them more valuable as human beings. Under their hyper-capitalist worldview, their high-paying jobs and excessive spending habits make them model citizens and, thus, people of great worth. The homeless, who have no money and no jobs, are entirely devoid of value to them, and thus, not worthy of any respect or human decency. In fact, they assign these people such little value that they taunt and hunt them for their own pleasurable sport.

Office Quotes

"Don't wear that outfit again," I say, looking her over quickly… "do not wear that outfit again. Wear a dress. A skirt or something… You're prettier than that… And high heels," I mention. "I like high heels."
She shakes her head good-naturedly as she exits…

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Jean

Related Themes:

Page Number: 66-67

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman views women as nothing more than objects. Whether it's Jean, his secretary, Evelyn, his girlfriend, or a

prostitute he hires, he believes women exist only to serve him and to aid in his pleasure, whether it be sexual or simply visual. Furthermore, because Jean works for Bateman and thus, in his mind, belongs to him, she is an extension of the persona of perfection, style, and dominance that he presents, and therefore must align her appearance with his standards.

Bateman's objectification of women will play a large role in his descent into reckless and sadistic killing; if a woman has no value but to provide him pleasure and service, then by torturing or killing her he is doing nothing beyond that to which he is rightfully entitled. His obsession with appearances – with clothing, with company, with physique – will eventually fall by the wayside as he descends into madness, but for now he is meticulously and religiously devoted to them.

Date with Evelyn Quotes

❝ Idly, I wonder if Evelyn would ever sleep with another woman if I brought her over to the brownstone… If they'd let me direct, tell them what to do, position them under hot halogen lamps… But what if I forced her at *gunpoint*? Threatened to cut them both up, maybe, if they didn't comply?

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Evelyn Richards

Related Themes:

Page Number: 120

Explanation and Analysis

For Bateman, women exist to serve him and aid in his pleasure, and nothing more. He, as a man, is more powerful and important. He is the one with the Wall Street job; he is the one with the large sums of money; this is what gives him value as a person. When he is with prostitutes, this is clear and obvious – these are women of a lower class that he has hired to pleasure him – however, this passage shows that this attitude even extends to women in his own social circle, even to his own girlfriend. The line of thinking Bateman has here also serves as a precursor to the conflation of sex and violence that will come later in the novel. While now he only imagines using a weapon and violence to force a woman to do what he wants sexually, he will later be unable to distinguish an act of sex from an act of violence, biting the flesh off women as he pleasures them orally and having sex with their dead and dying corpses.

This passage also highlights the complete lack of connection in Bateman and Evelyn's relationship. Though they are dating, and seem to have been for some time, they are not affectionate to one another and do not care deeply for one another in any way. Their relationship, like all other relationships in Bateman's life, is entirely shallow, based primarily on money and appearances. This complete lack of connection even in his most intimate relationships will go on to fuel the mental and social isolation that overcomes Bateman as he descends into madness.

Tuesday Quotes

❝ "Why don't you get another one?" I ask. "Why don't you get another job?"
"I'm not…" He coughs, holding himself, shaking miserably, violently, unable to finish the sentence.
"You're not what?" I ask softly. "Qualified for anything else?"
…
"Listen, do you think it's fair to take money from people who *do* have jobs? Who *do* work?"
His face crumples and he gasps, his voice raspy, "What am I gonna do?"

Related Characters: Al, Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 130

Explanation and Analysis

In Bateman's world, a person's worth is linked explicitly to their place in a capitalist hierarchy. This means that whoever is contributing most to the global economic boom of the 1980s (making more money, spending more money on more material goods, working with the Wall Street banks that uphold and profit from business and the movement of money and capital) is the most valuable. In Bateman's eyes, then, a homeless person is devoid of value because they have no money (and thus, no money to spend) and do not have a job. It is disgusting to him to even imagine a person with no value and who makes no contribution to the mechanism of capitalism trying to take money for free from someone who does, especially someone who does in such a great and expansive way as Bateman.

This disgust – along with the disgust Bateman feels for Al's unclean and disheveled physical appearance (remember, looks are everything and shallowness is key) and his complete lack of consideration for the humanity of people he considers to be below him – allows him to feel no remorse, and even take pleasure in the violence and torturous things he does to the helpless Al and his dog.

Lunch Quotes

❝ "My life is a living hell," I mention off the cuff, while casually moving leeks around on my plate, which by the way is a porcelain triangle. "And there are many more people I, uh, want to... want to, well, I guess *murder*." I say emphasizing this last word, staring straight into Armstrong's face.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Armstrong

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

In many instances throughout the novel, Bateman will describe himself admitting his crimes or threatening horrid violence in casual conversation with his friends. Yet every time, these admissions are either ignored completely or greeted with friendly laughter. Especially early on, these moments highlight the unreliability of Bateman as a narrator, an idea that will grow exponentially as events continue. It is unclear in these moments if Bateman is truly saying these things and being ignored, or if he is merely imagining himself saying these things.

If he is indeed making these admissions and being ignored completely, the reader can see, again, just how disconnected and shallow all of the relationships in Bateman's life truly are. Everyone in his circle is concerned only with themselves; they only pay attention to others when they are attempting to compare themselves to them. In this particular instance, Armstrong is so wrapped up in his own story that he isn't even listening to Bateman. He's not having a conversation with him, just talking at him. This isolation from others, which is a symptom of the capitalistic, materialistic, and shallow lives led by Bateman and his peers, will only increase as situations amplify throughout the novel.

Concert Quotes

❝ It hits me that we have something in common, that we share a bond... the audience disappears and the music slows down... everything getting clearer, my body alive and burning, on fire, and from nowhere a flash of white and blinding light envelopes me and I hear it, can actually *feel*, can even make out the letters of the message hovering above Bono's head in orange wavy letters: "I ... am ... the ... devil ... and I am ... just ... like ... *you* ..."

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Bono

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 142

Explanation and Analysis

This is one of Bateman's largest and most clearly spelled-out hallucinations in the novel. While at a U2 concert with a group of friends – a concert none of them are very interested in being at, though they, of course, have the most expensive front-row seats – he hallucinates a moment with lead singer Bono in which Bono reveals himself to be the devil. Not only is this another appearance of devil and hell imagery, a symbol which highlights both Bateman's sadistic tendencies and his entrapment in his own private, isolated world of suffering, but it also reveals that Bateman perhaps feels that his violent actions and feelings are a twisted symbol of status, making him (as the devil is) the supreme ruler of the hell in which he lives.

This passage also foreshadows the many hallucinations Bateman will have later in the novel. His description of the room falling away and white light will be repeated at other moments when he retreats far into his own mind. That being said, Bateman relays this happening to the reader, not as a hallucination, but as fact. Though for now it is clear to the reader that what is happening is inside Bateman's mind, discerning reality from imagination and truth from misconception or outright fiction will get increasingly difficult as things progress.

A Glimpse of a Thursday Afternoon Quotes

❝ ...I'm sweaty and a pounding migraine thumps dull in my head and I'm experiencing a major-league anxiety attack, searching my pockets for Valium, Xanax, a leftover Halcion, anything... I've forgotten who I had lunch with earlier, and even more important, *where*.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 148-149

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman's mental health has begun to deteriorate, and (as both a cause and effect) his reliance on drugs, prescription and otherwise, has been steadily increasing. In this passage and the rest of this chapter, the reader sees just how much

drugs grown to affect Bateman's life. For Bateman, things like where he has lunch and with whom he is seen are incredibly important, as both his society's system of value and his own self-worth are calculated based on material and social matters like money, fine dining, and "schmoozing." Now, however, his drug habit has eclipsed this set of values, forcing Bateman to abandon the matters that were once most important to him and helped most to keep him sane. Later in this chapter, he will describe how his physical appearance suffers as a result of this moment, as well as how he makes a fool of himself in front of beggars and waitresses – things the Bateman we met in the first chapter would never think of doing.

Furthermore, as Bateman reveals that he cannot remember even the most important details of his day, the reader is given a warning about the trustworthiness of his narration. Clearly, his mental health and drug use have affected his perception and memory, and we must beware of this going forward and thus take any information he gives up with an ever-growing grain of salt.

Shopping Quotes

"My priorities before Christmas include the following: (1) to get an eight o'clock reservation on a Friday night at Dorsia with Courtney, (2) to get myself invited to the Trump Christmas Party aboard their yacht, (3) to find out as much as humanly possible about Paul Owen's mysterious Fisher account, (4) to saw a hardbody's head off and Federal Express it to Robin Barker – the dumb bastard – over at Solomon Brothers and (5) to apologize to Evelyn without making it look like an apology.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Evelyn Richards, Courtney Lawrence

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 177-178

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman clearly (and comically) lays out for the reader his priorities, giving a concise and encompassing view of his values. He's determined to get into the most exclusive and elite restaurant in New York (a huge status symbol) and wants to bring, not his girlfriend, but his colleague's girlfriend. He also wants access to the party of the season, hosted by the man he idolizes above all others: supreme capitalist and celebrity businessman Donald Trump. At the same time, Bateman's obsession over Paul Owen's mysterious Fisher account and his immense jealousy of Owen continues to grow, and his appetite for sadistic, murderous violence against women is stronger than ever. Lastly, his relationship with Evelyn is still entirely detached, and more a matter of status and competition than love or connection.

Christmas Party Quotes

"Stop it. Come on, I want this," I say and then in a last, desperate attempt I smile flirtatiously, kissing her lightly on the lips, and add, "*Mrs.* Bateman?"

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Evelyn Richards

Related Themes:

Page Number: 188

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman is a master manipulator. He knows just what to say and just what to offer in order to get what he wants, especially with women. In this case, he knows just how much Evelyn longs to get married; she's told him herself. She views marriage as a symbol of status that will tie her to Bateman, as well as an opportunity for them to flaunt their wealth. Bateman wants desperately to get out of her party and, essentially, to go do drugs, and now he's willing to "offer" the one thing Evelyn can't say no to in order to get access to that.

This moment demonstrates once again the incredibly shallow nature of Evelyn and Bateman's relationship. She wants a wedding not because of her love for Bateman, but because of her love for his wealth and status. Evelyn is completely blinded by her shallow obsessions and is willing to do something she knows she shouldn't so (leave her own Christmas Party) in order to get closer to that.

It's also worth noting that Bateman's status as a manipulator could very well extend to his relationship to the reader. There is nothing to suggest that he would value the reader or feel any more closeness in that relationship than he does in any of the others in his life. If he's this quick and easy to lie to his girlfriend, we have to wonder if he's as happily willing to lie to us, too.

Lunch with Bethany Quotes

I think about other things while she describes her recent past: air, water, sky, time, a moment, a point somewhere when I wanted to show her everything beautiful in the world. I have no patience for revelations, for new beginnings, for events that take place beyond the realm of my immediate vision.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Bethany

Related Themes:

Page Number: 241

Explanation and Analysis

In this moment the reader gets a glimpse at a previous, and perhaps very different, version of Patrick Bateman. He tells us that he once wanted to show Bethany all of the beauty of the world; he once had an honest and tender appreciation for beauty, and his past relationship with her was such that he wanted to share this with her. We can infer, then, that their relationship was based on a close connection, very unlike Bateman's current relationship with Evelyn (or anyone else). We learn that he was once capable of connection and tender feeling, but that something must have happened along the way to change this, making him completely isolated from others.

Now, he tells us, he has left this past Bateman behind completely. For whatever reason, he refuses to think about going back or changing his life to begin anew; he is a banker and a killer, and will not allow himself to stray from that path. This is a very rare moment in which Bateman displays a speck of vulnerability and hints to the reader that he knows himself to be more complex of a person than he lets on.

Dinner with Secretary Quotes

And though it has been in no way a romantic evening, she embraces me and this time emanates a warmth I'm not familiar with. I am so used to imagining everything happening the way it occurs in movies, visualizing things falling somehow into the shape of events on a screen, that I almost hear the swelling of an orchestra, can almost hallucinate the camera panning low around us, fireworks bursting in slow motion overhead, the seventy-millimeter image of her lips parting and the subsequent murmur of "I want you" in Dolby sound.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Jean

Related Themes:

Page Number: 265

Explanation and Analysis

Here Bateman reveals not only his cold isolation, but his deep awareness of it. He knows that he feels no connection to others and has the (quite beautiful) language to discuss it. He is then taken aback not only by Jean's actions (here, embracing him) but by the honesty and warmth of her connection.

Bateman's description of this moment through the lens of a film demonstrates his ability to dissociate from his life and the world around him. Even while he's in the middle of a moment, Bateman is able to step back from it, analyze it, and give a play-by-play of what is happening as if it weren't his own life or even a true happening at all. His increasing isolation and retreat further and further into his mind leaves him disconnected from the world around him, desensitized to emotions and stimuli from others, and able to think of the situations he's in and actions he takes as not even part of his own reality.

Girls (2) Quotes

During this Christie has kept on a pair of thigh-high suede boots from Henri Bendel that I've made her wear. Elizabeth, naked, running from the bedroom, blood already on her, is moving with difficulty as she screams out something garbled.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Elizabeth, "Christie"

Related Themes:

Page Number: 289

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman transitions abruptly from sex to violence here. He has been describing, in graphic detail, his sexual encounter with "Christie" and Elizabeth, including the things he's instructing them to do to him and to each other and the clothes he's made them wear. Then, however, he is all of a sudden attacking the women, already having drawn blood. This lack of transition is a symbol of the deterioration of Bateman's distinction between sex and violence (and, seemingly, the passage of time itself). Where earlier in the novel he would describe sex with a woman and then the movement from sex into violence, here he blacks out and foregoes any transition. Later on, there will be no need for a transition, as sex and violence will have become, for

Bateman, one and the same.

The narrative style of this moment also raises res flags around Bateman's reliability and trustworthiness as a narrator. Has he actually blacked out, not remembering things that have happened? Or is he intentionally choosing to keep parts of the story secret from the reader? Either way, this moment is an important reminder that Bateman's words cannot be assumed to be realistic or true.

Killing Child at Zoo Quotes

I feel empty, hardly here at all, but even the arrival of the police seems insufficient reason to move and I stand with the crowd outside the penguin habitat... until finally I'm walking down Fifth Avenue, surprised by how little blood has stained my jacket, and I stop in a bookstore and buy a book and then at a Dove Bar stand on the corner of Fifty-sixth Street, where I buy a Dove bar – a coconut one – and I imagine a hole, widening in the sun...

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 300

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman has just committed one of his must horrific and risky crimes: the public killing of a young boy at the Central Park Zoo. What's more, he stuck around afterwards, claiming he's a doctor and rushing in to try to give the dying boy first aid while a giant crowd circled. Not only does he show no remorse for what he's done, but he makes no attempt to protect his identity, cover his tracks, or escape the scene to avoid suspicion. By now, he has gone so far deep into his killing spiral that these notions are not even considerations for him.

Bateman's empty feeling highlights his extreme desensitization to his own violence; he no longer has feelings of any kind when he's killing, and is able to simply go about his day after the scene, doing something as mundane as buying and eating a Dove ice cream bar.

As we continue to gauge Bateman's level of sanity and hallucination, it becomes interesting to notice in this particular instance that he says specifically that he "*imagines* a hole, widening in the sun." At other moments, he may have told the reader simply that he "saw" it.

Girl Quotes

...I'm hoping she realizes that this would have happened to her no matter what... if she would simply have not taken a cab with me to the Upper West Side, this all would have happened anyway. *I would have still found her*. This is the way the earth works.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 328

Explanation and Analysis

As he's looking into the eyes of a woman he's in the middle of torturing, Bateman takes a moment to ponder inevitability. He imagines that it is fate's way to bring him and his victims together – that they are, in a way, destined to be killed by him. It also reveals that Bateman himself feels he is out of control of his life and actions; even if he didn't want to, he was going to kill this woman tonight or at some point in the future. This is both a denial of culpability and a full commitment to violence on Bateman's part. Was there something special about this woman that made her destined to die at his hand, or does he now feel this way about all women, all people? Now, utterly desensitized to even the pleasures of violence, it seems as if Bateman has given in to killing relentlessly and monotonously.

I can already tell that it's going to be a characteristically useless, senseless death, but then I'm used to the horror. It seems distilled, even now it fails to upset or bother me.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 329

Explanation and Analysis

As in the previous passage from this chapter, Bateman reveals what his killing has now become: a monotonous and repetitive habit of his. He has killed so much and so often that the high he once got from murder has begun to wear off. At first, he started killing more often and more recklessly to give himself the same rush – just like a drug addict would increase a dosage – but now he finds himself utterly numb to the pleasures and horrors of his actions.

Throughout the novel, a similar effect can occur for the reader. Though the high volume of intensely horrific and

graphic language describing sex, torture, assault, and murder can be truly stomach-churning at first, there is so much of it that, as the novel goes on, the reader, like Bateman, can become desensitized to it, finding each new kill as useless and distilled as Bateman does. What does this say about the reader or the human psyche, then? That anything, even the most horrific acts, can be gotten used to.

At Another New Restaurant Quotes

It's an isolation ward that serves only to expose my own severely impaired capacity to feel. I am at its center, out of season, and no one ever asks me for any identification. I suddenly imagine Evelyn's skeleton, twisted and crumbling, and this fills me with glee.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Evelyn Richards

Related Themes:

Page Number: 343

Explanation and Analysis

Having just tricked Evelyn into eating a used urinal cake and then having abruptly broken up with her, Bateman finds himself dissociating, diving into his mind and ignoring the scene around him that he has caused. He feels completely isolated, his recent activities and mental state having pushed him deeper and deeper into his own mind. The metaphor he creates here details his understanding of his experience quite explicitly: completely isolated, with no one attempting to connect with him, getting excitement and happiness only from the fantasies of violence and destruction that he creates in his mind.

In this chapter a change can be noticed in Bateman's feelings towards Evelyn. Earlier, though their relationship was shallow, disconnected, and cold, Bateman was very rarely downright cruel to Evelyn – the extent of his cruelty was leaving her on call waiting or standing her up for a date. Now, having grown to have no warm feeling for anyone other than his own voice in his head, Bateman takes joy in tricking Evelyn and imagining her dead body crumbling in a way that he earlier would have reserved for a homeless bum.

Tries to Cook and Eat Girl Quotes

...while I grind the bone and fat and flesh into patties, and though it does sporadically penetrate how unacceptable some of what I'm doing actually is, I just remind myself that this thing, this girl, this meat, is nothing, is shit, and along with a Xanax (which I'm now taking half-hourly) this thought momentarily calms me and then I'm humming...

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 345

Explanation and Analysis

Having descended so far into sex, drugs, and killing, Bateman's materialistic consumption has been exaggerated by Ellis to a cannibalistic consumption, where he has begun preparing and eating the flesh of his victims just as his life of capitalist materialism has eaten away at his own humanity (and that of others). He has not lost his meticulous touch, though, arranging and preparing the food as a delicacy.

Bateman reminds himself that the flesh in front of him is "nothing," that the woman he killed – now completely objectified as "meat" – has never been more than an object, something to *feed* his habit of torture and murder. He no longer recognizes any other person's humanity, and is calmed by the belief that all those around him exist only to serve the bloodlust that has grown inside him and the mechanic, monotonous habit of killing that he has fallen into.

Bateman's mention of his new Xanax schedule also shows just how serious his drug addictions now are, as well as the immense volume of varied drugs he is ingesting at all times.

Chase, Manhattan Quotes

...and the sun, a planet on fire, gradually rises over Manhattan, another sunrise, and soon the night turns into day so fast it's like some kind of optical illusion...

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 352

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel's climactic scene – Bateman running and driving hijacked cars through the streets of Manhattan, shooting police officers and exploding police cars, huddling in his office surrounded by SWAT team and helicopters – he describes the rising sun as a fiery hellscape, an image of his own purgatory where he must continue his sadistic actions for eternity.

As he describes this sunrise, Bateman reveals his own knowledge that his understanding of time is nearly hallucinatory. Describing the change of day as an "optical illusion," he not only states explicitly that the timeline of events he relays to the reader is untrustworthy, but that the passage of time (and, thus, events) in the novel may entirely be a trick, not as they seem, an "optical illusion." In this moment, Bateman essentially confirms for the reader that he is an unreliable narrator and he knows it, casting the entirety of the novel thus far and to come into a shadow of mystery, confusion, and doubt.

Something on Television Quotes

"Please do not sit in the same row in court with Janet. When I look over toward you there she sits contemplating me with her mad eyes like a deranged seagull studying a clam... I can feel her spreading hot sauce on me already..."

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 364

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman is watching yet another strange episode of "The Patty Winters Show." This time, however, the topic is not so strange as to immediately assume the moment to be a hallucination, but instead so right on the money with discussions of violence and guilt that it may be more a manifestation of a glimmer of conscience inside Bateman. This particular quote comes from a real-life letter written by serial killer Ted Bundy in prison, and its mention of hot sauce being spread on a body conflates flesh and food and violence in the same way Bateman has come to do in his killing and cannibalism.

It is also an example of the obsession and feelings of camaraderie Bateman has with famous serial killers like Bundy. He is always bringing them up in conversation – his friends mock him for it – and thinking about their outlook on the world compared to his own. This can be read as a possible origin point for Bateman's bloodlust or an early attempt for him to rationalize or excuse his behavior. Now, however, when he is so deep down in his spiral of horrors, Bateman finds himself unmoved even by this kinship with other killers, focusing only on the image of flesh made edible.

End of the 1980s Quotes

...it did not occur to me, ever, that people were good or that a man was capable of change or that the world can be a better place through one's taking pleasure in a feeling or a look or a gesture, of receiving another person's love or kindness. Nothing was affirmative, the term "generosity of spirit" applied to nothing, was a cliché, was some kind of bad joke. Sex is mathematics. Individuality no longer an issue. What does intelligence signify? Define reason?... Evil is its only purpose. God is not alive. Love cannot be trusted. Surface, surface, surface was all that anyone found meaning in.. this was civilization as I saw it, colossal and jagged...

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 375

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman takes a moment to – in an incredibly coherent, intelligent, and articulate voice – ruminate on his feelings of isolation and desensitization. Having withdrawn into his own demented mind and grown unfeeling to even the most visceral and horrific acts, he tells the reader that he has never believed in human goodness (or, that he has erased any memory of such experiences or beliefs) and that there is no hope for the world to improve in any way. As he describes it, the world becomes a hell in which there is only eternal pain and suffering.

Bateman even goes so far as to reject sex as nothing but mathematics. What was before one of his favorite activities has now just become something that he does, a habit he goes through the motions of.

Bateman does seem to recognize, however, that he has been led to this point, at least in part, by his shallow Wall Street life. By living a life devoid of individuality, where he strove only to look and present as the best example of a stereotype, and by encouraging all others around him to do so too, he has contributed to this death of civilization that

he describes.

> ...there is an idea of a Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction, but there is no real me, only an entity, something illusory, and though I can hide my cold gaze and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours and maybe you can even sense our lifestyles are probably comparable: *I simply am not there.*

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 376-377

Explanation and Analysis

Continuing his philosophizing from earlier in the chapter, Bateman now turns his attention from the world at large to himself. He has arrived at a point where he is only able to think of himself as a concept. Having gone so far into his own mind and pushed away any form of connection or human understanding, he is now not even able to know himself, and, in a way, objectifies his own flesh just as he has the flesh of the victims he kills, mutilates, and eats.

Bateman's ability to articulate this displays that, while his sanity has crumbled, his intelligence and perceptiveness has, at least in part and in some moments, remained accessible.

Aspen Quotes

> Jeannette should be okay – she has her whole life in front of her (that is, if she doesn't run into me). Besides, this girl's favorite movie is *Pretty in Pink* and she thinks Sting is cool, so what is happening to her is, like, not totally undeserved and one shouldn't feel bad for her. This is no time for the innocent.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker), Jeannette

Related Themes:

Page Number: 382

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman is on his way to the airport for his winter holiday, having just dropped off Jeannette and forced her (using, in part, violence) to get an abortion. He goes on to excuse and rationalize his actions to himself, shallowly and cruelly using her taste in music and film to determine that she deserves the treatment she is receiving. Though Bateman has done a number of horrific things to women and said a number of despicable things, this moment of such intimate cruelty towards the woman he is now dating stands out and allows the reader to see the degradation of Bateman's humanity in a new light. While the reader has perhaps been desensitized to drilling a woman's face or eating her intestines, this deeply personal action and attack is unlike that which Bateman has described before. Interestingly enough, it is a moment of great humanization. The reader sees a woman, beaten, upset, and being forced into an abortion. It's an incredibly intimate moment, and thus, allows the reader to make a connection and empathize with Jeannette in a way never afforded to the nameless women Bateman tears apart. And so this moment of cruelty seems almost more intense and awful than those surrounding it.

New Club Quotes

> "Davis," he sighs, as if patiently trying to explain something to a child, "I am not one to bad-mouth anyone. Your joke was amusing, but come on, man, you had one fatal flaw: Bateman's such a bloody ass-kisser, such a brown-nosing goody-goody, that I couldn't fully appreciate it.... Oh good god, man. Why else would Evelyn Richards dump him? You know, really. He could barely *pick up* an escort girl, let alone... what was it you said he did to her?"

Related Characters: Harold Carnes (speaker), Evelyn Richards, Patrick Bateman

Related Themes:

Page Number: 387-388

Explanation and Analysis

In this climactic moment, Bateman approaches his lawyer to address the voicemails he left during the chase in which he confessed to all of his crimes. To both the reader and Bateman's shock, Carnes laughs right in Bateman's face, mistaking him for someone else and assuming the voicemails were left as a prank. He then goes on to completely tear down Bateman's character. Clearly, he views Bateman as a complete joke, not the respected (and deadly) alpha-male that Bateman has made himself out to be throughout the novel.

As Bateman's characterization of himself is completely called into question, the reader must then question with newfound magnitude if everything Bateman has said has been a lie. If all the people around Bateman, like Carnes,

view him as such a pitiful loser, he has spent this entire novel pretending to hold a position in society that he does not. If he has fabricated everything – for attention, to boost his self-confidence, to imagine a world where he is the alpha-male he longs to be but never will be – the entire novel is perhaps a complete ruse, an exercise in twisted fantasy.

He stares at me as if we were both underwater and shouts back, very clearly over the din of the club, "Because ... I had ... dinner ... with Paul Owen ... in London ... *just ten days ago*."

Related Characters: Harold Carnes (speaker), Paul Owen, Patrick Bateman

Related Themes:

Page Number: 388

Explanation and Analysis

As this unraveling of the truth continues, the reader and Bateman simultaneously learn that Paul Owen is (seemingly) alive and well and living in London. Bateman has not killed him. When Harold Carnes gives Bateman this news, he goes into a state of shock. From this reaction (if Bateman's description of the moment can be trusted), it can be assumed that Bateman truly believed he killed Paul Owen. He is being faced with the reality that one of his most climactic killings was a hallucination. What, then, happened? Did he imagine the entire thing, or kill someone else in Owens' place? Has Carnes mistaken someone else for Owen? And what about Bateman getting into Owen's apartment, killing women there, and stashing several dead bodies in the bath tub? Did he break in and really commit these acts? If so, that would explain the real estate agent's shock and terror at having someone come around the apartment asking about Paul Owen.

These questions will, of course, go unanswered by Bateman and Ellis alike. In numerous interviews, Ellis himself has commented on the matter of truth in his novel, saying that he intended to leave the questions unanswered and the truth up-in-the-air, and he has gone so far as to say that he himself is still unsure whether or not Bateman committed the murders in the novel or not.

Taxi Driver Quotes

While walking back to the highway, I stop, choke back a sob, my throat tightens. "I just want to..." Facing the skyline, through all the baby talk, I murmur, "keep the game going." As I stand, frozen in my position, an old woman emerges behind a *Threepenny Opera* poster at a deserted bus stop and she's homeless and begging, hobbling over, her face covered with sores that look like bugs, holding out a shaking red hand. "Oh will you please go away?" I sigh. She tells me to get a haircut.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 394

Explanation and Analysis

After a deeply ironic turning of tables, Bateman has just been robbed of his material possessions and bullied by someone he considered to be a far lesser person than him: a taxi driver, who recognized Bateman's face from wanted posters downtown and claims to have known the taxi driver he killed during the chase. Utterly distraught, the world he's built for himself inside his head crumbling, Bateman reluctantly weeps. His plea to "keep the game going" reveals a sense, on his part, that things are coming to an end – that he has run his marathon of isolated horror for as long as he can, as long as the world is going to allow him. He is confronted with the fact that, while he has been living inside his head, the world around him has continued to move.

The mention of the "Threepenny Opera" is also a sign of great change. For the entire novel, the posters across town have been for "Les Misérables," and now even that has changed, moved on to something else.

Bateman's final exchange with the homeless woman, in which she tells him to get a haircut, is the cherry on top of this moment. A dirty and poor woman, the kind of person Bateman has spent the entire novel despising and discounting, critiques the physical appearance of a man so obsessed with shallow outward appearances that he had a meticulous and lengthy morning routine and wore nothing but the finest clothes. It seems, for a moment, that everything about Patrick Bateman has come to an end.

At Harry's Quotes

❝ "Well, though I know I should have done *that* instead of not doing it, I'm twenty-seven for Christ sakes and this is, uh, how life presents itself in a bar or in a club in New York, maybe *anywhere*, at the end of the century and how people, you know, *me*, behave, and this is what being *Pat*rick means to me, I guess, so, well, yup, uh..." and this is followed by a sigh, then a slight shrug and another sigh, and above one of the doors covered by red velvet drapes in Harry's is a sign and on the sign in letters that match the drapes' color are the words THIS IS NOT AN EXIT.

Related Characters: Patrick Bateman (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 399

Explanation and Analysis

Bateman finds himself out to drinks with his friends, talking about clothing and women and business; it's as if the events of the entire novel have never happened and we're right back where we started. Bateman attempts to make an intelligent speech about what it means to be him, at his age, in the age he's living. But he fumbles. He's lost his way with words, and is grasping at an explanation for the situation and life and world in which he's found himself. Trying to make a universal statement, he realizes that he is unlike anyone else around him; he is completely alone.

The final words of the novel, the red text of the sign on the wall, bookends the graffiti from the opening of the novel with a final reference to the devil and hell, this time via an allusion to the Sartre play "No Exit," in which four people are trapped in a metaphorical purgatory. With this, it is essentially confirmed that Bateman's fate is sealed; though things around him may have changed and his actions and feelings intensified and become fanciful, he is doomed to, at his core, remain the same. No matter how much he may try to dissociate, revert into his mind, or lash out with sex, drugs, and violence, he cannot escape Patrick Bateman.

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.

APRIL FOOLS

The novel begins with a quote from Dante's *Inferno*, "**Abandon all hope ye who enter here**", seen scrawled along the side of a bank in red graffiti letters. Suddenly, a bus pulls up with an advertisement for "**Les Misérables**" and blocks the view.

The quote from Dante is in reference to the gates of hell. By beginning the novel in this way, Ellis is telling the reader that they are in for something dark, involving sin, pain, and suffering, and he also equates the world of finance in New York City with hell. This first appearance of "Les Misérables" is Ellis telling the reader that both 1980s pop culture (of which Les Mis was a huge part) and the tensions of class (a theme of the musical) will be crucial fixtures of the novel.

Patrick Bateman, the novel's protagonist and narrator, is taking a cab through New York City with his friend Timothy Price, a fellow Wall Street investment banker. Price is complaining about hating his job and listing off the terrible occurrences that have been reported in the day's paper: from AIDS to Nazis, mafia violence to gridlock. Bateman stays silent and allows his friend to continue on and on for most of the ride. Staring out the window, he sees another Wall Street colleague, Luis Carruthers; he watches as Carruthers waves to Price in the passing vehicle, but is ignored.

Price's outlook on the world is negative and angry. He shows contempt for the terrible happenings in the world, not because they cause harm to others, but because they are an irritation to him – a wealthy man who sees himself as above the crime, disease, and poverty that he associates with the less fortunate. He even looks down on Carruthers, a fellow wealthy Wall Street banker, and shows this by ignoring him. For Bateman, there is nothing new or interesting about what Price has to say. This first depiction of Patrick, stoic compared to the raving negativity of his friend, establishes him as a more cool, collected, and perhaps positive person than Price. This outward image will later be revealed as one of Bateman's tactics for manipulation and the masking of his true self.

Price spots a homeless person on the street, begging for money, and swears. He is disgusted by the woman and by himself for growing so accustomed to seeing homeless people on the streets of New York City. He tells Bateman that he's been counting homeless people all day, and over the course of the ride he's reached a total of 30. As they near their destination, Price continues to complain, now discussing his plans to break up with his girlfriend. Eventually, he apologizes to Bateman for his attitude, telling him that the steroids he's been taking have made him tense.

Bateman and his friends all have a shallow hatred of the homeless; they view people without wealth and material possessions as worthless. Nevertheless, they also seem obsessed with the homeless, always looking for them, interacting with them, and clearly getting satisfaction from degrading them. Price's mention of his steroid usage is the novel's first instance of a character using drugs. This particular drug is one that's all about surface: steroids help you look strong and muscular, further displaying the men's shallow obsessions.

The two finally arrive at the home of Evelyn Richards, Bateman's fiancée, where they're planning to meet Evelyn and her friend Courtney for dinner. Price apologizes for being late, blaming the "inept Haitian cabbie." The women announce that Evelyn has ordered sushi and they will be dining at home. Bateman flirts with Courtney when he sees her, but she brushes off his advances. Meanwhile, his fiancée Evelyn is obsessively re-arranging the sushi she's ordered on a platter. She wasn't able to get a reservation at the restaurant she'd hoped and now is preparing their take-out like a fine work of art, complete with fresh ginger, (embarrassingly) room temperature soy sauce, and large bottles of imported beer. The whole time, she is deeply concerned that everything is "a mess." When Bateman steals a piece of sushi and tells her that it's "delicious," her anxiety seems to subside.

Price barges into the apartment with more negativity, this time making a racist remark about the cab driver. Evelyn, who is not taken aback by this, is focused solely on dinner. She knows that the "boys" will be disappointed to dine in – they are used to going to the finest restaurants– and is obsessing over making their meal perfect. The meticulous way she arranges the sushi and her preoccupation with the cleanliness and perfection of the meal parallels Bateman's highly-regimented and organized life (which is later presented in great detail). Hypocritically, Bateman also judges her for this, although he acts very similarly in many situations. Bateman's interaction with Courtney also reveals that he is not faithful to Evelyn – even his fiancée is just another woman to enjoy.

Price returns to the kitchen and announces that there are other people who he doesn't know sitting in Evelyn's living room. Courtney says that their names are Stash and Vanden, and that they are friends of Evelyn's. Price finds the two strange; they're artist-types, dressed in all black, Vanden with a streak of bright green in her hair. They're sitting on the couch smoking, "doped up," and staring entranced at a heavy metal music video on the television.

Stash and Vanden are very different from Bateman and his Wall Street gang, and because of this, Price (and Bateman, too) look down on them and consider them less valuable as people. Living outside of the materialistic world of Wall Street, Stash and Vanden don't seem too concerned with how others perceive them—or at least they're concerned with maintaining a wholly different kind of persona than Bateman.

Under Evelyn's guidance, everyone makes their way to the table to eat. She and Price briefly excuse themselves and return "flushed" about 20 minutes later. Evelyn insists that her guests sit boy-girl, so the guests re-arrange and sit down to the beginning of an awkward dinner. Stash skewers a piece of sushi with his chopstick and stares blankly at his plate, while Vanden sits reading a newspaper called "Deception" that bears the headline "THE DEATH OF DOWNTOWN" – Price finds this preposterous. Courtney seems amused by the whole affair.

Evelyn and Price's trip to the kitchen makes it clear that Evelyn isn't faithful to Bateman either, and that Bateman's best friend cares for neither him nor his relationship. Price, who is a big partier, scoffs at the idea of downtown being "dead." While the magazine is commenting on the "deadening" effects of Wall Street's materialism and drug culture on the nightlife scene, Price merely assumes that others are envious to be left out of the exclusive scene he runs in.

Stash finally speaks to correct Vanden's pronunciation of a new night club (she's been calling it "Sri Lanka") and discusses the war crimes currently being committed in that country, which leads Bateman into a long speech about the numerous foreign and domestic policy issues of the United States. He discusses ending apartheid, slowing the nuclear arms race, and making sure that America is a respected world power where all young people have access to affordable college education. He criticizes the current economic situation in the United States, demanding that there must be a way to decrease inflation, interest rates, and the national deficit while still promoting economic and business growth. He continues on even more, discussing welfare, abortion, illegal immigration, and so forth. When he finally finishes, Evelyn, unsure of what to do, offers everyone sorbet for dessert.

The reader sees a new side of Bateman during his long rant. Up until now, he's been cool and collected, while Price has been the one to get worked up over things. When Bateman speaks up, we learn not only how he views the world, but the way in which his brain thinks about things: he is very intelligent, well-informed, and makes specific and organized opinions and plans. Especially compared to Price's earlier ranting in the cab, Bateman's speaking is clear, intelligent, and purposeful. That being said, his speech seems to be more a display of dominance than care. He isn't worried about the betterment of the world (as displayed by his actions thus far and later), but is committed to others viewing *him as intelligent, worldly, and upstanding.*

Stash and Vanden head out and Courtney goes to meet up with her boyfriend Luis Carruthers, leaving Evelyn, Price, and Bateman behind to keep drinking. The three end up in Evelyn's bedroom, with Evelyn preparing for sleep and the men lying on her bed. Price teases Bateman and Evelyn, subtly flirting with Price, tells him to knock it off. The three gossip about Courtney's unhappy relationship, as well as the last time Bateman met (or believes he met) Stash. The men mock Stash for being such a strange artist-type.

Bateman, Price, and Evelyn are quick to talk about others behind their backs because they don't have close, intimate connections to their friends; everything in their world is superficial. We learn that Courtney is dating Luis Carruthers, and that she seems to think as little of him as Price and Bateman do.

All of a sudden, Price is sitting behind Evelyn as she brushes her hair. Bateman watches as Price clearly flirts with Evelyn, even smelling and licking her neck and kneeling in front of her, trying to push his head up underneath her robe. Bateman tells the reader "I'm pretty sure that Timothy and Evelyn are having an affair. Timothy is the only interesting person I know."

Bateman and Evelyn's relationship is completely shallow, so he isn't hurt by the thought of her having an affair. What's more, the tone of his detailed descriptions of Price's actions suggests that he may enjoy watching the two flirt in front of him. Perhaps the reason Bateman finds Price "interesting" is that he does not constrain himself (his thoughts, opinions) in the way Bateman currently does.

Evelyn abruptly announces that it's time for Price to leave, and Bateman pushes him out of the apartment. The two men are both quite drunk. Bateman returns to the bedroom and crawls on top of Evelyn, passionlessly kissing her. He "[attempts] to have sex with her," but she keeps interrupting, telling Bateman that Stash has been recently diagnosed with AIDS and will probably try to sleep with Vanden. She criticizes Bateman, telling him that he could be in better shape and asking if his hairline is receding. Eventually, Bateman gives up. He rolls off of Evelyn, finishes his last drink, and walks to his apartment, where he masturbates (thinking about Evelyn, then Courtney, then a model from a Calvin Klein ad.)

There is no love in Bateman and Evelyn's relationship; they even seem to have a degree of animosity towards one another. Sexually, Bateman is more excited by the affairs he's having and the other women he sees in the world than by his supposed girlfriend. To him, a woman is an object for his pleasure. Bateman and Evelyn's conversation about AIDS reinforces it as a large force in this historical moment, and Bateman's dismissal of the disease as unimportant reveals that he, too (like Price), considers such things to be concerns for those below him (like Stash).

MORNING

It's early in the morning in the month of May. Bateman begins by describing to the reader the layout and contents of his apartment; he has paintings of naked women, beautiful and expensive furniture (including a jukebox), and all of the latest technology, including a large TV, VCR, and CD player. As he carefully describes each piece of furniture, he notes not only its beauty, but also the designer of the piece and occasionally how much he spent on it.

Bateman's life is entirely materialistic. He surrounds himself with the finest, most expensive things because he believes they give him value as a person (and in his Wall Street world, he's right). But at the same time, his constant focus on material value exposes vulnerability: he must constantly focus on what he owns because it is the only way he can have self-value – he has no other inner self to rely on.

Bateman gets out of bed, wearing silk pajamas, a paisley robe, and monogrammed boxer shorts, and heads to the bathroom to put an ice mask on over his eyes. He returns to his bedroom, where he begins his morning stretching and fitness routine. Back in the bathroom, he brushes his teeth, buffs his fingernails and toenails, and uses a tooth polisher to shine his bright, white teeth. In the shower, he washes with several scrubs and products and uses his high-end shampoo and conditioner to prepare his hair for flawless and neat styling. He presses a hot towel against his face before shaving, rinsing with water, and applying a non-alcohol aftershave and layers of expensive moisturizers and eye serums to keep his skin clean, fresh, and young.

Bateman's morning routine is incredibly regimented. He obsesses over keeping his body in pristine condition (because for him it's what's on the outside that matters!), and the reader gets the impression that he goes through this routine in an identical fashion every single day—a kind of monotonous ritual devoted to upholding his (and his society's) superficial ideal of perfection.

Leaving the bathroom, Bateman puts the new Talking Heads CD into his CD player and moves to the kitchen to begin his breakfast routine. He starts by taking several pills (aspirin, vitamins) washed down with a bottle of Evian water, and begins to eat a kiwi and sliced apple-pear. He also eats a bran muffin (microwaved, with apple butter), oat-bran cereal (with wheat germ and soy milk), and brews himself a cup of decaffeinated herbal tea. He describes the contents of his kitchen – a number of appliances including an espresso machine and large, electric knife.

Bateman is also very specific in the food that he eats, spending lots of money on exotic fruits and healthy meals. His breakfast is a well-executed and orderly ritual—but also one entirely lacking in any kind of enjoyment of what he's eating. The food is merely fuel for his body – the power that will keep his perfect and pristine machine running.

Finally, Bateman gets dressed. Today, he wears an Alan Flusser suit, Valentino Couture tie, and A. Testoni shoes. While he's dressing, he turns on the television to watch "**The Patty Winters Show**," his favorite program. On today's episode, the guests are women with multiple personalities. After he's watched some television, he grabs his Burberry scarf, coat, and Rolex watch and gets in the elevator. He goes out the door of his building, hailing a cab to head downtown to Wall Street.

Bateman wears only the most high-end designer clothes and believes that he is a better person for it. "The Patty Winters Show," like Bateman, is incredibly shallow, merely ogling the guests' strange affectations and not paying attention to who they are as people. Today's episode features a theme typical for daytime talk shows of this variety, though this won't always be the case.

HARRY'S

On another day, Bateman is back with Price on their way to meet their two other friends, Craig McDermott and David Van Patten, for drinks at Harry's. When they arrive, McDermott begins quizzing Bateman on proper shoe etiquette. Across the room, Bateman sees Luis Carruthers standing at the bar, and thinks he sees him blush at him. He describes how Luis, it seems, is never able to get a bartender to take his order.

Bateman and his friends spend much of their time drinking and discussing appropriate fashions. Many in their exclusive group look down upon Luis Carruthers because he doesn't carry himself with the same confident, masculine air as the rest of the men; he can't even command the respect of a bartender.

The four friends continue quizzing one another on style, saying that they're going to send their questions into GQ magazine, before Van Patten pulls out his Zagat restaurant guide to help them decide where to go for dinner. After dinner, they plan to stop by Tunnel nightclub. McDermott tells a story of the last time he was there and the very attractive woman he took home to have sex with, despite his having a girlfriend. The girl (a Vassar girl), who McDermott had gotten very drunk, would only give him a hand job, he complains, and insisted on keeping her gloves on. Price brings up AIDS, though Van Patten insists that as white men, their chances of contracting the new disease are nearly zero. Another colleague of theirs, Preston, comes over to the table, giving his regrets for dinner and contributing another question (this one about tuxedo shirts) to their list to send to GQ.

If they're not talking about clothing, Bateman and his friends are either talking about where they're going out for dinner or attractive women they have had or plan to have sex with. They view these women as objects – tools for their pleasure, to be used as they desire. And so these women must be "designer" just like the products the men buy: they must be beautiful and of a certain social status. Meanwhile, as the men's conversation about AIDS shows, the men believe that their wealth, privilege, race, and position in society make them more valuable than all others, and, thus invincible to things that affect "regular people."


The men start to look around the room, surveying to see who else is in attendance. They argue over the identity of one man, who Price refers to as "one of those young British faggots," judge the clothing choices of the other bar-goers, and eventually spot Paul Owen, another banker, who is "handling the Fisher account." The men are all envious of this. Preston starts making anti-Semitic remarks at Owen's expense, but Bateman shuts him down, claiming to be "the voice of reason" in the group of friends. They all start to jokingly (but harshly) ridicule one another until Preston announces that he has a joke to share. While he's telling the joke, though, he realizes he's forgotten the punch line and has to fumble his way through – the others jeer him. Meanwhile, Luis Carruthers is still standing at the bar, waiting to be served.

Bateman and his friends often mistake people for other people and spend time arguing over the identities of those they see around town, highlighting how monotonous and similar their lives and even their appearances really are, though those external things are all they focus on. In fact, their emphasis on external as opposed to internal things is what makes them indistinguishable from each other: none of them has a unique internal core. This idea of mistaken identity among Wall Street bankers will become even more important as the book progresses, particularly in reference to Paul Owen. For now, Bateman and his friends envy Owen, whose exclusive account at work seems to make him more valuable than they are. Meanwhile, the "friends" all jockey for dominance among each other.


Eventually Preston remembers the punch line to his joke; it is unfunny and racist, and Bateman calls it out as such. When he does, though, his friends mock him for being uptight and politically correct. Preston excuses himself and the men prepare to go to dinner.

Bateman maintains his front of respectability very intently, even when he is amongst his circle of "closest" friends. As was the case at Evelyn's dinner, though, Bateman's reprimand is likely more a show of dominance than of Bateman's true values, and his "friends" show their dominance in turn by mocking him.

PASTELS

Finally, Bateman and his three friends are ready to head to dinner. They've settled on Pastels, a popular restaurant where it is typically difficult to get a table. Lucky for them, McDermott is friends with the maître d', so they all pile into a cab towards the Upper East Side. Price, the only one of the four who doesn't approve of their choice of restaurant, slides on his Walkman headphones and blasts Vivaldi, while the others use his "portaphone" to make the reservation. When they arrive at the restaurant, Price takes the napkin upon which Van Patten had written their questions for GQ Magazine and throws it at a homeless man.

In Bateman's circle, where you are and who you know is everything. McDermott being able to get a table at Pastels because he knows the maître d' shows his status. When Van Patten throws the napkin with their questions for GQ written on it at the homeless man, not only is he being aggressive (and flaunting his own extravagant lifestyle), but he's also revealing that, perhaps, the men don't care too much for GQ either. Their obsession with being well-dressed and in style is completely shallow, something they feel they must show interest in.

The men arrive at their table to discover that the maître d' has sent them four complementary Bellinis (a cocktail of sparkling wine and peach purée). Bateman takes a moment to look over all of the women working in the restaurant, including their waitress, declaring them all "hardbodies" with big breasts, and describing to the reader in detail what they are each wearing. He also relays to the reader each of the men's complex and gourmet orders. Price barks at a busboy to take all of the Bellinis away, even though some of his friends argue that they'd like to keep theirs.

Bateman sizes up the women in every room he's in; he looks around and determines which ones are attractive, which ones aren't, and, thus, which ones have value. Using the label "hardbodies" only further objectifies women for Bateman and his friends. We see Bateman's attention to detail in the way he describes the food orders, but we also can see that these fine foods don't mean anything to them. He methodically lists them off as a checklist of the fine things he and his friends can afford to enjoy, not showing any real pleasure or appreciation for the meal.

Van Patten calls attention to someone who has just entered the restaurant. The men guess who it might be: Preston? Paul Owen? It's Scott Montgomery, who Price refers to as "that dwarf." The men take a moment to mock his outfit. Montgomery brings the woman he's with over to Bateman and his friends' table. Bateman is convinced that the woman is silently flirting with him. The men exchange pleasantries and Price attempts to schedule a time to play squash with Montgomery, who gives him his **business card**.

Those in Bateman's circle are constantly mistaking people for others and arguing over the identity of those around them. This demonstrates just how shallow all of their relationships (and even identities) are. While Price is being two-faced – mocking Montgomery and then inviting him to squash – Bateman is focusing his assumption that any woman who looks as him finds him irresistible.

As soon as Montgomery walks away, Bateman and his friends begin to gossip. They discuss how much money Montgomery is worth (800 million) but mostly focus on the woman who was with him: whether they considered her attractive, whether they'd have sex with her, and whether they think she's an "anorexic," "alkie" model-type. While they're gossiping, the maître d' comes by to notice their missing Bellinis, and rushes off to fetch more before anyone can tell him not to.

Bateman and his friends all objectify and judge Montgomery's date, and what's more, they assign a level of status to Montgomery based on the value (attractiveness) they believe the woman he is with to have. All of the chapter's action with the Bellinis, a drink the men likely view as effeminate, displays their obsession with upholding their masculinity.

Bateman finds himself feeling a little insecure over McDermott's friendship with the maître d', and so to "even up the score a little bit" pulls his brand new **business card** from his wallet. The men are all in awe, marveling over the paper, the coloring, and the lettering. Not to be outdone, Van Patten pulls out his card. The others find it even more beautiful, which makes Bateman upset. And then, Price pulls out his new business card—it's even more beautiful. Finally, Price pulls out Montgomery's card. It is the nicest of the bunch—a hard blow for Bateman, who stays in a daze while the others move on to discuss ordering a pizza. They argue over which kind to order, which "hardbody" waitress to call over, and joke about the woman Van Patten is having an affair with. All this time, Bateman stays in a trance, until he snaps and shouts about his hatred for the pizza served at Pastels. Meanwhile, four more Bellinis have been brought over.

In Bateman's circle, a man's business card is an important status symbol. Not only does the information on it display the elite Wall Street job he has, but its style tells all others what a fashionable, respected man he is. The comparing of the business cards in this moment is nearly phallic, with the men each comparing the "size" of their business cards to the others, secretly hoping theirs is the best and being disappointed to discover that they've been one-upped. Bateman's outburst over pizza also shows his shallow, competitive nature; knowing the best pizza is another thing for him to be better than others at.

Their appetizers arrive, and several of the men are disappointed to have not gotten what they ordered. They press on, discussing the attractiveness of one of the waitresses, specifically debating whether or not her knees make her an unfit specimen. A man they know passes by, calling Bateman "Hamilton" and commenting on his tan. The friends jeer and then start discussing their tanning regimens; Van Patten has a tanning bed at home. Suddenly, their appetizers are replaced with their dinners. Bateman, however, is distracted, staring at Paul Owen from across the restaurant and wondering how he got his hands on the Fisher account. Quickly the men finish their meals, carrying on their conversation about women, others they work with, and their significant others. They split the check four ways and all head out for Tunnel, one of the city's most exclusive nightclubs.

It's clear that Bateman and his friends care more about the ordering of their food – the flaunting of their status through dining – than the food itself. They remark over the details of what they've ordered, but don't seem to care what they eat. Their dinner conversation follows its typical, shallow range of topics, with Van Patten revealing the lengths to which he's willing to go to look "perfect." Bateman, whose identity has again been confused, is always distracted by Paul Owen; he seems obsessed with him and the mysterious "Fisher account" he works on.

TUNNEL

The men arrive at Tunnel nightclub. Bateman notices that all of the men outside are wearing tuxedos, with the exception of a single homeless beggar. Van Patten approaches the beggar, waving a dollar bill in front of his face and then whisking it away into his own pocket, laughing. McDermott is talking to Van Patten, complaining about Bateman's distaste for the pizzas at Pastels. As he listens, Bateman fingers a blade in his pocket, imagining cutting and gutting McDermott right then and there. As they move into the club, the men take stock of the attractiveness of the women around them, joking about the ideal "hardbody" ("maybe a close personal acquaintance to **Donald Trump**"). McDermott comments that the club's "skanky chicks" make him worry about disease, but Van Patten assures him *they* can't catch *that*.

The scene outside of the nightclub – homeless beggars and rich men in tuxedos – amplifies the class differences at play in the novel. Bateman and his friends think people without money have such little value that, not only do they not care about them, they delight in tormenting them for their own sick entertainment. In this shocking introduction of the book's theme of violence, Bateman suddenly contemplates the murder (an act he's come prepared for) of one of his closest friends over an opinion on pizza. He has no affection for a friend in his inner circle and seems so disconnected from others that a small attack on his ego could illicit such violence from him. The comment that the ideal woman would be a friend of Donald Trump not only shows how much Bateman and his friends idolize Trump, but how much their opinion of a woman is tied to the men she hangs around (or sleeps) with.

Inside, McDermott and Van Patten take a pair of VIP passes they were given at the door and enter a private area. Bateman signals to Price that they should purchase cocaine; they go in search of Ted Madison, a drug dealer. After confusing a few other men for Madison, they find their man and make their purchase. The whole time, even when Bateman goes to get him a drink, Price has been mesmerized by a pair of lit-up train tracks that are a fixture of the underground nightclub. Eventually Bateman is able to pull him away, and the two head for the men's room to do their drugs. Price is shaking just trying to open the envelope, and the two are shocked to find that they got less than they paid for. What's more, when they try the drugs, they are incredibly disappointed in the quality. The two argue back and forth before using their platinum credit cards to quickly snort the entire gram.

Bateman and his friends have quite a partying habit; they're big cocaine users when they're at clubs and bars. Later on, however, this drug habit will spill over into other areas of Bateman's life. Their experience buying the drugs shows both a level of entitlement and a lack of tact: they are shocked that they did not get the finest quality of drugs for their money. They believe that they deserve the best because they are able and willing to pay the most, however they're wrong in this instance – the nightclub drug dealer seems willing to take full advantage of their affluence and rips them off.

Bateman brings them over to the bar, where he purchases them two new drinks – but the attractive bartender, whose university Bateman tries to guess, tells him his drink tickets are no longer valid. The music playing feels long, dull, and overbearing to Bateman. Price tells him that he's "leaving," and Bateman stumbles into Paul Owen, asking him about the Fisher account. Owen quickly runs off, spotting another colleague, and Bateman finds McDermott and Van Patten again. Suddenly, McDermott points to the tracks above the dance floor: there's Price, standing above the crowd staring out. Bateman rushes as close to him as he can get, just in time to hear him shout "Goodbye! Fuckers!" It's like no one else in the club notices. The three remaining friends quickly leave the nightclub. They attempt to make plans for the next day, but all of their schedules are packed.

This is another instance of Bateman thinking his status can get him more than it can: the drink tickets he's been given, which should entitle him to a free drink, are useless after a certain hour. Even though he's special enough to have a drink ticket, his status only goes so far in the club. Price's moment up above the club on the train tracks is a strange, almost-hallucinatory moment. The evening's drinking and drug use could be either the cause of Price's behavior or of Bateman and McDermott seeing what they see – after all, no one else seems to.

OFFICE

Riding the elevator up to his office, Bateman encounters a colleague named Frederick Dibble, who asks if he's read a Page Six article about Ivana **Trump**. He hasn't. Bateman asks him if he watched this morning's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**," which, today, was about Autism. While they ride, Bateman notices that the music playing in the elevator sounds like "**Sympathy for the Devil**."

This short conversation includes two of Bateman's favorite things: Donald Trump and "The Patty Winters Show." The appearance of devil imagery upon the novel's first depiction of Bateman actually at work on Wall Street draws a connection between this capitalist world and the evil and suffering that pervades the novel.

Bateman enters his office and is greeted by his secretary, Jean, "who is in love with me and who I will probably end up marrying." She tells him his only work appointment today has been cancelled, and he tells her to cancel the only personal appointment he had scheduled. Jean hasn't seen today's "**The Patty Winters Show**" either, but smiles at his obsession with the show. Bateman settles in his office, asking Jean to make two sets of reservations for him and taking in the décor of the room. Like his apartment, it is expensive, including a George Stubbs painting, a stereo, and vintage magazines. He pages Jean, asking her to keep her eyes out for a tanning bed and remind him to return some videotapes. Moments later, she comes in the room to confirm his lunch reservation. Bateman stops her, asking if she thinks he's crazy (she doesn't) and telling her to never wear the outfit she's wearing again. He tells her, "You're prettier than that," and instructs her to wear high heels. He likes high heels.

Jean is the only character in the novel who displays any kind of honest affection for Bateman – even the affection Evelyn shows seems forced or based on shallow feelings. Jean dotes on Bateman and enjoys his "personality quirks," but is still incredibly subservient to him. When Bateman tells her to dress in a certain way (a demonstration of his shallow objectification of women, as well as his understanding of Jean as someone assigned to be under his specific control) she complies. Bateman asking Jean is she thinks he's crazy, however, reveals what may be a small glimmer of interest, honest connection, or concern under Bateman's sleek exterior.

HEALTH CLUB

The Upper East Side health club Bateman belongs to comes complete with multiple tennis courts, aerobics classes, a juice bar, and more. He arrives and changes into a Lycra tank top and shorts. Before leaving the locker room he checks himself in the mirror and is forced to turn around and fix his hair. He quickly passes the woman who works at the desk – "a dumpy chick who is in love with me" – and heads for the Stairmaster, where there is usually a line, but isn't. Bateman notices "some faggot" already waiting behind him, checking him out, no doubt.

Bateman's fitness routine is an important part of his physical upkeep. Like his morning routine, it is incredibly specific and regimented – he seems to methodically stick to the same routine every time. Even at the gym, he still obsesses over his physical appearance, judges others, and is preoccupied with women (and men) admiring him. His focus on the man waiting behind him for the Stairmaster again shows the homophobia which results from his obsession over his own masculinity.

As he exercises, Bateman reminisces about the day's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**," which was about women with big breasts. One woman had gotten a breast reduction; Bateman immediately called McDermott to mock her. He takes the reader through the remainder of his exercise routine, which includes a specific number of sets on specific machines to target specific, individual muscle groups.

Today's episode of "The Patty Winters Show" is another moment for Bateman and his friends to de-value women based on their own standard of appearance and to mock those they feel are less valuable than them. Note that the topic of the show itself is realistic for such a tabloid show. As the book progresses the topics discussed on the Patty Winter show will become increasingly wild, indicating that Bateman might have begun to lose his mind (or that society has).

Once Bateman has worked through his entire body, he showers and heads out. Along his way, he stops by the video store, returning *She-Male Reformatory* and re-renting *Body Double*, though his date with Courtney tonight means he won't be able to "masturbate over the scene where the woman is drilled to death by a power drill."

Bateman's desire to masturbate over the film's violent scene is one of the first instances of him getting sexual satisfaction from violence, though this will escalate to intense degrees over the course of the novel.

DATE

On his way home, Bateman stops to purchase some porn videos and magazines. The man working at the store (a "fucking Iranian") mentions to Bateman that his nose is bleeding. When Bateman arrives home, there is a new doorman, a Hispanic man whose English is not very good. Bateman tries to tell him to alert the superintendent that there is a leak in his ceiling, but has trouble communicating, gets frustrated, and storms off. In the elevator, he sees the famous actor Tom Cruise. He's always known they lived in the same building, but never seen him. Bateman pushes the "Penthouse" button and smiles, telling Cruise he is a big fan and enjoyed him in the film *Bartender*. Cruise corrects him; the film was called *Cocktail*. Their interaction is very awkward, and Cruise notes that Bateman's nose is bleeding, before quickly letting him off on his floor.

Bateman has two harsh interactions with people he perceives as less valuable than him: the man working at the store and the new doorman. He makes racist remarks about both of them. These two interactions are in stark contrast to his interaction with Tom Cruise, someone who he clearly views as more valuable than himself. With Cruise, Bateman is a completely different person, meek and seeking approval. Though Cruise does not treat Bateman as cruelly as Bateman treats the others, he is not warm to him. Nosebleeds are not uncommon for heavy cocaine users, though Bateman does not explicitly make this connection for himself.

In his apartment, Bateman gets a call from the woman with whom he has a date tonight: a model named Patricia. He tells her he has another call on the line (he doesn't) and asks her to call back. When she does, he puts her on hold for a few minutes before finally answering. She tells him she's gotten tickets to see a friend play at Radio City, and asks him to join her, instead of dinner. Bateman is displeased. He tells her how much he hates concerts and live music, and though Patricia begs him to come to the concert, he refuses. Bateman tells her how excited he was for dinner just the two of them, and that he had made a reservation at Dorsia, the newest and most exclusive restaurant. This catches Patricia's attention. After all, the concert is playing for a few nights, and she could just go see it then. It's a date: she'll come to Bateman's at 8 and they'll go to Dorsia.

Bateman's "call waiting" game for women is not completely unlike the game of dangling dollars in front of the homeless. In this situation, he dangles his attention (something he assumes is very valuable) in front of a woman (someone who he assumes is desperate for that attention). Bateman's hatred for live music is a strange quirk, however the one time he is in the presence of live music (later in the novel) he has quite an alarming experience, and it's unclear if that is a one-time instance. The restaurant Dorsia is held in incredibly high regard by Bateman and his friends, and it will recur as a motif throughout the novel.

Bateman has *not* made a reservation at Dorsia, and it's notoriously difficult to get one. He calls the restaurant, feverishly asking for a reservation, and is laughed at and hung up on. He scours his Zagat guide for another restaurant, choosing a place called Barcadia, where he is narrowly able to get a table, and insists that Patricia will just have to like it. Though he's already been to the gym, he exercises, showers, and gets dressed. He wonders what Patricia will wear tonight. He prepares a bottle of champagne (not his best, but Patricia would never know the difference), and decides – though he isn't quite sure just why – that Patricia will be safe tonight. He will not use his knife to cut, torture, and murder her.

Having a reservation at Dorsia is a matter of status, and Bateman is desperate to maintain his. He is clearly thrown off by his inability to get in the door, even though he knew this would be the case when he lied to Patricia in the first place. Bateman's flaunting of his mercy for Patricia is an instance of him, in a way, threatening the reader with a dangerous act; he tells us that he won't, but that he is capable of and used to doing such things.

Patricia arrives late and Bateman meets her in the hallway. It's not until they're in the cab on the way to the restaurant that he tells here they aren't going to Dorsia after all. Patricia is incredibly upset and refuses to talk to him even while he tells her what a luxurious and well-reviewed place Barcadia is. All through dinner – ordering drinks, appetizers, and meals – Patricia ignores Bateman completely. Dinner drags on mercilessly, and when they finish, Bateman takes Patricia in a cab headed for Tunnel. On the way there, he thinks to himself how, even though he "wouldn't mind having sex with her body," he could never bring himself to treat Patricia tenderly after such an evening.

Patricia's interest in a date with Bateman is clearly superficial: she wanted to go to her friend's concert (and who knows what material reason was pulling her there) but simply received a more "high-profile" offer from Bateman. She then feels she has been cheated in this transaction and is upset. Bateman doesn't seem hurt by it, but annoyed. His comment about having sex with her body is another example of his objectification of women.

At the club, Bateman gets drinks, though Patricia continues to ignore him. He looks around and notices that there is almost nobody else in the usually-packed nightclub; it's almost as if he and Patricia are the only ones sitting near the bar. Eventually, he gets up to explore the club, expecting her to follow him, but she doesn't. Bateman finds a man, asking if his name is Ricardo ("Sure," he says), and asks to buy some cocaine from him. He purchases it and heads back to Patricia. On the way, a young girl tells him she likes his wallet. He tells her he'd "like to tit-fuck her and then maybe cut her arms off" but she doesn't hear.

It's definitely strange that Tunnel, one of the most popular and exclusive nightclubs in the city, is empty on such a night. It is left unclear if this is a reflection of the way the evening with Patricia has been going (poorly) or an incorrect perception of Bateman's: perhaps he is so used to the life of only going to the most exclusive and exciting clubs that this one seems empty and boring to him, regardless. The drug dealer answering with "Sure," while maybe not behavior out of the ordinary for a man of his profession, is yet another example of mistaken and confused identity. Bateman's suddenly brutal remark to the young girl is another example of the way violence and sex are connected in Bateman's world, and the girl's lack of reaction also shows the rather surreal way the novel treats Bateman's dark side—it's often unclear whether he is actually saying or doing the twisted things he describes, as other people sometimes ignore or don't seem to notice them.

Bateman finds Patricia and asks her if she wants to do some coke. They go to the bathroom, and when they arrive, Patricia explodes, apologizing over and over again for her behavior tonight, and telling Bateman how much she really enjoyed Barcadia and that they could go to Dorsia some other time. Bateman is unamused, and in a daze can think of nothing other than the drink he wants and the pill he's craving, a Valium.

Patricia's admission of guilt over her behavior is interesting; it can be read as either a break in the novel's shallowness, or just Patricia realizing her strategic mistake and attempting to backpedal so she can be taken to Dorsia another night. We'll never know, as Patricia never again appears in the novel.

DRY CLEANERS

It's another morning, and Bateman has recently received back an order from the Chinese couple he sends his bloody laundry to for dry cleaning – the clothes, however, remain stained with blood. Furious, he makes the trip all the way uptown (he's never been) to visit the dry cleaners in person. Bateman rushes out the door, skipping his workout and today's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" – a re-run featuring the President. Outside the store, he sees a bum, blind and missing a foot, begging for money on the sidewalk. Bateman steps on his "foot," causing him to cry out and drop his cup of change.

Bateman is reluctant to go all the way uptown to see the elderly Chinese couple who take care of his bloody laundry; he likely assumes that, because these people are so far below him, there's no reason for him to worry about sending them bloody linens so often. He also cares very little about the bum outside. It is interesting to note, however, the guest on the day's episode of "The Patty Winters Show." It's highly unlikely that the President of the United States would be a guest on a show like this; this could be a sign that Bateman is either being dishonest or partly hallucinating the morning's events.

Inside the dry cleaners', Bateman is having an incredibly difficult time communicating his disappointment. He mocks the old woman, who clearly is not a very good English-speaker, while her husband looks on, equally dumbfounded. Bateman is irate – the suit and sheets he's brought back are incredibly expensive and cannot simply be bleached. Getting nowhere, he continues to berate the old couple, who are clearly uncomfortable with the entire interaction. Bateman is relentless, screaming at the old woman and mocking her, telling her that he has an important appointment that he has to get to, and shouting and laughing over her as she tries to communicate with him and becomes more and more upset.

Again we see Bateman having a racist and uncaring attitude towards people he views as below him. Because these people are not of his level of society, he is cruel to them, and because they are not native English speakers and have jobs other than Wall Street banking, he assumes they are stupid and worthless. His expensive linens are more important to him than these two other human beings.

Suddenly, the bell on the door rings, and a voice says, "Patrick?" It's a woman Bateman recognizes from his building – she's a bit older than him and not in shape. She greets him excitedly, clearly knowing exactly who he is, though he only has a vague knowledge of her. There is an awkward moment when he tries to explain what the stains on his clothes are… cranberry juice, chocolate… Bateman quickly asks Samantha ("Victoria," she corrects him) to sort things out with the dry cleaners. As he rushes out the door, she asks if he'd like to get lunch some time. After telling her he's busy on the few dates she proposes (once because he has tickets to "**Les Misérables**"), he just tells her he'll call and leaves quickly.

This is another instance in which Bateman fixates predominantly on a woman's appearance and on her perceived interest in him sexually. For a moment, he is caught; he has bloodstains on his linens, something not only difficult to explain but a crack in the perfect image he is always trying to project. He doesn't know what to do, and so exits the situation as quickly as he can. Note also another example of mistaken identity (and blatant objectification of women) as Bateman addresses the woman by the wrong name. Ellis' evoking "Les Misérables" in this particular moment is telling; by mentioning the musical, he brings out the class distinctions at play in the scene between Bateman and his dry cleaners. Their fighting back with him could almost be read as their own, small revolution.

Outside, Bateman spots a young homeless woman. He's struck by her; she's pretty. He reaches into his pocket and fishes out a dollar, dropping it into the cup she's holding in front of her. The girl looks up at him angrily, and he sees the dollar floating in a cup of coffee. "What's your goddamn problem?" the girl – evidently not homeless – shouts at him. Bateman, dazed, rushes into a cab and heads to his lunch appointment.

This is one of the few instances in the novel where Bateman treats a homeless person with anything other than outright cruelty. Of course, it is also the time he mistakes someone else for a homeless person – these happenings of mistaken identity don't just occur within Bateman's Wall Street social circle.

HARRY'S (2)

Bateman is at a late lunch with two other Wall Street bankers, Todd Hamlin and George Reeves. The three men are discussing clothing: must socks and trousers match? And shoes? Bateman takes a moment to describe in detail what each of them is wearing, before returning to the conversation, now discussing the proper occasions and ways to wear vests with formal wear. Bateman makes his way over to the bar for another drink and overhears two men discussing a new nightclub run by the owners of Tunnel. When he returns to the table, Reeves is telling Hamlin how he likes to taunt homeless people with dollars before whisking them away. Though Bateman often does the same thing, he insists it's proper to "just… say… no…" to beggars, especially homeless pregnant women.

This lunch is very typical for Bateman and his Wall Street crowd: lots of drinking, and talk mostly of shallow things like fashion and nightclubs, as Ellis sets up another kind of monotonous routine in Bateman's life. Again in this moment, we see Bateman criticizing someone else for something he does himself. Here, as well, it is a gesture towards superiority: by scolding Reeves, Bateman makes himself seem like a better, greater person.

Across the way, Bateman spots Paul Owen. He asks the others who Owen is sitting with, and they argue over his guest's identity. Before they reach a conclusion, Owen stops by their table. Owen asks Bateman how the Hawkins account is going and how his girlfriend Marcia is. Bateman realizes that he's mistaking him for Marcus Halberstam, another banker. Bateman suggests that he and Owen get drinks; Owen agrees and leaves him his **business card**, which, to Bateman's relief, is not as nice as his own. One of the men who came to the table with Owen is introduced as Paul Denton. While the conversation is going on, Bateman notices Denton staring at him strangely; he wonders whether or not Denton remembers the drunken night when they previously met.

Here, even the identity of the fabled Paul Owen is confused by some of Bateman's lunch guests. However, Owen makes his own identity mistake, thinking that Bateman is really Halberstam; this mistake will be lasting and continue throughout the rest of the novel, eventually getting under Bateman's skin. The moment Bateman has with Paul Denton is another example of a fear of homosexuality (as something that makes a man less masculine). The notion that Denton might be eyeing Bateman sexually is perhaps supported by the fact that Paul Denton had a sexual relationship with Bateman's brother, Sean, in Ellis' previous novel The Rules of Attraction.

When Paul Owen and his friends leave, Bateman, Hamlin, and Reeves immediately begin talking about him, mostly about his girlfriend, who they deem a "hardbody." They launch into a discussion of women, all agreeing that there is no such thing as a girl with a "good personality." Any woman who is smart or interesting is, of course, ugly. To cap off their discussion, Bateman quotes serial killer Ed Gein – the others all remark how Bateman is always bringing up serial killers. Gein says that whenever he sees a beautiful woman, part of him wonders what it would be like to love her and treat her right, and the other part wonders what her head would look like on a spike.

Bateman and his friends objectify women yet again. Bateman's friends notice that he quite often brings up famous serial killers; they consider it only a personality quirk, but the reader, with an inside look into Bateman's mind, can read this as an obsession linked to his violent tendencies. This specific quote from Ed Gein sounds just like something Bateman would say to the reader, though his friends would never believe it to be true.

DECK CHAIRS

Courtney has invited Bateman out to dinner with friends of hers, Scott and Anne Smiley (both Camden graduates), at a new restaurant called Deck Chairs. On the cab ride over, Courtney tells Bateman about her day – shopping, a facial. She tells Bateman to be on his best behavior, and he retorts that she should just take some more Lithium. While at dinner, the two couples discuss the current pop culture highlights of the day. Bateman mentions that he and Anne have a mutual acquaintance: a woman he sexually assaulted at a ski resort. Their conversation turns towards the restaurant's style of cuisine, "California classic." Though Bateman isn't quite sure what that even means, he launches into a speech about "post-California cuisine," impressing Anne greatly.

Courtney's life is mundane and monotonous, like Bateman's, and her monotony is definitely exaggerated by her habit for "downers" (although Lithium is mostly used as a treatment for bipolar disorder, perhaps offering a brief glimpse into Courtney's own psychology). This is the second pair of Camden graduates Bateman has had dinner with; the first was Stash and Vanden, and he gets along with the Smileys just about as well as he got along with them. In another parallel to that first dinner, Bateman's speech about "post-California cuisine" is another display of superiority through lying and performance, just like his political speech in the first chapter or his false Dorsia reservation with Patricia.

Meanwhile, Courtney is slumping over, having nearly fallen asleep just reading her menu. Bateman props her up and continues the conversation while their food arrives. A waiter appears, asking to take a drink order, and Scott and Anne have an extended, loving fluster over what kind of wine they'll drink, whether or not Anne even wants a drink, and the benefits of Pepsi vs. Coke.

There is a funny comparison here: while the Smileys are having an adorable scuffle over whether or not to have a glass of wine with dinner, Courtney has taken so many pills that she can't even sit up straight. This demonstrates the attitude towards drugs (and, seemingly, emotion and experience itself) in the two couples' different worlds.

Bateman's mind wanders, as he starts thinking about (and describing in detail) the porn he watched the other night. Conversation at the table turns to a recent exhibit by artist David Onica. Courtney, who has been drinking heavily in addition to her pill-taking, mentions that Bateman owns a piece of his, citing the price. Bateman aggressively tells her it was even more expensive. Still, Anne suspiciously remarks that this price is surely far too low. She seems not to trust Bateman, especially when Courtney is in such a condition, and Anne brings up Courtney's boyfriend, Luis Carruthers. Bateman continues to daze in and out, thinking that "no sex is worth this dinner." Conversation turns to the latest in stereo equipment and music. While Bateman and Scott are talking, Courtney excuses herself to go to the bathroom, only to be found asleep in the coat check room thirty minutes later.

Bateman can't keep his mind off of sex and pornography. That is, of course, except when it's time for a discussion of his lavish material possessions. It's very important to Bateman that the Smileys know just how much money he is able to spend, and he's likely even a bit embarrassed to find that he's underpaid (or underestimated his memory of the payment). Anne's mention of Luis is an attempt to take some power away from Bateman, though he is unaffected, displaying to the reader how little he cares about the whole situation. It's just for sex, and if he doesn't get it, he'll be just fine – though that is, we know, probably not the case.

Back at her apartment, however, Courtney is in an entirely different mood. She and Bateman are having sex, and she is egging him on to be more and more passionate. Suddenly, Bateman stops short. He runs to the bathroom, shouting to Courtney that they've forgotten to use a spermicidal lubricant. He scours the bathroom for it, shouting to Courtney for assistance, and eventually finds a tube behind a giant bottle of Xanax. Back in bed, the mood has left Courtney. As they resume having sex, she stops Bateman and mentions her boyfriend, Luis Carruthers. Bateman has, however, misheard her; she's actually asking about the condom they're using, which she now insists they turn on the light to examine. Bateman gets angry, insisting she take another Lithium. Courtney then becomes upset, sobbing into her pillow and eventually telling Bateman to "get it over with." He does; they finish having sex and are both unpleased.

Even during his favorite activity, sex with a beautiful woman, Bateman obsesses about cleanliness; he cannot leave a trace (his sperm) on Courtney, or she could get pregnant. This is a stark contrast to the way he treats the prostitutes and other women he has sex with. He could care less about them or their bodies, but because Courtney is connected to his social circle he feels he must maintain his image. This sexual encounter goes sour, though, and ends with Bateman having sex with a crying woman on a lot of drugs; it's not a consensual act, but he'll do it anyway because he believes himself entitled to his climax.

BUSINESS MEETING

Another day, Bateman is in his office, incredibly hung over from the previous night's drinking and cocaine binge. He is rude to Jean when she tells him he has a meeting to attend that afternoon, and when she mentions that a few people have called looking to schedule meetings with Bateman, he growls at her to "just…say…no." She is put off, but only slightly. Bateman takes Valium and drinks Perrier to curb his hangover.

Bateman's drinking and drug use has a negative effect on both his work and his relationship with Jean; he's crueler to her than usual and has even less care for his work responsibilities than he does on most days. He begins using drugs to help him cope with the effects of other drugs.

In the boardroom, Bateman is first to arrive, followed by Luis Carruthers, "like a puppy at my heels." Luis is going on and on about a dinner he recently had with clients, and though Bateman can barely be bothered to respond, continues speaking eagerly for quite some time. Luis invites Bateman to join him at lunch sometime soon, and Bateman accepts, picturing himself with Courtney's legs around his neck. The other men begin to arrive, including McDermott, who brings up an old argument: the pizzas at Pastels. He's brought with him an article clipping and asks Bateman, "Where do you think **Donald Trump** thinks the best pizza in Manhattan is served?" Bateman has been bested. Paul Owen arrives, dressed impeccably. Luis notices Bateman noticing this, and makes a comment about a "power*jock*strap," which Bateman ignores. Owen mistakenly greets Bateman as Marcus Halberstam again, more men file in, and the meeting begins.

Luis once again pays extra close and special attention to Bateman, and he is nothing but annoyed by it. He has such little respect for Luis that it's funny to imagine himself having sex with his girlfriend while making lunch plans with him. Luis' "powerjockstrap" comment is the first explicit hint to his sexuality, which will be revealed later in the novel. McDermott just can't let the pizza subject go, but knows this time that he'll win the argument by playing his "Trump card" – using the words of the man Bateman admires more than any other.

VIDEO STORE THEN D'AGOSTINO'S

Bateman is walking around a video rental store. To his dismay, it's too crowded for him to rent porn, and he's already been spotted by another banker he knows, who used the wrong name to say hello. Bateman finds himself stressed by the movie selection and ducks behind a cardboard cutout to take some Valium. Eventually, he decides to rent *Body Double* again. The girl at the counter, who he describes as "dumpy," has no idea what he's talking about when he asks if she has any movies featuring actress Jami Gertz. Bateman fantasizes about attacking her with a hammer, before telling her that his favorite part of *Body Double* is when a woman is mutilated with a power drill.

Renting and returning porn (and other films) from the video store is another seemingly daily ritual for Bateman. This time, the stress of being misidentified, coupled with his inability to rent the movie he desires, turns him to drugs. He's beginning to need them more and more. Bateman also objectifies the woman at the counter and fantasizes about hurting her but he settles instead for scaring her with his violent comments.

Leaving the video store, Bateman stops by a market called D'Agostino's to pick up some fruit, Perrier water, and other items. Outside he sees a bum sitting beneath a "**Les Misérables**" poster, and tells him he needs a shave. All at once, Bateman can start to feel the Valium kick in, as he describes everything around him slowly fading away. Minutes later, he comes to his senses and finds himself still standing outside of the market, drooling.

Once again, Bateman has no care for the homeless, and the distinction between a rich man like Bateman and the homeless man sitting on the street is emphasized by the appearance of "Les Mis." This is the first time we see his drug use have such a strong effect on his mental capacity, however; he essentially blacks out from taking Valium.

FACIAL

Bateman leaves his office early one day. He goes to his health club to lift weights, and then takes a cab across town to get a facial at his usual spa. In the room, he leaves off the smock he's supposed to wear; he likes for the woman who gives him his facials, Helga, to check out his body. While he waits, he reads a story about a part bird-part rodent creature in the Post. When Helga enters, she comments about Bateman being back so soon – his last facial was only two days ago. While they settle in, one of the girls hums a song from "**Les Misérables**" and Bateman tells Helga, in detail, about one of his methods for torturing women. She simply tells him to relax and continues her work. Bateman's mind wanders; he thinks about things like CD players and women's vaginas. Another worker comes in to give him his manicure, and he criticizes her work before letting himself be lulled by his luxurious, orderly pampering.

Though Bateman has no interest in Helga, it is important for him that she sees his body and he gets the satisfaction of "knowing" that she is attracted to him. Once again, the class distinctions of the moment – the served and the servant – are emphasized by the evocation of the musical "Les Misérables." Also, in this moment, Bateman again tells someone completely honestly about the terrible things he does and is ignored – it continues to remain unclear if he's really saying these things or if the people he's saying them to are genuinely not fazed by them in any way. His mind wanders to material items and objectified women, before he is rude to someone who he views, like his dry cleaners, as a kind of servant to him.

DATE WITH EVELYN

Bateman is on the phone making a reservation for himself and Courtney (who is on the other line) when Evelyn buzzes into the third line. She is upset – her neighbor was found decapitated the day before, and she's been staying at a hotel and skipping work to get pampered in order to recover. She argues with Bateman, asking him where he was the night before when she was calling him for comfort. He tells her that her neighbor's head is in his freezer and invites her to dinner. Without any transition, Bateman finds himself sitting across from Evelyn at Barcadia; he hasn't cancelled his reservation or plans with Courtney.

Bateman's relationship is so shallow that he has no qualms about carrying on an affair with one of Evelyn's closest friends. Likewise, his relationship with Courtney is so shallow that he feels no remorse for standing her up to go to dinner with another woman. Again, it is unclear what Bateman is saying or admitting (if anything) when telling Evelyn that his neighbor's head is in his freezer. Did he really kill the neighbor? Is he only taunting Evelyn? Did he actually say these words to her at all?

Over dinner, Bateman's mind wanders to the Christmas shopping he's been doing, and the conversation between Evelyn and him remains shallow, discussing friends of theirs who they dislike. Bateman stops to wonder if Evelyn would ever sleep with another woman… maybe if forced to at gunpoint. They talk about Price; Bateman says there's a rumor he's in rehab and Evelyn wonders if he has AIDS. Evelyn continues talking about some posters she saw on the subway, when she abruptly stops and asks if Ivana **Trump** is sitting across the restaurant from them. Bateman is enthralled but then quickly annoyed to discover that Evelyn is nowhere near correct.

Bateman is so detached in his relationship with Evelyn that the only way he can stay interested in their dinner is by imagining forcing her into a violent sexual encounter. It's interesting, though, that he does not fantasize about this act but ponders it much more theoretically. Because of his social circle, he probably couldn't actually ever do this to Evelyn. As is often the case, the conversation revolves around Bateman's fixations with AIDS and Donald Trump, and involves another instance of mistaken identity.

The dinner carries on with Evelyn doing most of the talking and Bateman hardly paying attention to her. She goes on a long tangent about her affection for him and her friend's upcoming wedding. Bateman's mind wanders as she goes on and on about weddings and love; he only joins her train of thought once in a while to interject with things like asking to bring an AK-47 to the wedding. But then he's brought back to reality as Evelyn tells him, "We should do it." She wants to get married. She doesn't think Bateman should wait until he's thirty, and her friend's wedding was so romantic. Bateman tunes her out completely and takes out a cigar to smoke. When Evelyn tells him to ask permission before smoking, he simply tells her he's wearing sixty dollar boxer shorts.

Again, it is unclear if Bateman's interjections are actually being said and ignored, or are just part of his storytelling to the reader. Knowing Evelyn, it's not unlikely, in this instance, that she would be talking and talking without ever listening to the things her boyfriend is saying. Bateman has no interest in marriage, even with Evelyn appealing to his age, and because he cares so little about it, he is completely flippant with Evelyn and flaunts his wealth to remind her who is the powerful one in the couple.

TUESDAY

Bateman finds himself at a black-tie party. He's wandering around, miserable, thinking that maybe he'll try to find some cocaine, when he bumps into Courtney. She takes a moment to warn him to stay away from Luis; he "suspects something." Bateman brushes this off and tells her he's leaving; the champagne and food and music are terrible. She tries to convince him to stay, but he won't yield.

Even a fine, luxurious party is a boring, monotonous event for Bateman, especially if he can't be using drugs. Courtney's revelation about Luis comes as no real surprise to Bateman.

Outside, a number of his Wall Street colleagues spot Bateman and invite him to dinner. Though he suspects they might have drugs, he waves them off and continues walking through the moonlit city. He spots a torn playbill for "**Les Misérables**" blowing down the sidewalk. Eventually he comes across a homeless man and his dog, lying in a doorway. After looking him over for quite a while, Bateman stretches out his hand and introduces himself to the bum, who tells him he's incredibly hungry and in need of money or food.

There's something different about this encounter than the ones Bateman's had with homeless people before. Maybe it's just because he's been so bored by the party he was at, or maybe he's still shaken up in some way by Evelyn's marriage proposal, but he stops to talk to this man, eventually even asking his name – an act which inevitably humanizes him.

Bateman dangles a dollar in front of the homeless man, asking him why he doesn't just get a job, and if he's been drinking. The man becomes very upset, and Bateman begins to scold him for trying to take money from people who *do* have jobs. Bateman asks the bum his name; "Al," he replies. Bateman reassures Al that he's going to help him, though he goes on to ridicule Al for his stench and for crying like a "faggot."

Bateman does his usual trick of dangling money, but takes it a step further to really be cruel to and berate this man, mocking his joblessness and likely reliance on alcohol (not that Bateman has any problems with drugs himself...). Bateman's specific insults also show how he equates weakness with a lack of what he sees as "manliness."

Bateman reaches into his pocket while Al hopefully looks on. He takes from it a serrated knife and begins to drive it into Al's eye. Al is in complete shock. Bateman plays with the blade in his eye, before undressing him and stabbing him several times in the stomach and then going in to slowly puncture Al's second eye with the blade. When he's finished with him, Bateman throws a quarter at Al's slumped-over body. When Al's dog begins to bark, Bateman stomps on its legs, breaking them, and heads off. He finds himself sitting in the Union Square McDonalds, covered in Al's blood, as others look on.

This is the first time we see Bateman actually attacking another person, though he's referenced and fantasized about events many times in the novel so far. What's more, this is attack is committed in public, right on the side of the road. While he could quickly kill Al, Bateman is more interested in torturing him and causing him pain, showing that he gets a true satisfaction from his sense of domination and others' suffering. Surreally, Bateman is then able to casually go about in public without repercussions, even while covered in blood—a type of scene that will continue to recur throughout the book, which can be read as indicating that Bateman actually imagined the whole event or as satirically pointing out how society doesn't notice or care about injustice done to the poor.

GENESIS

This chapter is a first in a series that will re-occur several times throughout the book. Bateman addresses the reader directly to tell them about one of his all-time favorite bands: Genesis. He's been a fan since the release of their first album, Duke, and has continued to follow all of their records closely, as well as the solo career of the band's front-man, Phil Collins. Over the course of a few pages, Bateman walks the reader through each of the band's albums, giving his opinion on each album's individual songs and drawing a line between the evolution of the band's music and their collaborators.

These chapters demonstrate not only Bateman's intellect and interest in valuable pop culture, but also display an obsessive and relentless capacity for learning and retelling facts, which is not unlike his earlier speeches about food and politics. More importantly, we'll see that these chapters come as (rather jarring) breaks in the action after pivotal moments in the novel. This first one comes after Bateman's first "on-screen" act of violence. In a way almost of dissociating, he leaves the story after this shocking event and talks on and on about something mundane and completely different.

LUNCH

Bateman is out to lunch at a new club with another Wall Street banker named Armstrong. Armstrong is telling him about his recent trip to the Bahamas and the benefits for travelers of going to such a place. While he speaks, Bateman completely zones out, going back to the morning when he was watching "**The Patty Winters Show**" in his apartment (the topic was "toddler murderers"), eating breakfast, and staring at the crack in the ceiling above his David Onica that he'd previously tried to tell his superintendent about.

Bateman is having another monotonous and uninteresting Wall Street lunch; this time, he's barely even listening to what Armstrong is saying, and replies only to prompt him to keep talking (so he can keep daydreaming) or to mock him. Today's topic on "The Patty Winters Show" is especially strange – they're starting to get stranger.

Bateman tunes back into Armstrong for a moment, and then out again, as Bateman internally describes his morning commute being interrupted by a "Gay Pride Parade." It irritated him so much he had to rush home to torture and kill a dog he'd purchased earlier in the week. Armstrong is now talking about sports attractions at resorts, and Bateman can't help but think what an imbecile he is. Without listening to his responses, Bateman starts asking Armstrong questions to keep him talking. Meanwhile, Bateman looks disgustedly at the food on their table and fantasizes about slitting his own wrists, just so he could spray Armstrong with his blood. Bateman starts interjecting to tell Armstrong he's an "asshole" and that his life "is a living **hell**," but Armstrong doesn't even notice. This continues until the chapter ends abruptly in the middle of one of Armstrong's sentences.

Once again, Bateman displays a disgust for homosexuality and a compulsion for violence to make himself feel better. This lunch is the first and only time in the novel when he fantasizes about violence against himself – a sign of how miserable he is in the monotony of his life, as well as the flippant way he thinks about all lives, including his own. During this terrible lunch, Bateman once again references hell, suggesting that this monotony is also a motivator of the pain and suffering in the novel.

CONCERT

Luis Carruthers has "dragged" a group of the gang out to New Jersey to see a concert of an "Irish band called U2." The group includes Luis and Courtney, Paul Owen and his girlfriend, and Bateman and Evelyn – though Bateman mentions trying to bring along Marcus Halberstam's girlfriend just for Owen's sake. The girls, Bateman notices, really don't want to be there, and it seems as if Courtney is ready to claw Evelyn's face off (it is the better of their two faces, Bateman notes, but Courtney has a better body).

Bateman displays his distaste for live music, and his sentiment is shared by his friends (though Luis seems on an entirely different page, as usual). He gets entertainment from the potential conflict between Evelyn and Courtney, likely even more so because he is the orchestrator of it, but is still focused on them more as objects than anything else.

The concert drags on, with Courtney repeatedly asking "Which one's The Ledge?" Luis motions for her to switch seats with him, so he can talk to Bateman. She tries to ignore him, squeezing Bateman's thigh tightly, but is eventually ousted from her position. Luis suggests they'll need drugs, and starts discussing with Bateman where they should go for dinner. Bateman is livid that Luis hasn't already made a reservation. Meanwhile, he describes U2's lead singer Bono running about the stage, even reaching an arm out to Bateman's group, only to be shooed away.

Courtney's questions about "The Ledge" are a funny jab at her intelligence – U2's second front man, after Bono, is The Edge. The group's overall disinterest in their front row seats to a big concert is a comical display of their self-obsession; they see their conversations amongst themselves as the most important things happening in the room. In another play for superiority, Bateman scolds Luis for not having made a reservation. Though he does things like this often, he is especially cruel this time because of his condescending view of Luis.

Bateman gets up to move to sit next to Paul Owen when all of a sudden something catches his eye. Bono has followed him as he's moved. Bateman can't stop staring at the man as he sings. Suddenly, everything else disappears, as the world around Bono and Bateman grows red. The music slows and quiets, engulfing every one of Bateman's senses, as a message appears, written in space above Bono's head: "I... am... the... **devil**... and I am... just... like...*you*."

This is one of the Bateman's clearest moments of hallucination. Though he isn't in a heavy drug haze at the moment, he hallucinates and sees the devil coming from the pop culture icon in front of him. Is this hallucination a materialization of repressed guilt over Bateman's actions, or a fear that that he will someday have to face consequences for the way he's living? These questions are never really resolved, as Bateman never (at least not in front of the reader) thinks about this moment further.

As quickly as the vision appeared, everything is back to normal, though Bateman still feels that he has received this important, personal message from the **devil** and finds that he has a pulsing erection. He tries to pick up a conversation with Paul Owen. Owen has noticed some men standing on the sides of the stage who have been pointing to the girls in their group; he tells Bateman they're "trim coordinators," trying to find girls to come backstage to party with the band. Bateman tries to bring up the Fisher account to Owen, but he doesn't take the bait. They leave the concert early, and in the limo ride to a restaurant, the men tell the women about being "trim coordinated." They find it funny and pour more champagne.

Bateman's erection ties this demonic hallucination to sex, but also just shows what an arousing and intense physical experience it was for him. Just like Bateman and his friends, Bono and his bandmates treat women like objects, having the attractive ones chosen for them. The women find it comical, showing just how used to this kind of treatment they are, and perhaps illustrating a subconscious devaluing of themselves (or internalized misogyny) as well.

A GLIMPSE OF A THURSDAY AFTERNOON

The chapter begins abruptly, mid-sentence, as Bateman is standing in a phone booth. He's experiencing a heavy anxiety attack and is rifling through his pockets for a pill – Valium, Xanax, Halcion, anything – to help him. He can't remember where he had lunch, with whom, or what he ate, and doesn't even know who he's called as the phone continues to ring. On the other end of the line is Jean. He tries to have a conversation with her, struggling both to make out what she's saying and speak for himself. They go back and forth about reservations and names and appointments before Bateman tells her to just stop sounding so sad. She apologizes and he hangs up on her.

Bateman's mental state is beginning to deteriorate, and this is tied to his drug use. He's experiencing anxiety (likely a result of his cocaine habit, his crimes, or a mix of both) and is using even more drugs to help control this since he's not able to control his mind on his own. Not only is he unable to conduct business because of this, but he's barely able to even have a conversation; the drugs are beginning to have a huge impact on his daily functioning.

Bateman continues walking up the street, relaying to the reader the stream-of-consciousness mess of his mind with barely a single period. He feels the sun melting the mousse in his hair and hears Madonna's "Like a Prayer" playing as he stumbles past people who are handing out flyers, old women, and more. He stops in a doorway, nearly doubled over, collects himself, and runs into a nearby Potter Barn, where he purchases a set of knives. Bateman then runs into a supermarket and steals some canned ham, which he shoves into his mouth and immediately throws up. He stops to kiss the face on a "**Les Misérables**" poster. He passes a man who recognizes him and calls him by the wrong name, and then Bateman bumps into a Korean deli stand, sending food flying.

In his drug-induced state, Bateman begins to let go of the things he cares about most. He lets his appearance (his hair) slip, and acts embarrassingly in front of people to whom he normally would want to display an air of superiority and perfection. Gripping for normalcy, Bateman starts purchasing things; he thinks his money and spending will fix this situation like they do all others, but he ends up vomiting on the side of the street. His behavior with the "Les Mis" poster is not only strange but highlights a shift in the normal power dynamics of Bateman's life. But not everything has changed: even in this very crazed moment, Bateman's identity is mistaken by a colleague.

Eventually, Bateman stumbles into a deli. He tells the woman working that he has a reservation, and she just tells him to sit down. When a woman comes to take his order, he can hardly read the menu. He tried to order a cheeseburger. She tells him the deli is kosher, and doesn't serve cheeseburgers. Bateman doesn't understand and tries unsuccessfully to order several other items, including a milkshake, before cursing the woman out, calling her a racial slur, and stumbling out of the deli into the street. The chapter ends as it began: mid-sentence.

Bateman foolishly acts as if he's in a fine restaurant when he's really in a corner deli. He's making a fool out of himself, barely able to speak, let alone understand the concept of "kosher" and order appropriate things. In his "right" mind, Bateman might play it cooler or, more likely, make anti-Semitic remarks and demands, but he is here rendered completely incapable of doing anything.

YALE CLUB

Bateman is out to lunch with McDermott and Van Patten, and they're discussing usual topics: sweater vests and serial killers. On this morning's "**The Patty Winters Show**," the topic was Nazis, and Bateman found it quite entertaining, especially when one of them began juggling grapefruit. The three men are all dressed well and have been siting at their table for some time drinking. Luis Carruthers is sitting a few tables away and keeps looking over at Bateman, who ignores him. Meanwhile, Van Patten is complaining about his girlfriend again. Bateman zones out, wondering if Courtney would like him more if Luis were dead, and if she only is interested in him in the first place because of the size of his muscles and penis.

Though the topic of "The Patty Winters Show" today was not so strange, the fact that the Nazis were juggling grapefruit definitely is – the show is growing stranger as Bateman begins his spiral into more drugs and violence. Bateman ignores his usual conversation to compare himself and Luis in Courtney's eyes – could he be feeling a bit insecure in his superiority to Luis?

Without transition, Bateman finds himself in the men's room. Only one stall is in use, and he hears Luis whistling a song from "**Les Misérables**." He approaches the stall and comes up behind Luis. Slowly, he raises his hands to his throat and closes his grip around him, strangling him. He loosens his grip to let Luis turn around, allowing him to see the fluttering of his eyelids as his breathing is cut off. Bateman looks him in the eyes and tells him he's been sleeping with Courtney. He squeezes harder and harder, waiting for the climax of the kill, but it never comes.

Bateman goes in for his second "on-screen" attack here. Something about this moment has led him to finally try to kill Luis. Likely, he's beginning to sense the deterioration of his perfect and superior affront, and needs to make himself feel powerful by causing harm to someone who he views as less than him. If successful, this would be his "biggest" kill yet; the first time he kills someone right in his own social circle.

All of a sudden, Luis looks down at Bateman's wrists, leans down to kiss one of them, and begins to caress his face, asking him, "Why here?" Bateman is paralyzed, as Luis continues to talk to him, telling how long he's waited for this moment and attempting to kiss him. Bateman escapes the stall, but Luis follows him, telling him, "I want you, too." Bateman storms out of the bathroom and attempts to compose himself to return to lunch, but just before he can, Luis stops him. He tells Bateman to call him and says that his "secret" is "safe."

Bateman's plans are foiled by Luis' admissions of love for Bateman (which are more likely surprising to Bateman than to the reader). Bateman himself is completely overwhelmed by Luis' assumption that he is gay., and the fact that Luis so easily slips out of Bateman's choke hold and his certainty that Bateman is gay raises the question of whether Bateman is, *in fact, attracted to Luis and at the same time so closeted/disgusted that he can't distinguish between whether he is trying to kill or kiss Luis. The novel delights in raising these sorts of possibilities and then, instead of resolving them, letting them linger as Bateman's sanity seems to become less and less stable.*

KILLING DOG

Bateman is in his apartment. Courtney has called him, too wasted on pills to be able to go to dinner, so he stays in to watch television. He goes through a lengthy exercise routine in his living room (even though he's already been to the gym) and goes shopping, where he buys a number of expensive clothing items. Bateman recounts how he spent time earlier in the evening making obscene phone calls to young Dalton girls, choosing numbers from a directory he stole when he broke into the school.

Courtney's drug habit is once again affecting her life, though the consequences are much less dire than when this happens to Bateman. When given the free time, Bateman seizes the opportunity to make himself feel powerful by exercising, spending money, and assaulting women.

Out on the street, Bateman passes by someone who looks familiar. The man says hello to him, calling him Kevin. Bateman passes a homeless woman who is incredibly high and he thinks about killing her, but decides she's too easy of a target. He passes a street performer who he *also* decides not to kill. Bateman then stops in front of D'Agostino's and peers through the window, imagining himself spending lots of money on groceries, before continuing to wander through the dark streets.

On his walk, Bateman is faced with the usual case of mistaken identity and urge of violence against a homeless person. For some reason, he's choosing not to act on his desires for the first part of this walk. Instead, he supposes he'll spend lots of money, but decides not to do that either. This is unusual behavior for him.

Eventually, Bateman comes along an older gay man walking his dog. He stops to greet the man and his dog, and has a conversation about the pronunciation of the dog's breed: shar-*pei*. The man tells Bateman about how he pampers the dog, getting his eye bags surgically lifted every two years, and tells Bateman that he's attractive enough to be a model. Bateman leans down to pet the dog and picks it up by its throat, squeezing so hard he can hear its trachea being crushed. He takes out a knife and cuts the dog's stomach open, leaving it crawling around on the ground, dragging its own intestines. The man is in complete shock, but before he can do anything, Bateman slashes his throat and runs off. He runs back to D'Agostino's, where he uses a coupon to purchase cereal before running back outside to hurry through the dark streets.

After his thwarted attempt to kill Luis, Bateman seems eager to get another opportunity to murder a gay person. Bateman, who barely values other people, let alone dogs, is perturbed by the care this man gives to his pet. He delights in using his hands to kill it, small and powerless as it is, and gets satisfaction not just from the killing but from traumatizing the dog's owner by making him watch it. Bateman does this all in public, and this is a man whom people will likely come looking after. His tactic of killing people that won't be missed is really beginning to slip—or, alternately, his hallucinations/subconscious desires for violence are growing more unrealistic. Afterwards, he continues his evening like nothing happened.

GIRLS

Bateman is out to dinner with Courtney, who's wasted again. She's talking to him but he isn't paying much attention. When the dinner ends, Bateman pays with his platinum American Express card and the two hop in a limousine and head to meet others at Nell's for drinks. Before they get there, Bateman tells Courtney he's going to drop her off so he can go score some drugs. After some arguing – she doesn't know why he has to go elsewhere or who he's going to get drugs from – Bateman drops her off and tells the driver to head down to the meat-packing district.

Bateman's relationship with Courtney is as empty and shallow as his relationship with Evelyn. Even a fancy dinner and a ride to their favorite bar in a limousine aren't interesting enough for the two, so Bateman gets a craving for drugs… or so he says. He'll never come back to meet up with Courtney, and we never learn what happened the rest of her night once she realizes she's being sent off to the meat-packing district for no reason. From what we've seen before, this likely isn't an uncommon occurrence.

Bateman spots an attractive young girl walking the street and instructs the driver to pull alongside her. He details her clothing and her very attractive body, imagining that she could just be another NYU girl walking home from a night out. Bateman finally talks to her, inviting her to his apartment. She says she isn't supposed to, but after he gives her some money, she agrees. He's told her that he doesn't want to know her name and is just going to call her "Christie."

Bateman, bored by his lavish date with Courtney, has ditched her to go pick up a prostitute. He uses his money to persuade her to come to his apartment, even though she isn't allowed; Bateman knows his money can get him anything. By not asking the girl her name, Bateman further objectifies and dehumanizes her. Clearly, this is preparation for what is to come.

Back at Bateman's apartment, "Christie" takes a bath while Bateman calls to order a second prostitute – a blonde. While they wait, he gives "Christie" wine and instructs her to bend over in the bath so he can clean her vagina. He carefully does so, playing with and arousing her. They're interrupted by the arrival of the second girl, Sabrina, who isn't blonde. Bateman brings the two women into the living room, the "**Les Misérables**" album playing, and asks them if they want to know what he does for a living. They don't. He offers the girls truffles and expensive chardonnay, which they aren't quick to drink, and keeps trying to make small talk between the three of them, asking if they've been abroad or if they went to college.

This is the first time Bateman tells the reader the full details of the sex he has with prostitutes. At first he treats them very well, pampering "Christie" and showing off his luxurious lifestyle. His sex in the bathtub with "Christie" is gentle and pleasurable, but the reader can see how he keeps himself in complete control the entire time, dominating the encounter. The women are uninterested in small talk; this is as much a transaction for them as it if for Bateman. Again, Les Misérables highlights a distinction of class and the contrast between Bateman and these women.

The three of them end up on the couch, beginning to have sex. Bateman orders "Christie" and Sabrina around, instructing them to go down on each other and stimulate one another to climax. He then instructs them to begin paying attention to him, and they do so, as he moves them around on his body however he likes. This scene goes on for quite a while, with Bateman describing in very intimate detail the activities and multiple climaxes of their sex. A while later, he awakens, with one girl on each side of him. He smokes a cigar and tells them to be careful of his watch before telling them they're "not through yet…" Bateman then jumps the reader ahead, describing only how the girls will later leave his apartment, battered and bruised, "sobbing, bleeding, but well paid."

During sex, Bateman is very controlling. This starts in a non-violent manner, with him very specifically instructing the women on what to do – to him, to each other. He treats them almost as if they're dolls to be positioned to play out his fantasy. Though the first round of sex is pleasurable, the second round leaves the women incredibly hurt and distraught. Bateman does not describe what happens, but it's clear his controlling and dominating nature has turned violent. In this first encounter, the reader can see the clear distinction between the sexual part of the evening and the violent part of the evening – these two aspects of Bateman's life will soon start to blur together, however..

SHOPPING

Bateman details his lengthy holiday shopping list and his plans for purchasing. He says he could have just sent Jean on this errand, but has decided to do it himself. On the way to Saks, he passes a bum on the street and then has a brief panic attack when Bateman realizes he may be taping a porn film over another porn film on his VCR at home. A Xanax doesn't help him.

Shopping for gifts is another opportunity for Bateman to flaunt his wealth in front of others; he enjoys that. Unsurprisingly, the sight of the bum inspires in Bateman a completely selfish and mundane thought.

Bateman tells the reader his four goals for the holiday season, which include: a reservation at Dorsia for himself and Courtney, an invitation to the **Trump** Christmas party, learning more about Paul Owen's Fisher account, and sawing a woman's head off. In the store, he lists to the reader the luxurious and expensive items laid out before him. He stops for a moment to check his Rolex, wondering if he has time for a massage and facial, and then runs into a colleague of his who invited him to a Christmas party. Bateman shouts expletives at him and tap dances away to the sounds of a choir. He takes another moment to list the items around him in the store, and then pops three Halcion and heads to the Clinique counter to buy multiple tubes of shaving cream. While he's there, he makes a mental note to "put in an appearance at Evelyn's Christmas party" and wonders if he should ask one of the Clinique girls to be his date.

Bateman's goals for the holiday season show his most important preoccupations. The first two involve materiality and status (via the restaurant and man Bateman obsesses over), while the second two involve some of his more secret obsessions. This scene involves a number of contrasts. First, the list of goals is darkly humorous in its juxtaposition of the mundane, the material, and the sadistically murderous. Second, the almost trance-like listing of the expensive items surrounding Bateman is contrasted with the bustle of the holiday season, and again this typically wholesome "holiday shopping" image is juxtaposed with Bateman's foul language and lewd, adulterous fantasies at the Clinique counter.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Bateman is out to drinks with a man names Charles Murphy, who is complaining about the Japanese – how they're buying more and more American businesses and property. After drinks, while walking alone through the streets of New York, Bateman stops to attack and kill a Japanese food delivery boy riding on his bike. He continues along nonchalantly, passing a bum who he gives the bloodstained fortune cookies to, and arriving at Evelyn's brownstone (townhouse). He's late and the party is in full swing.

Once again, someone in Bateman's circle shows an attitude of racism, and this time the conversation inspires a random act of violence from Bateman. Again, this person he kills is someone who has no value to him – a regular worker going about his business. It is, however, someone who may be missed, and again Bateman recklessly kills in public and makes no attempt to hide his actions.

Inside the party, Evelyn has spared no expense – there are waiters in tuxedos serving champagne, Tiffany candleholders, fine food spread all throughout the home, and even dwarves hired to be elves. Bateman is greeted briefly by a man who mistakes him for someone else, before Evelyn rushes over to grab him. She teases him, calling him "a Grinch" and asks obsessively about the Waldorf salad. They look around the party, trying to figure out who is who – Evelyn still mostly concerned about the salad – and tease one another with fake gifts. Across the room, Bateman spots Owen, who eventually makes his way over to him, greeting "Marcus Halberstam" warmly. Owen's girlfriend runs to fetch Evelyn, who Owen refers to as "Cecilia" (the name of the real Halberstam's girlfriend) – Bateman silently encourages her to go along with it.

Evelyn's obsessive behavior comes out again – this time focusing on the Waldorf salad as she did with the sushi in the first chapter. Evelyn is obsessed with this party being the most perfect and lavish of the season because she wants to be considered the best. This attitude is much like Bateman's, with a comic perfectionism related to mundane details. Once again, Paul Owen mistakes Bateman for Halberstam, this time expanding the confusion to the respective girlfriends.

Bateman pulls Evelyn into the kitchen and tells her he wants to leave and bring her with him. She says she can't leave – it's her party! She's worried he didn't like the Waldorf salad. Evelyn is very reluctant to leave, even citing her duties watching over the cleanup, but Bateman is able to win her over with the one tactic he knows will win, calling her "Mrs. Bateman," and just like that, the two are sneaking out the door.

Evelyn is convinced that she must be the perfect hostess in every way, but Bateman is trying to encourage some spontaneity in her. This is slightly uncharacteristic of him; he's usually only spontaneous in his acts of violence, and he's never shown this kind of happy-go-lucky candor with Evelyn.

Outside, Bateman rushes Evelyn into a limo – she's delighted. He goes over to the driver and introduces himself, telling him Paul Owen told him it was all right for him to have his ride. Unfortunately, this isn't Owen's limo, so Bateman drags Evelyn – already drinking the champagne – to another limo and tries the whole tactic again, this time correcting himself and telling the driver his name is actually Marcus Halberstam. The driver refuses to let Bateman take the car (it is completely against regulation) but Bateman is able to buy his way around that.

The limousine confusion is yet another example of mistaken and confused identity, though this time it is a bit comical and involves Bateman again using his money to get what he wants. Additionally, though it is a small (and certainly not violent) act, the stealing of the limo is the first time Bateman does something cruel to Paul Owen and uses his "false identity" (Marcus Halberstam) to cover his tracks. What has been annoying to him now becomes useful!

Inside the limo, Bateman finds Evelyn crying. He's concerned, and tells her that the Waldorf salad was delicious, when she reveals a gift she has found in the limo and assumed to be for her: a Tiffany diamond necklace. Evelyn pounces on Bateman affectionately, ultimately pulling from his pocket another bloody fortune cookie. Bateman orders the driver, much to Evelyn's dismay and argument, to drive them to a club called Chernoble. She wants to go to the Rainbow Room, but he hates it there and can't score drugs there. Evelyn starts to get on Bateman's nerves, so he brings out the big guns: telling her he didn't like the Waldorf salad. Expectedly, she is distraught.

Evelyn's first large display of emotion is, unsurprisingly, upon the receipt of an expensive gift – even one that isn't technically her gift. She wasn't even this emotional when talking to Bateman about getting married, though her talk of marriage was also completely materialistic and superficial. Their argument over which club to go to is, for Bateman, an attack on his dominance in the relationship: he should be able to get what he wants. Being the master of manipulation he is, he knows just what to say in order to upset Evelyn into submission.

There is a huge crowd at the club, but when the doorman asks if they're the two who arrived in the limo, Bateman and Evelyn are invited right in. Bateman goes to grab them each a glass of champagne and to score some drugs, through Evelyn is entirely displeased and wants to leave. They go to find the club's single unisex bathroom and are in line with another couple. After a long wait, the other couple in line leaves just as the couple in the stall exit, wiping their noses. Bateman moves for the stall as the other couple returns, trying to get in first.

Bateman and Evelyn's limousine arrival gets them special treatment; in their world, the flaunting of money goes a very long way. As soon as drugs become involved, though, they become Bateman's only interest.

A big argument ensues between Bateman and the other couple, which leads to him calling the other man's girlfriend a "bitch" and leaving Evelyn standing in the bathroom a wreck. The other couple begin to argue amongst themselves – the man didn't even defend his girlfriend – and leaves. Bateman then turns to Evelyn, who is still a wreck, and screams at her to leave before slamming the stall door and doing all of the cocaine at once.

Though anger and fighting are not entirely out of character for Bateman, this is the first time he becomes aggressive over his need for drugs; clear evidence that his addiction to them is growing and having strong effects on his behavior. Yet even while Bateman's aggressiveness is over-the-top, the novel is quick to point out how the other couple ends up fighting because the other man wasn't aggressive enough. It can be difficult to pin down what the book is and isn't mocking in terms of masculine behavior, where its satire ends, if anywhere.

When he's finished, Bateman peeks to see if Evelyn is really gone (she is) and imagines her having a threesome with the other couple. Back in the club, the vibe has changed and Bateman sticks out like a sore thumb. A man approaches him and calls him a "fucking yuppie," but he's not even able to defend himself. He tries to save face by shouting "Rasta Man!" at a passing black man with dreads, but just makes a fool of myself. He finishes his drink and approaches a nearby "hardbody."

While on drugs, and after such an eventful and exhausting night, Bateman starts to act strangely. He is out of place in a space that he usually feels like he owns, and is even directly mocked for being a Wall Street "yuppie," something he is incredibly proud of. Bateman compensates for this, typically, by being racist— trying to show others that he can be the dominant one in any situation and with any group of people. His attempt backfires embarrassingly.

NELL'S

It is mid-May, and Bateman is sitting at a table at a bar with McDermott, another banker, Alex Taylor, and three models: Libby, Daisy, and Caron. The women are well-dressed, though Bateman admits he's only interested in Daisy. He's had a long day: an anxiety attack paired with a meeting with a lawyer about "some bogus rape charges." Bateman and McDermott flip a coin to see which one of them will go downstairs to score some cocaine; Taylor is asleep sitting up and the women are all very drunk. A waitress comes over and Bateman barks an order at her, as the girls go on talking about which new furs they want to buy.

Bateman lets the reader know that a large amount of time has passed, though he doesn't make any effort to fill in the gaps of the months that have been left out. It seems to be business as usual anyways, with Bateman and his friends out for drinks with attractive, not-sober women. Bateman's fleeting remark of "bogus rape charges" is not to be ignored – it is one of the few instances in the novel where his actions seem to be legitimized by real-world consequences, but it's still not something he takes seriously.

Bateman recalls how, earlier at dinner, McDermott asked the women if they could name any of the nine planets: "the moon" and "comet" were among the answers. The girls carry on and on about furs, discussing their favorite animals and designers. Bateman asks if anyone's ever played around with an Uzi (a gun) but is ignored. Libby and Caron spot someone they know in the distance and rush off, leaving behind Bateman and Daisy, who flirtatiously ask each other mundane questions.

The women they are with are concerned only with material items, which likely explains why they're hanging around with Bateman and his friends in the first place. Even when Bateman gets one of them alone, the conversation is impersonal and flat; there is no connection other than materiality and superficiality.

A woman named Francesca suddenly overtakes the entire booth, greeting everyone ecstatically and talking on and on. She introduces her guest, a girl named Alison Poole, to Bateman. Alison insists they've met, and Bateman privately remembers that he physically and sexually assaulted her last spring at the Kentucky Derby. Amidst the commotion, McDermott returns, wiping his nose and insisting he couldn't find any drugs. They all talk on, listening to the jazz music playing, and before much can happen, McDermott has paid the tab and they head out.

Here Bateman is confronted by one of his previous victims. What could be an awkward of confrontational moment for him, however, is not; he mentions the past attack as if he is amused by the coincidence. This new woman, Francesca, is in stark contrast to the other three – Francesca is talkative, intelligent, and interested in those around her. She is unlike many of the characters we've met so far.

Outside the bar, the group are hailing cabs. A homeless woman approaches them and McDermott, clearly high, dances around dangling a dollar in front of her sobbing face. Eventually, just Bateman and Daisy are left; she's drunk, claiming there are no more cabs and confusing the lightning for a photographer's flash. Bateman turns around to see in front of him Bethany, an ex-girlfriend of his from Harvard. He is clearly taken aback to see her. They make quick small talk and she heads off, suggesting that they get lunch soon. Bateman and Daisy pile into their cab.

Once more, McDermott demonstrates his lack of care for the needy, and it seems that drugs have helped exaggerate his actions in this instance. It appears Bateman will have no impediments in taking Daisy back to his apartment to do what he wants with her, but he is interrupted by the appearance of Bethany, and it throws him a bit. Clearly she is different from other women in his mind. Likely the connection they had in the past was real and deep, unlike any of Bateman's connections now.

Back at Bateman's apartment, he is undressing while Daisy is eating ice cream on his couch. Out of nowhere, she starts to tell him about an ex-boyfriend of hers who beat her up. Bateman is unsure how to respond. She asks if he thinks she's dumb; he says he doesn't. Then Bateman tells Daisy that, earlier that day, he saw a young girl begging for money to get a bus out of town, and he beat her up for misspelling a word on the sign she was holding. The two briefly have sex, and then Bateman tells Daisy she should leave. He tells her he's scared he's going to do something bad to her, and that he thinks he's going crazy. She agrees and leaves his apartment.

Bateman's encounter with Daisy is also unlike any of the ones we've seen before. When she tells Bateman about her abusive ex-boyfriend and her insecurities, she becomes a bit more humanized in his eyes, and he subsequently shows signs of remorse for his actions and concerns for her well-being. It's likely that this is due in part to his run-in with Bethany. Perhaps Daisy talking about her past made him think of his own, and of a time when he had relationships that weren't solely shallow and disconnected. For a brief moment, we see what a caring, non-violent Bateman might have one day looked like. This experience is very troubling to him.

PAUL OWEN

It's a regular day for Bateman: he screened calls in his apartment all morning, went to the gym, got a facial, and made dinner reservations for two under the name Marcus Halberstam. Tonight, he's having dinner with Paul Owen. Bateman arrives to the restaurant late and the place is nearly empty; Owen seems unimpressed by both of these things, and complains to Bateman, who sarcastically combats his remarks. The two order drinks. Bateman can't help but notice that Owen seems out of it tonight – dull and tired – and the dinner carries on at a monotonous pace. Bateman soon realizes, however, that he's just very drunk. Bateman pries Owen for details about the Fisher account, but he only gives him useless statistical information and keeps redirecting the conversation.

This is the moment when Bateman's obsession with Paul Owen comes to a head. Throughout the novel, he's been jealous of Owen – constantly fixating on his mysterious Fisher account. For Bateman, the account is a status symbol that Owen has and he doesn't. He's also grown more and more annoyed over Owen mistaking him for Halberstam. Perhaps Bateman thinks that because Owen calls him by the wrong name, he considers himself the better of the two. This doesn't sit well with Bateman. Tonight, Bateman brings a drunk Owen to a deserted restaurant (this is one time he does not *want to be seen) and tries to get more information out of him. It feels as if Bateman has planned something.*

By the time dinner is over, Owen is so drunk that Bateman makes him pay the bill, admit that he's an asshole, and go back to his apartment with him. Back at Bateman's apartment, Owen makes himself another drink and sits down, while Bateman goes to the bathroom to take two Valium, grab a stashed axe, and put on a plastic raincoat. Bateman directs Owen over to a folding chair he's set on top of a large sheet of plastic. Owen keeps rambling on, too drunk to even realize what's happening, when Bateman slams the axe into his face. There is a momentary pause before blood starts spurting out of the gash in Owen's head; Bateman rips the axe out and continues, watching as Owen falls to the ground, dies, and continues bleeding out for quite some time.

Now that Owen is clearly drunk and Bateman knows he is in the position of power, he starts to have fun with Owen, making him pay for dinner and mock himself. The set-up of the apartment – plastic on the floor, the raincoat and axe prepped and ready – show that this particular murder was specifically and carefully premeditated by Bateman. This, the most consequential kill yet, is one of the climaxes of the novel. Bateman's killing of Owen is gruesome but joyous; his preparation and previous attitude towards Owen show just how much Bateman has been looking forward to and working towards this moment.

Bateman leaves the body and heads over to Paul Owen's apartment, where he lets himself in with a stolen key and sits down to watch some television. He decides he'll send Owen to London, leaving a mock outgoing voicemail, packing a bag, and even booking a flight. Back at Bateman's own apartment, the body is now in rigor mortis. Bateman stuffs Owen into a sleeping bag and takes him in a cab back over to Owen's apartment, where he leaves the body to rot in the porcelain bathtub.

Now that Owen is dead, Bateman's superiority is no longer threatened, and he takes a sort of victory lap by enjoying himself in his dead opponent's home. Careful to cover his tracks for the first time, Bateman creates an elaborate set-up so that others will believe Owen is out of town and not suspect anything. In all ways, this murder is different than Bateman's other murders, and it seems to both give him back his feeling of supremacy and, possibly, further his push off the edge of sanity.

Later that night, in bed, Bateman is unable to sleep. Evelyn calls. She's upset; she thought the two of them had dinner plans that night, though Bateman assures her they didn't. She questions him about where he was this evening ("I had to rent some videotapes") and goes on to blather about another couple she saw out at an event. Bateman tells her he's tired and she ends the call, but not before he can tell her that the two of them should plan a getaway to the Hamptons in the summer.

At first Bateman's conversation with Evelyn is as usual: he's not too interested in what she has to say and makes up excuses for why he hasn't been with her. However, we see something different when he asks her to go to the Hamptons for the summer. Clearly, the murder of Paul Owen has made Bateman feel so good that he deserves a little reward, and he's even willing to share that victory, in a way, with Evelyn. The return of his feeling of supremacy has given him a hint of powerful generosity.

PAUL SMITH

Bateman is at Paul Smith, a designer store, talking to another Wall Street couple. While they talk, he describes in detail the fine clothes they're all wearing. He interrupts to tell the couple how much he loves to torture and murder other people, but is completely ignored. From behind, Luis Carruthers approaches the group. The man Bateman's speaking to begins to introduce him incorrectly, but Bateman corrects him and quickly excuses himself to look at ties.

Bateman's typical activity of discussing expensive clothing—and being ignored when he tells people the gruesome things he enjoys doing—is interrupted by Luis. Though Bateman is normally unfazed by being introduced incorrectly, in front of Luis he insists on correcting his misidentification; could it be that he is self-conscious around Luis, feeling the need to assert his dominance by being correctly identified?

Luis follows Bateman mercilessly, asking him what he's doing (buying a tie for his brother's birthday) and begging him to speak with him. Bateman keeps trying to ignore Luis and lose him as he moves through the store, but it's no use. Even at the checkout counter, Bateman tries to make small talk with the cashier (he reports that a bum is outside and the police should be called). Luis follows Bateman onto the street, where Bateman turns and pulls a switchblade on him, threatening him with aggressive jabs. Even this doesn't do the trick; Bateman only loses Luis when he jumps into his cab and is whisked away.

Luis is relentless, humiliatingly following Bateman around and expressing his feelings for him. We thus see a great contrast between the two: while Bateman never shows affection for anyone and is always sure to keep up a collected and perfect appearance at all times, Luis shows his affection passionately (though secretly) and is not afraid to make a fool of himself in the process.

BIRTHDAY, BROTHERS

It's Bateman's brother Sean's birthday. Earlier in the week, their father's accountant and estate trustee both phoned Bateman, encouraging him to use this as an excuse to take his brother out to dinner and find out what he's doing with his life. Bateman doesn't think it will work, and imagines where he would take his brother to dinner – they could never get a table at Dorsia, and Sean would hate it there. The day of, Bateman calls his brother, telling him something bad has happened and suggesting they get dinner. He tells him he'll call back, and when he does later, it's to instruct Bateman to meet him at Dorsia at 9:30.

Bateman's relationship with his brother, like all of his others, is disconnected – even his father (via his employees) sees their relationship and the occasion of Sean's birthday only as a tool for getting some information. There is great irony in Sean making a reservation at Dorsia. Bateman, who seems to have a condescending dislike for his brother, couldn't imagine him having the class to appreciate such a restaurant, let alone be the kind of person able to get a reservation.

That evening at Dorsia, Sean is late and Bateman is left to wait, humiliated. After a half hour, he heads to the bathroom and returns to find Sean settling into their booth. Sean, 23, has just returned from a mysterious trip in Europe – his father received a bill from a luxury hotel, but it's unclear if he was really there or not. He's since re-enrolled at Camden and, Bateman notices mockingly, started to pluck his eyebrows. Sean waves at a waiter to bring over menus and they order. Sean orders the most expensive items on the menu: lobster for both his appetizer and entrée. He's clearly just trying to get a rise out of his older brother, and it works. They make small talk over dinner, until an extremely attractive woman (blonde, carrying a "**Les Misérables**" program) stops by their table to say hello to Sean, who pays her absolutely no mind, though he notices Bateman looking at her.

Sean's tardy arrival leaves Bateman feeling awkward and exposed at a very important restaurant. It's likely this is an intentional power play on the part of his younger brother, who, throughout the dinner, seems to be trying to assert his dominance, just as Bateman does with others. Despite Bateman's best efforts, Sean seems to be the victor here, though Bateman attacks his masculinity by mentioning his eyebrow grooming. (Bateman, a notorious groomer himself, isn't implying that eyebrow plucking is effeminate as much as he is inferring that his brother is "finally becoming a man.") When he orders nothing but lobster, Sean moves from trying to assert his dominance over his brother to manipulating his brother's need for dominance (paying the check) for his own gain. Clearly, Sean doesn't have the same dire need for status as his brother, but still enjoys it and enjoys playing with it.

Sean doesn't touch his food, and when the time comes to wrap up dinner, tells Bateman that all of the bars Bateman plans to go to later in the evening are no longer the cool places to be. To save face, Bateman tells his brother that he's going to one of **Donald Trump**'s parties, and says he could even introduce him. Sean wants to go to an exclusive club that's just opened, and Bateman is sure his brother could get them in. Bateman daydreams for a while about videotapes – whether he'll have time to fetch ones he needs to return from his apartment or if he should go purchase more. He's interrupted by Sean saying, "**Damien**," but he's misheard; Sean is really complementing his tan. Bateman pays the bill and the two leave the restaurant.

Sean, who has clearly ordered expensive food just to make his brother pay for it, switches back to playing for dominance over Bateman, attacking his brother's knowledge of the hippest nightlife. Bateman tries to outdo his brother by mentioning Donald Trump, but Sean doesn't seem to care too much about this. The mishearing of "Damien" is another reference to hell and the devil: Damien is the name often associated with the antichrist or child of Satan, most notably in the famous film The Omen.

LUNCH WITH BETHANY

Bateman is having lunch with his old Harvard girlfriend, Bethany. He's nervous, convincing himself that since *she* called *him* she must want to see (or have sex with) him. He couldn't sleep the night before, and wrote Bethany a poem – something he used to do when they dated. That morning, the topic on "**The Patty Winters Show**" was "Has Patrick Swayze Become Cynical or Not?"

Bateman's past relationship with Bethany is clearly something he has insecurities about; no other character, especially no woman, makes him act this way. The daily topic of "The Patty Winters Show" is definitely a strange one, signifying that Patrick's mental state could be less than 100% clear on this day.

The maître d', a young gay man, brings Bateman over to the table where Bethany is already seated – she looks beautiful. Bateman complains about a couple smoking nearby and insists they be reseated in the nonsmoking section. The maître d' tells him there isn't one. As he takes his seat, Bateman is extremely nervous, even shaking. Bateman nervously makes small talk, asking if his hair is okay and if Bethany watched "**The Patty Winters Show**" today; she thinks the topic sounds quite strange. Bateman tells her about the poem he wrote, and hands her a folded piece of paper from his pocket, encouraging her to read it. The poem is incredibly violent, filled with graphic language and racial slurs. Bethany is taken aback, but Bateman tells her to keep on reading, despite the looks they're receiving from those around them.

Bateman smokes often and has smoked in restaurants a number of times in the novel, often having no consideration for those around him. His conflict with the maître d' over the lack of nonsmoking section is an attempt for Bateman to display his dominance in front of Bethany and increase his confidence in this situation that unsettles him. Bateman has written a poem for Bethany – a slightly awkward thing to do for a first meeting with an ex-girlfriend – and makes her read aloud a disgusting and offensive poem. Because his feelings towards Bethany have mixed up his thinking, he reveals to her his dark side in a twisted and public way.

When a waiter arrives at their table, Bateman, displeased with the entire beer selection, orders a scotch, while Bethany orders a water. Bateman is incredibly tense, blurting his answers at the waiter, attacking his grammar, and interrupting constantly. Once the two are finally able to get through their order, Bethany notices that Bateman's leg is shaking uncontrollably. "It's the music," he tells her, before launching into a strange conversation about new age music and the recent concerts he's seen (U2). Bethany is polite and humors him, despite his strange behavior. Bateman asks her about her work and she about his, though she tells him she doesn't want to talk about work, and if Bateman's job is such a burden for him, he should quit – he doesn't *have* to work, after all.

Clearly thrown off, Bateman is trying to overcompensate in his efforts to come off as cool and powerful, and ends up acting foolish in his interactions with the waiter. This is a blundering side of Bateman that we haven't seen before. His attempts to make small talk are an unsuccessful cover for his erratic behavior and lack of composure, and Bethany seems to almost pity Bateman. Bethany's suggestion that Bateman not work reveals not only the extent of his family's wealth (though this can be inferred, especially from his dinner with Sean) but just how dependent Bateman is on his job as a status symbol; without it, he wouldn't be who he is.

Bateman struggles to make his way through the lunch, his behavior erratic as he attempts to eat, whispering across the table and trying to hold Bethany's hand. He comes to attention when Bethany asks if he's seeing anyone. Though he thinks of Evelyn, he circles around the question and rebuffs it. He asks Bethany the same thing. She is; she's dating the chef at Dorsia. Bateman becomes hostile, interrogating her as to why she is with him, if she wants to be married, have children. She's taken aback, and reminds Bateman that he and her boyfriend were friends at school. "But he was a *fag*," Bateman blurts out in response. According to Bateman, he used to get gang-banged by jocks at frat parties. Bethany is unsure how to respond, but assures Bateman that her boyfriend is *definitely* not gay. Bateman calms down and allows Bethany to discuss her boyfriend. While she does, he daydreams, remembering a girl he murdered his junior year of college.

Bethany's revelation that she is dating the chef at Dorsia is a deeply ironic attack on Bateman's dominance. His ex-girlfriend, a woman who, like all others, he feels should be clamoring for his attention and affection, is dating one of the leaders of the one exclusive institution he hasn't been able to access on his own. This upsets him very much, and so he lashes out at Bethany and her relationship, trying to delegitimize it by attacking Bethany's boyfriend's sexuality (and, thus, masculinity). As Bateman's thoughts begin to turn towards violence, we get a new understanding of how he uses violence as a coping mechanism, an outlet or escape from facing his problems or insecurities.

When they finish lunch, Bethany pays with her own platinum American Express card and waits for Bateman outside while he throws up his squid lunch in the men's room. He convinces her to come back to his apartment. She is reluctant, but after a long back and forth and Bateman nearly begging, she agrees, citing the wine that she "shouldn't have had" at lunch. Inside Bateman's apartment, Bethany takes a moment to look around, and points out that Bateman's David Onica has been hung upside down. Meanwhile, Bateman has put on black leather gloves and fetched a nail gun.

Bateman's self-conscious anger has been rising throughout the lunch, and it seems Bethany's insistence on paying the bill (for Bateman, an attack on his masculinity) is only reinforces it. From there, he puts into action a plan of violence, manipulating Bethany and taking advantage of the fact that she's been drinking in order to get her back to his apartment. Her comment over the David Onica, implying that Bateman is not truly educated in his fine tastes, is the final straw for Bateman, as he begins a horrific and incredibly personal attack on Bethany..

Bateman turns Bethany around, nail gun in her face, and screams about her boyfriend. She makes a panicked run for the door, but is unsuccessful. He stops her with several blows to the head before dragging her to the ground and pinning her down by nailing her fingers into the wood. He shoots nails into her hands and body, until she eventually pleads with him to please stop and not to kill her. Overcome with pain, Bethany vomits and passes out, and Bateman begins to gnaw at her fingers with his teeth. When Bethany comes to, Bateman has opened all the windows and set up a video camera. He cuts her clothes off and her tongue out, telling her to scream as much as he wants, and having sex with her bloody mouth until he climaxes. He screams at her, sprays mace in her face, and tells he she was wrong about the kind of suit he was wearing – "Dumb bitch."

Bateman clearly wants Bethany to suffer greatly, and to know that her suffering is at his hands; that he is the one in power. In this incredibly grisly scene, we also see Bateman's first move towards cannibalism, starting to bite at Bethany's fingers – this tendency will grow later. We also see his first true incorporation of sex and violence. While before he would often have sex with women before turning violent, this is the first time he commits a sex act on a body he is in the process of torturing and killing. This will become regular practice for Bateman

THURSDAY

Bateman is in a cab to Nell's with McDermott and Courtney; they're discussing bottled water and trying to name as many brands as possible. They go on for quite some time, arguing the specificities of water and how it should be served, before Courtney sheepishly admits that she doesn't really understand the differences. The men dive into the conversation, but Bateman's mind begins to wander. He's thinking of Bethany's body decomposing in his apartment and when and how he should get rid of it.

Once again there seem to be no repercussions following Bateman's murderous acts, and he appears to have returned to his typical routine, carrying on an exaggeratedly mundane and monotonous conversation with Courtney and McDermott about bottled water. Meanwhile, Bateman's focus is on the body in his apartment.

Earlier in the evening, they had all been at a Morgan Stanley party, where they mingled with others and did a lot of cocaine. Now in the cab, they still can't stop talking about bottled water – it's the best fluid replacer for the body. The night continues in the same fashion. Later, back at his apartment, Bateman is drinking a scotch and standing above Bethany's body, looking at himself in the pool of her blood. He takes her sawed-off arm and hits her in the head with it, breaking off her jaw and crushing in her face completely.

Bateman can't stop thinking of Bethany's decomposing body, obsessing over what he did to her – even his favorite drugs and monotonous conversation can't distract him. In a grisly image of narcissism, he stands above her body, proudly gazing at his reflection in her blood and making a final effort to destroy her corpse just for his own amusement. He is in total control over this dead body, and control is everything to him.

WHITNEY HOUSTON

Again, Bateman takes a break from telling the reader the details of his life, and discusses the discography of a 1980s pop music icon: Whitney Houston. He talks through each of her albums in chronological order, noting the most successful (and his favorite) tracks on each, and ultimately declaring her "the most exciting and original black jazz voice of her generation." He looks forward to the many great things sure to be on Whitney's horizon.

This is the second chapter detailing the career of a 1980s pop superstar: Whitney Houston. As before, this moment comes after a climactic violent act which has taken Bateman's level of violence to new heights. Even more than the murder of Paul Owen, the murder of Bethany was personal, sadistic, and sexual for Bateman, marking a turning point in his crimes.

DINNER WITH SECRETARY

Bateman is sitting in his office doing a crossword puzzle. He's had a fine day: a two-hour workout, a little bit of work, and Evelyn is away in Boston for the weekend. Just outside his door, Jean is sitting working through a large stack of papers he's asked her to take care of. She appears in the doorway, asking if he needs any help with the puzzle and coming around to the back of his desk to be next to him. Bateman asks Jean if she'd like to join him for dinner – that is, if she doesn't have any plans. She doesn't and would be delighted. When asked to select a restaurant, Jean picks Dorsia. Playing it cool, Bateman picks up the phone. The maître d' on the other end of the line tells him that it's completely booked, but Bateman carries on the conversation as if everything will be just fine. When he hangs up, Jean points out that he forgot to give his name for the reservation.

Bateman is in a fine mood, pleased by Evelyn being out of town and relaxed after having murdered Bethany; killing her seems to have been a vital opportunity for him to let off some steam. As usual, Jean is hardworking and happy to dote on Bateman, though today she is a bit bolder than usual, insisting that she help Bateman with his crossword puzzle and even coming physically close to him on his side of the desk. Whatever she's trying to do, it works, and Bateman invites her to dinner. Bateman, not wanting to seem incapable of getting into Dorsia in front of someone as lowly as Jean, fakes his way through the phone call.

When they arrive at Dorsia, Bateman peers onto the maître d's list, noticing that the only name left not crossed off is Schrawtz, a reservation for two. He tells Jean to go to the bathroom; she argues that she doesn't have to, but eventually complies. When the maître d' arrives, Bateman is acting very strange, but manages to tell him he has a reservation for two for Schrawtz. They are led over to "their table" and Bateman is so nervous he can barely read the menu. Their drink orders are being taken when Bateman notices the maître d' looking at them from across the restaurant. He's standing with a couple – a very Jewish-looking couple. They come over to the table to confront Bateman and Jean, and after unsuccessfully attempting to play dumb, Bateman grabs Jean and they rush out of the restaurant.

Still trying to maintain his feelings of superiority over Jean, Bateman makes a plan to steal another couple's reservation. In this rather comic scene, Bateman risks an enormous embarrassment (at Dorsia, no less) just to maintain his feelings of superior status in front of Jean, someone whose opinion he could usually care less about. Perhaps something is changed in Bateman: could he be feeling affection for Jean, and thus wanting to impress her, or trying to maintain his feelings of status as a way to subconsciously resist the affection he's feeling?

The pair attempt another restaurant, Arcadia, and are able to be seated. They have a meal that Bateman considers mediocre, but Jean seems to enjoy just fine. She asks him about himself, noting that he seems strange tonight. She tells him about her dreams to travel some day. Bateman realizes that Jean will probably take anything he tells her as true, and so starts spouting misinformation about the history of Arcadia. After dinner, they find themselves standing outside Jean's building. She invites Bateman up for a drink, but he tells her he has to get home to watch Letterman. She tells him he can watch it at her place, but he tells her he prefers to watch it at home "without cable."

Bateman's embarrassment over the incident at Dorsia is clear from the way he speaks out about the meal. He's attempting to regain a feeling of dominance by putting down the fine food that's in front of him. Jean, however, doesn't find the situation embarrassing, and seems to actually enjoy *her food—unlike any of the other characters we've seen. When Bateman realizes the extent to which he can mess with Jean, he regains his composure and dominance a bit. By the end of the night, Jean's affection for Bateman is clear, as she invites him up to her apartment.*

Jean accepts this excuse, and the two shake hands before embracing. For a brief moment, Bateman feels Jean's warmth and affection engulfing him, but then he pulls away. She reminds him of a meeting he has tomorrow, and the two say goodnight. In his cab home, Bateman passes a bum on the street. As he stares at him, he has a brief fantasy, not about killing, but about buying balloons with Jean and running through Central Park.

Previously, Bateman may have tried to have sex with Jean, or maybe even killed her, but now he's acting differently and avoiding her. She's brought out a feeling in him that he's highly unused to, as is made clear by one of the book's more tragic moments: his vision of the two of them running through the park with balloons.

DETECTIVE

It's now August. Bateman is sitting in his office when Jean tells him a Mr. Donald Kimball is here to see him. Bateman tells Jean to tell Kimball that he's not in, but the man is right outside the door. Bateman puts down the *Sports Illustrated* he's been doodling on and picks up the phone, pretending to be in the middle of an important call about fabrics, as Mr. Kimball comes in. When Bateman eventually gets off the phone, the two men both apologize to one another. Kimball tells Bateman that he's been hired by Paul Owen's girlfriend to investigate his disappearance, and has been making his rounds talking to all of the men in Owen's social and work circle. Bateman shows concern and offers Kimball a bottle of San Pellegrino. Kimball refuses, but Bateman insists Jean bring one.

It's business as usual, once again, for Bateman; he's sitting in his office and avoiding anything that may remotely be considered "work." That is, until someone needs his attention; as he's done before on the phone with women, Bateman creates an appearance of busyness (and, thus, importance) for the man who's come to see him. When the man announces that he is a detective looking into Paul Owen's disappearance, Bateman is flustered and begins to overcompensate in his hospitality out of anxiety over his guilt. Could his violent actions be finally about to have consequences?

Kimball begins to ask Bateman some basic questions: his age, where he lives, where he went to school. Bateman is nervous, and Kimball notices this. Bateman starts smoking and dry swallows two Nuprin. Kimball begins to ask about Owen, and Bateman manages to tell him only that he ate a well-balanced diet and was involved in "that whole Yale thing" (meaning he was a closeted homosexual). The awkward questioning continues, with Bateman being not entirely helpful in his answers. Kimball brings up Owen's outgoing voicemail, which said he was going to London. Owen's girlfriend, however, doesn't buy this, even though some people have claimed to have seen Owen out and about in London.

Bateman turns to drugs – a Nuprin – to help him calm his nerves. When pressed for details about Owen, Bateman tries to distract from his guilt and nervousness by repeatedly insulting Owen's masculinity and discussing mundane and unhelpful aspects of his life. When Kimball starts talking about whether or not Paul Owen is in London, the seed is planted for one of the novel's largest questions of truth: if Paul Owen has been seen in London, how could Bateman have killed him? For the time being, however, Bateman (and Kimball, as well, it seems) assume that these witnesses are mistaken (especially as everyone seems to be constantly confusing each others' identities in this Wall Street world).

Kimball finally asks Bateman if he can tell him where he was on the night of Owen's disappearance. Bateman makes up a date with a girl, though this doesn't match what Kimball has heard elsewhere. Kimball asks Bateman the last time he was with Paul Owen, and, again, he makes something up. Finally, Kimball reveals that the item in Owen's planner the night he disappeared was a dinner with Marcus Halberstam, though Halberstam denies this and has an alibi that checks out clean: Halberstam was out to dinner with a group of men, including Bateman.

Bateman flubs his alibi, which could throw suspicion onto him, yet Halberstam's statement that he was with *Bateman on the night of the disappearance further clouds the truth. Is Halberstam just mistaken, or was Bateman with him (and not Paul Owen) on the night of the "disappearance"?*

The awkward "interrogation" continues, with Kimball bringing up another similar case and then making some strange comments about how the earth just sometimes "opens up and swallows people." Bateman is finally able to usher Kimball out of the door, feeling both anxious and relieved, and pops a Xanax. A few days later, he bumps into Owen's girlfriend, though she mentions nothing of the disappearance or investigation.

Though much remains unclear, a possibility emerges that Bateman never killed Paul Owen; did he hallucinate this, or simply lie to the reader? These questions will continue to grow throughout the rest of the novel, and Donald Kimball, though referenced, will not reappear or continue his investigation.

SUMMER

Bateman nonchalantly recaps the events of the summer: a number of airplane disasters, the Mets doing poorly, a new deodorant, and the need to go to the Hamptons. He tells Evelyn of his need, and the two head out of the city to spend time at Price's Hamptons home. The home, which Bateman describes in intricate detail, is gorgeous and filled with expensive and luxurious furniture. Bateman tells the reader that he "really tried to make things work" with Evelyn while he was in the Hamptons.

After a chaotic and unsettling few months, Bateman's desire to go to the Hamptons (with Evelyn, no less) is a desire for him to return to his more monotonous life of luxury.

At first, they would ride bikes together, take baths together, and read novels together, but eventually things grew strained: Evelyn wouldn't eat, and Bateman started microwaving and eating jellyfish. Bateman would lie around, drinking and fantasizing about killing people, while Evelyn would helicopter into the city a few times a week just to get facials. Everything felt boring and dull to Bateman; even killing their dog provided no satisfaction. One day, he announced to Evelyn that he thought they should leave. She agreed and the two quickly hopped on a helicopter back to New York City.

It seems at first as if things will go just fine, but Bateman is unable to keep up this schedule of normalcy and begins to have urges towards violent and sadistic behavior once again. What looks like it could have been an opportunity for a connection between Bateman and Evelyn is squashed when they both get bored of one another and turn to other outlets: violence and facials, respectively.

GIRLS (2)

Bateman is in his apartment with a girl named Elizabeth and the prostitute he calls "Christie". Elizabeth complains about the restaurant they went to. Bateman tells her he thought it was "hip," and she tells him it couldn't be, because **Donald Trump** goes there. Earlier in the night, he had left Elizabeth at a bar to go pick up "Christie," who he left waiting in a locked limo while they finished their drinks. "Christie" had expressed reservations about seeing Bateman again after what had happened the last time they met, but some vodka and cash quickly changed her mind.

Up to his old tricks, Bateman leaves Elizabeth hanging while he goes in search of a prostitute – this is just what he did to Courtney the first time he hired "Christie." Elizabeth is clearly only interested in Bateman for his money, arguing with him that a restaurant even favored by the idyllic Wall Street man, Donald Trump, wasn't good enough. Though "Christie" is reluctant to see Bateman again after being so badly beaten during their previous encounter, he knows that flaunting his money and using alcohol to cloud her judgment will get him just what he wants.

Back in the apartment, Elizabeth is making small talk with "Christie", telling her how she and Bateman met at the Kentucky Derby when he was with that girl Alison Poole. Today's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" was about "People Who Weigh Over Seven Hundred Pounds – What Can We Do About Them?" Elizabeth clearly has no idea "Christie" is a prostitute, and assumes she runs in their same crowd. Though it's 3 AM, she tries to make a phone call to score drugs, but the dealer isn't answering the phone. Soon enough, Bateman, who has dissolved ecstasy into the girls' wine, is on the couch coercing them into having sex with each other. Elizabeth maintains that she is *not* a lesbian.

Today's episode of "The Patty Winters Show" has a topic that, once again, is a bit strange (and notably obsessed with physical appearance in a dehumanizing way), though not as wildly unrealistic as some of the ones before. This is a gauge for Bateman's hallucinations; perhaps this encounter is real and its memory unclouded. Elizabeth is oblivious to her surroundings, having no idea that "Christie" is a prostitute and assuming that she can just call to purchase drugs whenever she'd like. Meanwhile, Bateman is using drugs to prepare his victims; this will make his attack easier. He is beginning to incorporate drugs directly into his violence more and more.

Despite these objections, the women start having sex with one another, which Bateman describes in graphic detail. He gives them a makeshift strap-on to use with one another, which they take great pleasure from. With no transition, Bateman then begins to describe himself attacking a horrified Elizabeth with a butcher knife, citing this moment as his orgasm in the sexual encounter. He slices her body and throat before returning to "Christie", whose nipples have been hooked up with jumper cables to a spare car battery. Bateman tortures her and describes her pain in detail. The next morning, Bateman describes the scene: "Christie" (who is dead) has had her breasts exploded, her lips are gone, and there is "a black pit where her vagina should be," though he doesn't remember doing anything to it. He contemplates a lunch appointment he has, unsure of whether or not he should cancel.

It's interesting to note that Bateman's disgust for homosexuality only applies to men; he is turned on by lesbian encounters (though perhaps only when he is the one controlling them), but despises gay men. There is a jarring narrative shift here, when Bateman immediately transitions from sex to torture. It's almost as if he's blacked out while narrating. This break is never explained – are there events Bateman is hiding or doesn't remember, or is he merely skipping to the "good stuff?" From here on in he becomes even more of an increasingly unreliable narrator. As usual, his sexual and sadistic violence has no effect on him, and he goes about his day as normal after.

CONFRONTED BY FAGGOT

It's a Sunday afternoon and Bateman is shopping at Barney's. He spots Luis Carruthers, hiding behind a pole and watching him closely. Luis pretends to notice Bateman unexpectedly, and begins following him around the store, begging him to please talk to him. Bateman feels sick and tries to shake off Luis, but he is relentless. Luis tells Bateman that he's sick over him, and Bateman replies that he simply has a demented obsession. "I know you feel the same way I do," Luis tells Bateman. This continues for quite some time until, ultimately, Luis has collapsed to the floor, sobbing and begging Bateman to be with him.

Luis Carruthers is back and as pitiful as ever, once again stalking Bateman around a luxury clothing store and professing his love for him. Bateman's response is the same as it always has been: disgusted rejection. At the same time, the way that Luis keeps appearing suddenly raises the possibility that Luis is actually a hallucination, a kind of projection of Bateman's own fragile and insecure sense of himself and his masculinity.

The scene is out of control: Luis is sobbing, racks are being knocked over, and Bateman is trying to convince those around them that there's nothing to see. Luis is inconsolable, and tells Bateman that he'd rather just be killed than go on like this. Bateman grabs him by the collar and menacingly tells him that he will kill him, that he's done it before and would delight in doing it again, before throwing him back to the ground. Eventually, Luis is able to compose himself and Bateman leaves him behind in the store. As Bateman leaves, Luis tells him that he loves him.

Bateman's insecurities are in full relief in this scene, as he runs from Luis out of fear that people will get the idea that Bateman might also be gay. Such a prospect would be catastrophic for Bateman and his fragile masculinity. Just as terrifying might be the prospect of love – gay or straight. Above all, Bateman wants to control his own image, to look powerful, and anything that threatens that – being seen as guy, being seen as emotionally open – is something he can't bear.

KILLING CHILD AT ZOO

Days pass strangely – Bateman has been unable to sleep and feels his mind going. This morning's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" was about a boy who fell in love with a box of soap. Bateman finds himself wandering through Central Park, cursing out a janitor who tells him to flush and looking disgustedly at two drunk, gay, homeless men. In the Zoo, he passes the seal tank and reads a sign about how coins tossed into the water can kill the animals. He tosses in a handful.

Bateman's introduction to this chapter, discussing the trouble he's been having sleeping and his general air of confusion, can serve as a warning to the reader that he is an increasingly unstable and unreliable narrator, and the very strange topic of this episode of "The Patty Winters Show" supports this. He takes to the park, judging the common people around him and intentionally harming animals just for fun.

Bateman spots a five-year-old boy with his mother. The boy's mother instructs him to throw away a wrapper in a garbage can near Bateman. When the boy comes over, Bateman offers him a cookie, before grabbing him and stabbing him in the neck. Bateman moves away and watches as the mother, who first thinks her child is just lying on the ground playing, discovers his dead body. Pretending to be a doctor, Bateman runs back over and places his hand over the boy's wound. There is complete chaos, as the mother screams and a large crowd of people surround the scene. A cop arrives and pushes Bateman out of the way, ripping the boys clothes off and carrying him onto the cement just as he sputters and finally dies. The mother has to be restrained. Bateman leaves the park, stopping to buy a Dove bar, and eats happily, his hands still covered in blood.

In another shocking murder, Bateman kills a small child in public. Bateman is savage in his choice of helpless victim and unconcerned with being caught in the act. Even after killing the child, he not only sticks around the scene but dives in to act as if he's coming to the rescue – a very bold act for a man who's just slaughtered a young boy in broad daylight. Bateman has gotten both bold and reckless in his murders, and even so, is unfazed by his actions, grabbing an ice cream afterwards. Bear in mind, however, that Bateman's introduction to this chapter casts a shadow of unreliability onto his description of these events.

GIRLS (3)

Bateman's appearances at work lately have been, in his own words, "sporadic." His apartment reeks of decomposing bodies, which makes sense as he's scooped the contents of the rotting head of "Christie" into a glass bowl and left other body parts to rot around his living room. He heads over to Paul Owen's apartment. Donald Kimball, he's learned, has confirmed Owen's presence in London.

The quality of Bateman's life, once meticulous and perfect, has taken a complete nose dive. The sense of monotonous cleanliness he exhibited earlier in the novel is completely gone, and he has begun to leave and display his victims' bodies as trophies for himself. Though he learns Paul Owen has been confirmed as being seen in London, he is unbothered – what does this mean about his earlier descriptions of the event?

Sitting in Owen's apartment, Bateman calls to hire two prostitutes, paying for it with Owen's card. The girls arrive and they begin making small talk; one of the prostitutes tells a story about a former pimp she had whose pet monkey refused to watch anything but "The Oprah Winfrey Show." The three start having intense sex, the girls climaxing multiple times. Eventually, they are all on top of each other, and Bateman has his mouth between one of the girls' legs. He bites her vagina, causing her to scream and bleed everywhere – the other girl first thinks these are screams of pleasure.

Bateman takes great enjoyment from using Owen's card to buy prostitutes and having sex with them in his apartment. The transition from sex to violence is explicitly described in this encounter. It is neither a clear shift from one to the other nor a moment of blacked-out, missing narration. This time, Bateman describes how he uses the aggression of his sex to move right into violence, conflating his sexual and violent acts.

Bateman then starts to attack both girls with a nail gun, spraying them with mace, and skinning them alive. He films their deaths, even as he starts cutting them to pieces and having sex with their dying body parts. One of the girls is still alive, so he takes a match and starts burning her eyeballs, eventually shoving his arm down her throat and ripping her apart. When the deed is done, Bateman goes about his day – he has things to do, videotapes to return, and plans with a new girl he's been seeing named Jeannette. He returns later to discover the mess, unable to tell one body from the other, and scrawls "I am back" in blood on Owen's wall.

Even once Bateman has killed the women and skinned them, the sexual aspect of the encounter continues. His torture is more gruesome, graphic, and sadistic than it has ever been, and he continues to gain sexual satisfaction from reaching new levels of violence. From here on out, Bateman's distinctions between sex and violence disappear; all sex is violent and all violence is sexual.

RAT

It's October, and Bateman has received in the mail a number of the latest, most expensive pieces of electronic sound equipment. He spends several pages detailing the items and their specific technical capabilities. He's on the phone debating a charge with his lawyer when he sees, perched on the seat of his toilet, a large rat. The rat leaps from the toilet and scampers to the kitchen where Bateman, unbothered as a result of taking multiple Halcion, tries to catch it with a bag. He goes out and purchases a mouse trap, which he sets with the only cheese he has: a wedge of brie. A day later, he comes home to find the rat trapped but, because of its size, not killed. He traps it in a large hatbox, placing cookbooks on top to prevent it from escaping.

As if his recent killings have put him on a high, Bateman spends his money in a masturbatory fashion, buying expensive items he doesn't need just because he can, and so he can say he has the latest technology. There have still been some big changes in him, though: earlier in the novel, he would have been disgusted by the thought of a rat being in his perfect and spotless apartment. Now, however, he wants to keep the rat, as if he's saving it for something.

ANOTHER NIGHT

Bateman has plans for dinner with McDermott and Hamlin. They're on the phone discussing where they want to go and having a number of disagreements about it, all refusing to go to the places the others want to go. McDermott tells Bateman that Hamlin wants to bring Luis Carruthers along, and Bateman squarely refuses; Luis absolutely may not come to dinner. They have reservations at a place called 1500, but now want to go to Zeus Bar. Someone has to cancel one reservation and make the other, and McDermott volunteers.

This chapter is one of the novel's most confusing, for both the reader and characters alike. It begins like a typical night, with Bateman and his friends discussing dinner reservations and Bateman completely averse to even the notion of Luis Carruthers.

Bateman gets another call; it's Jeannette, upset that Bateman stood her up the night before. To make peace, he invites her to join them for dinner at Zeus Bar. Over on the other line, McDermott has made them a reservation at Kaktus – Zeus Bar was full. Regardless, they're still arguing confusedly over where they'll go and when and which reservations they still have to cancel. Hamlin gets off the line, planning to meet them at Kaktus at 9, and Van Patten beeps in, asking Bateman about cummerbunds (an accessory that can be worn with a tuxedo).

In typical fashion, Bateman attempts to buy favor with Jeannette by inviting her to a fancy dinner. Also typical: it works. The back and forth between Bateman and his friends over where they will eat dinner is only beginning to reach the level of complication and confusion it will rise to by the end of the chapter.

While on the phone, Bateman is watching a new rat that he's bought and poisoned drag itself around a Habitrail rat cage. He gets another call; it's Evelyn, who wants to see him. He lies and says he's having dinner alone, but Evelyn already knows his plans because Hamlin's girlfriend has told her. Back on the line with the men, Bateman curses Hamlin out and declares that no women are welcome at dinner. Bateman switches back over to Evelyn and now tells her to meet him and the guys at Zeus Bar at 9:30. Bateman then calls Hamlin's girlfriend, attempting to convince her to invite Evelyn to dinner so the men can have their own night. She isn't convinced.

Bateman has little concern for the multiple women he's dating. He doesn't feel bad for standing up Jeannette and will go on to invite both her and Evelyn to the same dinner. The play-by-play of this whole conversation, especially the clichéd moment when the men's girlfriends ruin their plans by conferring behind their backs, is comical, but it also serves another purpose. This incredibly confusing chapter greatly destabilizes the reader, again creating a sense of unreality or unreliability.


Back on the line with McDermott and Van Patten, Bateman is exasperated. McDermott gets off the call and Van Patten suggests that they, again, change the reservation, though neither he nor Bateman have kept track of how many people and what time it should be for. Van Patten leaves and McDermott kicks back in. An hour passes as they debate restaurants and reservations, and now Bateman has no way of reaching Jeannette and can't remember which restaurant he told Evelyn to go to. Van Patten returns and starts asking about Donald Kimball, the detective looking into Paul Owen's disappearance. It's now after 10, and the restaurants they wanted to go to are closed or not accepting reservations; they've even cancelled their non-existent reservation at Zeus Bar. It is a confusing mess.

The confusion of this chapter, for both reader and character alike, continues, though the characters seem to be entirely unbothered by the chaos of their conversations.


Bateman suddenly gets another call: it must be one of the girls. It's Evelyn, furious, stranded at Kaktus with a woman named Jeannette who is also there to meet her boyfriend. Bateman assures her that he'll be there shortly and to just relax, and then switches back over to the line with McDermott and Van Patten. Bateman starts talking about driving lead pipes into women's vaginas, but his friends make nothing of it, suggesting that they just go out in search of some drugs. Bateman, his mind a blur, agrees.

For most people, an accidental meeting of their significant other and the one with whom they're cheating on them would be terrible and something to avoid, but for Bateman, his relationships are all so shallow that he could care less. Once again here, Bateman discusses his love of violent acts openly with his friends, any they pay him absolutely no mind. (Which again calls into question whether he actually said these things aloud at all.)



GIRL

Bateman is in his apartment with a girl he's picked up and whose name he doesn't know. She's asking him where he went to school and what he does for a living. She also asks him about the strange smell; he tells her it's from a rat he killed. He finds some cocaine in his bathroom and snorts it. The scene then shifts to his bedroom, where the two are now having sex. He's being incredibly rough with the girl, slapping and scratching her, and aggressively using the strap-on with her. She tells him to stop but he doesn't, and eventually she pushes him off her, calling him a "crazy fucking bastard" and trying to escape, but Bateman leaps at her, maces her, and bashes her head into the wall several times.

In what has become his new usual fashion, Bateman brings a woman back to his putrid apartment to do drugs and have sex. While drugs, sex, and violence were once separate aspects of his life, they now mingle together to become a mess of one and the same. This is the first time the reader sees a woman fight back when Bateman is rough with her, but this challenge is met only with increased aggression and violence from Bateman.


When the girl regains consciousness, Bateman has tied her up and smeared brie cheese on her vagina. On the TV, he's playing the videotape of the last girl he tortured. He proceeds to use a drill to gouge at the girl's jaw and face. He tries to shove the end of the Habitrail cage's tube into her vagina, but it doesn't fit, so he uses some acid to make the opening wider. Inside the cage is the crazed rat from his toilet, which runs towards the smell of the cheese and begins gnawing at the woman's vagina, eventually crawling inside her body. Bateman takes a chainsaw to the girl's neck and body, cuts up her face, and gouges out her eyes. The rat emerges headfirst from her open neck. Later, Bateman takes parts of the girl's body and puts them in the oven.

Always outdoing himself, this torture and murder scene is the most sadistic yet. At this point in the novel, for many readers, the barrage of graphic sexual and violent language and action may have become so great that a desensitization to this kind of material can occur—perhaps paralleling the desensitization Bateman seems to experience in most aspects of his life. Additionally, this chapter is the first time the reader sees Bateman preparing the remains of one of his victims for consumption. Even more cannibalistic tendencies are on the horizon.

AT ANOTHER NEW RESTAURANT

Bateman is out to dinner with Evelyn. The week before, they'd attended an office Halloween party, and Bateman dressed as a serial killer. Their dinner conversation is, as usual, shallow and tense. Evelyn mentions a shirt she's been seeing everywhere that says "Silkience Equals Death." Bateman corrects her: it's "Science Equals Death." Across the room, Bateman sees a man he hardly recognizes and waves to him enthusiastically. Evelyn is annoyed and argumentative, until she spots someone she knows, Robert Farrell. She tells Bateman how handsome she thinks Farrell is, though she hopes she isn't making Bateman jealous. The two then argue over Bateman's hair and workout routine and Evelyn sees that she's upset him.

Bateman's cheeky Halloween costume displays a growth in his flippancy towards his crimes; instead of just casually mentioning that he's a murderer, he dresses up for a party flaunting it, and, of course, no one seems to notice or care. Ironically, both Evelyn and Bateman are incorrect about the shirt: it must have said "Silence Equals Death," which was the motto of the famous 1980s AIDS prevention and action group Act Up (a cause Bateman and Evelyn wouldn't care about at all, of course). At dinner, Bateman and Evelyn are as unconnected as ever, but she goes so far as to taunt Bateman by suggesting that there is a man more attractive than he is; it works.

Evelyn attempts to change the subject, telling Bateman a story about two friends of hers, but he is hardly listening, just staring at her breasts and interrupting to ask the waiter for a scotch. Bateman muses to himself about the "lack of carnality" that he used to love about Evelyn and now dislikes, and remembers a recent therapy session where he was asked what kind of contraception he and Evelyn use and what their favorite sexual positions are. Evelyn keeps talking, they argue over the prices on the menu, and when their food arrives Bateman gets into an argument with a waiter offering them fresh ground pepper, and Evelyn is embarrassed.

Bateman, typically interested in Evelyn on only a shallow level, has a revelation about his attraction to her. Before, he enjoyed the fact that she "lacked carnality" – a quality he himself has in abundance – but now he wishes that weren't the case. This change in "appetite" is linked to the changes in his habits with sex and violence – everything about his life has become more carnal, and this is now part of what he is looking for in a woman. From the outside, Bateman and Evelyn's dinner continues as usual.

Bateman has planned something special for dessert. Earlier that day, he'd stolen a used urinal cake, taken it home, covered it in chocolate, froze it, and popped it in a Godiva box (Evelyn's favorite). He's brought the box with them to dinner and asked the waiter to surprise Evelyn with it at the end of their meal. She is delighted when it arrives and offers to share the treat with Bateman. He refuses and allows Evelyn to dig in. He watches her take a big bite and observes her face as she tries to process what it is she's tasting. It's "minty," she tells him, unaware of what it is she's actually eating. As Bateman watches her, he has a realization. Even this act isn't pleasurable or fulfilling to him. It's merely something he feels he must do in order to even put up with Evelyn for three hours.

Bateman's "prank" on Evelyn in disgusting, cruel, and humiliating—but it's also an ironic take on the "consumption" all the novel's characters are obsessed with, and their preoccupation with food as a status symbol (i.e., the Godiva box) rather than as something to actually enjoy. While Bateman mistreating Evelyn is nothing new, this is the first time we see him go out of his way to do something terrible to her. Perhaps he is not only getting pleasure from this cruel act, but also trying to get a reaction out of Evelyn—trying to get Evelyn to act "carnally" in response. It doesn't work, however, and the whole prank is in no way pleasurable for him.

At the end of the meal, Evelyn tells Bateman that she wants "a firm commitment." At this point, he isn't too fazed. Bateman tells Evelyn that things between the two of them are over, citing in part his love for murder. She doesn't seem to understand, and calls the waiter over to order coffee. Bateman continues, telling her that, at 27, he can't get trapped with the burden of a commitment. She asks if he's still seeing his shrink, and he tells her that at the end of their last session his therapist asked Bateman if he could get him into a nightclub.

Bateman's immediate response to Evelyn's asking for "a firm commitment" is to break up with her. Earlier in their relationship, when she had talked about marriage, he either ignored her desires or played along to get something he wanted from her. Evelyn isn't even able to comprehend what is happening to her and acts as if it isn't happening at all.

Evelyn tries to reason with Bateman, calling him "honey," which he detests, and telling him how their breaking up would make their friend group a mess and asking him "what about the past?" Bateman isn't moved. He tells Evelyn that she's just not important to him. Evelyn becomes hysterical, first telling Bateman that he's pathological and then pleading with him, asking what she can do to change his mind. He tells her she could, maybe, wear erotic underwear, know more about cars, and say his name less often, but eventually just tells her to give it up.

Evelyn tries to redirect, to plead, and to aggressively shame Bateman into changing his mind, but it is no use – he mocks her offer to "do anything" and he is only more cruel to her. This interaction is not unlike Bateman's previous actions with Luis Carruthers: a person begging and pleading with him over their affection, and Bateman cruelly rebuffing and dismissing them.

After much spectacle, Bateman finally gets up to leave Evelyn sitting at the table. She asks him where he's going, and he enters his own mind, lost in a maze of business and violence – he sees the image of Evelyn's skeleton, twisted and crumbling. When he comes to, he tells her he's going to Pago Pago, and that, because of her outburst, he won't be paying for the meal.

Bateman's cutting of ties with Evelyn is an example of him isolating himself; the more he descends into his spiral of drugs, sex, and violence, the more he retreats into his own mind, becoming isolated from all those around him. Even at the end of this interaction with Evelyn, Bateman disappears inside his mind.

TRIES TO COOK AND EAT GIRL

It's now November, and Bateman is feeling horrible; his body hurts in a way that no drugs, food, or liquor can help, and he's been taking sleeping pills constantly. Wafting into his bedroom is the fresh smell of blood cooking. A girl's breasts are sitting prepared on china plates, while other parts of her body are strewn around the apartment and smeared on the walls. Bateman describes how he pulls a long string of her intestines out and begins shoving it into his mouth.

Bateman's new reliance on drugs and alcohol has had an extreme effect on his life. In this chapter, we see Bateman meticulously preparing a woman's flesh for consumption. A juxtaposition to his earlier scene preparing breakfast, Bateman has descended so far into his madness that his capitalist and materialistic consumption has morphed into a cannibalistic consumption that is overtaking his life.

Bateman is meanwhile watching "**The Patty Winters Show**," and the topic is "Human Diaries." Later in the day, he attempts to make meat loaf with the girl, but becomes frustrated and just ends up smearing the meat all over his walls and chewing on a piece of skin he's ripped from the corpse. He goes on trying to cook as if he were a gourmet chef, humming the theme song to a show from his childhood, before giving up and sobbing to himself "I just want to be loved," while maggots begin to crawl across the human flesh on his kitchen counter.

Unfortunately, Bateman no longer has the self-control and ability to properly prepare a meal, and ends up smearing his walls with flesh like a maniac. He is clearly distraught. As in previous moments, however, we can look to the day's topic on "The Patty Winters Show" to gauge Bateman's level of clarity. Today's topic, "Human Diaries," doesn't make much sense at all, signifying that his narration in this chapter may not be the most reliable.

TAKING AN UZI TO THE GYM

Bateman is at the gym and has placed an assault rifle in his locker. He goes about his regular activity, listening to his Walkman and exercising, thinking about an NYU girl who was recently raped and murdered. After his workout, he stares at the gym in his locker, calling it "a symbol of order to me." He thinks about using it but decides not to and shuts the door; he has videotapes to return and a dinner reservation that was difficult to get.

Bateman's behavior is becoming increasingly reckless, as he takes more and more risks in his violence. His calling the rifle a "symbol of order" is very interesting; for Bateman, his power to kill maintains his dominance, his control over individual situations and over his entire life. As he feels himself losing control, sliding deeper into drugs and sex and violence, he brings the gun to the gym as a way of holding on to what he feels is slipping away.

CHASE, MANHATTAN

The paragraphs of this chapter seem to fade in and out of one another, each beginning and ending with ellipses ("..."). First, Bateman find himself out to dinner with his usual group. He tells them that his life is a living hell, but they all ignore him, talking about their usual subjects: women, work, alcohol. He tells the reader that this morning's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" was about a man who lit his daughter on fire while giving birth, and that, for dinner, he and all his friends ate shark.

The writing style of this chapter, with paragraphs flowing into and out of one another without transition, along with the strangeness of the topic on "The Patty Winters Show" and Bateman's dinner, are all huge tip-offs to the reader that Bateman's mind is not in the right place as he's giving this information. He is either delusional, hallucinating, or being completely facetious—so the reader must remember to take everything Bateman says in this chapter with a huge grain of salt.

Walking alone through the streets of New York, Bateman comes across a man playing the saxophone in a doorway. He walks over to him, takes his gun out of its holster, and screws a silencer on. The man sees the gun and stops, but Bateman encourages him to continue playing, and just as he does, shoots him dead in the face. He's failed to notice, however, a police car on the street behind him. After the shooting, the police car begins to chase Bateman through the streets, as he ducks and weave in and out of alley, trying to lose the car.

Bateman's killing is becoming more and more reckless. While earlier in the novel, he would kill prostitutes or beggars in dark alleys or the privacy of his own home, his thirst for killing has now led him to murdering street performers in plain view – not just of other civilians, but of the police.

Bateman jumps into a cab, frantically waving his gun at the terrified driver. He shoots the driver, pushes his body out of the car, and attempts to drive off. Swerving like a madman, Bateman drives the car into a Korean deli. He gets out, now referring to himself in the third-person. He tells the reader how "Patrick" attacks a police officer who is approaching him and then shoots him. "Patrick" tries to take off running, and then another squad car appears, leading to a shootout between "Patrick" and the police officers. One of his bullets hits the gas tank of the police car, which explodes into flames.

The details of Bateman's murder of the saxophone player and the ensuing police chase seem increasingly unrealistic—like something happening in an action movie. While it's not totally out of the scope of believability for Bateman (who's grown increasingly violent and reckless) even to shoot a police officer during the chase, the car exploding from a single bullet seems overly sensational and impossible. Furthermore, remembering the introduction to the chapter and knowing that, later in the novel, Bateman never tells us of any consequences for these actions (murdering a police officer in plain view, blowing up a police car), the whole scene is difficult to believe. Finally, his transition to referring to himself in the third person shows a level of dissociation that supports the idea of a hallucination.

"Patrick" starts running. At first he's looking for a car, but then he just keeps running and running as fast as he can. He approaches the building his office is in and tries to get inside. In the confusion, he realizes he's run into the wrong building. He's trying to get to the elevator when a doorman stops him, calling him "Mr. Smith" and telling him he forgot to sign in. "Patrick" shoots the man and runs across the street to his correct office building.

Still referring to himself in the third person, Bateman describes how the chase continues – still unrealistically. Bateman's mistaking one building for another is an additional sign that he isn't in his right mind.

"Patrick" nods politely at his own doorman and heads up to his office. When he gets inside his office, "Patrick" grabs the phone and hurls himself to the ground. Shaking, he calls his lawyer, Harold Carnes, and admits every single one of his crimes. Meanwhile, the building has been surrounded by cop cars, SWAT teams, and helicopters. "Patrick," sobbing, continues his phone call, now telling his lawyer that he may show up for drinks later, and watching the sun rise over Manhattan.

There is an interesting juxtaposition between Bateman's questionably hallucinated chase and his lengthy and crazed voicemails for his lawyer: a confession is an act of truth telling, and yet, this rare moment of truth telling comes in the moment in the novel when it is most difficult to discern the truth. The final words of this climactic chapter – Bateman staying hidden in his office, surrounded by helicopters and police, the sun rising – are strikingly peaceful. That being said, time has passed in an unclear way, Bateman's sanity is highly questionable, and these events have no known consequences and are (almost) never spoken of again.

HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS

For the third time, Bateman pauses the narrative of his story: this time to tell the reader about the successful career of the 1980s band Huey Lewis and the News. Of all of these sequences in the novel, this one is the longest. Bateman goes on and on, detailing each different one of the band's albums – how their sound changed and developed, how the lead singer Huey Lewis found his voice, and how their hits were received by the public. Not only does Bateman go into incredible detail, but he also relays his deep feelings for the band, expressing his fascination with and love of their music and development and, ultimately, declaring Huey Lewis "a vocalist, musician, and writer who just can't be stopped."

Again, this break in the narrative (the third and final) comes after a climactic moment. The irony this time is palpable; Bateman, barely able to tell his own story, is able to recite perfectly the story of the entire career of Huey Lewis and the News, sharing his love for the band (a rare moment of affection) and complimenting Lewis (perhaps the first real compliment he's given so far). In a way, this chapter serves to distract the reader from the previous one, helping us to forget the actions above and accept that there will be no follow-up or consequences. Is Bateman purposefully trying to hide the truth, or has he just not come down from a moment of drug-induced psychosis?

IN BED WITH COURTNEY

It's approaching the holiday season, and Bateman is lying in bed with Courtney – Luis is out of town. He thinks about the early Christmas shopping he's been doing and the episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" he watched earlier (it was about "Beautiful Teenage Lesbians," and he missed work to stay home and masturbate to it). Courtney asks what Bateman's plans for Thanksgiving are and if she'll get a chance to see him before. She tells him she'll be spending the holiday with Luis, complaining about him in a loving way. Bateman sees where this is going; "You're going to marry Luis," he says. Courtney doesn't directly reply, but this is clearly the truth. She tells Bateman that if she doesn't see him before Thanksgiving, to "Have a nice one."

Once again, even while Bateman is in bed with a beautiful woman, he is fantasizing about others. This scene, essentially Bateman's breakup with Courtney, stands in stark contrast to his breakup with Evelyn. He knows the decision she's made before she even says it and they end things detachedly but kindly, and Bateman is left as alone as ever. This is also the first time in a long time that Bateman hasn't recoiled or lashed out upon being faced with the name or even thought of Luis Carruthers.


SMITH & WOLLENSKY

Bateman is sitting at drinks with McDermott; they're waiting for Harold Carnes, who never shows up. They make the move to dinner, going to Smith & Wollensky. Bateman is dazed, thinking about a cousin of his who also rapes and murders women, until McDermott stops to berate him for not ordering hash browns. You don't come to Smith & Wollensky and not order hash browns, he says. "Jesus, Bateman, you're a raving maniac," McDermott says. Bateman is struggling to make sense of his situation, noticing for the first time the brightly painted walls and listening intently to the sounds of Frank Sinatra's "**Witchcraft**" floating through the restaurant.

This would be the first time (that we know) that Bateman has seen his lawyer, Harold Carnes, since leaving his confessional voicemails (if the voicemails ever happened, that is). Luckily, Carnes doesn't show. In a rare mention of family, Bateman's daydream about his cousin points to a streak of violence or mental illness in his family, but is interrupted by McDermott's ranting over something as inconsequential as hash browns. Clearly not in his right mind, Bateman goes back into his daze, losing himself as Sinatra's devilish lyrics float through the air.




SOMETHING ON TELEVISION

Bateman is in his apartment, getting ready for a date with Jeannette, and watching a two-part episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" which he's recorded. The first part features Guns n' Roses front man Axel Rose telling Patty about his violent urges, and the second part features Patty reading strange letters Ted Bundy (a famous serial killer) wrote to his wife from prison. Bateman keeps repeating one line from the letter: "I can feel her spreading hot sauce on me already."

Having quickly moved on to a new girlfriend, Bateman seems to be up to usual activities. The day's episode of "The Patty Winters Show" seems not as strange as it has been recently – perhaps Bateman is having a moment of clarity. The violent nature of both topics, however, is an interesting coincidence. Bateman's fixation on Bundy's "hot sauce" line is important, as it links women and flesh and the consumption of food – three things that have become virtually indistinguishable for Bateman.

Bateman is hanging around his apartment, waiting to leave. He does some extra coke he has left over from a previous night and goes to meet Jeannette. When he invited her out to see a new musical tonight, all she said was "I'll go." After the show, the two are sitting at Progress having dinner. Jeannette is quiet and drunk; she sighs and orders another glass of champagne. When Bateman suggests she should slow down, she curses him out and he retorts rudely back.

Bateman's relationship with Jeannette seems to be the coldest he's had yet. He does cocaine before the date just because, and she seems to have no passionate feelings about seeing him or not – until, of course, he hypocritically criticizes her drinking. This detached and tepid relationship makes sense, as Bateman has receded more and more into his own mind and totally isolated himself .

SANDSTONE

Bateman is sitting with his mother, Mrs. Bateman, at the home where she lives; it's April. They sit quietly, and Bateman stares at the dried blood on his hands. She tells him he looks unhappy (though he insists he isn't) and then asks him for details about a recent party – how many people were there, and what time did he leave? Bateman looks at his mother's bedside table and notices an old photograph of his father, sitting next to a photo of himself and his brother Sean on their father's estate in Connecticut.

This is the novel's first mention of Mrs. Bateman. It's not entirely clear whether or not Sandstone is an assisted living facility. At first, the encounter looks like it might be heartfelt, with Bateman's mother asking after his happiness, but she then ends up taking interest in shallow, materialistic things like everyone else in the novel. The tone of the chapter, however, is subdued, as if seeing his mother and the family photos in her room causes Bateman to have a rare moment of self-reflection.

THE BEST CITY FOR BUSINESS

Bateman decides to stop into Paul Owen's place, since he hasn't been there since the night he spent with the two escorts. It's strange, he thinks, how there have been no rumors or reports of the bodies being found, and the investigation into Owen's "disappearance" seems all but dried up. When he gets to the building, the keys he has don't work. The doorman lets him in and tells a confused Bateman that Mrs. Wolfe, the realtor, is already upstairs. Bateman wonders how much Owen's apartment is worth.

Bateman is right to find it strange that there have been no investigations or rumors regarding his murders or the rotting corpses sitting in Paul Owen's mysteriously deserted apartment, however it's no more strange than there having been no consequences for his helicopter police chase. Again, we're entering territory where truth, reality, and consequences are incredibly murky. Bateman is surprised to find the locks changed and to hear of a realtor upstairs, but it doesn't deter him from checking out the situation and sizing up the wealth of his former rival.

When Bateman gets upstairs, a woman greets him, asking if he's her eleven o'clock appointment. He tells her he isn't and walks around the apartment, looking at the other couple who is viewing the property. Bateman can't stop thinking about and picturing the horrible things he did to those girls in this apartment. The realtor approaches him, unnerved, and asks if she can help him. Bateman asks her if Paul Owen lives in the apartment, and she assures him that he doesn't. Bateman is distracted by a commercial on the television, in which a woman tells her husband, "you're right, this margarine really *does* taste better than shit."

Clearly something strange is happening: Paul Owen's apartment has been cleaned of the dead bodies Bateman had left behind and is now being shown for sale. Is Paul Owen alive, and has he decided to sell? Has the landlord taken over the sale of the property because Owen stopped paying or living there? Who discovered and removed the bodies, and why wasn't there any news surrounding them—or were there never any bodies in the first place? All this is unclear. Bateman catching the glimpse of the strange television commercial (as with "The Patty Winters Show") may be used to make the case that he is currently hallucinating, even further clouding the truth.

The realtor asks if Bateman is here because he saw the ad in the *Times*. He tells her yes, and she tells him there was no ad in the *Times*. Bateman starts to panic, as the realtor urges him to leave the apartment immediately and not make any trouble. His head is spinning and he wants to cry out, but he is unable to do a thing. The realtor forces him out of the apartment and glares at him until the elevator doors close.

The realtor is suspicious of Bateman, likely because he asked about Paul Owen by name earlier. Her terrified and insistent response might suggest that she knows about Paul Owen and the bodies, and is afraid of the perpetrator of the terrible crimes returning to the scene—or just doesn't want knowledge of the murders interfering with her ability to make money. Does this mean that Bateman definitely committed those murders and left those bodies? But what if he's hallucinating this entire scene? Were the locks to Owen's building changed or did Bateman just never have a set of keys in the first place? All these questions and more remain open.

WORKING OUT

Bateman is at the gym going through his usual routine. He enjoys the feel of his muscles burning. In his gym locker lie three vaginas he's cut off women, one pinned with a barrette and a blue Hermès ribbon tied around his "favorite."

Bateman is back to his typical regimen of exercise and shallow focus on his body, though he now has in his locker three souvenirs from his sadistic and sexual murders, which he treats like trophies.

END OF THE 1980S

Bateman describes to the reader his hallucinatory dreams: he smells blood, remembers his past at Harvard, thinks about car wrecks and football games, and hears Madonna singing "Like a Prayer." He's on his way to meet Jean for brunch when he is stopped by a kid with a clipboard, asking him what's the saddest song he knows. Then Bateman sees a car wreck and stares at the pools of blood on the ground before buying an apple. He and Jean spend time guessing which shapes are in the clouds; she sees things like puppies and tulips, while Bateman sees Gucci money clips and women cut in two.

Bateman's dreams seem to be just as strange as his waking life, and by including this dream description, Ellis makes things very clear for the reader: there is no distinction left between Bateman's true life and fantasy, and so, what he says to the reader (whether awake or asleep) cannot be trusted. Bateman's walk to meet Jean is almost surrealistically depressing – being asked about sad songs, seeing a car wreck – but he finds it delightful. He and Jean's cloud guessing game is a darkly comical moment which clearly shows the differences between what is on her mind and what is on his.

At brunch, Bateman looks fondly on Jean; she looks good. She asks if there are any museum exhibitions they should visit and they order coffee (Bateman mistakenly says "decapitated" instead of "decaffeinated"). They talk about going to dinner that evening, though Jean is insistent she only wants to go if Bateman wants to go. Suddenly, Jean asks Bateman if he's ever wanted to make someone happy. Bateman replies with a strange story; he tells her about going out to dinner once and seeing a strange man in the men's room scrawling on the wall. When he looked over to see what the man had been writing, it said "Kill... All... Yuppies." Jean is unsure how to react, and to break the awkward silence, Bateman starts talking about Ted Bundy.

It's hard to tell what Bateman is doing getting lunch with Jean. Has he finally decided to give in to her affection? Has he been feeling isolated and missing connection, and knows that Jean is the best person to provide that? He has a funny "Freudian slip" (saying the wrong word by accident, but in a way that reveals something deeper about his psychology); all of the mentions of violence in this chapter seem to be, for some reason, somewhat lighthearted. When Jean tries to ask Bateman a deep question, though, he's still unable to open up to her, and instead tells her a dark and strange story, seeming not to realize that this is an inappropriate response. It's almost as if he's making an effort to make a genuine connection, but doesn't know how or is entirely unable to do so.

Next, Bateman pauses the action between him and Jean to recite to the reader a long, philosophical quote about nature, the earth, truth, sex, reason, justice, and evil, and then he then jumps back to his conversation with Jean. She's been talking on this whole time and tells Bateman that she's always been alone and is in love with him. Bateman quickly tells her that he loves someone else, though something may be able to be done about that—or, maybe not. Jean is embarrassed and apologetic, though Bateman urges her not to be. She tells him she can't fight her feelings and that her life is so much fuller with him in it.

Bateman's moments of philosophical musing are unlike any other passages in the book. Though dark, they are eloquent and poetic in their discussions of grand topics, and display not only his intelligence, but a sensitivity and an empathy of thought that he hasn't shown before. When Jean admits her love for Bateman, however, he recoils entirely, making an awkward excuse instead of talking about his feelings in return, whatever they may be.

Again, Bateman leaves this action to philosophize. This time, he talks about "the idea of Patrick Bateman," breaking himself up into sketches of his past and his vice and his pain. He finishes, however, by saying, "There has been no reason for me to tell you any of this. This confession has meant *nothing*..." Back with Jean, Bateman continues to hear about her feelings. She thinks he's sweet, which is sexy, and thinks there's no one like him.

Bateman's speech on "the idea of Patrick Bateman" is an incredible moment in which he breaks himself down theoretically. It reveals not only the way he thinks about his own identity, but that his sterile and organizational nature is (or has been) applied not only to his surroundings and social interactions, but to his own concept of himself. When he tells the reader this has meant nothing, though, the truth and reliability of the entire remarkable passage is thrown to the wind; maybe it's untrue, maybe he's embarrassed, maybe he's in denial. In his moment of isolation, obsessing over breaking apart his personality,

Bateman then has an epiphany: he realizes that nothing he can do or say will change the way Jean feels, and that it is more her image of him that is controlling his behavior than who he himself really is. For a moment, he feels the coldness that he has always felt leave him – this moment, however, ends abruptly. Bateman tells Jean that he recently found a stash of cocaine and threw it away. He asks her if she has a briefcase, saying that Evelyn has a briefcase. Jean tries to be empathetic, but doesn't know how to respond. Bateman disappears into his mind again, describing an image of a young, thirsty child in the desert. He hears phones ringing, and comes back to stare at Jean, unsure how to explain the sensation he's feeling.

Bateman misses the final chance to connect with another person. Instead, he continues to push people away, a moment of warmth passing him by, and he launches into a typically scattered rant. His final moment of musing, however, may reveal to the reader that Bateman is aware of what is happening to him, aware of his isolation and his missing out on connection; perhaps he is the thirsty child, desperate, completely alone, and with no idea how to find "water" (true connection).

ASPEN

It's December and Bateman is in a limo with Jeannette. He's reading an article about **Donald Trump** and she's upset, nursing a black eye he gave her the night before to "coerce" her to dinner. Bateman has no sympathy for her issues and feels no guilt. He has the driver drop her off at her brownstone and then continues on to JFK. He tells the reader that this isn't the first child he's had aborted, and that Jeannette will be okay, out of the country by the time he even returns in January. Besides, since she likes Sting and the movie *Pretty in Pink*, none of this is undeserved.

Bateman's cold relationship with Jeannette comes to a rocky close in this chapter. As is normal, they are together and disconnected, with Bateman, as usual, obsessing over Donald Trump. As the chapter unfolds, however, it is revealed subtly that Bateman has forced Jeannette into getting an abortion. He feels no remorse for her, violently making her come to dinner and using her taste in movies and music to determine that she has bad taste and is worthy of his mistreatment. In this terribly misogynistic and cruel moment, we see another side to Bateman's lack of care for others and violence against women. Even in comparison to his terrible acts of violence, this act of heartlessness is still shocking and upsetting.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Bateman is standing in his apartment, on the phone with his lawyer while splitting his focus between the maid cleaning the blood off his walls and an episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**," where Patty is asking a young child about orgies. Bateman tells the reader that this has been a bad week; he's started drinking his own urine, sleeping on the floor, and flossing his teeth until his mouth bleeds. For Valentine's Day, he sent the heart of a girl he killed to her mother, Evelyn a box of flies with a note telling her she's fat and he never wants to see her again, and for Jean, a number of expensive, beautiful gifts delivered to her home.

The topic of this episode of "The Patty Winters Show" is one of the strangest yet, so it's probably unlikely that Bateman's actually watching a maid he hired clean the blood off his walls, too. That being said, the disgusting and grotesque new habits he describes aren't too unrealistic based on the other things he's told us he's done. Even his Valentine presents seem pretty typical—except for, of course, his presents to Jean; could he still be trying to connect with her? Or is he apologizing for his inability to connect and be with her in the way she wants?

At the office, Bateman listens to Madonna, arranges an interview with a nagging reporter, and reads an article about dead bodies being discovered on a yacht and a serial killer going around poisoning bottles of Evian water. Price drops by to see him. It's been a while, but Price assures him that he's now "back." Bateman catches him up on things: he dumped Evelyn, and Courtney married Luis (though Price mistakes which "Luis"). Price is now working for a different firm, and wishes his friend well as he heads out. Bateman wonders for a moment what it's like to be inside the world of Tim Price.

Bateman's new musical obsession is clearly Madonna, who was an icon of the 1980s. The report that he reads about poisoned Evian water sounds strikingly like something he would do—maybe he did and didn't tell us, or maybe he's been making up stories based on crimes he reads about in magazines this entire time. Price's return (we never knew he went anywhere) seems like it might be from a rehabilitation facility, which would make sense given his drug use. Bateman wonders what it would be like to be him: someone with similar vices, but who is able to keep control of them, and, perhaps, seek help for them.

BUM ON FIFTH

Bateman is walking near Central Park. He takes a moment to remember the spot where he murdered a young boy and where he fed one woman's remains to some dogs. He takes in the sky and the wind around him, and looks up longingly at **Trump** Tower. He then sees Al, the bum he attacked and blinded previously, sitting with his dog and a sign claiming he was in the Vietnam War. Though Al cannot see him, the dog seems to recognize Bateman and tenses up. Bateman leans in and tells Al "You never were in Vietnam." Now Al knows who Bateman is, and he pisses his pants and begs for mercy. Bateman moves on without doing anything, and tells the reader about the day's episode of "**The Patty Winters Show**" (a Cheerio was interviewed for an hour), the horrific knife attack of a woman wearing fur by an animal rights activist, and the bone he found in the Dove bar he ate earlier.

Bateman is taking a stroll down memory lane, in a way, remembering fondly his past crimes and the places he committed them. His description of the sky and skyline is quite beautiful actually, and his longing for Trump Tower reveals a sense of melancholy towards something he's always revered. When he comes across Al, he is again cruel, mocking his sign and intimidating Al so much that he pisses his pants. Bateman, however, decides not to be violent in this moment, maybe because of the way he was feeling earlier. However, all of this is once again thrown aside when he mentions a very strange episode of "The Patty Winters Show" and other unimaginable, hallucinatory experiences he had earlier in the day.

NEW CLUB

It's been a "very unstable" week for Bateman, and he finds himself at a party at a new club. Across the room he spots his lawyer, Harold Carnes. Bateman realizes he'll have to confront him about the crazed confessional voicemail he left during the night of the car chase, and he grabs a martini to help with his confidence. Bateman awkwardly intrudes upon Carnes' conversation and then asks him if he received his messages. Carnes, who mistakes Bateman for a man named Davis, laughs and says yes: he got the messages and thought they were hilarious and preposterous. Bateman is entirely taken aback, anger towards Carnes beginning to rise in him, until Carnes tells him he had "one fatal flaw: Bateman's such a bloody ass-kisser…that I couldn't fully appreciate it."

Bateman tells the reader straight out that he has been unstable; this is a clear warning. Later, when he sees Carnes, he needs to drink quickly and heavily in order to be able to even approach him. As is often the case, Carnes mistakes Bateman for someone else, but this time, it is revealed that Carnes thought the voicemails (which apparently did actually happen) were a prank, insisting that there's no way Bateman could ever do the things he admitted to doing. In this brief exchange, everything Bateman has built up over the course of the novel – his actions, his attitude, his place in elite Wall Street society – comes crashing down.

Bateman is shocked by this and questions Carnes. Carnes goes on to say that Bateman was understandably dumped by Evelyn and could barely even pick up a call girl, let alone mutilate one. Carnes tries to walk away, but Bateman explodes, admitting that he chopped Paul Owen's head off. Carnes tells him that this is entirely impossible, as he had lunch with Paul Owen twice in London just ten days ago. There is a very heavy pause, before Carnes, now referring to Bateman as Donaldson, excuses himself and walks away. Bateman goes back to his table and pops a Halcion to calm himself. He then declines to take a number from a woman and brings Jean, his date, back to his apartment.

Before Bateman can even respond, Carnes really goes in to tear down the character of Bateman; it's clear that the man Bateman had made himself out to be for the reader isn't at all how others (at least Carnes) view him. Has he been lying to the reader, trying to make himself cooler and more respected than he really is? Carnes telling Bateman that he was with Paul Own in London seemingly brings that entire storyline to a halt. If Paul Owen is in London, Bateman couldn't have killed him—or maybe Bateman killed him and Carnes has been mistaking someone else for Owen? Following this, could Bateman still have murdered those women in Owen's apartment? If Owens is really in London, did Bateman get the idea to book him fake tickets there, or was this something he hallucinated based on hearing elsewhere about Owens' travel plans? All this being said, this scene could, like all other recent scenes in the novel, also be a hallucination. In Bateman's horrific and drug-addled web of a story, the truth is entirely impossible to pinpoint.

TAXI DRIVER

Bateman is sitting in a taxi. This morning, he reluctantly had a decadent breakfast with two colleagues, but had a lot on his mind, like helping America's schools and getting tickets to see Sting in *The Threepenny Opera* on Broadway. Driving through Manhattan, the taxi pulls up next to another taxi, and Bateman sees sitting inside another colleague of his whose identity he is unsure of. Quickly, the cars both take off.

Bateman is starting not to enjoy even his favorite things, like fine dining, though his daydreaming during conversations with others is nothing new. The glimpse he has of a colleague, though he is unsure of his identity, is a brief moment of comparison, with the glass of the window separating the Bateman of the current moment from the group of colleagues he once felt such a part of.

Bateman notices his taxi driver (whose name, he reads, is Abdullah) staring at him. Bateman notes the man's clogged pores and ingrown hair, but doesn't think anything of his stare—that is, until Abdullah asks him outright, "Don't I know you?" Bateman insists he doesn't, but the driver asks his name. Bateman gives Abdullah a fake one and tells him he must recognize him because he's an actor and model, but he doesn't take the bait. "I've seen your face somewhere," he tells him. After a while, Abdullah tells Bateman he knows who he is.

As is by now expected, there is a moment here of identity confusion. However, it's not that Bateman is being confused for someone else, but being recognized. In a rare moment, he is being seen and identified—and at least some of his crimes are seemingly confirmed as occurring in the real world. Though Bateman can usually use his privilege to dominate someone like a taxi driver, his efforts here are unsuccessful.

Abdullah starts driving quickly and dangerously, running through red lights and taking strange routes. Bateman wants to get out, and considers asking him to stop immediately and let him out, but he's frozen. Abdullah finally tells Bateman, "You're the guy who kill Solly." Abdullah tells Bateman his face is on a wanted poster downtown. Bateman chokes up, attempting to speak, and say that he's going to take down Abdullah's license number. Abdullah starts to get incredibly angry and turns the taxi off the highway and toward a deserted parking area. Bateman still finds himself unable to move or respond.

Bateman finds himself completely at the mercy of Abdullah. Whereas he normally would be in control of a situation like this, especially one with someone who he views as so much less valuable than him, he is now helpless. For the first time in the novel, Bateman is recognized for and seems about to face justice for one of his crimes. This moment, a jarring change from the rest of the novel, also gives new information regarding the truth: if there are posters downtown with Bateman's face from the night of the big chase, maybe it really did happen? Maybe Bateman only partially exaggerated things?

Bateman is finally able to speak, telling Abdullah that he's incorrectly identified him, but Abdullah turns around with a gun and demands Bateman's Rolex watch, then his wallet and cash. All this time, Bateman is cowering and Abdullah is shouting, swearing, and debasing him. Bateman threatens to call and have Abdullah's license revoked, but Abdullah knows he won't do this because he's guilty. Bateman tries to pull a knife on Abdullah, but it is useless and he's forced to turn over even his sunglasses. Bateman calls Abdullah a dead man, and Abdullah calls him a "yuppie scumbag," asking, "Which is worse?" As Bateman walks back to the highway, he chokes up, saying to himself, "I just want to keep the game going," and sees a homeless beggar walking out from behind a poster for *The Threepenny Opera*.

Here the tables are drastically turned. Bateman is quite literally stripped of his shallow material possessions by a man who he considers to have much less status and value than himself. It appears as if the structure of Bateman's life and world are coming crashing down completely in this one moment. Finally, someone has not only rightfully accused Bateman of his crimes, but stood up to him, not bending to his intimidation or attempts to buy favor. His final exchange with Abdullah, though heavy-handed, raises the question: is a life like Bateman's even worth living? The final image, of the homeless woman coming from behind the poster, also demonstrates the change in Bateman's world: earlier, that poster would have undoubtedly been for "Les Misérables."

AT HARRY'S

Bateman is out having drinks with a group of his Wall Street colleagues, including Price and McDermott. He tells the reader about the "hardbodies" they're dating, describes in detail what each of them is wearing, and then the others begin asking him questions about the particularities of fashion. Bateman tells the reader that he fantasizes about draining a woman's blood through her vagina, making a necklace out of her bones, and masturbating. Bateman daydreams, recalling an ATM speaking to him and a park bench that followed him for several blocks, before being asked if he's made a reservation for dinner. On the bar TV, "**The Patty Winters Show**" is playing; the topic is "Does Economic Success Equal Happiness?" All then man in the bar cheer: definitely.

Despite everything that just occurred, it seems all is back to normal in Bateman's life; he's out to drinks with his friends, and they're discussing women and fashion. This scene could have come from the beginning of the book, before Bateman's spiraling decent into drugs, sex, and murder ever happened. Even his horrendous fantasy about killing a woman and playing with her bones feels at least somewhat harmless in comparison to his (seemingly) real-world actions of committing actual torture and murder. Then, however, Bateman recalls two of the must hallucinatory images in the novel, and the reader is thrown back into questioning truth, and is reminded that, though Bateman may have momentarily appeared stable, he is still very disturbed. The comically perfect topic on "The Patty Winters Show" and the crowd's cheerful response is an ironic feather in the cap of the novel's brutal depictions of Wall Street materialism, and a suggestion that perhaps all of these men, like Bateman, are psychos.

The men continue arguing about restaurants and making fun of others' appearances. Another colleague stops by the table and asks who's handling the Fisher account now. No one seems to care; now it's the Shepard account they're all interested in. As they're getting ready to leave, Bateman spots someone who looks like Marcus Halberstam across the way. Bateman then jumps back into the conversation, telling his group that he is who he is and he does what he has to do. Just as he's leaving, Bateman spots a sign hanging on the wall. It reads: "**This is not an exit**."

With the movement from the Fisher account to the Shepard account, Ellis suggests to the reader that Bateman's life is going to continue on as it has; that with the end of one phase will begin another, identical one. Perhaps he hasn't learned anything or changed in any way throughout the course of the novel. He even makes a speech about the permanence of his character. The final line of the novel perfectly bookends the first, with another allusion to hell (via the play "No Exit"). Bateman is as trapped as ever.

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