

American Psycho Study Guide

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis

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Plot Summary

American Psycho is a novel that makes a statement about modern society. Patrick Bateman is a rich kid who works on Wall Street. Bateman spends his mornings at the gym and his nights clubbing with his friends. Everyone believes Bateman is a nice guy, the shy boy next door. What his friends do not know is that Bateman is a psychopathic killer who has confessed to his crimes repeatedly. No one wants to believe that the boy next door could hurt someone, so everyone chooses to ignore Bateman's confessions. American Psycho is a satire that is both entertaining and frightening, opening reader's eyes to the consequences of apathy in society.

Patrick Bateman and his friend, Tim Price, are on their way to dinner at Evelyn's, Bateman's girlfriend, house. Price is talking non-stop, a result of too many steroids. Bateman listens quietly, putting little energy of his own into the conversation. As they approach Evelyn's house, Price teases a homeless man with some money, but in the end refuses to give it to him. Bateman finds this cruel. During dinner at Evelyn's, Price and Bateman get into a political discussion while Evelyn's artist friends watch the conversation with disinterest. After dinner, Bateman watches Evelyn and Tim flirt, wondering if the two are having an affair.

A few days later, Bateman goes to dinner with a group of friends, including Price. Price is agitated all night. When they get to a nightclub, Price buys drugs that turn out to be artificial sweetener. Price then becomes fascinated with the train tracks that run through the club. After a time, Price makes a scene and then walks down the tracks. Bateman lets him go, walking out of the club without Price. No one sees Price after that night.

Some time later, Bateman has a date with a young woman who would rather go to a concert where her ex-boyfriend is playing. Bateman hates music, so he lies to the girl about getting a table at an exclusive restaurant. Unfortunately Bateman cannot get reservations to the restaurant, causing the girl to be so disappointed she refuses to speak to him for the rest of the night. A few days later, Bateman goes into his dry cleaners to complain that they did not get blood out of his jacket as requested. As Bateman argues with them, a girl from his building comes into the dry cleaners and sees dried blood on the sheets Bateman has also brought in to be cleaned. The girl believes Bateman when he says the blood is chocolate and then pushes him into having dinner with her. Bateman brushes the girl off, promising to call.

Bateman has begun to date Courtney, a friend of Evelyn's, while attempting to keep Evelyn happy. Evelyn is boring to Bateman, always talking about things he does not care about and fantasizing about a wedding between the two of them. Bateman would rather be with Courtney. Bateman is annoyed, however, that because of her boyfriend, Courtney is not always available to him. Bateman decides to kill Courtney's boyfriend, Luis Carruthers. However, while Bateman is attempting to choke Luis, Luis tells Bateman that he is in love with him and wanted to be with him for a long time. Bateman is so shocked by this admission that he stops trying to choke Luis. Later, Luis makes a scene in a department store, attempting to make Bateman admit his feelings for him.

Instead, Bateman kicks him in the face and leaves him humiliated. Eventually, Luis marries Courtney, whom Bateman has lost interest in because of her affair with another man.

Bateman becomes fixated on Paul Owen because Owen has a coveted account at work. Owen believes Bateman is a fellow worker named Marcus Halberstam. Bateman encourages this mistake by calling Evelyn by Marcus's girlfriend's name. Bateman continuously tries to get information from Owen about the coveted account, but Owen often changes the subject. Finally Bateman decides that if Owen is gone, the account will be reassigned. Bateman kills Owen and then makes it appear as though Owen has gone to London.

While out on the town one night with two friends and a couple of girls, Bateman runs into a girl he dated in college. When the girl, Bethany, asks Bateman to lunch, he is very nervous until he learns that Bethany is dating a man they both knew in college and whom Bateman believes is gay. Bateman asks Bethany up to his apartment and while she is there, Bateman tortures and kills her. At the same time, Bateman has gotten into the habit of soliciting prostitutes and killing them as well.

A few months after Owen's death, Bateman is visited at his office by a private detective. Bateman is extremely nervous, but the private detective is so convinced that Owen is really in London that he does not become suspicious at Bateman's behavior. Even though he is aware that the private detective is watching Owen's apartment, Bateman uses it to torture and kill two prostitutes. Later, Bateman returns to the apartment only to find it is up for sale.

Bateman begins dating his secretary shortly after breaking up with Evelyn. Bateman finds that being with his secretary makes him feel calm, makes the need to kill less intense. However, Bateman does not believe he can survive a mundane life of being a husband and father. Bateman continues to date his secretary but does not commit to her. At the same time, Bateman kills a young boy at the zoo and a musician on the street. When Bateman kills the musician, he is seen by a couple of cops. Bateman leads them on a chase through the streets where he kills a taxi driver. Bateman eventually makes it to his office and calls his lawyer, making a full confession to all his crimes.

Bateman is not caught by the police and his lawyer believes his confession is a joke. Bateman returns to life as normal, dating his secretary and going out with his friends. One morning on his way to work, Bateman is mugged by a taxi driver who believes he is the man who killed one of his friends. Bateman is not harmed during the mugging and again is able to return to life as normal.

April Fool's, Morning, Harry's

April Fool's, Morning, Harry's Summary

American Psycho is a novel that makes a statement about modern society. Patrick Bateman is a rich kid who works on Wall Street. Bateman spends his mornings at the gym and his nights clubbing with his friends. Everyone believes Bateman is a nice guy, the shy boy next door. What his friends do not know is that Bateman is a psychopathic killer who has confessed to his crimes repeatedly. No one wants to believe that the boy next door could hurt someone, so everyone chooses to ignore Bateman's confessions. American Psycho is a satire that is both entertaining and frightening, opening reader's eyes to the consequences of apathy in society.

Patrick Bateman rides in a taxi with Tim Price to his girlfriend, Evelyn's, home. Price is talking non-stop about everything from money to AIDS. When they arrive on Evelyn's block, Price teases a homeless man with some cash, but refuses to give it to him. Price finds the game amusing, but Bateman is mildly embarrassed. When Price and Bateman arrive at Evelyn's, they discover that instead of going out to eat, Evelyn and Courtney, another friend, have decided to eat in. Evelyn is arranging sushi on a platter, attempting to put them in the shape of Price's initials. Price wanders through the apartment and finds a couple in the living room. Price demands to know who they are. Evelyn explains they are an artist and his girlfriend. Price is not thrilled with Evelyn's choice in friends.

Over dinner, Bateman feels that he embarrassed himself by expressing his opinion on America's foreign policies. The artist and his girlfriend, however, remain the focus of the dinner. The artist believes his sushi is moving on his plate and the girlfriend remains hostile in her silence when she is not making unintelligent comments about politics. Finally, much to everyone's relief, the meal ends. Courtney, the artist, and his girlfriend all leave. Price, Bateman, and Evelyn retire to her bedroom. Bateman lounges on the bed and watches Evelyn brush her hair. Price begins flirting with Evelyn and Bateman realizes that they might be having an affair. Bateman is disappointed because he likes Price. Later, after Price has left, Bateman tries to have sex with Evelyn, but she refuses, so Bateman goes home.

The next morning, Bateman wakes in his apartment and begins his normal morning routine. Bateman brushes his teeth four times with four different products and four different toothbrushes. Bateman washes his face with several different products and then takes a shower, again washing his face with another product. After dressing, Bateman listens to a CD while preparing his breakfast. Bateman then watches the Patty Winters Show while finishing his morning routine. That night, after a day at the office, Bateman goes with Price to dinner at a place called Harry's. Bateman and his friends discuss questions they can send in to the magazine GQ. Through this discussion, they also discuss where they should have dinner. Bateman is concerned about choosing a restaurant because he wants to be able to get reservations so that they can get a good table.

April Fool's, Morning, Harry's Analysis

Several characters are introduced into the story at this point. The first and most prominent is Tim Price. Price is a privileged young man who seems to believe that he is above the common people. In fact, Price believes that he cannot get AIDS because he is rich and people like him do not get illnesses such as that. Price spreads this belief to his friends. Price is also unkind to a homeless man, teasing him with cash that he pretends to want to give him and then takes away. This action shows Price's opinion of homeless people—Price is no humanitarian. Price is self-centered and hyped up on steroids. Price also appears to be having an affair with Bateman's girlfriend, once again showing his lack of morals.

Another character introduced here is Evelyn. Evelyn is also a rich person who behaves as one might suspect a rich person would act. However, contrasting Price, Evelyn seems to be more of a humanitarian, making friends with an artist and his girlfriend who are clearly not part of the group of rich twenty-somethings who are Price's friends. Another character briefly introduced here is Courtney. Courtney is a friend of Evelyn's and she dates a man who works with Bateman. This is all the reader really learns about Courtney at this point, except that Bateman appears to be attracted to her.

Finally, Patrick Bateman is introduced. Bateman is the narrator of the novel, with the entire book seen through his first person point of view. Bateman is one of Price's privileged friends, rich and working on Wall Street. Bateman is referred to by Evelyn as the boy next door, describing him as a kind, shy type of guy. The reader sees little of Bateman's feelings and desires in the first part of this section. However, the second section goes into excruciating detail about his daily habits. Bateman is clearly concerned with his looks and he spends a great deal of time attempting to maintain his good looks. Bateman's obsession with his own looks not only opens the theme of shallowness, but also shows the depth, or lack thereof, of Bateman's personality.

Pastels, Tunnel, Office, Health Club, Date

Pastels, Tunnel, Office, Health Club, Date Summary

Bateman is worried as they arrive at Pastels, the restaurant where they plan to eat, because he does not think they made the reservation early enough to get a good table. However, their table turns out to be in a good location. Price hates the restaurant and is in a bad mood. They all place their orders, but then McDermott tries to talk everyone into sharing a pizza with him. Bateman outright refuses and tells McDermott the pizzas are too brittle. Discussion around the table is heated, mostly about sex and the pretty girls they see in the restaurant. The food comes and not everyone is happy. However, the food gets eaten and they share the bill, which comes up to more than four hundred dollars. After the restaurant, they decide to go to a nightclub called Tunnel. Bateman stays with Price while the others go into the basement. Price seeks out a guy he knows he can get drugs from. Price seems agitated and unhappy, fixated on the train tracks that run through the club. When the drugs finally arrive, Price and Bateman go into the bathroom to take them, but quickly realize they have been sold an artificial sweetener instead of cocaine. Price is despondent. Back in the club, Price causes a scene while Bateman is buying drinks and disappears down the train tracks.

Bateman arrives at his office late and is greeted by his secretary, Jean. Bateman is aware that Jean is in love with him and thinks he might marry her one day. Jean tells Bateman about his messages, to which Bateman responds by discussing the talk show, The Patty Winters Show. Bateman settles down at his desk to read last week's Sport's Illustrated. Bateman calls Jean and asks her to keep an eye out for a tanning bed for sale. Then Bateman begins watching Jeopardy! on his watch. Later, Bateman works out at his health club, Xclusive, starting with the Stairmaster and then working out with the weight machines and the free weights. Afterward, Bateman returns home where he runs into Tom Cruise on the elevator. Bateman forgets the proper name of one of Cruise's movies when attempting to make small talk with him.

Bateman is to go out with a woman named Patricia that night. On his answering machine there are several messages from Patricia. Bateman speaks to her and learns she would like to go to a concert that night. Bateman hates live music, so he suggests she go alone while he goes to Dorsia, an exclusive restaurant where it is near impossible to get a table. Patricia decides she would rather go to Dorsia. Unfortunately, Bateman cannot get a table at Dorsia and ends up taking Patricia to Barcadia. Patricia is so upset about the change in plans that she refuses to speak to Bateman all through dinner. Bateman then takes Patricia to Tunnel, but the place is nearly empty. Bateman buys some cocaine at the club and shares it with Patricia who, when high, finally apologizes for her behavior.

Pastels, Tunnel, Office, Health Club, Date Analysis

Bateman has dinner with his friends where the talk consists of what most young men talk about, sex and girls. Afterward, they go to a club where Price and Bateman do some cocaine. Price is agitated, but Bateman does not seem to notice or really care. Bateman is not the type to ask a friend about his feelings. After they do the drug, Price disappears down the train tracks. Bateman does not try to go after him or do anything else to help Price. Bateman again shows his lack of concern by simply leaving the club without attempting to do anything to help Price.

Bateman goes to work, but he does not appear to be working very hard. First Bateman reads a magazine and then he watches television on his fancy, and expensive, watch. Bateman teases his secretary, a girl he knows is in love with him but clearly believes is below him. This introduces Jean, who will reappear many times within the plot, as a young, naive girl who is in love with a man who is not only out of her social league, but might be incapable of returning her affections. Jean might be the most compassionate person yet introduced into this novel, making her a sympathetic character and a character the reader may be able to identify with. Unlike Jean, Bateman later goes on a date with a young woman named Patricia who is so stuck on appearances that she is angry with Bateman for not getting them in to an exclusive restaurant and instead taking her out for a three hundred dollar dinner elsewhere. Bateman seems to be surrounded by people who are more concerned with appearance than with morality, perhaps explaining why he himself is not terribly concerned with little things like compassion.



Dry Cleaners, Harry's, Deck Chairs, Business Meeting, Video Store then D'Agostino, Facial

Dry Cleaners, Harry's, Deck Chairs, Business Meeting, Video Store then D'Agostino, Facial Summary

Bateman goes to his dry cleaners with a sack of dirty laundry and a jacket that the dry cleaners were unable to remove a stain from. Bateman insists that they should have been able to remove the stain and should try again. Bateman argues with the woman while her husband removes blood stained sheets from Bateman's dirty laundry bag. The man is clearly shocked, but not surprised by the blood since it is not the first time they have cleaned something blood soaked for Bateman. As Bateman argues with the couple, a girl from his apartment building walks in. Bateman tells her that the cleaners did not remove a stain and asks her to talk to them because he needs to leave. The girl agrees, but wants to make a date with Bateman. Bateman brushes her off with a promise to call.

Bateman meets a group of friends at Harry's where they discuss the proper way of wearing certain clothing items and the homeless people who populate the city. Several of Bateman's friends think it is funny to tease the homeless with cash, but refuse to hand the money over. Paul Owen, a co-worker of Bateman's, comes over to the table to say hello and mistakes Bateman for another co-worker, Marcus Halberstam. Bateman plays along because Owen is working on an account Bateman would like to have. Later, Bateman has dinner with Courtney and a couple of friends of hers at a place called Deck Chairs. Bateman listens to the ladies talk about settling down to have a few children while Bateman compares his stereo equipment with the equipment Courtney's friend says he has. Bateman pushes the subject until he is able to convince the man that his equipment is superior. Later, Bateman goes to Courtney's apartment where they have sex, arguing the whole time over the protection Bateman uses.

Bateman is at work nursing a hangover when his secretary reminds him he has a meeting. Bateman is rude to Jean who brushes it off because of her affection for him. Bateman is one of the first in the conference room when Luis Carruthers, Courtney's boyfriend enters. Luis discusses his recent trip to Arizona. Bateman takes every chance he gets to belittle Luis. When McDermott comes into the room, it is clear he is still angry with Bateman for his comments about the pizza at Pastels. Bateman apologizes, but McDermott insists on telling Bateman how his idol, Donald Trump, loves the pizza at Pastels. Later, Bateman goes to the video store where he wants to rent porn but is afraid to because of a co-worker he spots in the store. Afterward Bateman goes to D'Agostino's where he teases a bum with some cash as he is leaving. On another day,

Bateman goes to have a facial where he humiliates the manicurist for cutting his nails too short.

Dry Cleaners, Harry's, Deck Chairs, Business Meeting, Video Store then D'Agostino, Facial Analysis

Bateman shows the reader two things when he goes to his drycleaners. First, Bateman proves that he is not a kind man as he humiliates his dry cleaner for being unable to remove blood stains from one of his jackets. Second, Bateman introduces the theme of oblivion as he presents blood stained sheets to the dry cleaners who have cleaned this sort of thing for him before, but have clearly done nothing about it. The dry cleaners are washing away evidence of a crime but do not seem to care enough to call the police or to even warn Bateman that this might be an option. Not only this, but a girl from his building comes into the dry cleaners and she is so infatuated with Bateman that she would rather believe the stains are chocolate than to think Bateman capable of such a crime. This behavior simply proves that people do not want to get involved no matter how clear the evidence appears to be.

Paul Owen is introduced in these sections. Owen works with Bateman, but confuses him with another man from their office named Marcus Halberstam. Bateman plays along because Owen is working an account Bateman would like to have. The reader, however, is unsure why Bateman could want this account since he clearly does little at his office except sit around reading and watching television. That does not seem to matter. Bateman wants the account and seems willing to do anything immoral to get it. At the same time, Bateman is having an affair with the girlfriend of another co-worker, Luis Carruthers. Luis clearly likes Bateman, but Bateman tries to humiliate Luis. Bateman dislikes Luis not only because of his relationship with Courtney, but also because of Luis's clear devotion to Bateman. Something about Luis clearly makes Bateman uncomfortable and this will most likely come back into the plot as the story develops.

Bateman has dinner with Courtney and a friend of hers where Bateman feels the need to prove that his stereo system is better than that of Courtney's friend, nearly driving Bateman into a frenzy to prove this. To the reader, Bateman's need to prove himself to be better is almost pathological, as though he cannot mentally handle the idea of someone having something or simply being better than him. Bateman does have the sense of character, however, to apologize to his friend McDermott over his insults toward the pizza at Pastels that offended McDermott so deeply, showing McDermott's own need to be better.

Date with Evelyn, Tuesday, Genesis, Lunch, Concert, A Glimpse of a Thursday Afternoon, Yale Club

Date with Evelyn, Tuesday, Genesis, Lunch, Concert, A Glimpse of a Thursday Afternoon, Yale Club Summary

Evelyn calls Patrick upset because her neighbor was killed the night before. Bateman tells her he was unable to allow her to come over because her neighbor's head was in his freezer. Evelyn laughs and then insists he take her out to dinner. The dinner is boring for Bateman because Evelyn will not stop talking. Evelyn asks about Tim Price, who has not been seen since the night at Tunnel, but Bateman does not know anything except that there is a rumor that he is in rehab. Evelyn then starts talking about weddings and how nice their wedding would be even though Bateman has never mentioned marriage to her. Bateman is outraged that Evelyn would even suggest such a thing.

Bateman goes to a black tie dinner where he runs into Courtney with Luis. Bateman leaves and finds himself walking the streets alone. Bateman sees a bum sitting in a doorway with his small dog. Bateman lectures the man about finding a job before he kills him and his dog. Afterward Bateman is hungry, so he goes to a McDonald's where he fills up on milkshakes and feels just like the common man. In the next section, Bateman discusses Genesis, the band, in great detail, exhaustively dissecting each of their albums and pointing out the songs and the singer he thinks makes them great. Bateman seems to really enjoy Phil Collins, mentioning as well his solo career.

Bateman has lunch with a co-worker who just returned from the Bahamas and listens to him discuss the commercial advantages of vacationing there. As the co-worker talks, Bateman thinks about The Patty Winters Show and the gay pride parade he ran into on his way to work. In the middle of the conversation, Bateman tells the co-worker how bored he is with his life and how he wants to kill the people around him, but the co-worker does not hear any of it. Later, Bateman finds himself roped into going to a concert that Luis Carruthers has arranged even though he dislikes live music. The band is U2, a relatively new band that Bateman has never heard of. At the concert, Bateman wants to sit close to Courtney, but Luis keeps moving next to him so they can talk. Finally Bateman gets up and moves over. When Bateman moves, he feels as though the lead singer, Bono, is staring at him and the two of them make some sort of soul connection. Afterward, Bateman finds out that two of the roadies attempted to get Courtney and Evelyn to go back stage to meet the band.

On a Thursday afternoon, Bateman is lost and confused, unable to remember where he had lunch or what he is doing downtown. Bateman wanders through a department store, stumbling and having stomach cramps, and ends up in a Kosher restaurant



ordering a milk shake which is not on the menu. Some time later, Bateman is at the Yale Club with a few friends, discussing serial killers. Bateman sees Luis Carruthers there. It crosses Bateman's mind that Courtney might be more available to him with Luis gone, so when Luis goes into the bathroom, Bateman follows. Bateman traps Luis in a stall and begins choking him, telling Luis about his affair with Courtney. Suddenly Luis kisses Bateman's wrist. Luis has mistaken Bateman's actions for affection rather than homicide. Bateman is shocked by Luis's confession of love for him and is unable to complete the act. Bateman storms out of the restroom and returns to his friends who are now discussing the proper way to wear a tie bar.

Date with Evelyn, Tuesday, Genesis, Lunch, Concert, A Glimpse of a Thursday Afternoon, Yale Club Analysis

Bateman has a date with Evelyn and the reader can clearly see his boredom with her. When they speak on the phone, Bateman tells Evelyn that he has her neighbor's head in the freezer and Evelyn believes it is a joke. However, the reader wonders if this is really a joke. Evelyn is talkative and concerned about weddings and appearances. Although Bateman is often concerned with appearances as well, he is bored with Evelyn's excessive talking and lack of sex in their relationship. When Evelyn suggests that they get married, Bateman is shocked and frightened at the thought. This shows Bateman's feelings for Evelyn, causing the reader to wonder why Bateman continues to be in a relationship with Evelyn and why he does not end their relationship so he can be with Courtney. However, the reader might also believe that Evelyn is what makes Bateman's relationship with Courtney exciting. Also important to note here is Evelyn's asking about Tim Price. Price was a major part of the first few sections of the book, but has completely disappeared since taking a walk down the train tracks. The reader is curious as well, wondering if maybe Bateman might have done something to Price. This feeling is deepened when the reader is witness to Bateman killing a homeless man and the man's dog, an act of complete cowardice and immorality that shocks the reader.

The theme of music is explored when Bateman discusses in deep detail the band Genesis. Bateman discusses each of Genesis's albums as well as several of Phil Collins' solo albums, telling the reader what he believes makes this music a success. The timing of this section, directly after a section in which Bateman relates having killed a homeless man, makes the reader wonder if perhaps music is somehow Bateman's way of getting back in touch with reality after suffering the break with morality that enables him to commit such a heinous act. Bateman's love of music is not a surprise, as he has mentioned on many occasions wearing a Walkman everywhere he goes, so it is not a surprise he would turn to it in a moment of crisis. Bateman clearly suffers a great deal from these incidents, as another section shows, when he has a break from reality. One Thursday, Bateman has such a deep break from reality that he cannot remember where he was or why.

Luis Carruthers takes Bateman and a group of people to a U2 concert despite the fact that Bateman does not like live music. Not only does this again touch on the theme of music, but it begins to show the reader the relationship between Bateman and Luis in a

more in-depth way. Bateman does not like Luis, but Luis clearly likes Bateman as he tries to talk to him even as Bateman is running away, attempting to get close to Courtney. It is like a classic lover's triangle, everyone in love with someone else. During the concert, Bateman feels as though he has made a soul connection with the lead singer, Bono. This implies that Bateman feels that Bono is like him, dark and homicidal. This also begins to show Bateman's tenuous mental state, where Bateman sees things that might not really be there. Later, when Bateman sees Luis in the Yale Club, he thinks about killing him in the hopes of making Courtney more available to him. However, when he attempts to kill Luis, Bateman learns that Luis has a romantic interest in him. It has never crossed Bateman's mind that Luis might be gay. Bateman is so shocked that he is unable to kill Luis, leaving open the possibility that Luis might become a staple in Bateman's life, or perhaps a thorn in his side, as the plot continues to develop.

Killing Dog, Girls, Shopping, Christmas Party

Killing Dog, Girls, Shopping, Christmas Party Summary

Bateman decides to have a quiet evening in. Bateman needs to go to D'Agastino's to get a few groceries. On the way, Bateman runs into a man walking his dog. Bateman stops and pretends to admire the dog, causing the man to believe Bateman is flirting with him. Bateman picks up the dog and then disembowels it with a knife. The man is so shocked that he does not have enough time to cry out before Bateman cuts his throat. When they are both dead, Bateman calmly walks away, going into D'Agastino's to buy a box of cereal he does not need.

Some time later, Bateman drops Courtney off at a club and promises to return after buying some drugs. Instead, Bateman cruises the meat-packing district in a limo until he finds what he is looking for. The prostitute is young and blond, the cleanest looking girl on the street. Bateman talks her into getting into the limo and returning to his apartment with him. Bateman has the girl take a bath while he calls an escort service and orders another blond. When the other girl arrives, Bateman attempts to talk to the two girls for a few minutes, but they quickly become confused by his attempts to describe what he does for a living. Instead, Bateman decides it is time to retire to the bedroom. Bateman engages in sexual intercourse with both girls. When he is done, Bateman ties the girls up and tortures them, releasing them the following morning.

It is Christmas time and Bateman goes shopping to get gifts for all his friends and co-workers. Bateman could ask Jean to do it, but enjoys doing it himself. Later, Bateman goes to Evelyn's Christmas Party. Evelyn has hired midgets to be the wait staff at the party, something Bateman finds both fascinating and disturbing. Bateman runs into several co-workers, including Paul Owen. Afraid Owen will finally figure out he is not Marcus Halberstam, Bateman rushes Evelyn out of the room and asks her to leave with him. Bateman takes Evelyn outside where he bribes Owen's limo driver into taking them to a club. At the club, Bateman buys some cocaine and takes Evelyn into the bathroom to take it, but finds there is a line for the single stall. Bateman gets into a fight with another couple who believe they have more right to the stall than Bateman and Evelyn. Evelyn is offended by the whole situation and storms out of the club, leaving Bateman alone with the drugs. Later, Bateman hooks up with another girl alone at the club.

Killing Dog, Girls, Shopping, Christmas Party Analysis

Again Bateman's homicidal tendencies come through when he stops to talk to a stranger on the street and ends up killing both the man and his dog. Bateman's audacity at committing such an act on the open street where someone might see shows his

belief that he is above the law and that he will not get caught despite his lack of concern for who might be watching. The fact that no one notices and Bateman is able to go to the grocery store afterward without repercussions, suggests again that the people in the novel are living in a state of oblivion, a theme of the novel. It also suggests that Bateman might be an unreliable narrator, and perhaps the murders did not actually take place. The reader wonders how so many people could ignore such a blatant murder in the middle of the street and then ignore the blood that Bateman must have on his clothes. Bateman then employs a couple of prostitutes and spends the evening torturing them instead of spending the evening at a club with Courtney. This not only touches on Bateman's homicidal tendencies, but it also shows that Bateman is beginning to lose interest in Courtney. Perhaps the fact that Bateman cannot harm Courtney prevents him from enjoying their time together. At any rate, Bateman appears to be bored with his life and is attempting to have fun by doing outrageous things. The only question is how far can Bateman go before someone catches on and stops him.

It is almost Christmas and Bateman is preparing in a normal fashion like most people. However, when Bateman goes to a party where he runs into Owen, he is upset that he might be found out. Bateman is still allowing Owen to believe he is Marcus Halberstam. The reader is unclear why Bateman is continuing this charade, except perhaps because he feels that he has no choice since the moment of correcting Owen is long past. Perhaps, as well, Bateman likes the idea of being someone else, of being outside of himself and allowed to act in a fashion not expected of the persona he has built for himself. At any rate, Bateman leaves the party rather than allow Owen to figure out who he really is. Bateman takes Evelyn to a club where Evelyn gets mad at him and leaves. Bateman, who felt it was deeply important that Evelyn be with him that night, is not upset at her leaving, causing the reader to believe the only reason Bateman wanted Evelyn with him was to get her away from Owen.



Nell's, Paul Owen, Paul Smith, Birthday, Brothers, Lunch with Bethany

Nell's, Paul Owen, Paul Smith, Birthday, Brothers, Lunch with Bethany Summary

Bateman is at Nell's with McDermott, Alex Taylor, and three girls. The girls are very stupid and do not talk a great deal, leaving Bateman bored as McDermott leaves to get drugs and Taylor is asleep. Bateman attempts to get the girls to talk, but they will not. Finally the girls begin speaking to each other about furs, causing Bateman a great deal of fascination. To add to Bateman's frustration, McDermott comes back without any drugs. When the group leaves Nell's, Bateman runs into Bethany, a girl he once dated in college. From there, Bateman goes home with one of the girls. After having sex, Bateman tells the girl to leave because he feels the need to hurt someone and he does not want to hurt her.

Bateman has lunch with Paul Owen where Owen gets very drunk. Bateman takes him home and finally tells him he is not Marcus Halberstam, but Patrick Bateman. Then Bateman kills him with an ax. When Owen is dead, Bateman goes to his apartment and makes it look as though Owen has gone to London for a few weeks. Back at his own apartment, Bateman puts Owen into a sleeping bag and takes him out of the building in search of a taxi. Bateman runs into a couple of acquaintances. Bateman takes Owen to an apartment he rented in Hell's Kitchen and puts him in the bathtub, dumping lime on him to speed up his decomposition. Later Evelyn calls and yells at Bateman for forgetting a dinner date. A short time later, Bateman is in Paul Smith looking for a birthday present for his brother when he runs into Luis Carruthers. Luis wants to know why Bateman will not admit to his romantic feelings for him. Bateman pulls a knife on Luis, using it to get out of the store and into a cab without Luis.

Bateman is not close to his brother and would normally not have dinner with him, but does on his birthday because of a request by their father's accountant and trustee of his estate. Sean arranges for dinner at Dorsia, proving to Bateman that he has the clout to get in. The entire dinner Bateman feels that his brother spends the whole night trying to one-up him. Finally Bateman gets some satisfaction when he is able to pay the bill with his Platinum American Express card. Sometime later Bateman has lunch with his college sweetheart, Bethany. Bateman is incredibly nervous, making many comments that embarrass him. Bethany is tolerant, however, and the lunch goes well until Bethany tells Bateman who she is currently dating. It turns out to be a guy they both knew in college, a guy Bateman believes is gay, who also turns out to be the chef and co-owner of Dorsia. After lunch, Bateman talks Bethany into going to his apartment despite her clear reluctance. Once there, Bateman nails Bethany to a board and spends the rest of the day torturing her in an outrageous manner.

Nell's, Paul Owen, Paul Smith, Birthday, Brothers, Lunch with Bethany Analysis

Bateman is having dinner with a group of girls who are not talkative and who are too stupid to understand half of what he has to say. Bateman is so bored that he becomes fascinated with their discussion of fur coats. These girls are the epitome of the theme of shallowness, showing how their only concern is their social status and the clothing they wear. Bateman should adore these girls because they are exactly what he is, except female, and they do not talk as much as Evelyn. However, Bateman finds them boring leaving the reader curious exactly what kind of woman Bateman would enjoy.

Bateman has lunch with Paul Owen who becomes very drunk. It is easy for Bateman to get Owen up to his apartment where he murders him with an ax and then drags his body all over town without trying very hard to conceal it. Again the theme of oblivion is touched on here as Bateman stops to talk to a couple of friends while carrying a dead body. Again the evidence is right in front of someone and they again either choose not to see it or cannot see it. This moment only deepens Bateman's belief that he is untouchable. The only thing that seems to bother Bateman is his brother's ability to get reservations at Dorsia when Bateman has tried on several occasions and had no luck.

Later, Bateman has lunch with his college sweetheart and is so nervous that he makes numerous mistakes in their conversation that makes his nervousness obvious. It is not until Bateman finds something undesirable about Bethany, something unpleasant, that he can once again find his confidence and be the same cocky, shallow person the reader has come to know. When Bateman learns that Bethany is about to marry a gay man he feels superior once again and is able to be confident. Bateman then invites Bethany up to his apartment where he tortures her and makes her pay for ever making him feel inferior, for dumping him in college and not wanting him.



Thursday, Whitney Houston, Dinner with Secretary, Detective, Summer

Thursday, Whitney Houston, Dinner with Secretary, Detective, Summer Summary

Bateman is out with Courtney and McDermott. As they discuss the differences in bottled waters, Bateman notices a mild flirtation going on between Courtney and McDermott. Bateman is not upset, but feels pity for McDermott. In the next section, Bateman discusses Whitney Houston in detail, discussing each of her albums that have been produced up to the time of his writing, suggesting that she is a powerhouse who will be a great star one day. Some time later, on a Monday, Bateman finds himself without plans for dinner. Bateman decides to ask his secretary to have dinner with him. However, when Jean chooses to eat at Dorsia, Bateman does not have the strength to tell her he could not possibly get a reservation there on such short notice. Instead, Bateman pretends to have a reservation and then sneaks a peek at the reservation book once they arrive. However, they are found out and forced to leave the restaurant. Jean finds the whole situation amusing, flattering Bateman for his wit and sense of humor.

Jean and Bateman have dinner at Arcadia, where Bateman finds himself being honest with Jean and sharing some of his knowledge of trivia with her. Afterward, Bateman walks Jean home. Jean invites Bateman upstairs, but he cannot make himself go. Instead, Bateman gives Jean an awkward handshake and finds himself thinking that with her he does not feel the urgent need to kill like he does at other times. The summer comes and slowly slips past. Bateman is at the office one day when a private detective stops by to ask him about Paul Owen. Bateman is deeply nervous, but the private detective does not notice. The private detective has already come to the conclusion that Paul Owen has left town and will reappear when he is ready, so he is not digging terribly deep into the case. Bateman spends the rest of the summer going from one new restaurant to another and spending a few weeks in the Hamptons with Evelyn at Tim Price's house. At first, the vacation is enjoyable, but after a while both Evelyn and Bateman become restless and on edge, finally deciding it is time to return to the excitement of the city.

Thursday, Whitney Houston, Dinner with Secretary, Detective, Summer Analysis

Bateman goes out with Courtney and McDermott only to become convinced that they are having an affair. Bateman has lost interest in Courtney and this seems to prove it. Later, Bateman spends the summer with Evelyn in the Hamptons, but becomes bored with her as well. These examples seem to show that Bateman is deeply bored with life

in general and needs something else to stimulate him, to keep him from going crazy. When Bateman goes out to dinner with Jean, it seems like he is a different person. Jean's simple affection and good heart bring out a kinder side of Bateman, a side that does not feel the need to lie or make up crazy stories. Later, when Bateman says goodnight to Jean, he admits to feeling a deep affection for Jean that helps ease the need to kill. Perhaps someday Bateman might indulge that feeling and become a deeper, feeling person rather than the shallow, party-person he is now.

A private detective comes to talk to Bateman about Paul Owen. At first the reader might believe someone has finally caught on to Bateman's extracurricular activities. However, it quickly becomes obvious that the private detective is simply going through the motions, so convinced he is that Owen is just another rich brat who has disappeared for a while to outrun some debts. Again this situation touches on the theme of oblivion as the detective clearly cannot see the truth when it is staring him in the face.



Girls, Confronted by Faggot, Killing Child at Zoo, Girls, Rat, Another Night

Girls, Confronted by Faggot, Killing Child at Zoo, Girls, Rat, Another Night Summary

Bateman has hired the same prostitute from the meat-packing district to join him and female friend at his apartment. The girl was hesitant, but Bateman offered her a lot of money and promised he would not hurt her like before. Bateman encourages the two women to have sex with each other before he joins in, having intercourse with both women. Later, things turn violent and Bateman kills both girls after torturing them with knives and the nail gun.

While the bodies are still in his apartment, Bateman goes shopping at Barney's when he runs into Luis Carruthers. Luis tells Bateman he is moving to Arizona because he loves Bateman so much he cannot stand seeing him at work every day without having his love returned. Bateman is embarrassed and outraged by Luis's behavior. Bateman tries to brush Luis off, but he will not go so easily. Bateman becomes more insistent, demanding Luis leave, causing a scene. Still Luis will not go. When Bateman tries to leave, Luis wraps himself around his leg and will not allow him to go. Finally Bateman kicks Luis in the face. Eventually a sales person comes over and distracts Luis long enough for Bateman to escape.

A few days later Bateman is wandering around the city when he finds himself at the zoo. In the penguin exhibit Bateman coaxes a child to him with a cookie. Bateman then cuts the child's throat and hides him behind a trashcan. When the child's mother finds him, she screams for help. Since the child is still alive, Bateman rushes over and pretends to be a doctor, preventing anyone else from helping the child until he is dead. When the police come, Bateman simply slips into the crowd and walks away. Sometime later, Bateman invites two prostitutes to Owen's apartment where he tortures and kills them both. Bateman leaves his victims and their mess at Owen's without making an attempt to clean up.

At home while Bateman is accepting delivery of a group of new electronics, including several new televisions, a rat comes up out of his toilet. Bateman manages to catch the rat in a trap, but the rat is so big the trap does not kill it. Instead, Bateman decides to keep it in order to use it to torture some unsuspecting girl. A few nights later, Bateman watches another rat die in its cage, one he bought and doused with acid, while McDermott and Hamlin talk to him on the phone about where they should have dinner. No one can make up their minds and they end up changing the reservations a half dozen times. During this phone call, both Evelyn and Jeanette, a girl Bateman's been dating, call. Bateman tells them both to meet him at the same restaurant where they subsequently run into each other. Evelyn is angry with Bateman, but he blows her off and does not worry about it.

Girls, Confronted by Faggot, Killing Child at Zoo, Girls, Rat, Another Night Analysis

Bateman is now killing more than ever before. First Bateman takes the risk of killing two more prostitutes, then he kills a child in a busy zoo with lots of people around who could have seen it, then again he kills another set of prostitutes in Owen's apartment even though he knows there is a private detective looking for Owen who might have the apartment under surveillance. Not only this, but Bateman leaves his mess at Owen's apartment without attempting to clean it up or hide it. Once again Bateman is proving to the reader that he believes he is above the law and will not be caught. Not only this, but Bateman also shows his lack of morality in that he is disappointed in the murder of the child because he had not lived enough life to make his passing felt. It is also possible that all of this has not really happened, but that Bateman has imagined it and presented it as though it has happened, creating an unreliable narration. The fact that Bateman has been able to get away with all of this without repercussion does seem to suggest it is not really happening outside his mind.

As Bateman continues to kill, he also continues to live a mundane life. Bateman runs into Luis Carruthers and has a final showdown, where Luis tells Bateman he loves him and Bateman tells him there is no chance for them. Perhaps Luis will finally get the message before Bateman kills him. However, the reader wonders why Bateman has not killed him after all the embarrassing situations Luis has placed him in. Bateman has killed with less motivation. Bateman orders a lot of new electronics, filling his house with all the latest in video technology as well as wide screen televisions. Bateman deals with a rat infestation when a rat gets into his apartment through the toilet, only to catch it in order to use in horrendous ways. Bateman also spends time with his friends, visiting restaurants, and worries about his two girlfriends meeting by accident. Through all this, Bateman's friends continue to believe he is normal, just like them, causing the reader to wonder if Bateman is not alone in his strange, psychopathic ways.

Girl, At Another New Restaurant, Tries to Cook and Eat Girl, Taking an Uzi to the Gym, Chase, Manhattan, Huey Lewis and the News

Girl, At Another New Restaurant, Tries to Cook and Eat Girl, Taking an Uzi to the Gym, Chase, Manhattan, Huey Lewis and the News Summary

Bateman picks up a girl at a club, ties her up, and uses the trapped rat to kill her. A few days later, Bateman and Evelyn have dinner at a new restaurant. Evelyn seems to have forgiven Bateman for his relationship with Jean. Once again their conversation is based on designer name brands and the people around them. Finally Bateman calls for the special desert he had prepared for Evelyn. Evelyn believes it to be chocolate from Godiva, but in reality it is a used urinal cake that Bateman covered in chocolate and placed in an empty Godiva box. Evelyn never suspects this is a joke, but attempts to eat it. Bateman is saddened by Evelyn's attempts, not getting the pleasure he thought he would. Finally Bateman tells Evelyn that their relationship is over, he no longer wants to see her.

At home, Bateman attempts to cook and eat the girl from the club, but finds the effort too complicated and instead smears her meat all over the walls. Later, Bateman takes a gun to the gym with the intention of killing everyone, but decides he does not want to because a rape and murder the night before took away his urgent need to kill. Some time after that, Bateman is outside a club when he sees a musician playing his sax on the street. Bateman walks over and pulls a gun on the man, killing him with one shot to the head. Unknown to Bateman, a police car is behind him. Bateman runs, losing the car in an alley. Bateman jumps into a taxi, but when the driver becomes frightened by the gun, Bateman shoots him and drives the car into a storefront. Bateman jumps out of the car and makes his way to his office, but realizes he is in the wrong building. Bateman's office has been moved to another building. Bateman kills the security guard before running off to the right building. Once in his office, Bateman calls his lawyer and leaves a complete confession on his answering machine. In the following section, Bateman carefully explores the careers of Huey Lewis and the News.



Girl, At Another New Restaurant, Tries to Cook and Eat Girl, Taking an Uzi to the Gym, Chase, Manhattan, Huey Lewis and the News Analysis

Bateman uses the rat he trapped to kill a girl he picked up at a club, doing heinous things that no healthy person might do to another person. This act shows how far gone Bateman's sanity has become and how desperate he is to find new and outrageous things to do to people. Then Bateman tries to eat the girl, further showing the deterioration of his mind and his lack of empathy or concern for people in general. Bateman also attempts to humiliate his girlfriend, Evelyn, by feeding her a urinal cake that he has covered in chocolate. While Bateman enjoys killing the girl with the rat and eating her body, he does not enjoy watching Evelyn bend to his desire by eating the cake. This is an interesting turn of events, suggesting to the reader either that Bateman actually cares about Evelyn and does not like seeing her humiliated or that the urinal cake trick is not heinous enough to turn him on any longer.

Bateman is outside a club when he has an urge to kill, so he shoots a musician in the head. Bateman is seen doing this and finally the police begin to react, chasing him through the streets of Manhattan. Unlike other novels in which the reader feels connected to the narrator, this narrator is not sympathetic and the reader might find themselves hoping he will be caught. Bateman himself is afraid. The reader can see this when the point of view of the novel briefly switches from a first person narrative to a third person, suggesting that Bateman has moved outside of himself and is watching the police chase as though as a spectator rather than the prey being pursued. However, once again the reader must wonder if this is all really happening outside Bateman's mind. The reader wonders how could there be such a police chase that just disappears, that Bateman is able to walk away from so easily. The reader also wonders, is Bateman insane, or is everyone in his life really as oblivious as they appear? Again this touches on the idea of an unreliable narrator, suggesting that the narrator, Bateman, does not know for sure if all this is real and therefore cannot express to the reader whether or not all this is really real. Finally, Bateman makes a full confession to someone who has the power to do something—a lawyer. Perhaps now Bateman will finally pay for his crimes.

In Bed with Courtney, Smith & Wollensky, Something on Television, Sandstone, The Best City for Business, Working Out, End of the 1980s, Aspen, Valentine's Day, Bum on Fifth, New Club, Taxi Driver, At Harry's

In Bed with Courtney, Smith & Wollensky, Something on Television, Sandstone, The Best City for Business, Working Out, End of the 1980s, Aspen, Valentine's Day, Bum on Fifth, New Club, Taxi Driver, At Harry's Summary

Bateman is in bed with Courtney, but from their conversation it appears the relationship is on the downslide. Courtney is getting married to Luis soon. A few days later, Bateman goes to Smith & Wollensky with McDermott where he fails to order the prerequisite hash browns. Bateman sees an episode of The Patty Winters Show where she reads letters Ted Bundy wrote to his fiancée, complaining that he can feel the anger of one of the victims' relatives staring at him. The line from the letter haunts Bateman. Bateman goes to visit his mother at the living assistance facility and his mother suggests he does not look happy.

Bateman decides to go to Owen's place to see if anyone has discovered the mess he left there a few months before. When Owen arrives, he discovers a doorman where there was not one and a real estate woman attempting to sell Owen's apartment. Bateman is shocked that the place is so clean and all the furniture is there as though Owen will come home at any moment. The real estate woman becomes suspicious of Bateman and asks him to leave, but he finds he has difficulty leaving. Eventually, however, Bateman walks away.

Bateman goes to meet Jean after working out. Bateman and Jean have been seeing each other frequently. Jean confesses her love for Bateman during lunch and he denies he has feelings for her even though he can see himself settling down with her. Jean has a calming effect on Bateman, but he is not sure he is ready to be calmed down. A few days before Christmas, Bateman takes Jeanette to have an abortion on his way to the airport for a trip to Aspen. Jeanette is clearly upset about the abortion, but Bateman sees it as routine, since this is the fifth child he has had to have aborted. On Valentine's



Day, Tim Price suddenly reappears. Rice seems the same except there seems to be a dark smudge on his forehead that Bateman forces himself to ignore.

On the street, Bateman passes a bum he recalls blinding. The bum claims to have lost his sight in Vietnam. Bateman whispers in his ear that he knows the truth, but before he can do anything, Bateman spots a young girl watching them. Bateman walks away when the girl will not spook. A few nights later, Bateman goes to a new club where he runs into his lawyer. Bateman approaches him and asks about the message he left on his machine, confessing to all his crimes. The lawyer mistakes him for someone else and then says that he thought it was a joke because Bateman was too gentle to do any such thing. When Bateman insists that it is all true, the man makes him walk away. A few days later, Bateman takes a taxi to work. The driver recognizes Bateman, claiming that Bateman killed his friend. The taxi driver takes Bateman out under a bridge and mugs him, leaving him to walk back into Manhattan. A few nights later, Bateman is at Harry's, discussing the same old things with the same old people.

In Bed with Courtney, Smith & Wollensky, Something on Television, Sandstone, The Best City for Business, Working Out, End of the 1980s, Aspen, Valentine's Day, Bum on Fifth, New Club, Taxi Driver, At Harry's Analysis

Courtney has decided to marry Luis, causing her relationship with Bateman to end. Bateman was already losing interest anyway, since he knows that Courtney is having an affair with McDermott. Bateman goes on with his life, dating his secretary and meeting his friends. Bateman's secretary, Jean, finally confesses her love for him, but Bateman refuses to confess his own feelings even though being with Jean calms the darkness inside of him. Instead, Bateman believes he is not ready to change his life, especially the homicidal part. Bateman returns to Owen's apartment and finds everything in perfect condition and the apartment up for sale. This confuses Bateman, causing him to wonder who is selling the place and who cleaned it up. Surely if someone had found the carnage Bateman left behind, there would have been something about it in the news. However, Bateman does not recall this. Not only is the apartment for sale, but people insist they have seen Owen in London. However, the reader is not sure how reliable this information is because people mistake Bateman for other people all the time, so it is possible these sightings are the same sort of mistaken identity. The apartment is clean, however, giving strong evidence that Bateman's murder sprees are part of his imagination. Tim Price returns, ending the reader's speculation that Bateman might have killed him in revenge for sleeping with Evelyn. Perhaps Bateman never did care enough for Evelyn to care who she was sleeping with.

Bateman attempts to kill a bum, but is distracted by a witness and decides not to. Perhaps this shows that Bateman has grown some since nearly being caught by the police. At the very least, it shows that some of Bateman's self control is returning.

Bateman also runs into his lawyer, who touches one final time on both the theme of oblivion and shallowness when he refuses to believe Bateman's detailed confessions. Finally, Bateman is mugged by a taxi driver who claims to know about his murderous ways. However, even the driver proves to be somewhat shallow. Instead of turning Bateman in, he steals his money. It is also possible, however, that the driver is simply a mugger who wants nothing from Bateman but his money. This again would point toward the idea that Bateman's crimes are part of his imagination and therefore the cabbie's insistence that he knows Bateman killed his friend is also part of his imagination. At Harry's, Bateman talks to his lawyer and once again is mistaken for someone else. No one seems to know who Bateman is. Does this suggest that Bateman is someone else that is never really identified during the novel? Bateman insists that his confession on the phone was real, but the lawyer believes it all to be a big joke. This could be seen two ways by the reader. First, the reader could assume that it means Bateman is an unreliable narrator and therefore did not commit these crimes outside of his own mind, which is supported by the lack of evidence in the news, the fact that no one ever seems to notice blood on his clothing, and the fact that the bodies in Owen's apartment seem to have just disappeared. Second, it could be that, touching on the theme of oblivion, society has simply progressed in such a way that everyone is so self-centered that they cannot see what is right in front of their faces. Bateman has confessed repeatedly, but no one takes him seriously. Bateman has had clothes cleaned with blood on them, but no one has called the police. Whether Bateman is an unreliable narrator or society is simply too selfish to see what is right under their noses, the final determination is left up to the reader.

Characters

Patrick Bateman

Patrick Bateman is the narrator of the novel. Bateman is the son of wealthy parents and works on Wall Street. While a job on Wall Street seems like a high powered, stressful job, Bateman appears to not work very hard. In fact, often when the reader sees Bateman at work he seems to be goofing off, drawing pictures in magazines and pretending to be on the phone. Bateman works, not because he needs to but because it gives him something to do. However, Bateman hates his job and does not like the accounts he is given to work on.

Bateman appears to be deeply bored with his life. Bateman's life consists of keeping up with his friends, making sure he always has better stuff, and keeping himself better looking. Bateman wants everything about his life to be better than everyone else. Bateman buys all the best electronic equipment, lives in the best building, and surrounds himself with the right people. Bateman cannot imagine having anything that is inferior to anyone else. Bateman wants what he cannot have, but does not want what he does have. Bateman dates Evelyn, but sleeps with Courtney while dating several other girls, including his secretary. Bateman lives a shallow life, unaware of the people he is hurting or concerned about the lack of depth that leaves him bored and without a real friend in the world.

Bateman is also a psychopathic killer. Bateman likes to maim homeless men as he walks the streets of New York. Bateman will pick up prostitutes for the sole purpose of torturing and killing them. Bateman will strike out at strangers on the street, stopping a man to discuss his dog only to kill the dog and then the man. Bateman even kills children visiting the zoo even though he finds little joy in it because it seems that killing a child is a waste of time because they have not lived enough life yet to elicit the response from the community that Bateman likes to see. Bateman attempts to confess this behavior many times to his friends, but no one ever believes him, giving Bateman the impression that he is above the law and will never pay for his crimes.

Evelyn

Evelyn is the child of rich parents and lives and works in New York. Evelyn, much like Bateman, is focused on stuff. Evelyn notices what everyone she comes into contact with is wearing, noting who wears the right designers and who does not. Evelyn likes to talk about people as well, often driving Bateman crazy with her non-stop conversation. While on vacation with Bateman, Evelyn often returns to the city to get a manicure and a facial, unable or unwilling to have these done in the Hamptons or by herself. Evelyn is spoiled, just like Bateman, and appears to be above ordinary people.



Evelyn wants to marry Bateman, whom she refers to as the boy next door. Evelyn thinks Bateman is a kind, shy man who would never do anything to hurt anyone. It never even crosses Evelyn's mind that Bateman might be a murderer even when he confesses to his crimes in her presence many times. Evelyn is always too busy talking about herself or her friends to notice what Bateman is saying. Late in the novel, Bateman tricks Evelyn into eating a used urinal cake, believing it will be funny but discovering that he gets no pleasure from it. Bateman then ends his relationship with Evelyn because he finds her tedious and self-centered.

Courtney

Courtney is a friend of Evelyn's. Courtney dates Luis Carruthers. Bateman finds Courtney attractive and begins dating her soon after coming to the conclusion that his girlfriend, Evelyn, is having an affair with Tim Price. Courtney is obsessed with having safe sex and often interrupts her time with Bateman in order to verify that he is taking precautions. Not only does Courtney not want to become pregnant, but she is terrified of contracting AIDS even though Bateman assures her that the rich are immune to the disease.

Bateman becomes so infatuated with Courtney that he begins to think he ought to kill her boyfriend. However, Bateman is concerned that if he kills Courtney's boyfriend she will lose interest in him. Bateman attempts to kill the boyfriend, but things go wrong and he does not attempt it again. Later, when Courtney marries her boyfriend, Bateman loses interest in her because he knows the marriage is a shame and it will end eventually. Not only this, but by the time Courtney marries Luis Carruthers she is already sleeping with another of Bateman's friends.

Craig McDermott

Craig McDermott is a friend of Bateman's. McDermott is often Bateman's companion when he goes out to dinner and goes clubbing. McDermott also works on Wall Street. McDermott is a lot like the rest of the people who surround Bateman, rich and spoiled. McDermott seems to be one of the only people who notices Bateman's fascination with serial killers, often pointing it out whenever Bateman brings one up. McDermott is also the one who begins to have an affair with Courtney shortly before she marries Luis Carruthers, effectively ending Bateman's interest in her.

Tim Price

Tim Price is a friend of Bateman's. The book begins with Price talking about the state of the world, complaining about homeless people, money, and the AIDS virus. Price and Bateman then attend a dinner at Evelyn's where Price complains almost non-stop about Evelyn's artist friends. After dinner, Price hangs around and flirts with Evelyn causing Bateman to realize the two are having an affair. Bateman is disappointed because he likes Price. Shortly after this, Bateman and Price go to a nightclub where Price makes a



scene and then disappears down a train track that runs through the club. The implication seems to be that Bateman killed him, but Price shows up again at the end of the novel. Bateman is offended that he was not privileged to know where Price went, but assumes he was in rehab. Price is a different person at the end of the novel, quieter and more subdued.

Luis Carruthers

Luis Carruthers works at the same Wall Street firm where Bateman works and is engaged to Courtney. Luis annoys Bateman because of the way he is always looking at him. Bateman also dislikes Luis because he is dating Courtney. Bateman is sleeping with Courtney and wants her to be more available to him. Bateman decides to kill Luis, hoping his death will leave Courtney more apt to spend time with him. However, when Bateman attempts to kill Luis, Luis takes it as an attempt to express affection. Luis tells Bateman that he loves him and has wanted to be with him for a long time. Bateman is so shocked that he stops choking Luis and walks out. Later, Luis runs into Bateman in a department store and makes a scene, attempting to get Bateman to admit his love for Luis. Bateman kicks Luis in the face and walks away. Luis finally gives up and marries Courtney.

Paul Owens

Paul Owen works on Wall Street with Bateman. Owen has an account that Bateman would like to have. However, every time Bateman tries to talk to Owen about the account, Owen manages to change the subject. Not only this, but Owen mistakes Bateman for another man who works in their company. One night, Bateman invites Owen to dinner. After dinner, Bateman takes a drunk Owen to his apartment where he kills him after torturing him for several hours. Later, Bateman goes to Owen's apartment and makes it appear that Owen went to London on business. Then Bateman takes Owen to an apartment he rented in a poor section of the city and puts him in the bathtub and covers him with lime. After Owen has been gone for several weeks, a detective comes to Bateman's office to ask him about Owen. Bateman is nervous and nearly gives himself away, but the detective does not catch Bateman's nervousness and believes that Owen is alive, so he does not suspect Bateman of anything criminal.

Marcus Halberstam

Marcus Halberstam also works with Bateman and Owen on Wall Street. Halberstam is a member of the same group of rich twenty-somethings that populate Bateman's world. However, Paul Owen believes that Bateman is Halberstam. Bateman allows Owen to continue believing this because he wants information on an account Owen is assigned at work and believes that as Marcus Halberstam Owen is more likely to share the information with him. Later, when Bateman kills Owen, the identity of Marcus

Halberstam helps protect Bateman by making everyone believe it was Halberstam who had dinner with Owen the night he disappeared rather than Bateman.

Jean

Jean is Bateman's secretary. Jean is deeply in love with Bateman and goes out of her way to make him happy. When the reader meets Jean she is dressed in a style that is clearly above her pay scale and too sexy for the office. Bateman sees this too and tells her to stop dressing that way, giving her some tips on how to please him more, which she quickly follows. Later in the novel, Bateman invites Jean to dinner where he makes a fool of himself trying to get into Dorsia, an exclusive restaurant that is often booked and Bateman does not have the clout to get into. Jean finds the whole situation amusing, which keeps her on Bateman's good side. Jean and Bateman begin to date and Bateman realizes that when he is with Jean he does not feel the urgency to kill as often. However, Bateman cannot imagine himself falling in love or living a mundane life as a husband and father.

Girls

Bateman titles several of his journal entries, or sections of the novel, girls. In these sections Bateman often picks up prostitutes or calls escort services and invites women to his home. After having sex with these women, Bateman will often tie them up and torture them before finally killing them. Bateman uses many different techniques with these girls, sometimes using knives or guns, sometimes using other, unconventional objects. After killing one of these girls, Bateman attempts to cook and eat her. Bateman also decorates his apartment with some of these girls. Eventually Bateman grows bored with these girls and finds himself looking for other ways to fulfill his desire to kill.

Objects/Places

Homeless People

Bateman objectifies homeless people, turning them into scenery. Bateman often relieves his need to kill by torturing homeless people in the streets of New York City.

Knife

Bateman often carries a knife in order to kill or maim people as he is walking down the street.

ATM

Bateman often stops at the ATM simply to have extra money to fill his fancy wallet.

Gazelleskin Wallet

Bateman is proud of his gazelleskin wallet, often pulling it out to show off.

Platinum American Express

Bateman likes to show people that he has a Platinum American Express card. Bateman also likes to use this credit card while doing cocaine.

Walkman

Bateman wears a Walkman almost everywhere he goes, listening to tapes of his favorite music.

CDs

CD's, or compact discs, are a new format that music is being sold in during the late eighties. Bateman is excited that he is one of a few who has the technology to play this new format.

VCR

Bateman owns the latest in technology for VCRs, often comparing his system to others and finding his is better.

Video Tapes

Bateman likes to rent video tapes, often violent pornographic video tapes, to watch alone in his apartment.

Les Miserables

Les Miserables is a Broadway play that is often mentioned in the novel. Bateman sees multiple advertisements for the play and likes debating which version of the soundtrack for the play is best.

The Patty Winters Show

The Patty Winters Show is a talk show that Bateman watches every morning and occasionally records to watch later in the day.

Valentino

Valentino is a designer whose clothing some of Bateman's friends wear.

Armani

Armani is a designer who makes suits and many other types of clothing. Bateman often wears Armani.

Dorsia

Dorsia is a popular restaurant in New York City that Bateman does not have the clout to get into even though his brother does.

Themes

Oblivion

Oblivion is defined as a state of unawareness. This is the state that many of the people in this novel live in. As Bateman describes his daily activities, he often mentions people approaching him, saying hello, and then calling him by the wrong name. It seems many of the key people in the novel do not know who Bateman is, including Paul Owen, a man Bateman works with and of whom Bateman is jealous because Owen has been assigned a coveted project at work. Owen believes, up to the moment of his death, that Bateman is another man named Marcus Halberstam.

Not only do the people in the novel not seem to know who Bateman is, they also do not listen to the things Bateman has to say. People describe Pat Bateman as a quiet, innocent man. In the beginning pages of the novel, Bateman's own girlfriend repeatedly calls him the boy next door. What these characters do not realize is that Bateman is a psychotic murderer who often confesses to his crimes over dinner. Bateman will whisper into a girl's ear how he wants to chop her up, or announce to a friend that he spent the night before torturing a prostitute. However, these announcements are either not heard, ignored, or assumed to be a joke. There is even one point where Bateman calls his lawyer and makes a full confession of all his crimes. However, when Bateman later approaches his lawyer to ask about that confession, the lawyer not only mistakes him for someone else, he assumes the whole confession was a lie. Bateman is too nice to commit such heinous crimes.

The oblivion in which most of the characters in this novel live in is the author's attempt to make a statement about modern America. Not only do the characters in the novel miss every attempt Bateman makes at confessing to his crimes, but the world at large seems willing to overlook evidence right under their noses. Bateman wraps a dead body up in a sleeping bag and walks not only through his building and its lobby, but through the streets of New York without anyone questioning his body-shaped burden. In fact, Bateman stops and speaks with a couple with the body in his arms before jumping into a cab. It seems no one wants to know about men like Bateman so they simply ignore the evidence right in front of their eyes.

Shallowness

The commentary on humanity begun with the theme of oblivion continues with the theme of shallowness. It seems every new passage in the novel begins with Bateman describing what everyone is wearing, himself included. Everyone is wearing something designer and it seems Bateman is often rating these clothes against his own, making sure he always comes out on top. It is not only Bateman making these comparisons. When Bateman meets Evelyn for dinner, she often does the same, commenting on what

the people she has made contact with that day were wearing, or making remarks on the clothing of their fellow diners.

Throughout the novel whenever Bateman meets with some of his male friends, much of the conversation often centers on the proper way to wear certain pieces of clothing. Bateman is an expert on the subject, having read a book written by an expert. There are also other enlightening conversations throughout the book, such as the difference between spring water and mineral water, what to drink after working out, and who has the best business card. It is deeply important, after all, to make the right first impression and to prove one knows what is hot and what is not.

All of these conversations and the focus on designer clothing is an example of how shallow the characters of the novel are. Bateman can torture and murder a girl and then half an hour later have dinner with his friends and discuss the latest trend in sweater vests. When the reader sees Bateman confessing to his many, terrible crimes, and then watches as his friends ignore his boasts, it is easy to understand why. These friends are all so focused on their status in society that they cannot see past their bank accounts. Bateman, too, is focused on his own status, concerned that all his friends see that he has a platinum American Express card. Status is everything, human life is nothing.

Music

Music is an important theme in this novel because it is important enough to Bateman that he makes several side trips into the discussion of music during the writing of his story. Bateman discusses in detail Genesis, Whitney Houston, and Huey Lewis and the News in this novel, giving the reader insight into what Bateman believes is the best thing about these groups/singers, and what is the worst. Bateman also uses these forays into musical discussion as a way to regroup himself when things become difficult. At one point, Bateman is seen shooting a musician on the street. Bateman is chased by the police and finds himself hiding out in his office. This section leaves Bateman on the phone with his lawyer, confessing to all his crimes. The next section is a dissection of the music of Huey Lewis and the News.

Music also comes into the story throughout the novel as Bateman wears a Walkman almost constantly throughout the book. Bateman listens to everything from pop to rock, even listening to rap at one point because one of his victims assured him it was inspiring. Unfortunately, Bateman has trouble understanding it. Bateman places a lot of value on music, comparing his state of the art sound system with that of another acquaintance, always determined to come out on top. Bateman also spends a great deal of money on tapes, records, and CDs so that he will have copies of the music he really likes in every format. The only type of music Bateman does not like is live music. Bateman will not attend concerts if he can help it. However, Bateman is forced into seeing U2 and makes a spiritual connection with U2 lead singer, Bono. Finally, Bateman listens to music when he kills his victims, creating a soundtrack to his tortuous habits. It is because of these habits that music is a theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is first person. The novel is written from the point of view of Patrick Bateman, a trust fund child who is also a Wall Street tycoon. Bateman narrates the novel as though he is writing in a personal journal, confessing to his crimes while also recording the mundane events of everyday life. Bateman takes the reader from the detailed moments of his daily routine, to nightly excursions on the town, to his psychotic fantasies that often leave innocent men and women dead. Bateman is bored with life, bored with the world around him, and fascinated with the fact that he cannot get anyone to believe him capable of murder, despite the horrific and gruesome acts he confesses to on an almost daily basis.

The point of view of the novel works because the format of the plot is that of a personal journal. If the format of the novel were different, perhaps a different point of view could be considered. However, because the novel is written from such a personal view point in such a personal format, only the first person point of view would work. If a third person view point were used, the novel would not have the impact it has. The format of the novel is deeply personal, very close to the narrator, therefore it requires the first person point of view.

Setting

The novel is set in New York City in the late eighties. The novel involves a group of young, rich, successful people who live and work in New York City. These people think nothing of going out and spending five hundred dollars on dinner and then spending a few hours at the hottest nightclub in town. During the day, these people work high pressure jobs on Wall Street and at night party late into the night, doing drugs and drinking expensive liquor. The people in this novel live the high life, enjoying the new emergence of CDs, VCRs, and cell phones.

The setting of this novel is important for several reasons. First, the characters would not be the same if instead of working Wall Street they were all car dealers in Dallas or writers in LA. Wall Street gives the sense of loads of money, of power, and of intensity. No other job would provide this collection of themes to create the characters that just the mention of Wall Street does in this novel. Second, the setting is important because of the night life of the characters. Again, most large cities do have nightclubs and restaurants, but the nightclubs and restaurants of New York City have a certain mystique about them, a certain reputation that adds to the sense of privilege that permeates this novel. Finally, the setting of the eighties gives this novel a sense of being on the edge of great technological advances, giving all the characters technology that might not be readily available to the common man at the time, such as cell phones. Again, this gives the novel as sense of privilege. Not only this, but the drug culture of

the eighties, the oblivion of general society in the eighties, and the self-centeredness of the eighties creates a setting that works perfectly with the themes of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is precise English. The novel includes many well educated words due to the well educated people who fill the novel. The novel also includes many slang words, words used frequently in the eighties. There are words of the drug culture in the novel as well as many, many words that describe clothing, including the names of various designers popular at the time. The language of the novel is clear and easy to read, including the few foreign phrases included in the novel that are easily deciphered within the passages where they occur.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the characters who appear in the novel. The language is well educated in many places due to the fact that many of the characters are college educated. In fact, some of the characters have educations that go beyond college. The language also goes the other direction, including many slang phrases that were popular in the eighties. These phrases add to the authenticity of the novel, as this language would be the type of language a reader would expect the characters defined within the novel to use. Finally, the use of words describing clothing and their designers appears frequently in the dialogue and exposition of the novel. The use of these words is highly appropriate as they are used by Bateman as a way to judge the people around him and to prove to himself and the reader that he is not only the best dressed person in a specific situation, but also the richest.

Structure

The novel is written like a journal. There are no parts or chapters as would be found in a classically written novel. Instead, the novel is sectioned off into different aspects of Bateman's life. There are fifty-eight sections, each one denoted with the name of restaurant Bateman visits in that section or a day, or the name of the person Bateman spends time with. These sections vary in length, some as long as ten pages, others as short as a paragraph. There is little separation between the sections. The only indication of the beginning of a new section is the section's title.

The novel has only one plot. The novel follows Patrick Bateman through the course of his life, going with him on dates and to dinner with friends. Bateman describes his morning routine, trips to the store, and romantic interludes. Bateman also allows the reader to tag along when he picks up prostitutes with the intention of torturing and killing them. The novel is written as though a journal or diary, a private description of one man's life as he lives it in the exciting decades of the eighties.

Quotes

"I move out of the kitchen, past the dining room, where the table has been set, the beeswax candles from Zona lit in their sterling silver candleholders from Fortunoff, and into the living room. I can't tell what Stash is wearing since it's all black. Vanden has green streaks in her hair." *April Fool's Day*, p. 11.

"I'm on the verge of tears by the time we arrive at Pastels since I'm positive we won't get seated but the table is good, and relief that is almost tidal in scope washes over me in an awesome wave." *Pastels*, p. 39.

"There is a pause—the crowd in the background is surging, a deafening mass—and with real hope coursing through me I open my eyes, realizing that the maitre d', god love him, is probably looking through the reservation book for a cancellation—but then he starts giggling, low at first but it builds to a high-pitched crescendo of laughter which is abruptly cut off when he slams down the receiver." *Date*, p. 75.

"Tonight the talk centers around Elmore Leonard's new book—which I haven't read; certain restaurant critics—who I have; the British sound track from *Les Misérables* versus the American cast recording; that new Salvadorian bistro on Second and Eighty-third; and which gossip columns are better written—the *Post's* or the *News's*." *Deck Chairs*, p. 94.

"Silently she soaks them in warm lanolin cream, then dries both hands off and uses a cuticle moisturizer, then removes all the cuticles while cleaning under the nails with a cotton-on-wood stick. A heat vibrator massages the hand and forearm. The nails are buffed first with chamois and then with buffing lotion." *Facial*, p. 117.

"He starts nodding helplessly and I pull out a long, thin knife with a serrated edge and, being very careful not to kill him, push maybe half an inch of the blade into his right eye, flicking the handle up, instantly popping the retina." *Tuesday*, p. 131.

"Would Courtney like me less if Luis was dead? This is the question I have to face, with no clear answer burning back across my mind, as I make my way slowly through the dining room, waving to someone who looks like Vincent Morrison, someone else who I'm fairly sure is someone who looks like Tom Newman." *Yale Club*, p. 157.

"He brushes past me, shaking his head. I look back at the girls. They shake their heads—a warning to me not to come back over. I turn my gaze to a hardbody who's dancing by herself next to a column, then I finish my champagne and walk up to her, asking for a phone number. She smiles. Exit." *Christmas Party*, p. 199.

"The ax hits him midsentence, straight in the face, its thick blade chopping sideways into his open mouth, shutting him up. Paul's eyes look up at me, then involuntarily roll

back into his head, then back at me, and suddenly his hands are trying to grab at the handle, but the shock of the blow has sapped his strength." Paul Owen, p. 217.

"I'm not really listening to any of this conversation, not even to myself, because I'm thinking of ways to get rid of Bethany's body, or at least debating whether or not I should keep it in my apartment another day or so." Thursday, p. 249.

"The rape and subsequent murder last night of an NYU student behind the Gristede's on University Place, near her dorm, however inappropriate the timing, no matter how uncharacteristic the lapse, was highly satisfying and though I'm unprepared by my change of heart, I'm in a reflective mood and I place the gun, which is a symbol of order to me, back in the locker, to be used at another time." Taking an Uzi to the Gym, p. 346.

"Bateman's such a bloody ass-kisser, such a brown-nosing goody-goody, that I couldn't fully appreciate it. Otherwise it was amusing." New Club, p. 387.

Topics for Discussion

Who is Patrick Bateman? What is special about Bateman? What is unusual about him? Why would the reader want to know about Bateman's everyday life? What is it about Bateman that makes him special enough to focus an entire novel on his life? Why do Bateman's friends describe him as quiet, the boy next door? Is this true?

Who is Evelyn? Why does the novel start at Evelyn's house? What is Evelyn's role in the story? How would the story be different if Evelyn were not a part of Bateman's life? Why does Bateman continue to date Evelyn even though it is clear he does not want the relationship to continue?

Who is Tim Price? Why does the novel start with Tim Price? What happens to Tim Price? What is the implication of Price's disappearance? Was Tim having an affair with Evelyn? How did Bateman feel about this? Does it appear that Bateman does something about this? When Price returns, why is Bateman convinced there is a black smudge on his forehead? What is the significance of this?

Who is Paul Owen? Why does Owen believe Bateman is Marcus Halberstam? Who is Marcus Halberstam? Why is Bateman focused on Owen? What is it Bateman wants from Owen? Why does Bateman kill Owen? Does Bateman get what he wants as a result? Does this matter?

Who is Luis Carruthers? Why does Bateman attempt to kill Carruthers? Why does he stop? What does Carruthers want from Bateman? Why does Bateman not give it to him? Does Carruthers' attention confuse Bateman? Why? Why does Carruthers marry Courtney? How does Bateman feel about this?

Discuss the decade of the eighties. What denoted the eighties? Discuss the technology of the eighties as compared to today's technology. How did this new technology affect people of the eighties? Is there a similar affect on people today that is comparable? Discuss the drugs of the eighties. How do they compare to today? Is there a similar attitude toward drugs today as there was in the eighties?

Discuss the themes of the novel. How true are the themes of the novel? Do you think it is really possible for a man to get away with murder the way Bateman did? Do you think the rich are above the laws of the common man? Do you think the decade of the eighties had an impact on Bateman's behavior and ability to get away with his crimes? Do you think the novel would be the same if set in current times?