

Bone in the Throat Study Guide

Bone in the Throat by Anthony Bourdain

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Plot Summary

Bone in the Throat by Anthony Bourdain is the story of a mafia boss and an attempt to bring him and those who work for him to justice. Tommy Pagana is the nephew of Sally Wig, a murderer and extortionist. Tommy doesn't want anything to do with the crime world but gets pulled into the middle of Sally's "business". Tommy is busy trying to keep Sally's friends from killing him, due to what Tommy has seen, when Tommy is approached by the police with threats of prison if Tommy doesn't help them by ratting out his uncle.

Tommy Pagana is working in a restaurant called the Dreadnaught Grill as the assistant chef. Tommy's uncle, Sally Wig, tells Tommy to keep the restaurant open late one night so that Sally and a couple of guys can come by and talk some business. Tommy reluctantly agrees. When Sally arrives he shoots the man that came in with him and Sally and his friend Skinny, an assassin for the mob, quickly dispose of the body. Tommy is shaken and angry with his uncle for bringing him into the middle of this business.

Tommy's friend, referred to as the chef, goes out to get some drugs and is picked up by the police and asked a lot of questions by the police. Soon the head FBI agent, Al, goes to talk to Tommy and explains that they know that something happened with Sally and the man he brought to the restaurant that night. Tommy is worried about going to jail but knows that he can't say anything about what happened unless he wants to be killed too.

The man that owns the restaurant, Harvey, owes Sally a lot of money and is caught borrowing money from Sally's competitors. Sally takes over and soon finds out that Harvey is working with the FBI and has Harvey killed. Sally fires the chef and Tommy quits with him. Tommy is feeling the heat and knows that he is going to tell the FBI everything they want to know to get back at his uncle. Before Tommy has a chance to talk, Sally is murdered by Skinny because of the wire that the FBI had in Harvey's restaurant. What isn't known is that the FBI have Sally's place wired and Skinny is caught redhanded committing the murder of Sally Wig. Tommy and the chef are off the hook now from the police but Skinny is still worried that Tommy might say something about the death at the restaurant and put Skinny further in the hole. The head mob boss, Charlie Wagons, used to be friends with Tommy's parents and gives Tommy money to get him out of the country so that everyone will be happy.



Prologue, Chapter 1-4

Prologue, Chapter 1-4 Summary

Bone in the Throat by Anthony Bourdain is the story of a mafia boss and an attempt to bring him and those that work for him to justice. Tommy Pagana is the nephew of Sally Wig, a murderer and extortionist. Tommy doesn't want anything to do with the crime world but gets pulled into the middle of Sally's "business". Tommy is busy trying to keep Sally's friends from killing him, due to what Tommy has seen, when Tommy is approached by the police with threats of prison if Tommy doesn't help them by ratting out his uncle.

In the prologue a body is found that has been shot in the head. The mouth has been filled with cherry bombs and blown into pieces. The coroner of the small town where the body is found isn't surprised when the police officials show up. What surprises the coroner is their response to the dead man. They don't joke about it or treat it like another homicide case. The coroner notes that the different groups of law enforcement never say who is to blame, but that they all look guilty.

Chapter one begins with Salvatore Pitera, also known as Sally Wig, walking down the street. Sally is making his way to the Dreadnaught Grill. Outside the Dreadnaught Grill Tommy Pagana, the sous-chef, and Michael Ricard, often referred to simply as chef, are having a discussion about the menu. Sally Wig suddenly comes around the corner and Tommy is left alone to talk to his uncle. Sally got Tommy the job there at the Dreadnaught Grill but doesn't like the food that they serve there. Sally excuses himself to go in and talk to Harvey, the person that owns the Dreadnaught.

In chapter two Sally walks into Harvey's office to discuss the money that Harvey owes Sally. Business has been bad for Harvey and he is having trouble breaking even and so has no money to pay Sally. Sally says he understands but this is the third time in a row that Harvey has said he has no money to give Sally. Sally explains that he is going to pay that weeks dues out of Sally's own pocket. Sally then tells Harvey he had better have the money to pay next week or else. Quickly Sally grabs Harvey's face and begins to hit the desk with it, breaking Harvey's nose. Sally tells him that this is serious business, and before he leaves he asks Harvey if Harvey has seen The Godfather. Harvey says he has.

Chapter three has Harvey looking himself over in the bathroom mirror, trying to stop the bleeding from the nose. Harvey goes back to his office and calls his girlfriend Carol to have her pick him up a clean shirt from his house. Harvey tells chef that he will be out for a while and to watch things while he is gone. Harvey picks up the phone and makes a call and explains that his name is Moses and that he needs to talk to a friend. Harvey is told to meet his friend in "the place" and hangs up.



As chapter four begins Harvey is waiting outside a restaurant when a car drives up and the man inside asks Harvey if he wants a ride. Harvey gets in and begins to relate what happen at the restaurant. The person in the car becomes upset and explains that there have been funds given to Harvey simply for the purpose of paying Sally Wig on a steady basis. Harvey complains about his business, calling the man Al. Al tells him it is to bad but it must be better than prison time.

Prologue, Chapter 1-4 Analysis

The prologue is filled with a description of what has been done to the body that is found. While the details are given in regards to his injuries, there is never a name given to the person. The coroner does say that he is unable to get an identification off of the body because it has been so badly mutilated. The prologue also doesn't explain when it is taking place or introduce any of the police officers. It won't be until the last few chapters of the story that the reader finds out who this unlucky character is and why they are killed.

Sally Wig quickly becomes an interesting character. He is described as overweight and seems at moments to be comical in his appearance. Sally will prove that he is very morbid and enjoys the life that he leads. In addition to his his weight, the reader will also find in the next few chapters that Sally is the subject of much embarrassment from the other members of his mob organization as well as his nephew Tommy.

Tommy is a character that isn't introduced until most of the other players have already made an appearance. Despite this, Tommy will quickly become a main focus of the story. Tommy doesn't want anything to do with the mob life but his family connection to Sally will eventually pull him in. The chef also will be pulled in but he will be pulled into the situation by the police.

Harvey used to be a dentist but is helping the police to keep from going to jail. Harvey made a mysterious phone call in the story and then said that his name was "Moses". Later in the story this method of contact will be explained in detail and Tommy also will be forced to use it. Al is seen several times in the story but nothing personal about this character is ever revealed.



Chapter 5-9

Chapter 5-9 Summary

Chapter five begins with Al talking to United States Attorney Raymond Sullivan. Raymond is anxious to get Sally Wig and others arrested and begin prosecution. Al convinces Raymond to give him more time to get information on other people. They have enough on Sally Wig and Harvey to take care of them but Al is certain he has a shot at bringing down Sally's bosses, Charlie Wagons and Danny Testa. Raymond doesn't like the thought that Harvey is thinking of the restaurant as his but Al says it makes Harvey's role look more realistic. Raymond and Al decide to tell Harvey to borrow money from Sally's competitors in the hopes that it will make Sally slip up.

In chapter six Tommy is in the kitchen at the Dreadnaught. Tommy gets into chef's stash of heroine. Chef is addicted and needs a fix so he decides he will leave the restaurant for a short period of time before they open and go score some more. Tommy gives chef a small amount of money to buy him some heroin also.

As chapter seven begins the chef is walking out of the Dreadnaught Grill and is being watched by two undercover police officers stationed across the street. The two men look at the chef and decide that he is Tommy but they don't have the photographs of Tommy on them. They decide it would be in their best interest if they could catch "Tommy" doing something illegal and use it as leverage against Sally Wig. The two detectives watch the chef go in to get drugs and decide to bust him when he comes out. Chef exits the drug establishment and suddenly realizes he is being chased. He tries to swallow the baggies he bought but is unable to. Chef is brought to the ground and handcuffed.

Chapter eight finds Tommy trying to keep up with the orders. The Dreadnaught has been open for some time and the chef has never returned. When he finally does walk in the chef explains that he got robbed. Chef admits that he is sick already and has asked Harvey for an advance on his check so that he can go and get some drugs later. Tommy declines to go with him, saying it is free to get drunk. The chef is yelling because someone used his expensive knife and nicked it when Tommy suddenly gets a phone call. It is Sally, telling Tommy that he has to see him tonight at the restaurant next door owned by the Count. Tommy doesn't want to go but agrees.

Chapter nine has Tommy in Count's Villa Nova Restaurant. Tommy hates the food and the people at Count's and really hates the Count. When Tommy sits down Sally explains that he needs a place to talk private business and he wants to use the Dreadnaught. Tommy refuses at first, but Sally insists. Sally says he will make sure the porters are all out for the evening and that Tommy will be the only one there. Sally reminds Tommy that it was Sally who got him the job at the Dreadnaught and that Tommy owes him. Sally goes on to say that it will be him, Skinny, who Tommy knows does disreputable work for the mob boss Charlie Wagons, and one other unnamed person arriving at the Dreadnaught that night. All Tommy has to do is let them in to talk and then they will



leave. Tommy finally agrees with Sally's assurances, although Tommy is still unhappy about the arrangement.

Chapter 5-9 Analysis

The police in the story will quickly take on an antagonistic role for Tommy, the chef, and even Harvey to a degree. It is obvious at this point in time that Harvey is helping out the police in order to avoid jail time, although Harvey is trying hard to make a go of the restaurant in the hopes that he will be able to keep the place once the police are done with him. It appears that the police look at Harvey as an object to use. While they want him to cooperate, they have no intentions of letting him keep the place after they are through. The two policemen that pick up the chef, mistakenly thinking he is Tommy, will be seen again in the story. They seem to be continually portrayed as incompetent. It is quickly obvious that the police in the story are not the "good guys" in the story.

There is a lot of drug use going on in the story. Harvey, Tommy, and the chef will all be seen using casually. Harvey seems to have a severe problem with the drugs, much like the chef, although there will be differences in the ways that they look at their drug use. It will be seen in the story that the chef will try to get off of the drugs. He will occasionally try to go without the drugs but it makes him extremely sick, and so chef eventually makes the decision to go and get on methadone. Harvey, on the other hand, will not make any attempt to get off the drugs. It appears that the only thing that Harvey views as a problem in his life is the immediate threat he is in working with the police against the mob.

Skinny will be a crucial character as the story continues, although nothing much will be explained about Skinny's personal life or his past. Despite this lack of information, there is a lot that is known about Skinny by the work that he will do in the next chapters and the way that he handles the different situations. Skinny will be a character to be feared. He doesn't have the temper that Sally does, but Skinny is very dangerous and deadly.

The Count has been introduced into the story. Later it will be seen that the Count is in the story a little more and will begin to take over Harvey's business.



Chapter 10-14

Chapter 10-14 Summary

As chapter ten begins, Tommy is walking home thinking about Sally and the last time he had done a favor for Sally. Tommy had sold illegal firecrackers when he was still in school. Tommy had got busted with the fireworks and spent a couple of hours in jail. His mother had come to get him and Tommy had been ashamed. Tommy's father had been involved with the mob organization and had suddenly "disappeared". It had been Sally that had supported Tommy and his mother and got Tommy his first cooking job. Tommy had met a girl who had shown him a life that was so much more than Tommy had ever thought about. Despite all this Tommy knows, he is just going to have to help Sally get what he wants.

In chapter eleven Tommy is alone in the chef's office waiting for Sally and Skinny to show up. The door bell rings, and much to Tommy's surprise it is Skinny and he is alone. Tommy lets Skinny in and they wait on the others. After an awkward amount of time with Skinny, the door bell rings again and Tommy opens the door to Sally and another man. They are laughing and Sally has his arm around the guy. Tommy relaxes for a moment and they walk in. When they are both in the restaurant, Sally introduces the man as Freddy. Suddenly Sally pulls out a gun and fires several rounds into Freddy's head. Skinny pushes past Tommy and Skinny is naked with nothing on but gloves, an apron and a kitchen knife. Sally wraps the apron around Freddy's head and plunges the kitchen knife into Freddy's chest and twists. Sally calmly tells a panicked Tommy to get some plastic bags. Skinny grabs the chef's custom made knife to cut up Freddy's body. Skinny decides that Tommy can do part of the clean up after he has the body dismantled and in the garbage bags.

Tommy talks to Sally before they leave, where Skinny can't hear, and tells him how wrong it was to involve him in this. Sally tells Tommy to not be a cry baby and clean up the mess. Before they leave, Sally offers Tommy a ride home. Tommy declines and watches Skinny smiling at him as they drive away.

In chapter twelve Tommy calls in sick to work. Harvey takes the call while sitting in his office. Once off the phone Harvey turns his attention back to the two men that he is meeting with. The men are loaning Harvey money with the condition that he doesn't tell Sally and that they get paid first, before any other. Harvey agrees to their conditions. While they are finishing their discussion the chef comes in holding his custom made knife, completely mangled. Harvey tells him they can order a new one.

Chapter thirteen begins with Sally meeting with Danny Testa. Danny gives Sally some money for taking care of Freddy and puts a little extra in there for Tommy since Tommy helped. Sally is mad, wanting to know why Tommy would get anything. Sally feels that he has been doing the dirty work for Danny and his boss, Charlie Wagons, for a long time and has yet to get moved up in the ranks of the organization. Tommy does one



thing and gets noticed. Danny tries to comfort Sally and let him know that Charlie is appreciative of all that Sally has done. Danny tells Sally to just be patient.

Chapter fourteen introduces Charlie Wagons. He is wearing a bathrobe and loafers. Danny comes up to talk to Charlie. Charlie says he talked to the lawyers and they say that there shouldn't be any problem now. Danny tells Charlie about Sally's complaints. Charlie says he would have to be dead to ever give Sally any position of power. Danny and Charlie say that they need to use Sally but never pull him in with them. Charlie says that if it wasn't for Sally's sister and Sally's brother-in-law that Sally would still be driving around picking up dry cleaning. Charlie likes Tommy and thinks Tommy's mother is an angel but hates Sally. They decide to get Sally a new car or something to keep him happy.

Chapter 10-14 Analysis

Charlie Wagons has been shown in the story. He is wearing a very interesting outfit. He will be seen other times in the story and will always be wearing the same thing. It won't be until the end of the story that Charlie explains to Tommy why he is wearing this outfit. Charlie hates Sally Wig. As the story continues it will become apparent that Sally doesn't have near the power that he feels he has. He is loud and arrogant and it will be his undoing.

Charlie likes Tommy, as well as Tommy's mother and father. It is never explained the full connection that Tommy's family has with Charlie Wagons. Later in the story Charlie will do a large favor for Tommy with no expectation of pay back. It is possible that Tommy's father was high in Charlie's organization, or that Charlie has a connection to the mother. There are a few possibilities for the reason that Charlie treats Tommy the way that he does but it is never fully revealed. However it does appear later in the story that Tommy and Charlie have a lot in common.

Skinny is rather quiet. He will explain later in the story why it is that you get naked in order to do a murder. This won't be the first, or the last, murder that Skinny is responsible for. Skinny seems to unnerve Tommy quite a bit. Skinny doesn't seem to think of murder as taking a life as much as it is something that is methodical and requires certain steps. He will prove to be very good at what he does. Despite his abilities, Skinny will be caught in the story.

Chef hasn't been shown much in the story, or the police. As the story continues, more about the chef's battle with heroin and the police that are trying to use him will be focused on. There are several plots taking place in the story, but it becomes clear that Tommy is the main character. Although he is the main character, the chef and Harvey and others will have their own stories revealed and focused on.



Chapter 15-20

Chapter 15-20 Summary

In chapter fifteen Tommy is working at the Dreadnaught. The chef is going through withdrawals from not having a fix of heroin. The chef tried to go without sometimes and make it through a shift but just couldn't hold himself together. The chef finally leaves to get a fix and Tommy is relieved, knowing that at least the chef will be able to work when he returns. When the chef returns he is able to work and focus and seems like a new person. The chef pulls Tommy into his office where Chef pulls out a bag of dope. Tommy refuses to take any. The chef tells him that he has got on the waiting list for the methadone clinic.

Chapter sixteen begins with the United States Attorney Raymond Sullivan talking to Al. Al explains about the mix up and Michael getting arrested when the detectives thought that he was Tommy. Al tells Raymond that the detectives saw Freddy Manso, Sally, and Skinny di Milito walking into the Dreadnaught Grill after hours with no one there but Tommy. The detectives got pictures of everyone going in but missed any pictures of them leaving. Al knows that Freddy has been missing since that night and that no one is looking for him. Al talks about the lack of information they get from the bug they have in Sally Wig's apartment. They know that Sally has gas and he likes watching cartoons. Al thinks that if they put the pressure on Tommy that this will be the key to bringing down Sally.

As chapter seventeen begins Harvey is meeting with Al. Harvey is wearing a wire and Al pulls it off of him. Al makes sure that Harvey gave Sally all the money he was supposed to give him. Harvey assures Al that he did and points out that it's on the tape. They discuss the knife that belonged to the chef that got messed up the night that Sally stopped by and how weird it was that someone did all the dishes despite the fact that there were no porters that night.

In chapter eighteen the chef is looking himself over. He is beginning to loose his teeth thanks to his drug use. He also knows that he has sold almost every possession he could stand to part with in order to get another fix. The chef goes to the methadone clinic and meets with Mr. James about getting on the program. Mr. James tells the Chef that it will be three weeks before they can get him onto the program. The chef is very disappointed and upset but has no other choice.

In chapter nineteen when the chef walks out he finds a man selling methadone in the streets. The chef doesn't have the money to get the methadone and goes to score a hit of heroin. The chef has just bought the drugs when there is a raid on the building. The chef is able to hide until they are gone. Just as quickly as the police are gone the drug dealers come out of their hiding spots and open for business once again.



In chapter twenty Tommy is in his apartment with his girlfriend Cheryl asleep in the bed. Tommy is looking out his window at the cars below. Tommy is pretty sure that there is a van that has been following him for the last few days. Tommy found he couldn't sleep or eat, always thinking of Freddy. Tommy knows it isn't Sally or Skinny because they would just walk up to him and shoot him, but Tommy doesn't think the police should be following him since there hasn't been anything in the papers about finding a body and no police asking questions at the restaurant. Tommy wants desperately to be away from Sally, Skinny and the death that had suddenly entered his life.

Chapter 15-20 Analysis

For a brief moment Tommy tries to blame his mother for the way things have turned out. Tommy thinks about the fact that his mother was quite willing to go along with her husband's lifestyle and let the disreputable characters into her home. Despite the fact that this seems like a legitimate thought, Tommy is quick to rebuke himself for thinking ill of his mother. Tommy never goes to see his mother that is shown but she will continue to be a front thought in his mind.

Tommy's girlfriend, Cheryl, is the waitress at the Dreadnaught. It won't come out until much later that Tommy has been dating Cheryl for some time. Tommy himself seems to be unsure of how serious they are. Later in the story, Tommy will have sex with another girl that works at the Dreadnaught. It is at this point that Tommy will appear to suddenly want to solidify his relationship with Cheryl. Not much of Cheryl's life will be explained in the story.

The chef seems to be serious about trying to get off of his heroin addiction; however, he is obviously depressed about the amount of time it will take him to get in the actual program. This three week waiting period that the chef waits to get on his methadone will serve the reader as a marker for the amount of time that passes. Tommy will lean heavily on the methadone and will risk his life for it later in the story.



Chapter 21-25

Chapter 21-25 Summary

Chapter twenty-one begins with the chef having lunch with his mother. She agrees to give him money. They have a chat over lunch and the chef is able to keep his problems from her although she knows he doesn't look well.

In chapter twenty-two Tommy is at the restaurant when Stephanie comes up to him and begins to ask if he is dating Cheryl. Tommy tries to give Stephanie stalled answers and tells Stephanie to ask Cheryl when she gets back into town from visiting her mother. Stephanie finally gets Tommy's attention and they walk into a back room where they have sex.

In chapter twenty-three Harvey is griping about everything that is going on at the restaurant. Harvey has had a call from his ex-wife who wants money. Harvey doesn't have any money to give her but it is for his daughter and he does want his daughter happy. Harvey sees Stephanie and Tommy coming out of the back room and is disgusted by it. As Harvey walks out of the restaurant he sees the waiter talking to several girls who are looking at his head shots for his acting career.

Chapter twenty-four begins with Harvey laying on a blanket at the beach. He isn't there long when he goes to meet a guy at a bar and score some drugs. Harvey owes the man quite a bit already but the guy agrees that Harvey can just pay him next time. Harvey finishes his drink and heads to the bathroom.

In chapter twenty-five Al stops by to see Charlie Wagons. Charlie doesn't recognize Al but Al explains that he is an F.B.I. agent. Al begins to tell Charlie all about a rival mob family that has been loaning money to institutions in Charlie's part of the neighborhood. Charlie is upset and tells Al to get lost. Al then asks about Sally Wig before he goes.

After Al leaves Charlie he goes and finds Danny Testa and asks if Danny knows where Freddy Manso is. After talking for a while, Al says that he has photos of Freddy with people. When Al finally leaves, Danny goes to talk to Charlie. They decide to look into what Al told them in regards to someone taking profits from business on Sally's side. Charlie is mad that Sally hasn't been taking care of business right and says he doesn't know who he wants to have killed first, the guys who have loaned money to the business on his side or Sally. Charlie says not to worry about Freddy but to find out who the guys are and have them taken care of.

Chapter 21-25 Analysis

Al is very casual when he goes to talk to Charlie and Danny. His motive is obviously to get them riled up to the point that he can get his case finished sooner. It will have a much different effect than the one he intended. At this point in the story it is obvious to



see that Charlie and Danny are quite happy at the thought of getting rid of Sally. Sally has been making mistakes and now the big boss, Charlie Wagons, is being told about these mistakes by a policeman. In the next chapter Al will go on to see other people. Al's boss wants to have things put into high gear. Much of this will backfire on the police.

Tommy cares for Cheryl but goes and has sex with Stephanie anyways. When Cheryl gets back into town Tommy will feel very guilty about his actions and it will only take Cheryl a moment to figure out that something is wrong. Stephanie won't have another scene in the book but her actions with Tommy serve as a way that Tommy is able to put his amount of guilt over the top.

Harvey is in over his head in more than one way. Charlie and the others will seem upset at the whole situation in regards to Harvey possibly taking money from an outside source but the blame will fall on Sally for not being able to control the situation. In the next chapter Al will continue to visit people and the next will be Sally. Al is trying to get things moving faster but it will soon become clear that he has poured more gasoline on the fire than was safe.



Chapter 26-30

Chapter 26-30 Summary

As chapter twenty-six begins, Sally is sitting in his car when Al pulls up next to him. Al begins taunting Sally with jokes about how low Sally must rate in the organization to get an ugly car like what he is driving. Sally tries to get out of the car to punch Al but the door handle comes off in his hand. Later that morning Al enters a restaurant called the Pink Teacup where Tommy is sitting waiting on his breakfast. Al comes in and sits down and begins to talk to Tommy. Al quickly introduces himself as FBI and tells Tommy that he was just looking over Tommy's file. Tommy quickly becomes very nervous. Al explains that they are looking for a guy named Freddy Manso and asks Tommy where he is. Tommy says he doesn't know. Al explains that he told the guys in his precinct that Tommy never would get mixed up in a murder but that no one else believes that Tommy doesn't know something. Tommy becomes sick and Al quickly excuses himself, saying he forgot an appointment.

In chapter twenty-seven the chef is in line getting his first dose of methadone. When the chef steps out of the methadone clinic, Al is sitting on a bench and waves him over. Al knows him and calls him by name. Al takes the chef out to eat and they talk about Tommy. Al explains that if the chef will talk Tommy into coming in willingly to talk about Sally and the murder then they can protect him. Tommy is unsure but Al tells him how everything will happen when Tommy is called before a grand jury to testify. Al convinces the chef that Tommy either has to come in willingly to avoid being killed by Sally's guys or get pulled in for accessory to murder. Al reassures the chef that it is the chef's job to do this because no one else has the ability to talk reason to Tommy. Al reminds the chef that they have him for drug possession and the only thing they need the chef for is his influence over Tommy. Either the chef gets Tommy to tattle on Sally or the chef goes to jail.

When chapter twenty-eight begins Tommy is at his apartment. Cheryl is away visiting her parents and Tommy is alone for the moment. The van that had been parked outside his apartment is gone. Tommy wants to tell someone but has no one to talk to. He thinks about telling chef but knows that to Sally that would be the same as him telling the police. Tommy leaves his apartment when he sees Skinny. Reluctantly, Tommy follows Skinny to an alleyway where he is told to get in a car. Inside is Danny Testa. They drive for a while and Skinny drives like he is trying to loose whoever might be following them. After a time they get to a location where Danny and Tommy get out and go sit on a park bench to talk. The area is deserted and Tommy tries to keep an eye on Skinny's location, remembering how quickly he had come up behind Freddy with the knife. Danny asks Tommy if he has changed his mind about coming into the business and Tommy assures Danny that he still doesn't want to become involved. Danny finally breaks down and asks Tommy what would happen if the police came around and wanted to ask Tommy some questions about what happened at the restaurant? Tommy explains that he will keep quiet and get a lawyer. Danny asks what lawyer and Tommy



says that he hasn't thought about it and wants to know if he should be thinking about it. Danny gives Tommy a lawyer card and tells him to ask for Benson and that Danny and Charlie Wagons will take care of the fees. They drive Tommy back to the restaurant but knows that none of his answers have made Danny happy and Skinny keeps looking at Tommy in the rear view mirror as he drives. When they let Tommy out at the Dreadnaught Tommy is dizzy and hurries inside.

In chapter twenty-nine Tommy and the chef go outside to have a talk. The chef explains about his conversation with Al and everything that Al had said. The chef is confused as to why they want Tommy to come in and talk and Tommy tells the story of watching Freddy get shot in the head. Tommy also explains to the chef that it was Sally and Skinny that tore up the chef's knife cutting up the body. Tommy and the chef talk about leaving the country and going to Mexico or something but the chef has just started his methadone and can't just leave and Tommy doesn't speak a foreign language. Tommy feels like he can't tell on his uncle because Sally is family and Tommy is worried what it would do to her. Tommy remembers that Sally went to jail for five years because he stayed quiet. The guy that Sally refused to rat on was someone that Sally hated and he still stayed quiet. Tommy and the chef make a pact to try and protect each other. They know someone has to get hurt but they agree to look out for each other and make sure it isn't either of them that get hurt. Tommy decides he needs time to think about things and tells the chef to go and talk to Al and let Al know that Tommy is thinking about coming in to talk to them. Tommy hopes this will give them the time he needs to figure out what to do.

Chapter thirty begins with Tommy at Grand Central Station waiting on Cheryl to return from visiting her family. Cheryl is happy to see him but soon figures out that Tommy is acting guilty. When Cheryl learns that he has had sex with Stephanie while she was gone she hits Tommy in the face and leaves. Tommy gets a cab and goes to Cheryl's place. Cheryl is angry because it was Stephanie more than because Tommy slept with someone. Cheryl says something about Stephanie telling everyone how she slept with "Cheryl's boyfriend". Tommy is a little shocked, claiming he wasn't sure that he was Cheryl's boyfriend. Tommy says it never would have happened if all this stuff hadn't been going on and Cheryl demands to know what stuff. Tommy tells her that he is in a lot of serious trouble. He tries to leave it at that but Cheryl tells him to either tell her or she will go and kick Stephanie's butt. Tommy tells her all that had happened.

Chapter 26-30 Analysis

Tommy had been desperate to tell someone. The chef may have been involved slightly in getting Tommy in trouble but it turns out that he is a confidant for Tommy and Tommy really needed someone. Tommy finally does tell Cheryl everything that has happened. The chapter ends with the fact that he tells her. Her reaction isn't shown. Cheryl will be briefly seen again in the story, although she will be talked about and continues to play a part in Tommy's decisions.



The problem that Tommy is faced with is loyalty to his uncle or keeping himself out of prison. Tommy is frightened of the people that his uncle associates with but the problem of what to do doesn't stem only from this fear. Later in the story Tommy will finally decide what to do, and when that time comes the fear of what will happen to Tommy doesn't play a factor in his decision.

The chef is on the methadone and he explains that it doesn't make him high but it is enough that he doesn't need a fix or get sick. The rules of the methadone clinic are very strict and Tommy has to have his bottle that the clinic gives him when he returns to get a refill. Later in the story, the chef will knowingly risk his life for the bottle. The chef seems to look at the methadone as his only salvation from the street drugs. Despite the fact that the chef has a lot going wrong in his life, most of it by his own choice, he is a likable character and it is easy to see why Tommy chooses to keep the chef as his friend.

Tommy and the chef were talking when they made the pact and said that someone will have to get hurt. This is a moment of foreshadowing in the story. There will be several people get hurt in one way or another as the story continues.



Chapter 31-35

Chapter 31-35 Summary

In chapter thirty-one Harvey is in the restaurant and goes into the bathroom to snort some cocaine so that he feels healthy. Harvey tells everyone that he has a band coming in. Harvey has a large stack of bills on his desk and past-due notices as he continues to snort his cocaine. When Tommy comes in he finds that the band is already there. Tommy is hating the band, and the bartender explains that they have had three walkouts already since the band started. Harvey comes out of his office beaming, telling everyone that once the news of the good band gets out everyone will come in. Cheryl just smiles and nods.

As chapter thirty-two begins Harvey is leaving a tanning salon. He gets a block away from the Dreadnaught and he is pulled into Sally's car. Sally starts slapping Harvey and threatening to kill him for what Harvey has done. Harvey swears he hasn't done anything but Sally is already ripping Harvey's clothing, asking if Harvey is wearing a wire. Sally then asks Harvey about the money that Harvey supposedly borrowed from the Brooklyn people. Harvey is still being tortured and admits that he took twenty thousand. Harvey tells Sally he hasn't talked to any cops and then tells Sally the names of the Brooklyn guys, Dominic and Frank, although Harvey doesn't know their last names. Sally pulls Harvey around and introduces him to a young man named Victor. Sally tells him that Victor is going to be his new manager. Sally threatens Harvey very seriously several times and tells him that if Harvey is a thief then he can very easily be a rat.

In chapter thirty-three it's night and Sally is in a car with Skinny. They are watching the Calabrese Construction Company office. Sally and Skinny wait until the two men are close to their car. Sally and Skinny emerge with guns and begin shooting the men. One of them is shot point blank range in the face. Sally and Skinny get back in the car and Sally goes out of his way to run the body over as they leave. Skinny reprimands Sally for running over the body, leaving forensics on the tires. They drive back to a parking lot where they take duct tape off the inside of the car they had been driving. They leave it unlocked in the hopes that someone will steal it. Skinny tells him to get rid of his clothes and shoes and burn them. Skinny says that doing the job naked is the best but burning the clothes is the next best thing.

As chapter thirty-four begins Tommy and Al are meeting at a restaurant that Tommy suggested. Tommy tells Al that he isn't going to rat out Sally just for free lunch. They go back to Al's car and Al pulls out several pictures. One is of Sally with Charlie Wagons and then one of Skinny. After several pictures, Al shows Tommy the pictures of two men that had been to the Dreadnaught recently several times. The two men were found in Brooklyn and they have been shot to the point that their faces are destroyed. One of the men had been ran over after he was shot and killed. The last picture shown to Tommy is of Freddy Manso. This picture is of Freddy's mug shot. Tommy turns away from the



photos. Al says he knows that Sally is his uncle but there are going to be subpoenas. Al asks Tommy if Sally, Skinny, Danny and Charlie are going to be trusting of Tommy or are they going to want to make sure that things go their way. Al gives a card to Tommy with a number on it. Al tells Tommy to say his name is Aaron when he calls and say he wants to talk to Al. Al tells Tommy he will be his friend. Tommy opens the door and throws up, with Al patting his back and telling him it will be alright.

In chapter thirty-five Harvey is in his office, yelling. Tommy and the chef are talking about Harvey firing his office manager and hiring a new guy named Victor. Tommy is horrified and says he knows Victor and that he works for Sally. Tommy is angry over the changes that are taking place and knows that Sally is going to change the whole menu and put fried calamari on the menu. Tommy says they won't get fired for a little while because Sally will want Tommy to stay happy but they are going to make working there miserable so that everyone will quit. Tommy decides to go out and see if he can get a look at what is going on. When he steps out he sees Victor sitting at the table with Harvey working up a new menu. Harvey looks worried, and sitting across from his is the Count. Tommy goes back into the kitchen and tells the chef that he is going to go and tell the police everything they want to know. Tommy says he is going to rat out his uncle over a piece of squid.

Chapter 31-35 Analysis

Tommy had been fighting with the thought of being loyal to family, but what makes the decision for him is the thought that he has to start conducting the restaurant in the same manner as the Count's. Tommy really dislikes the Count. Victor hasn't been seen much in the story, but there will be more about him in the next few chapters. Tommy obviously doesn't like Victor, and when Victor gets a chance to talk to Tommy it will appear that Victor doesn't much care for him either. The men in Sally's business seem to feel that Tommy is settling for something less by not taking part in their world. Tommy's father had been in their business and so is his uncle. Tommy's father's body was never found and Danny says something to Tommy about Tommy possibly being sore over what happened to his father. Tommy assures Danny that this isn't the truth, although it is never fully explained what happened to Tommy's father.

Al seems to be trying to play both the good cop and the bad cop. Although he never says that he is desperate, Al appears to be working like he has a lot at stake in this bust. He is trying to be the bad cop by going down and pushing at the chef with the drug charge they have on him and making it known to Tommy that they don't mind putting him in jail. In that same conversation Al also tells Tommy that he will be Tommy's "friend" and make sure that he is alright. Al is obviously much like the criminals in the story and willing to work any angle needed in order to get what he wants.

Skinny doesn't always say much but he is a character that has strong actions. Skinny has been seen naked once in the story and talked to Sally about being naked while committing a murder. This explanation gives the reader a better understanding of past actions. Skinny will continue to have a crucial impact as the story continues.



Chapter 36-40

Chapter 36-40 Summary

Chapter thirty-six begins with Harvey and Victor at a convention center looking at restaurant equipment. Detective Czerny and Detective Alvarez are keeping an eye on Harvey and Victor. Harvey decides to go to the bathroom and leaves Victor waiting for him. The detectives decide to not split up and sit where they are waiting on them. Once away from Victor, Harvey makes a phone call to Al and begs him to get him out of the situation. Al reassures Harvey that he only needs a few more days and then everything is going to come to an end for Sally and his guys. Al tells Harvey that they have a beeper in his car so they know where his at all times. Al is able to convince Harvey of how great he is going to look and even talks to Harvey about the movie they will make about all this. Harvey goes back to meet Victor only to find that Victor signals to a vehicle to come and pick them up. Skinny is behind the wheel. Victor has to forcibly shove Harvey into the car. The detectives look around and realize that they didn't see Harvey come out of the bathroom or see when Victor left.

Chapter thirty-seven has the US. Attorney Sullivan in his office talking to Al. Al is trying to convince him how well the whole operation is going, but there are others that are unhappy with what has gotten leaked to the media. Al tells Sullivan that they have a beeper in Harvey's car and that Harvey is safe. Al also says that Tommy is going to crack any day and tell them all they want to know about Sally. Sullivan tells him that they are in danger of losing their case and doesn't want to be left with only Sally Wig to indict. Al admits that Sally is not as stupid as they would like and may be able to figure out that Harvey is the one that is leaking them information.

In chapter thirty-eight Harvey is in a basement with Sally, Danny Testa, and Skinny. They are torturing Harvey while he is tied to a chair. Harvey is telling them he had no choice but Sally hits in the face. Harvey admits that he has been talking to the police since the beginning and that they have tapes. Danny is angry that Sally got put on the take. Sally gets a handful of cherry bombs and shoves them in Harvey's mouth but can't light them because of all the spit and blood coming out of Harvey's mouth. Skinny takes a gun and empties it into Harvey's head. After he is dead Sally continues to try and light the cherry bombs until at least he succeeds. It makes a mess, which makes Danny even more angry. Danny has Victor clean up the mess.

Chapter thirty-nine has Danny Testa at the law office of Benson, talking about legal options. Benson tells him that if the US Attorney's office is going to indict, and Benson knows that they have put the legal proceedings into motion already, then they likely had more than one person they were counting on testifying. Benson tells Danny the best thing they can do is to make sure there isn't anyone else that could cause any trouble if it were possible. Danny says he knows one guy that could be trouble and Benson says it would be better for everybody if he could be sure that this person wasn't going to be trouble.



In chapter forty Cheryl and Tommy are in Tommy's apartment. The chef calls and says that the restaurant is closed for the week but that Victor has called in both Tommy and the chef. When they arrive at the restaurant, the Count is there with Sally and Victor. Victor takes the chef downstairs to have a private chat and Tommy is left with Sally and the Count. Tommy knows he and the chef are being fired and begins to be anxious for it to be over and the chef to reappear from the basement with Victor. Downstairs Victor fires the chef. The chef decides he has to get his bottle of methadone from his drawer. The chef has managed to get his methadone from his desk drawer but Victor pulls a gun. The chef makes a run for it but is hit in the head with the butt of the pistol.

Chapter 36-40 Analysis

Tommy had put up with Sally and called him family and held onto that bond for a long time. By this point in the book Tommy has little feeling for Sally other than hate. Tommy no longer worries about his mother and what she will think of him when he stands before a jury and points the finger at Sally. Tommy isn't even thinking about Skinny and what Skinny will do when he tells on Sally. Tommy has clearly become consumed by his disgust of Sally.

Danny Testa is a person that is seen a lot in the book but speaks carefully so that it can't be used against him in court. Danny talked to his lawyer and said that there was a guy that they weren't sure about not being a problem. In the next few chapters it will become more clear who they are talking about.

In the prologue at the beginning of the story there was a dead body fished out of the river. There was no identification made on the body but the police recognized it and the person performing the autopsy said they looked guilty. At this point in the story it is clear that the dead body is Harvey and that the reason the police are looking guilty is because they were supposed to be looking after him. Harvey had asked more than once to be pulled out and no one helped him. Harvey wasn't an innocent bystander and it is clear that he had his problems, but the way in which he was killed was very brutal.

In the next few chapters Tommy and the chef will both be put to the test in many ways. Tommy never actually has a chance to tell his uncle how much he dislikes him.



Chapter 41-45

Chapter 41-45 Summary

Tommy is still sitting at the table with the Count and Sally in chapter forty-one when Tommy is shocked by the news that they want him to be the new chef. In the basement the chef is being pulled up to his knees by Victor. The chef's face is being pushed down toward the rotary slicer. The chef screams and it is heard by Tommy and the others upstairs. The chef loses a piece of his cheek and as he falls on the floor he sees Tommy's legs. Tommy grabs an ice shaver and buries it into Victor's armpit. Victor pulls it out and tries to steady himself but puts his hand down onto the rotary slicer and loses the end of a finger to the second joint. Sally comes down, wanting to know what is going on and Skinny comes in. Skinny turns off the meat slicer. Tommy turns to them and calmly explains that there was a work related accident here and that he is going to take the chef to the hospital and they had better do the same for Victor if they expect him to live since Victor is already going into shock. Skinny is looking at Tommy almost affectionately. Sally calls after Tommy laughing about the fact that Tommy obviously didn't want the job.

As chapter forty-two begins Sally is in his apartment when Victor and Skinny arrive. Sally goes to his bedroom and begins to get dressed when Skinny walks in naked holding a gun in a gloved hand. Sally is amazed at how fast Skinny got undressed when Sally is shot in the head. Skinny continues to fire until the gun is empty. Back in the living room Victor comments on the fact that it was loud but Skinny assures him in this neighborhood no one will have noticed. Skinny says not to wipe the place down since they are there all the time it is acceptable that the police should find their prints. When they walk out Skinny tells Victor to try and keep his face blocked on the way to the car.

In chapter forty-three Charlie Wagons and Danny Testa are talking about the fact that Skinny and Victor got picked up walking out to the car. Charlie says that Skinny and Victor have to go to jail for a time since the police got the whole thing on tape, but Skinny is worried that Tommy might say something about Freddy Manso and put him away even longer. Skinny wants Tommy killed. Charlie tells Danny to not do anything right now because he wants things to cool down for a while. Danny is unsure but agrees. Charlie and Danny are really happy to have Sally gone.

As chapter forty-four begins Tommy and the chef are in front of the Dreadnaught. The sign on the door says that the restaurant has been seized. While they are talking, Al drives up. Tommy asks Al what they plan to do with him and Al says that he believes the FBI will leave Tommy alone since Sally is dead and Skinny and Victor are unable to get out of their charges. Al says he doesn't know what happened to Harvey. Tommy and Al stand up and Al tries to give him a hand but Tommy walks away like he doesn't see Al.

Charlie Wagons is cooking for Tommy and they begin talking in chapter forty-five. The reason that Charlie always wears the robe, he explains, is that the lawyers says it



makes him look incompetent and easier if a trial happens. Charlie is a good cook and the two share stories for a while. Charlie eventually tells Tommy that Skinny wants him dead. Charlie says he will give Tommy money to go to the Caribbean and start his own little restaurant and serve stuff to the tourists and Tommy can take his girlfriend. Tommy refuses the money but Charlie explains that he likes Tommy and liked Tommy's mother and father. If Tommy doesn't take the money and go then Tommy is going to get hurt by either Danny or someone else. Charlie assures Tommy that he won't owe anybody anything in return for this. Charlie says that it would be a favor to him if Tommy would take his girl and just leave for a while. Tommy finally agrees and Charlie tells him to eat his food.

Chapter 41-45 Analysis

Charlie has offered Tommy money to leave the country. He has told Danny and the others not to touch Tommy but Charlie knows that it won't be enough long term. The reasons that Charlie cares for Tommy's safety isn't known. Charlie acts like it might have something to do with Tommy's mother and father but it also might be simply the fact that Charlie doesn't want any more messes to clean up. The truth of this is never explained. Tommy could take the chef with him but the chef is still in need of constant methadone fixes. It is easily assumed that the chef isn't in any danger, as Tommy is, and would be able to stay in the city but this also is left unsaid.

When Al stopped by the Dreadnaught to talk to Tommy and the chef, Al tells them that he doesn't know what happened to Harvey. It seems that the police had not yet found the body when this discussion took place. Both Tommy and Al are glad to see Al gone. Al appeared to be concerned with his case and nothing else. Al was willingly to call people friend and tell them how he was going to be there for them but it becomes apparent that he says whatever is needed to get the results he wants.

The wire in Sally's apartment had been mentioned before in the book but was quickly forgotten since nothing ever came from listening to Sally's apartment. It was a fluke that Skinny and Victor were caught there. These two are the only ones that the police are able to grab. It seems the police had been interested in Sally with the hopes that he would turn on Charlie and Danny. When Danny had been talking about a guy that would be trouble it seemed he might have been talking about Tommy. After Danny sends Skinny to kill Sally it would seem that Danny had considered Sally a liability even though they were happy to use him.



Characters

Tommy Pagana

Tommy Pagana is the nephew of Sally Wig. Tommy's father had been involved in the crime world, like his uncle, and went missing while Tommy was still a boy. Tommy's uncle helped to raise him and make sure that Tommy and his mother had money. Much of this is the reason that Tommy feels family loyalty toward Sally. Tommy doesn't want to be involved in the crime world but is pulled in against his will.

Tommy isn't a hero or good guy in the sense that he doesn't seem to have any major faults. In the course of the story he will be seen doing drugs and cheating on his girlfriend. Despite these actions, he is easily liked and seems to honestly strive to do what is the right thing for himself and his friends. Tommy often thinks of his mother and many of his actions at the front of the book, in regards to the crime world and ratting out his uncle, revolve around what it would do to his mother. Eventually the thought of the effect on his mother begin to wane as Tommy is pushed and pushed by his uncle. When Tommy does decide that he is going to tell the police everything he knows, the decision is made when Sally takes over the restaurant. Tommy says that he is going to rat his uncle out over a piece of calamari.

A lot of the story is about Tommy's fight, although he is not the only character that the story focuses on. There are several fights in the story, some are even physical. Tommy finally stands up to his uncle and puts his foot down to make a stand. Before, Tommy seemed to be content to simply distance himself calmly. Much of Tommy's dilemmas will disappear when he feels the last line has been crossed. This last line will focus simply on Tommy and his own morals and dreams.

Michael Ricard a.k.a. The Chef

The chef is a character in the story that just simply happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is picked up after buying drugs when the cops watching Harvey's restaurants mistake him for Tommy. The chef is trying to get his life under control but doesn't try to get on the methadone until after he is arrested and forced to try and coerce Tommy into testifying against Sally. It is unclear if the chef made the decision to get clean based on the fact that he was picked up by law enforcement. It is seen that the chef takes time in the mirror and looks at what the drugs have done to him. He has nearly none of his possessions left that he once prized because he has sold them all for drugs, and his physical appearance is beginning to show the signs of regular usage as well. It may be that it is the two of these things together that cause him to take action.

The chef is proud and loyal to Tommy, although he is scared of going to jail. It becomes obvious that he is messed up due to the drug usage. The chef makes a pact with Tommy to make sure that neither of them gets hurt. It dose seem that, despite this pact



and the chef's loyalty to Tommy, the chef needed Tommy far more than Tommy needed him in many ways. The main reason that Tommy needed the chef was simply because the chef was a loyal friend and Tommy was feeling alone and scared.

Salvatore Pitera a.k.a. Sally Wig

Sally is described as fat and slovenly. He is constantly made fun of and hates to be called "Sally Wig," although that is how he is referred to in the majority of the book. Sally is Tommy's uncle and is the one that gets Tommy involved in Freddy Manso's murder. Sally will be killed later in the story by Skinny, the same guy that helped him kill Freddy.

Gaetano di Milito a.k.a. Skinny

Skinny is a hit man for the mob. Skinny helps to kill Freddy Manso, Harvey and Sally. Skinny knows that Tommy can cause trouble for him and wants Tommy to be killed before the trial. Skinny tries to get naked before he commits a murder so that there will be no forensic evidence left on his clothing.

Al

Al is an FBI agent that is using Harvey to get information on Sally Wig in the hopes of bringing down mob boss Charlie Wagons. Al is able to get dirt on the chef and threatens the chef and Tommy with jail time unless they help and testify during the trial.

Cheryl

Cheryl is Tommy's girlfriend. Cheryl hits Tommy in the eye when she finds out he slept with Stephanie. Tommy eventually tells Cheryl everything that has happened in regards to the Freddy Manso murder.

Raymond Sullivan

Raymond is the United States Attorney. It is Raymond that is Al's boss.

Diane

Diane is the girl that Tommy dates when he is much younger. It is Diane and her parents that show Tommy that there is more to life than what the mob offers. It is in part because of Diane that Tommy decides not to enter the ranks of the wiseguys.



Julius

Julius is the mysterious man that Harvey meets at four o'clock and gets a tissue paper full of drugs. Harvey doesn't have the money to pay the man. The man says he can catch Harvey later but that he needs the money to get stuff for his boat.

Stephanie

Stephanie is a waitress at the Dreadnaught Grill. Stephanie will have sex with Tommy while Cheryl is away.

Dominic and Frank

Dominic and Frank are the boys from Brooklyn that loan Harvey twenty thousand dollars behind Sally's back. They are shot and killed by Sally and Skinny. Sally runs over one of them as they leave the scene.

Danny Testa

Danny Testa is Charlie Wagons' right hand man. It is Danny that arranges many of the hits that take place and pays the people that take care of the business. Danny is the one that goes to see the lawyers to find out what legal options they have and what is the best scenario.

Charles Iannello a.k.a Charlie Wagons

Charlie Wagons is the mob boss that wears a bathrobe so that he looks incompetent in case he ever has to go to court. Charlie hates Sally and is happy when he is finally dead. Charlie gives Tommy money to get out of the country so that Tommy won't get killed.

Victor

Victor is the man that Sally brings in to be the manager of the Dreadnaught Grill when Sally finds out that Harvey has been taking money from the Brooklyn guys. Victor is the one that cuts off a piece of the chef's face with the rotary slicer and then loses his finger in the machine. Victor is with Skinny when Skinny kills Sally.



Objects/Places

The Dreadnaught Grill

The restaurant that Harvey owns and Tommy is the sous-chef at. This restaurant is financed by the police in an attempt to get information to prosecute Sally Wig.

Count's Villa Nova Restaurant

The restaurant next door to the Dreadnaught. Tommy hates Count's place but it is one of Sally's favorite places.

Calabrese Construciton Company

The business where Sally and Skinny go to find the two Brooklyn guys that loaned Harvey money. It is outside this office that Skinny and Sally shoot the men and then run one of them over.

The Pink Teacup

The Pink Teacup is the name of the restaurant where Al finds Tommy and first tells him that the FBI is watching him. Tommy nearly gets sick here after listening to Al.

Jacob Javits Convetnion Center

This is the Convention Center where Harvey and Victor are looking at stuff for the restaurant. It is here that Skinny meets them and picks up Harvey. Harvey makes a pleading call to Al while here asking him to come and get him but Al refuses. The police watching Harvey lose them here at the convention center.

Cherry Bombs

Sally forces a handful of cherry bombs into Harvey's mouth but is unable to light them because of the spit and the blood. Sally finally manages to get them lit, but only after Skinny has already killed Harvey.

Rotary Slicer

Victor uses the rotary slicer to cut off a piece of the chef's cheek. Victor falls into the rotary slicer after a fight with Tommy and loses a piece of his hand.



Methadone

The chef is on methadone, trying to kick his drug habit. The chef will fight to get his methadone bottle after Victor fires him. When Tommy comes to save the chef, the chef is still holding onto the bottle.

Caribbean

The Caribbean is where Tommy is sent by Charlie Wagons. Charlie explains that it is better if Tommy leaves the country so that Tommy won't be killed.

Bathrobe

Charlie Wagons wears a bathrobe all the time. His lawyers have told him it makes him look simple in case he ever has to go to court.



Themes

Power

The theme of power is easily seen in the story, although it is shown in different ways by the various characters. Sally Wig wants to have power in the form of being in a higher position within Charlie Wagons' crime organization. Sally never actually calls it power, but it is easy to see that he is very excited at the prospect of people cowering in fear of him. Sally will continually try to show the fact that he is a force to be feared, although this isn't necessarily true. Charlie Wagons also wants power, although he seemingly has the power he wants. When Charlie says that someone is to be "taken care of" it appears that there isn't a shortage of people to willingly do the job for Charlie. It is only when Charlie wants Tommy Pagana left alone that Charlie is second guessed.

In addition to the mob there are the police that are trying to put an end to the crime boss and his thugs.

Family Bonds

Tommy Pagana is one of the main characters in the book. Although this character isn't taking part in mob activities,, he will continually get pulled into situations because of his uncle, Sally Wig, who takes part in multiple illegal activities. Tommy doesn't want anything to do with the mob and has gone out of his way to distance himself from that life. When the police begin to question Tommy, it is easy to see that he quickly becomes torn between the thought of what is in his own best interest and trying to keep from ratting out his uncle. Tommy feels that he owes his uncle in some small way because his uncle helped to take care of him when Tommy's father went "missing". Tommy's father was also a member of the mob.

As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that despite Tommy's dislike for his uncle and the life he leads, Tommy feels a deep connection. Tommy also worries greatly for his mother. She never makes an appearance in the book but she will constantly be mentioned as she is Tommy's mother and Sally Wig's sister. Family bonds show themselves deep in this story due greatly to the fact that Tommy tries so hard to not do his uncle wrong despite the fact that Tommy doesn't care for his uncle.

Drugs

Much of the story involves drugs. Harvey is constantly snorting cocaine. If Harvey had been able to put the drugs down he might have been in better financial standing with Sally. It is obvious that the drug use altered his perspective of things and caused him to make odd business decisions. He brings in a band in the Dreadnaught and puts in a fish tank. Tommy and the chef are talking about the fact that he gets high and reads something in a magazine and decides to try it.



The chef also has a drug problem. The chef gets picked up after buying drugs and this begins his involvement in the crime story. After the chef is picked up he begins to take a look at himself and realizes how much the drugs have taken from him. He has sold most of his prized possessions in order to pay for his habit and he has also begun to look the part of a user. It is possible that the threat of jail cause him to look hard at his drug use or he may have been to that point prior to the charges. The drugs have also taken a financial toll on the chef and he asks Harvey for his paycheck early every week so that he can get more drugs. In addition to that, the chef is also lying about the hours that he is working in order to get a larger paycheck.

There are other characters in the story that are seen doing drugs, such as Tommy, but not many of these seemed to be controlled by as Harvey and the chef are. The drugs aren't a focus of the FBI that are looking into the mob activities but they are willing to focus on it as leverage to get the information that they need to indict.

Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person point of view. The story has a limited omniscient point of view proven by the fact that there are many different characters that are followed but the thoughts and intentions of others are not known. The areas where the reader is allowed to see and what the reader is allowed to know is limited by the characters that are shadowed. This gives the reader enough information to have glimpses of what may be coming but doesn't reveal the ending that is coming.

The story focuses greatly on the character Tommy Pagana. The view will be of him trying to distance himself from the situation he finds himself in with his uncle. Tommy's view is one of a young man that knows where he wants to be in life but finds that he has lost the drive to get there. The point of view also allows a look at Tommy and his life from that of other characters in the story. The police and Charlie Wagons will both discuss Tommy. All the other characters in the book and the background given them will be in order to establish the plot around Tommy and his struggle.

Setting

The story takes place in a modern day Manhattan. There is never an actual date given and little to pin down an exact year for the story. Despite this, the setting is very believable and adds to the story. The story taking place deals greatly with a police sting that has been set up with the hopes of eventually leading to an arrest of mob boss Charlie Wagons. Tommy Pagana, a lowly chef, becomes tangled in the situation with the story focusing on Tommy's struggle to get out alive.

The story all takes place in the Manhattan city and surrounding area with the Dreadnaught Grill and Tommy's apartment being two returning scenes. The Dreadnaught Grill is described in detail with Harvey looking the establishment over. It is explained that Harvey buys many things for this restaurant at auction. The Dreadnaught Grill is where the murder of Freddy Manso takes place. The Dreadnaught is also significant because it is the restaurant that the police have given to Harvey while the sting is going on. While at the Dreadnaught, Tommy will be focused primarily on work. It is when Tommy is away from this place that he does most of his reflecting on the situation he finds himself in. The Dreadnaught will be one of the last scenes in the book, with Tommy and the chef sitting outside of the restaurant where a "seized" sign has been put on the door. In many ways this will mark an end to the problems that both Tommy and the chef were facing. This will be significant because it was Tommy's job at the Dreadnaught that got him involved in the troubles that occurred to him and in part to the chef.



Language and Meaning

The language and meaning in the story are fairly straightforward. The characters in the book being watched by the police are mafia and talk in that type of speech. The author uses intentionally misspelled words and phrases to emphasize a character's mannerisms. When the FBI agent Al is talking to Charlie Wagons, he will use exaggerated speech that mimics the mafia bosses. The author shows this by misspelling words and over pronunciation of phrases.

There are the characters that talk like the mafia people do and then there is everyone else. The majority of the characters in the book will fall into one of the two categories as far as speech is concerned. It will be impossible to know what character is talking based on simply their language in most cases. Some of the characters' language will change when they become angry. When Danny Testa realizes that Sally has been recorded by the police while talking to Harvey Danny uses the words "Whaddaya" and "proolly". Other places in the book, like when Danny is talking to the lawyer, his language seems to be much more controlled. The language, while a very useful tool in showing the background of the characters, isn't used heavily as a character identifier.

Structure

Bone in the Throat by Anthony Bourdain consists of 290 pages. It has forty-five chapters. Some of the chapters will contain only four pages, while others last for several more pages. The author used the beginning and ending of events to start and stop the chapters and didn't rely on the amount of space that the chapters took up. The author also used this as a tool for showing the lapses of time. Often in the story there are amounts of time that pass and there is no indication given that time has passed other than the end of a chapter. The chef goes to the methadone clinic and they tell him it will be three weeks before he can begin the methadone. A few chapters later it is told that he is at the methadone clinic getting his first dose. There isn't a way for the reader to know exactly how much time has passed but it does give a general idea.

The book also contains a prologue. There is no indication when the book starts that tells about a body being pulled out of the river. It isn't until the last few chapters of the book that the reader will realize that the body pulled out is that of Harvey. The reader knows for much of the book that at least one of the main characters in the story is going to have to die, but it isn't clear which one since there is never a positive identification made on the body.



Quotes

"No more "next weeks" outta you, you little prick. No more "I'll do my bests." Just get me my fucking money. Get it on time. Borrow it. Steal from your partners. Go back to pulling fucking teeth if you got to. This is serious. You seen The Godfather, right?"
Chap. 2, pp. 13-14

"Our office disperses you certain funds. You, in turn, are to disperse those funds in the precise fucking manner we agreed. You are not supposed to pay your liquor bills with that money. You are not supposed to pay rent, or make payroll, or buy gifts for your bimbos. We've had this conversation before. You are to use those funds for the express purpose of making controlled payments at the appropriate times. You are supposed to give the nice Mr. Pitera his money when he asks for it." Chap. 4, pp. 20-21

"Listen...We all know how Harvey got in the restaurant business. We put up his end, for Chrissakes,. He knows that. We kept him out of the pen, made his problem go away and all. He's a snitch." Chap. 5, pp. 22-23

"Tommy liked the chef. He was impressed by him. Sure, he was a junkie. He fucked up. He forgot to order things. He showed up late or sometimes not at all. He leaned on Tommy to cover for him in a way no other chef had done. But Tommy enjoyed working with him." Chap. 10, p. 55

"Sensing sudden movement, Tommy turned around, thinking Freddy had tripped. He moved to catch him. Instead, he saw Sally coming up with a .22-caliber Hi-Standard pistol. Frozen, he watched as Sally put the gun behind Freddy's right ear and fired three quick rounds into his skull." Chap. 11, p. 60

"Why the chef was trying to do without today, Tommy didn't know. He did this every once in a while. He'd come in junk-sick trying to make it through the shift, knocking back Sea Breezes and Daiquiris and beer after beer, unable to work." Chap. 15, p. 81

"Tommy couldn't do either of those things lately... Freddy's bleeding head, the apron as it soaked through with blood, Freddy's mouth opening and closing the way you see a goldfish do...the images followed Tommy around. He was afraid to dream." Chap. 20, p. 117

"I understand people look up to you around here, they come to you with their problems. You've got family here. I figured you'd be outraged that these people from Brooklyn feel free to come down here and loan money at usurious rates to someone of your local businesses. Extorting nice hard-working people like yourself. I would think you'd find that sort of thing disgraceful.' Al smiled." Chap. 25, p. 142

"So I have to get Tommy to come in and rat on his uncle,' said the chef. 'Nothing less...'
'That, my friend, is exactly what you gotta do.'" Chap. 27, p. 162



"The thing of it is... the thing of it is, I just can't give up my uncle. That's a real problem I have. I know he's an asshole, I know that. I know what he's done to me. I'm not stupid. I can see how things are. But, it's my mother's brother. I just can't do that." Chap. 29, p. 182

"'I hope you ain't even thinkin' about holdin' on to it,' said Skinny. ' 'Cause there's no way. An hour from now, it's gonna be all crushed up and on its way with the other one. You smart, you get rid of your clothes, too. Burn 'em. Shoes too. That's the smart thing to do. You can't get naked when you gotta piece of work, you should burn the clothes. That's the next best thing.'"

"'I've decided,' he said. 'I'm gonna drop a dime on my uncle.' He laughed bitterly. 'I'm gonna rat my uncle out over a plate of fuckin' squid.'" Chap. 36, p. 231

"'I don't think they got much,' he said. 'I was careful.' 'Whaddaya mean, they don't got much?' yelled Danny. 'They prolly got the fuckin' place wired up like a fuckin' Christmas tree! Jerk!'" Chap. 38, p. 251

"Sally had time to look up at Skinny with a puzzled expression and wonder how he got undressed so fast before the first round crashed into his forehead. The gun made a loud fwap-fwap sound as Skinny kept firing, the noise getting louder as the rubber nipple disintegrated." Chap. 42, p. 274

"'What happened is they walk outta Sally's and a million fuckin' cops come runnin' outta the place across the street. You know the bakery there? They were up there in the apartment over the store. Takin' their pictures, listenin' in...Vic and Skinny aren't even in the car yet, they got cops swarmin' all over 'em. Squad cars, plainclothes, feds... They still had the gun...everything...Skinny had the gun in his pocket when they grabbed him.'" Chap. 43, p. 275

"Charlie reached across the small table and took Tommy's hand. 'You see, kid, you'd be doin' me a favor. We gotta get you outta town. You see? There ain't gonna be any problems with the law, but some of the fellows don't feel too good you walkin' around seein' what you seen. Skinny and Victor and Danny, they get to talkin' with the lawyers and you know, with that case comin' up... Skinny and Victor's case... Well... I know how these guys think. You gotta get outta town. It's better for you, it's better for me. You unnerstan' what I'm sayin' to you here?'" Chap. 45, p. 289



Topics for Discussion

Why were Charlie Wagons and Danny Testa so willing to use Sally Wig if they disliked him so much? What does this say about Danny and Charlie?

Describe Skinny's character. What aspect of Skinny spoke the loudest about his character? Explain.

Tommy continued to say that he couldn't rat out Sally because he was family. In the end it was because of the restaurant that Tommy decided to rat Sally out. Explain the conflict that Tommy faced. Why was it so easy for him to suddenly decide he was going to rat Sally out?

Tommy said he wanted Cheryl to be his girlfriend but didn't realize she was. If Tommy cared so much for Cheryl, why did he have sex with Stephanie? Should the drinking or the current situation Tommy found himself in be taken into consideration for his actions? Explain. Was Cheryl right for forgiving him?

Given what is revealed in the story, speculate on the reasons that Charlie decided to send Tommy out of the country. Do you think that Danny Testa may know what happened to Tommy's father given what Danny said when he and Tommy when for a car ride? Explain.

What was most likely the reason that the chef decided to go to the methadone clinic? Would the chef have gone to the clinic had he not be picked up by the police? Why did the chef come to work and try to do without his fix periodically?

Was Charlie Wagons made out to look like a bad guy or good guy in the story given the fact that he was the one that ordered Freddy Manso, Harvey and Sally Wig murdered, but is also the one that saved Tommy? Explain.

Was Al the FBI agent made to look more like a good guy or bad guy even though he was the one trying to bring down a crime boss? Explain.