

# **Breakfast on Pluto Study Guide**

**Breakfast on Pluto by Patrick McCabe (novelist)**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <a href="#">Breakfast on Pluto Study Guide.....</a>  | <a href="#">1</a>  |
| <a href="#">Contents.....</a>  | <a href="#">2</a>  |
| <a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>  | <a href="#">5</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 1, Merry Christmas, Mrs. Whiskers.....</a>                                   | <a href="#">6</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 2, Patrick Braden, Aged 13 - The Trouble Begins in Earnest!.....</a>         | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 3, In Flagrate Delicto, 7.03 p.m., Sept. 13 1968.....</a>                    | <a href="#">8</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 4, Mrs. O'Hare's Smalls.....</a>   | <a href="#">9</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 5, Welcome to Juke Box Jury.....</a>   | <a href="#">10</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 6, Most Popular Adolescent Boy.....</a>                                      | <a href="#">11</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 7, A Real Soldier and a Work of Art Delivered.....</a>                       | <a href="#">12</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 8, Breakfast Is Served.....</a>  | <a href="#">13</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 9, Ladies and Gentlemen - Mr. Dummy Teat!.....</a>                           | <a href="#">14</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 10, A Dublin Interlude.....</a>  | <a href="#">15</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 11, Hysterical Jokes and Greeting Visitors in a Sky-blue Negligeel!.....</a> | <a href="#">16</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 12, Celebrity Squares.....</a>   | <a href="#">17</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 13, A Girl Who Knows She's Loved!.....</a>                                   | <a href="#">18</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 14, A Head on Him Like Barney Gillis's Cockerel.....</a>                     | <a href="#">19</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 15, Elephants to England.....</a>  | <a href="#">20</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 16, In a Pig's Ear, Sweetie-Pie!.....</a>                                    | <a href="#">21</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 17, I Work Here.....</a>   | <a href="#">22</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 18, "Look! She's Lost Again!.....</a>  | <a href="#">23</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 19, Theme from 'A Summer Place'.....</a>                                     | <a href="#">24</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 20, Where the Fuck Is My Mammy.....</a>                                      | <a href="#">25</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 21, Welcome Home!.....</a>   | <a href="#">26</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 22, At Last I Get To Paint Them!.....</a>                                    | <a href="#">27</a> |



[Chapter 23, Up West!..... 28](#)

[Chapter 24, A Big Dead Flower..... 29](#)

[Chapter 25, A Little Curling Whisper: Why?..... 30](#)

[Chapter 26, "My Name's Not Eily Bergin!"..... 31](#)

[Chapter 27, Terence in a Sheepskin..... 32](#)

[Chapter 28, Dancing on a Saturday Night..... 33](#)

[Chapter 29, The Incident Behind the Creamery..... 34](#)

[Chapter 30, Chez Nous..... 35](#)

[Chapter 31, Running out on Louise..... 36](#)

[Chapter 32, Visitations in the Night..... 37](#)

[Chapter 33, A Long-Ago Night in November..... 38](#)

[Chapter 34, The Life and Times of Pat Puss, Hooker..... 39](#)

[Chapter 35, Detention in the School of Dr. Vernon, Late October 1974..... 40](#)

[Chapter 36, Al Pacino Reveals All..... 41](#)

[Chapter 37, Busy Men Prepare to Blow Up London and Get Pussy into Trouble..... 42](#)

[Chapter 38, Ooh, Bomber!..... 43](#)

[Chapter 39, It's Bombing Night and I Haven't Got a Thing to Wear..... 44](#)

[Chapter 40, A Lot of People Losing It!..... 45](#)

[Chapter 41, Hello, Mrs. Braden!..... 46](#)

[Chapter 42, Vengeance Shall Be Mine, Says Puss!..... 47](#)

[Chapter 43, The Lurex Avenger..... 48](#)

[Chapter 44, The Stench That No One Knows Is There..... 49](#)

[Chapter 45, A Great Day for Bonzo..... 50](#)

[Chapter 46, A View from the Hill..... 51](#)

[Chapter 47, Vicky Likes Salmon..... 52](#)

[Chapter 48, A Church in Flames..... 53](#)



[Chapter 49, A Sudden Burst of Gunfire..... 54](#)

[Chapter 50, Lynsey de Paul..... 55](#)

[Chapter 51, I Become a Bit of a Busybody..... 56](#)

[Chapter 52, I'm in Love..... 57](#)

[Chapter 53, If I Wasn't There..... 58](#)

[Chapter 54, The Other Thing..... 59](#)

[Chapter 55, We Leave Tyreelin Forever..... 60](#)

[Chapter 56, He's Ours!..... 61](#)

[Characters..... 62](#)

[Objects/Places..... 64](#)

[Themes..... 66](#)

[Style..... 68](#)

[Quotes..... 70](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 72](#)



# Plot Summary

This book captures part of the therapy of the book's main character, Patrick Braden's. His therapist, Terence, suggested to Patrick that he write down everything on his mind in order to help others understand. Patrick Braden more accurately refers to the novel as *The Life and Times of Patrick Braden*.

Patrick Braden lives in the small Irish town of Tyreelin, on the South border of North and South Ireland. Braden, who lives with a foster family, enjoys wearing women's clothing and singing in front of the mirror. As he ages, his lust for feminine things increases.

Father Bernard, a priest, is Patrick's real father who raped Patrick's mother, Eily Bergin, when she was a teenage girl. As part of his therapy, Patrick writes many short stories about this incident.

After finishing high school, Patrick, who dresses like a woman, leaves town and is picked up by a man in a Mercedes. The man becomes Patrick's boyfriend, and supports him for several months. However, Mr. Teat, as Patrick calls him, is killed and Patrick returns to Tyreelin.

Patrick soon leaves for London where he becomes a prostitute in Piccadilly Circus. A client, whom Patrick calls Silky String, attempts to murder him, but Patrick escapes. He continues practicing prostitution on the streets of London. He eventually meets a man named Bert and moves in with him. Several months later, Patrick falls in love with Louise, Bert's landlady, and he leaves Bert to be with her. When Patrick confesses that he loves her because she reminds him of his mother, Louise breaks up with him.

Irwin, one of Patrick's childhood friends, is killed while participating with the Irish republican Army. Charlie, his lover and a friend of Patrick's, becomes distraught over Irwin's death.

Patrick goes dancing at a bar one evening. While dancing with an officer, a bomb explodes and kills everyone except Patrick. The police seem certain that it was Patrick who planted the bomb and they take him into custody. Patrick meets Terence, who begins reading his short stories. After seven days pass and no evidence turns up, the police release Patrick.

Patrick returns to Tyreelin and purchases a house and a dog for him and Charlie. Charlie recovers from her depression related to Irwin's death and gets married. Patrick, who lives his life as a woman, spends his days flipping through magazines and looking at pictures of women.



# Chapter 1, Merry Christmas, Mrs. Whiskers

## Chapter 1, Merry Christmas, Mrs. Whiskers Summary

It is Christmas morning in Tyreelin, a small village that lies just south of the Irish border. As Bernard McIvor, pastor of the parish, is preparing for the Christmas mass he reflects upon how Christmas masses were once enchanting, filled with his inspiring tales and uplifting songs. Now, however, the pastor lacks that passion.

Father Bernard's loss of passion occurred in the 1950s, when the pastor had sex with a housemaid that looked "not unlike Mitzi Gaynor the well-known film star." The result of this tryst was Patrick Braden, the narrator of this story, who lives with his drunken mother, Whiskers, and his seven siblings.

## Chapter 1, Merry Christmas, Mrs. Whiskers Analysis

McCabe begins *Breakfast on Pluto* with a pleasant, predictable setting for a Christmas morning. Birds are chirping, dipping into milk bottles, and the air is clean. We meet Father Bernard the pastor, and assume the story will begin with a Christmas mass. McCabe then introduces Father Bernard's twisted past and the storybook quickly distorts into a fractured reality.

This first chapter sets the tone for an unhappy story. McCabe juxtaposes the fluffy Christmas world that everybody wants to see with the gritty reality of Patrick Braden's life. In so doing, McCabe lets the reader know that this will not be a happy story.



## **Chapter 2, Patrick Braden, Aged 13 - The Trouble Begins in Earnest!**

### **Chapter 2, Patrick Braden, Aged 13 - The Trouble Begins in Earnest! Summary**

Patrick, who is thirteen years old, is reprimanded by his English teacher, Peepers Egan, for submitting unacceptable essays with titles such as "Father Stalk Sticks It In" and "Father Bernard Rides Again!" "You won't do it again, will you Patrick?" asks Peepers. Patrick responds, "I haven't the slightest intention of stopping it." Patrick is slapped for this remark, but is punished no further for his actions.

### **Chapter 2, Patrick Braden, Aged 13 - The Trouble Begins in Earnest! Analysis**

Patrick's obsession with his father, Father Bernard, is first introduced in this chapter. This obsession continues throughout the story. We also learn that Patrick has a history of writing. This is important because the whole book, as explained in the introduction, is a therapeutic story written by Patrick for his psychiatrist, Terence.



## **Chapter 3, In Flagrante Delicto, 7.03 p.m., Sept. 13 1968**

### **Chapter 3, In Flagrante Delicto, 7.03 p.m., Sept. 13 1968 Summary**

Patrick waits for Caroline and Whiskers to leave the house, then sneaks into Whiskers' room and begins applying her makeup. While wearing Caroline's dress, Patrick pretends that he is dancing with Efram Zimbalist Junior, mocking the movie star's deep voice while saying, "Like to dance then, sweet Patricia?" Caroline and Whiskers enter the room as Braden is dancing and singing to "Son of a Preacher Man." Caroline screams for her dress while Whiskers repeatedly slaps Patrick.

### **Chapter 3, In Flagrante Delicto, 7.03 p.m., Sept. 13 1968 Analysis**

Patrick's transsexual urges begin when he is a just teenager. Patrick's boldness in dressing as a woman increases as the story progresses, and by the end of the story Patrick is living as a woman. It is ironic that Patrick is singing "Son of a Preacher Man" when he is caught, because he is literally the son of a preacher man.





## **Chapter 4, Mrs. O'Hare's Smalls**

### **Chapter 4, Mrs. O'Hare's Smalls Summary**

Patrick promises not to wear Caroline's things again. Instead, he steals Mrs. O'Hare's smalls from her laundry line and, wearing the smalls, pretends that he is dancing with Lorne Greene of Bonanza. Patrick is caught stealing the smalls, which are extremely large, and Mrs. O'Hare arrives at his house, screaming and waving her fists.

### **Chapter 4, Mrs. O'Hare's Smalls Analysis**

Patrick's urges go beyond mere curiosity; he is willing to do whatever it takes to satisfy his desire to dress as a woman. This incident foreshadows a later incident when his clothes are stolen off the clothesline.



## Chapter 5, Welcome to Juke Box Jury

### Chapter 5, Welcome to Juke Box Jury Summary

Patrick is playing castle with his two best friends, Charlie, a girl, and Irwin. Patrick met Irwin when he was mourning over his dead brother, who was allegedly eaten by Balubas in the Congo. However, his brother returned home from Africa three days later, bearing gifts of ebony elephants for everyone.

The group often pretends that they are characters in the movie Citizen Kane. Later, they start producing mock-international runway shows. The group begins playing "Juke Box Jury," a mock-television show game in which Charlie and Patrick sing popular songs and are then rated by the other members of the 'Kane Gang.' Patrick continues wearing women's clothing, perfume and jewelry and Irwin, who is fed up with Patrick's feminine behavior, quits the gang. Charlie and Patrick agree to play war occasionally in order to keep Irwin in the gang.

### Chapter 5, Welcome to Juke Box Jury Analysis

The two most important characters, other than Patrick, are introduced in this chapter. The author develops them quickly - Irwin loves war and Charlie enjoys singing and dancing. Their personalities remain static throughout the novel.



# **Chapter 6, Most Popular Adolescent Boy**

## **Chapter 6, Most Popular Adolescent Boy Summary**

Charlie and Patrick decide that they are going to leave town as soon as they finish high school. Irwin gets involved with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), while Patrick begins breaking into stores and stealing cosmetics.

## **Chapter 6, Most Popular Adolescent Boy Analysis**

Irwin, who always enjoyed playing war, becomes involved in actual warfare, joining the Irish Republican Army. Patrick, becoming increasingly brazen, continues to steal in order to satisfy his urges.



# **Chapter 7, A Real Soldier and a Work of Art Delivered**

## **Chapter 7, A Real Soldier and a Work of Art Delivered Summary**

It is 1971 and Irwin becomes more involved with the IRA, enlisting as a soldier. As he is about to leave Tyreelin, Patrick drops a short story in the mailbox of his dad, Father Bernard.

## **Chapter 7, A Real Soldier and a Work of Art Delivered Analysis**

This is Patrick's first attempt to contact his father, and it is clearly an attempt to make his father feel guilty about his past.



# Chapter 8, Breakfast Is Served

## Chapter 8, Breakfast Is Served Summary

The short story recounts the fictional meeting of Patrick's mother and Father Bernard. His mother is a young housekeeper who prepares breakfast for the sexually deprived priest. Father Bernard, whom Patrick refers to as Father Stalk, is turned on at the sight of the young girl's thigh and suddenly jumps on her and forces the girl to have sex with him. After the rape, the girl sings in her head: "Go anywhere / Go anywhere without leaving your chair / and let your thoughts run free / Living within your chair / and let your thoughts run free / Living within all the dreams you can spin / We'll visit the stars and journey to Mars / Finding our breakfast on Pluto!"

## Chapter 8, Breakfast Is Served Analysis

This short story is part of Patrick's therapy, which is intended to purge his anger through writing. The therapy is unsuccessful, as Patrick's anger only continues to increase.



## **Chapter 9, Ladies and Gentlemen - Mr. Dummy Teat!**

### **Chapter 9, Ladies and Gentlemen - Mr. Dummy Teat! Summary**

Patrick tells Caroline and Whiskers that he is leaving the house, which he refers to as Rat Trap Mansions. Caroline and Whiskers jump on top of him and try to stop him from leaving. Patrick leaves, taking the road to the nearest town, Scotsfield. A Mercedes pulls up alongside Patrick, and a married politician and arms dealer who Patrick refers to as Mr. Teat opens the car door and offers him a ride. Patrick accepts, and soon becomes the man's lover. Mr. Teat, whom Patrick calls 'dummy,' buys him everything that he wants, including expensive perfume and clothing.

### **Chapter 9, Ladies and Gentlemen - Mr. Dummy Teat! Analysis**

As soon as Patrick leaves Tyreelin, he is on the path to becoming a prostitute. Mr. Teat's name suggests suckling, or nourishment derived from a mother. Mr. Teat is Patrick's idea of a mother - a caretaker who buys him whatever he wants. Patrick is searching for a mother figure, and at the same time wishes to become a mother figure.

# Chapter 10, A Dublin Interlude

## Chapter 10, A Dublin Interlude Summary

On Saturdays, Charlie and Patrick travel to Dublin and shop with Dummy's money. They often go to a shop called 'Trash,' which is located in St. Stephen's Green in Dublin. Charlie and Patrick encounter Irwin on the streets of Dublin. Irwin is participating in an anti-internment march. Charlie and Patrick discuss the value of glam rock, which Patrick likes because it gives him an excuse to dress up like a woman. Irwin, however, is too interested in the war to listen to their conversation. The trio gets drunk off Harp, and Patrick greets strangers on the street, saying, "Why, Paddy Pussy, dahling!" He even says this to a British soldier. When they arrive home, Patrick learns that British soldiers in Derry have shot thirteen people.

## Chapter 10, A Dublin Interlude Analysis

This chapter is one of many reality-shocks; it removes the reader slightly from the world of the three main characters and looks at Ireland, which is in a state of civil war. We are reminded of much larger and more significant happenings in the country.



# **Chapter 11, Hysterical Jokes and Greeting Visitors in a Sky-blue Negligee!**

## **Chapter 11, Hysterical Jokes and Greeting Visitors in a Sky-blue Negligee! Summary**

Patrick spends his days thinking about getting a vagina and then giving birth to ten children. He thinks of all his children surrounding him on his deathbed, grateful that he was such a good mother. Patrick and Dummy continue their love affair until Dummy, whose real name is Eamon Faircroft, is killed. Patrick does not attend the funeral out of consideration for Faircroft's wife.

While drinking one evening at a local bar called Mulvey's, local residents crack jokes about Eamon's death. Not long after this incident, members of the IRA break into Patrick's apartment and 'Pussy,' as Patrick is sometimes called, is caught in front of the mirror wearing a sky-blue negligee. The members of the IRA, who are wearing ski-masks and flak-jackets, interrogate Patrick concerning Dummy's contacts. Patrick makes up stories, telling his interrogators that Eamon was allied with the CIA, the Mafia, and Interpol. The IRA members, one of whom Patrick recognizes, do not believe his stories. Patrick confesses that he does not know any information because Eaton never told him anything. The IRA members leave without harming Patrick. After the incident, Patrick considers leaving Tyreelin.

## **Chapter 11, Hysterical Jokes and Greeting Visitors in a Sky-blue Negligee! Analysis**

The first section of this chapter demonstrates Patrick's extreme confusion, which continues throughout the novel. He wants to find his mother, but is not certain if this can be accomplished by finding a motherly lover, or by becoming a mother. Motherhood is a main theme in *Breakfast on Pluto*; love is another. The second section of this chapter reminds us that there is a war going on and nobody, even Patrick, is apart from it. War is another theme in this novel.





# **Chapter 12, Celebrity Squares**

## **Chapter 12, Celebrity Squares Summary**

Laurence has Down syndrome and, because he cannot properly pronounce his words, refers to Celebrity Squares as 'Lebrity Kwares.' As a result, Patrick refers to him as Laurence Lebrity. Laurence is killed in the Northern Ireland war.

## **Chapter 12, Celebrity Squares Analysis**

This chapter demonstrates that the war affects everybody.



## Chapter 13, A Girl Who Knows She's Loved!

### Chapter 13, A Girl Who Knows She's Loved! Summary

Patrick does not leave Tyreelin because he receives a letter from a secret admirer that says: 'I love you - you know me.' Braden is immediately aware that the letter is from Jojo Finn. Although he is not interested in Jojo, the letter flatters Patrick.

Irwin, Charlie, Patrick and Jojo go to the town of Caven to see the Plattermen, a band. Patrick eyes his secret admirer throughout the evening. The group does not make it to the Plattermen concert because they get into a bar fight with some bikers, who, after realizing that Patrick is a man, decide to "Kill the hooring nancy queen!" Jojo, however, protects Patrick, fighting off the bikers, who eventually lose interest. Patrick is infatuated by Jojo's heroics, and he chases after Jojo when Jojo suddenly leaves the bar. Irwin finds Patrick wandering the streets in search of Jojo. Charlie reads The Mercy Sound to a telegraph pole.

### Chapter 13, A Girl Who Knows She's Loved! Analysis

This is the second mention of love in the novel. Patrick is so curious about the concept of love that the letter from Jojo keeps him from leaving Tyreelin. Jojo may actually be the only person in the novel who actually 'loves.' Patrick, however, seems incapable of loving another person and becomes interested in people only after he finds some use for them. In Jojo's case, Patrick's interest is piqued once he realizes that Jojo can protect him.



## **Chapter 14, A Head on Him Like Barney Gillis's Cockerel**

### **Chapter 14, A Head on Him Like Barney Gillis's Cockerel Summary**

Patrick is kicked out of his cottage, which had been paid for by Eamon, and moves in with Charlie and her parents. One evening while watching David Bowie perform his Ziggy Stardust routine on television, Mr. Kane (Charlie's father) comments that David Bowie has a "head on him like Barney Gillis's cockerel!" Upstairs, Charlie and Patrick play 'Charlie's Salon' as Charlie pretends to be a stylist. Patrick decides to leave Tyreelin.

### **Chapter 14, A Head on Him Like Barney Gillis's Cockerel Analysis**

This chapter progresses the story. Patrick leaves his cottage and decides to move to London.



# Chapter 15, Elephants to England

## Chapter 15, Elephants to England Summary

On the ferryboat ride to England, Patrick meets an ex-boxer named Elephants. Elephants and Patrick drink in the ferry bar, where Elephants eventually falls asleep on a table. Patrick steals some money out of the man's pocket just before the ferry docks in Liverpool.

Patrick recalls how Terence, a resident of Tyreelin, used to comment on Patrick's flagrant cross-dressing and how Father Bernard was tormented by the occasional short story he'd receive in his mailbox.

## Chapter 15, Elephants to England Analysis

Patrick shows interest in Elephants because, like Jojo, he is capable of protecting him. As far as a conscience, Patrick appears to have little or none. He does not seem interested in discerning between good and evil; he is a survivalist.

Other than the introduction, this is the first mention of Terence, Patrick's psychiatrist. Terence becomes more involved in the story as it progresses. Patrick's therapeutic short stories also increase as the story progresses.



# Chapter 16, In a Pig's Ear, Sweetie-Pie!

## Chapter 16, In a Pig's Ear, Sweetie-Pie! Summary

Patrick admits that he flaunted his flamboyant attire more than was necessary. He remembers how his dad, Father Bernard, avoided him at all cost - often taking out-of-the-way routes around town in order to avoid Patrick, who only wanted his father's affection. Patrick remembers when he found out about the 'Mickey money,' which was a local term for the blackmail money given to Whiskers for keeping Patrick's background a secret. When Patrick finds out about this money, he begins tearing Rat Trap Mansions apart and screaming at Whiskers. When he settles down, Caroline and Frank, her boyfriend, give Patrick twenty dollars.

## Chapter 16, In a Pig's Ear, Sweetie-Pie! Analysis

Patrick seems preoccupied with his father, and fatherhood is introduced as a theme in this story. It is quite ironic that his father is also a Father. Patrick offends his father in every possible manner, but all he is really looking for is affection. His father is a caretaker only in the sense that he offers some financial assistance to Patrick. This may be where Patrick gets his distorted vision of love - that love is monetary security. Rather than attempt to console Patrick, Caroline and Frank also choose to give him money as a replacement for love.



## **Chapter 17, I Work Here**

### **Chapter 17, I Work Here Summary**

Patrick visits Tyreelin's church, hoping to encounter his father. He enters the confession booth expecting to find Father Bernard. He says, "Hello, Daddy," but instead finds a young priest on the other side of the confession booth.

### **Chapter 17, I Work Here Analysis**

Patrick attempts to contact his father, but is unsuccessful. He is clearly seeking to torment the priest.



## **Chapter 18, "Look! She's Lost Again!"**

### **Chapter 18, "Look! She's Lost Again!" Summary**

After reading an article about male prostitutes, Patrick heads for Piccadilly Circus, where he hopes to make a living. Patrick arrives in London and gets lost several times before arriving in Piccadilly Circus.

### **Chapter 18, "Look! She's Lost Again!" Analysis**

Patrick's search for love leads him to prostitution. He is hopeful that he can find a lover to support him.



# Chapter 19, Theme from 'A Summer Place'

## Chapter 19, Theme from 'A Summer Place' Summary

Patrick hopes to find another Eamon Faircroft type of individual who will take care of him. Braden's sixth customer, whom he later refers to as Silky String, shares Patrick's love of music. The pair discusses Vic Damone, The Girl from Ipanema, and old-fashioned music. They arrive at an unused industrial area and Silky String asks Patrick to take off his clothes, which he does. Silky String takes out a 'silky string' and begins strangling Patrick, and all Patrick can think about is a poem that Charlie had once read: "I want to paint two thousand dead birds crucified on a background of night..." Silky String violently kisses Patrick. A Mitzi Gaynor song plays on the radio - Patrick bites off a piece of Silky's ear and gouges his eyes. He dresses quickly and gets a ride from a nice man who drives him to a hospital. Patrick does not go into the hospital, however, because he is afraid that the doctors will ask too many questions.

Several unsuccessful weeks of the prostitution business pass. His business is slowed by constant police raids. One evening, while sitting in a coffee shop, he smells his own odor, which smells like "a dysentery-ridden mongrel."

## Chapter 19, Theme from 'A Summer Place' Analysis

The incident with Silky String has a profound affect on Patrick, who consistently, yet subtly, refers to string throughout the rest of the novel. This near-death experience leads Patrick on the road to madness, and his mind degenerates from this point on.





# **Chapter 20, Where the Fuck Is My Mammy**

## **Chapter 20, Where the Fuck Is My Mammy Summary**

Patrick spends his evenings in the coffee shop, where he writes letters to Irwin and Charlie and thinks about his missing mother, Eily Bergin. Patrick meets a man named Bert.

## **Chapter 20, Where the Fuck Is My Mammy Analysis**

Patrick's obsession with his mother continues and he meets a new lover.

# Chapter 21, Welcome Home!

## Chapter 21, Welcome Home! Summary

It is August of 1973 and Bert, who has a penchant for yellow attire, becomes Patrick's new provider. The duo gets drunk nearly every evening, and sings karaoke and dances to jukebox songs in crowded cafes. One evening while he is drunk, Bert rants about Welcome Home, a song about a house. Bert feels that there should be a Welcome Home 2, in which the insides of the house are explained in detail.

Charlie argues with Irwin about his involvement with the IRA. Irwin lies, telling her that he only sells copies of the Republican News newspaper. In actuality, Irwin has participated in several operations, including one which was a retaliation to the death of a comrade, who was found floating down the river on a mattress with a six-inch nail through his head. Irwin and two other members of the IRA kill Mr. Anderson and his son while the Andersons are at home. Irwin is unable to kill either of the men, and pisses his pants when faced with the chance to commit the murder. From that point on, the police interrogate Irwin whenever he crosses the border into Northern Ireland. The police, who have no evidence against him, threaten to plant drugs on Charlie, so Irwin reveals information about the IRA.

## Chapter 21, Welcome Home! Analysis

The color yellow, which is worn by Bert, generally signifies vivacity and liveliness. This could certainly be said of Bert, who enjoys getting drunk and singing karaoke.

Irwin, who loved war as a child, is now playing out his fantasy. However, he finds that it is not as desirable as he had thought, and he cannot bring himself to kill another person. Despite his best attempts, Irwin simply is not a soldier. Ironically, Irwin, who loves to play war, understands love more than any other character in this novel, with the exception of Jojo. Both Jojo and Irwin are willing to put themselves on the line in order to protect those they care for. In the end, it is his love for Charlie that gets Irwin killed.



# Chapter 22, At Last I Get To Paint Them!

## Chapter 22, At Last I Get To Paint Them! Summary

Charlie talks to Patrick on the phone, and tells him again about Irwin's interactions with the police. Patrick says that he has sent Charlie some albums of the rock band Yes.

## Chapter 22, At Last I Get To Paint Them! Analysis

This is a very brief and insignificant chapter. It essentially recounts a follow-up phone call that is placed after Charlie's letter.



## Chapter 23, Up West!

### Chapter 23, Up West! Summary

An unknown narrator with a strong Irish accent talks about a bombing in a restaurant. A man's head is blown off and a woman loses her legs.

### Chapter 23, Up West! Analysis

This is another reality-shock chapter. The reader is informed of the sort of warfare that was occurring in Ireland at the time. Conflict, especially in reference to war, is constant throughout this story. The reader is reminded that Ireland is a war-torn country and that conflict is everywhere.



# Chapter 24, A Big Dead Flower

## Chapter 24, A Big Dead Flower Summary

Patrick, who inherited a good singing voice from his father, sings at the Wheatsheaf Hotel every Sunday morning. In character as Miss Dusty Springfield, Patrick sings songs such as, 'The Windmills of Your Mind,' 'Shout!,' and his favorite, 'Son of a Preacher Man.' After his gigs, Patrick and Bret get drunk, go home, and have sex. After sex, the "Daffodil Man" passes out like a "big dead flower."

## Chapter 24, A Big Dead Flower Analysis

This book is very much about forgiveness, or, more accurately, about Patrick's inability to forgive his father. Patrick sings 'Son of a Preacher Man' - this is part of his ongoing attack on his priest father.



## Chapter 25, A Little Curling Whisper: Why?

### Chapter 25, A Little Curling Whisper: Why? Summary

Patrick feels sorry for the landlady, Louise, whose son, Shaunie, was killed by a car in 1961. One day while Bert is away at work, a sobbing Louise confides in Patrick, telling him that Ginger, Louise's husband, had abandoned her. Patrick, with Louise's consent, dresses like Shaunie and sits on her leg, calling her 'Mammy.' Bert catches Patrick sitting on Louise's lap, sucking her nipple. When given a choice, Patrick decides to become Louise's lover. Soon thereafter, Bert moves out of the apartment complex and Patrick never sees him again.

### Chapter 25, A Little Curling Whisper: Why? Analysis

Patrick's second serious lover bears an uncanny resemblance to his first. Much like Mr. Teat, Louise is looking for someone whom she can support. Patrick is looking for a mother. Patrick goes as far as to suck on Louise's nipples. We can assume that Patrick opts to stay with Louise because she reminds Patrick more of his mother. His mother's love is, after all, what he is seeking.



## Chapter 26, "My Name's Not Eily Bergin!"

### Chapter 26, "My Name's Not Eily Bergin!" Summary

While Louise is shopping, Patrick walks the streets of the town, approaching strangers and asking if their name is Eily Bergin. Patrick reminisces about his ex-psychologist, Terence, who had once said, "I think the truth is, Patrick, is that you always secretly wanted to become her, Eily." Patrick loved Dr. Terence Harkin and was disappointed on the day that the doctor was replaced by another doctor. Following his ex-psychologist's advice, Patrick wrote his thoughts in the form of short stories.

### Chapter 26, "My Name's Not Eily Bergin!" Analysis

Terence's comment is very accurate, and it seems that Patrick does in fact want to become his mother. However, this is not necessarily the case - he may simply want to associate with his mother. Patrick never claims to be, or want to be, his mother.



# **Chapter 27, Terence in a Sheepskin**

## **Chapter 27, Terence in a Sheepskin Summary**

Patrick encounters Terence on Christmas Day and they embrace. They talk for a while and decide that Christmas is the best time of year. Patrick reminisces about his Christmas holidays as a child, and they sing 'On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine.'

## **Chapter 27, Terence in a Sheepskin Analysis**

This chapter is one of Patrick's short stories. He is living out his fantasy of Terence's return. It also foreshadows Terence's departure.





# Chapter 28, Dancing on a Saturday Night

## Chapter 28, Dancing on a Saturday Night Summary

The story shifts to Belfast, where two soldiers are wandering the streets on a Friday night. They brashly enter a disco and begin talking to two girls in the corner. After the bar closes, the girls invite the soldiers to an after-hours party. At the party, four men in ski-masks surround the soldiers and kill them.

Terence says that Patrick is thinking too much about life. Patrick fervently argues that parents who bring children into the world ought to be held responsible for those children. Patrick cries because his mother abandoned him. Patrick refers to the Martina episode that occurred behind the creamery. He also reveals that, after returning home from London, Charlie was miserable because of Irwin's murder.

## Chapter 28, Dancing on a Saturday Night Analysis

Terence feels that Patrick is "thinking too much about life." This statement is in reference to Patrick's short stories, which have begun to revolve around the IRA. Quite unprompted, Patrick begins crying about his lost mother. He has strong issues related to abandonment, which are demonstrated in the chapter. Again, this chapter expresses conflict through war.



# **Chapter 29, The Incident Behind the Creamery**

## **Chapter 29, The Incident Behind the Creamery Summary**

The incident behind the creamery occurred between Patrick and Martina, a fifteen-year-old girl who was having an affair with Tommy McNamee, a man who has been married for twenty years. Patrick lightly taps (slaps) Martina on the cheek while trying to calm her down. However, Patrick doesn't know that she is already pregnant with McNamee's child. To be certain that Martina and Tommy are using condoms, Patrick sneaks to the back of the creamery one evening, crawling on his hands and knees in search of semen. He accidentally puts his hand in a pile of semen.

## **Chapter 29, The Incident Behind the Creamery Analysis**

Patrick takes on a motherly role with Martina, attempting to dissuade her from seeing a much older man. However, Patrick has no right to play this role, for he is not her mother.

# **Chapter 30, Chez Nous**

## **Chapter 30, Chez Nous Summary**

It is a pleasant evening in Tyreelin. Patrick's mother, whom he refers to as 'Eily Mammy,' reads to a young Patrick. Dinner is served, and the picturesque family gathers around the dinner table and exchanges pleasant, loving conversation.

## **Chapter 30, Chez Nous Analysis**

Patrick is unable to let go of his past. He cannot stop thinking about 'what could have been,' and his inability to forgive the past is Patrick's main character flaw. Patrick will never conquer this flaw, thus making Breakfast on Pluto a tragic story.



# Chapter 31, Running out on Louise

## Chapter 31, Running out on Louise Summary

Patrick reveals his secret to Louise - his mother's name was Eily Bergin and his father was a priest. Louise consoles him and after learning about Patrick's real mother, Louise assaults Patrick and asks if he will stay for breakfast. Patrick confesses to Terence that he hates the word breakfast. Terence urges Patrick to write a story about his father.

## Chapter 31, Running out on Louise Analysis

Louise's anger over Patrick's betrayal (he thinks about Eily and not her) is ironic because Louise is pretending that Patrick is her son. Patrick most likely does not like the word breakfast because it reminds him of his mother's rape.



# Chapter 32, Visitations in the Night

## Chapter 32, Visitations in the Night Summary

The priests of a seminary are practicing football. Their coach, Father Joe McGeaney, shouts at them from the sideline. Nineteen-year-old Bernard McIvor (Father Bernard) is one of the seminarians playing football. That evening, Bernard awakes in the middle of the night because of lurid dreams about sex with women. He struggles with the apparitions of his dream, noticing the sweat-stained sheets on his bed. Suddenly, Father Bernard is receiving his breakfast from a young girl who looks like Mitzi Gaynor.

When Terence enters Patrick's room, Patrick is screaming his father's name yelling, "I'll fucking kill him!" Terence says that Patrick must learn to forgive.

## Chapter 32, Visitations in the Night Analysis

It is apparent that Braden is at least attempting to forgive his father. The beginning of this short story is sterile. However, his anger soon takes over and Patrick is writing the same story over. Terence tells Patrick to forgive, but he is incapable of doing so.



# Chapter 33, A Long-Ago Night in November

## Chapter 33, A Long-Ago Night in November Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Bergin are peacefully sitting by the fire listening to the radio on a Saturday night. Their daughter, Eileen - Eily for short - is upstairs listening to music. Eily loves songs by Vic Damone. The following day, Mrs. McGlynn has an accident, and Eily, who is a very good person, agrees to fill in for her at Father Bernard's house. After preparing breakfast for the priest, she watches a young girl, who looks a lot like herself, get raped. She gets pregnant and decides not to abort the baby, but to give it away to the Bradens. After its birth, she puts the baby in a Rinso box, places the box on the Bradens' doorstep, and runs away forever. Eily's father goes insane because of his daughter's disappearance, and he is occasionally seen talking to cows, asking if they know his Eily.

## Chapter 33, A Long-Ago Night in November Analysis

Patrick is once again heaping blame upon Father Bernard's shoulders. It should be noted that there is no credible witness to the rape and no way that Patrick could possibly know so many details about the incident. Patrick is incredibly unpredictable and unbelievable as a narrator, and most, if not all, of *Breakfast on Pluto* should be taken as 'a story told by Patrick Braden.'



# Chapter 34, The Life and Times of Pat Puss, Hooker

## Chapter 34, The Life and Times of Pat Puss, Hooker Summary

Patrick resorts to the life of a hooker, working non-stop in order to make ends meet. Over the phone, Patrick speaks to Charlie. Patrick explains his occupation to Terence, saying that he'd do whatever a client asks, whether that be acting like a famous person, dancing, or performing sexual acts.

## Chapter 34, The Life and Times of Pat Puss, Hooker Analysis

Because he has been misled on the concept of love, Patrick believes that doing what people want is the way to gain their affection. He also equates affection with money, an equation that would be beneficial in the hooker business. We again see Patrick as the survivor, who does not know good from evil. He talks to Terence about his exploits with complete disregard as to their moral value.



## **Chapter 35, Detention in the School of Dr. Vernon, Late October 1974**

### **Chapter 35, Detention in the School of Dr. Vernon, Late October 1974 Summary**

Patrick is with a client named Dr. Vernon, who enjoys acting like a schoolmaster and punishing Patrick. Patrick is frightened at first, thinking that Vernon might be another Silky String, but he soon finds that the worst thing Vernon does is make him write the phrase "I Must Not be a Bad Mandy" 100 times. Patrick moves in with Vernon, but soon regrets doing so.

### **Chapter 35, Detention in the School of Dr. Vernon, Late October 1974 Analysis**

Still looking for someone to take care of him, Patrick is willing to degrade himself in order to be taken care of. He is never in love with Dr. Vernon, and shows little interest in him.





# Chapter 36, Al Pacino Reveals All

## Chapter 36, Al Pacino Reveals All Summary

Patrick leaves Vernon and wanders the streets of the West End in a hallucinatory state. He peers in the windows of bars, searching for a new lover, and imagines the life of a rock star or as Al Pacino's lover.

## Chapter 36, Al Pacino Reveals All Analysis

Patrick is still looking for a lover who can take care of him financially. Since he equates money with love, he assumes that a rock star or movie star would make the best lover.



## **Chapter 37, Busy Men Prepare to Blow Up London and Get Pussy into Trouble**

### **Chapter 37, Busy Men Prepare to Blow Up London and Get Pussy into Trouble Summary**

The date is November 6, 1974. Big Joe Kiernan and his group of bombers, Mayo Jack and Faigs, are preparing to go on a bombing raid. They construct a bomb out of gelignite, then drive away in a Mark 2 Ford Cortina.

### **Chapter 37, Busy Men Prepare to Blow Up London and Get Pussy into Trouble Analysis**

This is the story of the events of a bombing as told by Patrick. It is difficult to tell whether any of this actually occurred or if Patrick made it all up.



# Chapter 38, Ooh, Bomber!

## Chapter 38, Ooh, Bomber! Summary

Pussy enters a disco-pub that is full of soldiers. Mistaken for a girl, Patrick dances with one of the soldiers. Suddenly, the soldier who Patrick is dancing with lay dead on the dance floor. Bodies are strewn about and Pussy, who was near the point of detonation, is covered in soot and his nylons are ripped to shreds. Patrick (Pussy) stands in the middle of the room and laughs, thinking how he must get a new pair of nylons. Patrick is put in an ambulance when the police arrive and is taken to a hospital where his 'little secret' is discovered. The police are convinced that Patrick is the bomber. Patrick reads a newspaper article accusing him of the bombing; the caption above a picture of Patrick at the scene of the crime reads "Sweet Smile of a Killer."

## Chapter 38, Ooh, Bomber! Analysis

We can assume that these events actually happened. Patrick finally comes face-to-face with the civil war, and it drives him insane. This is the second incident (Silky String is the first) that mentally scars Patrick. This could be considered the point when Patrick 'loses it.'



# Chapter 39, It's Bombing Night and I Haven't Got a Thing to Wear

## Chapter 39, It's Bombing Night and I Haven't Got a Thing to Wear Summary

An IRA active service unit prepares for a Thursday night on the town in the London suburb of Hammersmith. They decide to go to a West End restaurant, which is frequented by businessmen and members of parliament. They prepare the bomb while their leader, Paddy Pussy, tries on evening gowns in front of the mirror. Pussy does not want to do the bombing this evening. Terence says that Patrick had an out-of-body experience when he was in the prison cell.

## Chapter 39, It's Bombing Night and I Haven't Got a Thing to Wear Analysis

Patrick's stories seem to indicate that he had something to do with the bombing. Terence realizes that Patrick is not mentally stable, and that his writings do not necessarily represent the truth. It becomes evident that Patrick's writings about the IRA, which formerly seemed inappropriate, must have stemmed from the bombing incident.



# Chapter 40, A Lot of People Losing It!

## Chapter 40, A Lot of People Losing It! Summary

Patrick has been incarcerated for four days, and Detective Routledge is anxious because he can legally hold Patrick for only seven days. Routledge cannot get any coherent confession from Patrick. He wants to go into the cell and 'knock some more sense into his suspect,' but Wallis, his partner, tells him not to. The detective begins to think that he has apprehended the wrong person, and that Patrick really is just a transvestite prostitute.

## Chapter 40, A Lot of People Losing It! Analysis

It is important for the reader to keep in mind that this is the story as told by Patrick Braden. There is no evidence that this chapter ever occurred - Patrick is telling the story as he thinks it may have happened.



# Chapter 41, Hello, Mrs. Braden!

## Chapter 41, Hello, Mrs. Braden! Summary

Patrick hallucinates in his cell and sees his mother, Eily Bergin. She asks Hairy if she can have her son back; Hairy says yes. Patrick is ecstatic to be with his mother again.

## Chapter 41, Hello, Mrs. Braden! Analysis

Even while in a state of insanity, Patrick seeks out his mother. He is once again living life out as it 'may have been.'



# **Chapter 42, Vengeance Shall Be Mine, Says Puss!**

## **Chapter 42, Vengeance Shall Be Mine, Says Puss! Summary**

Pussy and his mother are on a deserted island. "Wasn't he really an awful person to do what he did?" Eily asks of Father Bernard. "Yes. He was," says Pussy. Pussy's mother says that Pussy must learn to forgive. Routledge and Wallis enter the cell and find Patrick in a fit of rage, screaming, "I'll kill him! I'll kill him! I'll burn his church and him along with it!" Routledge believes the outburst is a result of Patrick's guilt over killing so many people.

## **Chapter 42, Vengeance Shall Be Mine, Says Puss! Analysis**

We again see the theme of forgiveness, as introduced by Patrick's imaginary mother. She asks him to forgive, which he clearly cannot do, yelling, "I'll kill him!"



## **Chapter 43, The Lurex Avenger**

### **Chapter 43, The Lurex Avenger Summary**

Mrs. Whiskers points to a figure on the mountainside and says "To the town of her birth she now returns, to visit every hill and dale." It is The Lurex Avenger (Patrick's fictional hero-name).

### **Chapter 43, The Lurex Avenger Analysis**

This is the height of Patrick's hallucinatory state. He takes on the name of the Lurex Avenger. (Lurex is a metallic yarn that is often used in fancy clothing.)





# Chapter 44, The Stench That No One Knows Is There

## Chapter 44, The Stench That No One Knows Is There Summary

The Nolan family is eating dinner when they smell the 'stench' of Chanel No. 19. They attempt to discern the origin of the odor, but cannot, for it the "Spirit-Pussy, Puss Avenger" gliding in the night sky above the town of Tyreelin.

## Chapter 44, The Stench That No One Knows Is There Analysis

Patrick begins to refer to himself as Pussy. Although he has done this throughout the book, he now refers to himself almost solely by this name. Patrick is still unconscious, possibly drugged with a sedative. He fantasizes about getting his vengeance on the people of Tyreelin.



# Chapter 45, A Great Day for Bonzo

## Chapter 45, A Great Day for Bonzo Summary

An old classmate of Patrick's, Pat McGrane, is leaving his job at a frozen meat plant. He receives his paycheck and finds that there is extra money for some overtime. It is Thursday and, like every Thursday, Pat crosses the border in order to go dancing with his girlfriend, Sandra. She likes Gene Stuart and the Mighty Avons; he likes Creedence Clearwater Revival (CCR), and dresses like John Fogerty. Pat is happy when Gene Stuart covers 'Bad Moon Rising,' a CCR song. After taking Sandra home, Pat drives back toward Tyreelin. He drives through Rosary Row, named for all the deaths that had occurred on a particular stretch of road. Someone carrying a lantern stops him. Before he knows what is going on, Pat is hit in the head with a wheel-brace and taken to an unknown location. His unidentified captors torture him because he is Catholic and dating a Protestant. He is cut by knives, and passes out while the captors watch A Great Day for Bonzo. Eventually, the captors shoot him in the head.

Patrick wakes up laughing. Wallis asks what he was dreaming about and Patrick replies, "Perfume." Terence tells Patrick to write out his feelings so he can understand.

## Chapter 45, A Great Day for Bonzo Analysis

This is another hallucinatory dream, and is written in the style that McCabe feels comfortable with. McCabe introduces a perfect setting, and then quickly tears it apart. This dream is vaguely similar to the next story that Patrick tells, which is about Irwin's death. It is possible that this is the surreal, dream version of Irwin's death.



# Chapter 46, A View from the Hill

## Chapter 46, A View from the Hill Summary

A police sergeant, drinking in Mulvey's bar in Tyreelin, mutters something cynical about the IRA. Horse Kinnane, who hears this comment, stomps to the bathroom and punches a hole in the wall. Later that evening, a volunteer, who has just been released from a five-year prison sentence, enters the bar and is whole-heartedly welcomed by Horse and his friend Jackie. They buy the volunteer, Irwin Kerr, some shots of vodka, then drive him to Cardonagh Lake. Irwin confesses that he'd given the cops some information. Jackie shoots Irwin and they drive to the quarry and dump the corpse.

Pussy, in his prison cell, screams, "You're going to die, Daddy!...I'm going to burn your church with you inside it."

## Chapter 46, A View from the Hill Analysis

In this chapter, we learn how Irwin died. It is difficult to know how much of the story is fact, because Patrick has no way of knowing what actually happened to Irwin. We do know that Irwin is dead, and that he probably died because he had been talking to the police.



# Chapter 47, Vicky Likes Salmon

## Chapter 47, Vicky Likes Salmon Summary

Patrick visits Big Vicky, one of the people responsible for Pat McGrane's torture and murder. Patrick, whom Vicky mistakes for a girl, charms Vicky, and Vicky invites Patrick into his bedroom. Vicky proudly displays his gun, a Magnum, for which Patrick asks permission to handle. Vicky hands the gun to Patrick; Patrick shoots him in the face.

## Chapter 47, Vicky Likes Salmon Analysis

The title of this chapter connotes that Vicky is a womanizer. Patrick uses this weakness to kill him. However, none of this is true; it is a short story.



## Chapter 48, A Church in Flames

### Chapter 48, A Church in Flames Summary

Father Bernard is preparing for Saturday evening confession. He checks to make sure he has everything he needs, then heads across town toward the Church of the Holy Savior. As he nears the confessional, the father notices a strange woman kneeling by the side aisle. When he is finished hearing confessions, Father Bernard leaves the confessional and is confronted by the strange woman, Pussy, who opens her trench coat, flashing the priest. Pussy assaults Father Bernard and then burns the church down, with the priest in it.

### Chapter 48, A Church in Flames Analysis

This is Patrick's catharsis, his purging of emotional anguish, summed up in a short story. This short story is Patrick's way of forgiving his father, something he is clearly unable to do. Because he blames Father Bernard for more than just his abandonment - his transexuality as well- Patrick will never gain peace of mind.



# Chapter 49, A Sudden Burst of Gunfire

## Chapter 49, A Sudden Burst of Gunfire Summary

It is a quiet night at Mulvey's bar and Dessie is washing glasses before the late-night rush. A customer is seated on a bar stool, puffing on a cigarette. There is a burst of gunfire; glass breaks, bullets splinter the walls. Pussy, the gunman, runs into the shadows, watching the Church of the Holy Savior burning in the distance.

Patrick wakes up and Routledge says, "You're free."

## Chapter 49, A Sudden Burst of Gunfire Analysis

Patrick's final fantasy is acted out in this dream. He destroys Mulvey's and watches as his father's church burns to the ground.



# Chapter 50, Lynsey de Paul

## Chapter 50, Lynsey de Paul Summary

Routledge and Wallis force Patrick, who does not want to leave the police station, out. Patrick wishes they would arrest him again. He returns to working as a hooker and soon saves up enough money to return to Tyreelin. He meets a man on the plane ride home who says that Patrick looks like Lynsey de Paul. Patrick had painted a mole on his lip to look more like her.

## Chapter 50, Lynsey de Paul Analysis

Patrick craves security so much that he does not want to leave prison. He is now living as a woman. Lynsey de Paul was a female glam rocker.



# Chapter 51, I Become a Bit of a Busybody

## Chapter 51, I Become a Bit of a Busybody Summary

Patrick buys a bungalow when he returns to Tyreelin. He seeks out Charlie, who'd been kicked out of her parent's house after dropping out of school, and finds her stumbling around the village with a bottle of vodka in her hand. Patrick takes her in and buys a dog to keep Charlie company. Charlie, who continues to drink abusively, names the dog Squire. Patrick cleans the house constantly and ruminates on the incident behind the creamery with Martina Sheridan.

## Chapter 51, I Become a Bit of a Busybody Analysis

The story is ending. Patrick returns to Tyreelin and finds Charlie in a terrible state, depressed, dealing with Irwin's death. Patrick, who equates affection with gifts, purchases a dog for Charlie.





## Chapter 52, I'm in Love

### Chapter 52, I'm in Love Summary

Patrick falls in love with Brendan Cleeve, a local boy, at Mulvey's. Patrick is so happy that when he gets home, he climbs in bed with Charlie and sings: "Up on the moon/We'll all be there soon/Watching the earth down below/We'll visit the stars/And journey to Mars/Finding our breakfast on Pluto!"

### Chapter 52, I'm in Love Analysis

We are misled to believe that Patrick may have actually found love. Patrick has never talked to Brendan Cleeve, and his attraction is strictly superficial. Patrick has learned nothing about the nature of love. The song that he sings to Charlie not only contains the title of this book, but sums up Patrick's concept of love. He sees love as a grandiose thing, as something that will take him to strange and exotic places. Thus, throughout the story, he places himself in strange situations in search of love.



## **Chapter 53, If I Wasn't There**

### **Chapter 53, If I Wasn't There Summary**

Patrick is certain that Brendan is interested in him because he had caught him staring at his legs. Every night at six o'clock, Patrick goes to Mulvey's and waits for Brendan to arrive. He tries to get his attention, but is unsuccessful. On the third night, Patrick sobs in the corner because Brendan doesn't notice him.

### **Chapter 53, If I Wasn't There Analysis**

Patrick is obsessed with Brendan, as he has been with people that he formerly 'loved.' Again, he does not understand the down-to-earth aspects of love and does not have a realistic view of what love ought to be.



# Chapter 54, The Other Thing

## Chapter 54, The Other Thing Summary

One evening at Mulvey's, while Patrick drinks gin by himself, Brendan begins talking to Tina Kelleher. The couple touches arms and kiss. Patrick walks across the barroom floor and lights Tina's hair on fire.

## Chapter 54, The Other Thing Analysis

The chapter title refers to the 'other thing' (besides the incident with Martina) that Patrick did to make himself unwanted in Tyreelin, which was setting Tina's hair on fire. Patrick is clearly still an angry individual, and, although he attempts to cope with his anger, he has yet to be successful at doing so.



# Chapter 55, We Leave Tyreelin Forever

## Chapter 55, We Leave Tyreelin Forever Summary

Soon after the hair-lighting incident, Brendan or Smigs and Martina Sheridan's brother, steal Patrick's dresses off his washing line, presumably. Several days later, Patrick finds his clothes in the garden, tattered and dirty. Squire is found dead, with barbed wire wrapped around his neck. Not wanting to make her more depressed, Patrick says that Squire ran away. Because of Squire's disappearance, Charlie begins to recover; Patrick believes that she just couldn't get any lower, so the only direction left to go was up. They visit Irwin's grave and Charlie describes what it was like seeing his body in the morgue.

## Chapter 55, We Leave Tyreelin Forever Analysis

Much like Patrick steals Mrs. O'Hare's clothes in the beginning of the book, his clothes are stolen. The book features a cyclical pattern that gives the book an asymmetry - the beginning is similar to the end. However, Patrick now takes the role of the woman. Charlie recovers, becoming the only character in the story who demonstrates any ability to grow. She is arguably the only dynamic character in *Breakfast on Pluto*. Charlie is able to let the past be the past, and says goodbye to Irwin. Patrick, on the other hand, is never able to let go of the past.

# Chapter 56, He's Ours!

## Chapter 56, He's Ours! Summary

When Patrick says he has a new short story for Terence to read, the nurse tells him that "The doctor won't be coming in anymore!" Patrick is initially very angry about this news, and wants to burn all his short stories. Charlie gets married to a man named Doug, who was an art student at Slade College. They have three children. Patrick does not find his mother, even after scouring all of London. He gives up his escort business and sells all his hooking clothes. Patrick spends his days flipping through magazines for pictures of Mitzi Gaynor, and dreaming about waking up in the hospital one day, surrounded by all his friends and family, who say, "He's ours!"

## Chapter 56, He's Ours! Analysis

The main theme of *Breakfast on Pluto* is forgiveness. Patrick, who still has issues with anger, is unable to forgive and therefore harbors deep emotions that he generally wants to express through burning things. The theme of burning appears throughout the novel as the enactment of Patrick's rage. Charlie finds love; she, unlike Patrick, is able to see the attainable and realistic, domestic side of love. Patrick continues to misunderstand the nature of love, and is, in the end, all alone.



# Characters

## Patrick Braden / Pussy

For all intents and purposes, Patrick Braden is the author of this book. The story is told through his experiences and his point of view. Patrick is the orphan of Father Bernard and Eily Bergin, a young girl who was raped by the priest. Patrick suffers from gender confusion, which may be a result of his lack of parenting. He searches, in lovers and within himself, for his mother. Patrick is a transsexual who may or may not want 'to become his mother,' as his psychologist Terence believes. When searching for lovers, Patrick is really looking for caretakers. He is very confused about the concept of love, and believes that affection is demonstrated through gifts.

Braden is a tragic hero because he does not conquer his demons, which revolve around his past. Patrick cannot forgive his father and is stuck in a cycle of anger that he never quite resolves. Although he seems to recover to some degree, Patrick never completely forgives his father. Physically, Patrick changes, but because he does not change emotionally, he is a static character. He is also a round character, however, which means that McCabe spent a lot of time developing Braden's character. The static/round combination is relatively rare, as most round characters develop into dynamic characters.

## Charlie Kane

Charlie is Patrick's closest friend. They have been friends since childhood, when they dressed like women and sang songs. Charlie is the only dynamic character in this novel because she is able to let go of the past. After Irwin's death, she is horribly depressed and becomes an alcoholic. She continues to mull over the sight of Irwin's dead body. Once her dog Squire is killed, she recovers. Charlie is unstable throughout most of the story and, like Patrick, is an alcoholic. She is also the only dynamic, changing character in *Breakfast on Pluto*. She is able to let go of the past and move on, something that Patrick is never capable of doing.

## Irwin Kerr

Irwin is Patrick's childhood friend who is obsessed with war. He enjoys war as a child and later becomes involved in the war between the north and the south. Charlie and Irwin eventually become lovers. The IRA kills him for surrendering information to the police. Irwin demonstrates the dichotomy between war and love. Although he enjoys playing war, he really is not a soldier. Irwin is a lover who sacrifices his own life for Charlie. Irwin has the potential to become a dynamic character, but dies before he can fully develop.



## **Father Bernard**

Father Bernard is Patrick's father.

## **Eily Bergin**

Eily Bergin is Patrick's mother.

## **Terence**

Terence is Patrick's psychiatrist.

## **Eamon Faircroft / Mr. Teat / Dummy**

Eamon is a married politician and Patrick's first boyfriend. He dies in a car bomb explosion.

## **Mrs. Whiskers**

She is Patrick's step-mother.

## **Silky String**

This is the name given by Patrick to a client who tries to strangle him with a 'silky string.'

## **Bert**

He is Patrick's second lover. He enjoys karaoke and has a penchant for yellow.

## **Louise**

She is Bert's landlady and Patrick's third lover. She has Patrick dress up like her young son who died in a bus accident.

## **Martina**

She is a fifteen-year-old girl that lives in Tyreelin. Patrick attempts to talk her out of having an affair with a married man.



## Objects/Places

### **Tyreelin**

This is a town on the south side of the border of North and South Ireland. This is Patrick's hometown and the setting for most of the story.

### **The Church of the Holy Savior**

This is the church where Father Bernard works.

### **Mulvey's**

This is an IRA-friendly bar in Tyreelin.

### **IRA**

The IRA is the Irish Republican Army.

### **Republican News**

This is a newspaper distributed by the IRA.

### **Trash**

Trash is the favorite clothing store in Dublin of Patrick and Charlie.

### **Piccadilly Circus**

This is a seedy district of London where Patrick becomes a prostitute.

### **Yes**

Yes is a popular 70s rock band - Charlie's favorite.

### **Squire**

Squire is Charlie's dog that is strangled to death with barbed wire.





## **Vic Damone**

Vic Damone is one of Patrick's favorite singers.

## **Chanel No. 19**

Chanel No. 9 is Patrick's favorite perfume.



# Themes

## Love

Love is a major theme in *Breakfast on Pluto*. It is Patrick's motivation behind many of his bizarre actions. Patrick seeks the love of his parents, specifically his mother, throughout the novel. Unfortunately, because he never experienced any emotional love from his parents, Patrick misconstrues love to be something material.

When he starts dating Mr. Teat, Patrick truly believes that he has found love. Teat provides Patrick with material things, which Patrick believes is a display of love. However, Mr. Teat does not love Patrick. Patrick's second lover, Bert, is similar to Mr. Teat in that he is a caretaker. Patrick, who is looking for a parent-figure, is comfortable accepting a lover who will take care of him. He leaves Bert for Louise, who is more like a mother than Bert could ever be. This is a relationship based on the perversion of the past - Patrick wants Louise to act like his mother; Louise wants Patrick to act like her dead son. This scene of the novel sums up Patrick's search for love - he imagines he is on his deathbed, surrounded by all his loved ones, who say, "He's ours!" This is the culmination of Patrick's desire to be wanted and to be loved.

## Forgiveness

The entire purpose of this novel (Patrick's writings) is for Patrick to learn to forgive. Terence tells Patrick to write in order to purge his feelings. Patrick expresses his thoughts, but he does not successfully purge his emotions because he is unable to forgive his father, saying, "I'll kill him! I'll kill him! I'll burn his church and him along with it." He repeats this phrase throughout the novel, and even writes a story about burning down the church. However, this story does not successfully purge Patrick's anger, and he continues to have a lot of pent up anger. Patrick sees that it is necessary for him to forgive (he even admits that Terence was right at some point) but he is still unable to fully let go of the past.

Charlie, on the other hand, is able to forgive. She experiences a major depressive episode after Irwin's death, but is able to recover because she is able to let go of the past and forget the challenging events of her past. As a result, she lives a relatively normal life. Forgiveness is linked closely with love in this novel. Those who can forgive (Charlie) find love. Those who cannot (Patrick) are unable to find love because they are unable to grasp the barest necessity of love - forgiveness.

## Motherhood

The theme of motherhood (however twisted) is recurrent throughout *Breakfast on Pluto*. Patrick is constantly searching for his mother throughout the novel. He finds her in two ways: first, by becoming her; and second, by replacing her. According to Terence,



Patrick becomes a transsexual because he 'always wanted to be' his mother. Patrick compensates for her absence by creating an image of her within himself. Later in the novel, Patrick attempts to act as a mother figure for Martina. However, Patrick does not understand the motherly role, and plays it completely wrong. At the end of the novel, Patrick wishes that all those who loved him would surround him on his deathbed and say, "He's ours!" This harkens back to an earlier part of the novel when Patrick talks about having ten children, all of whom would rush to his side when he was dying because he was such a good mother.

Patrick learns to replace his mother with things that he finds nurturing or to be in her likeness. He is first obsessed with Mitzi Gaynor, who he believes looks like his mother. Patrick's lovers all take on the role of caretaker, and Louise even takes on the role of mother, although artificially. Patrick learns to replace affection, which he did not have when he was growing up, with material possessions.



# Style

## Point of View

The character Patrick Braden writes the bulk of *Breakfast on Pluto*. Because of this, the story is mostly told from Patrick's first-person point of view. However, numerous chapters in the book deal with third person short stories, which are also written by Patrick. Because this is a book within a book, Patrick can manipulate the story at any time, switching between points of view and shifting between the present and the future. This creates a muddled narrative, which was probably McCabe's intention, because his main character is such a muddled individual. Everything in this story is subjective and from Patrick's perspective.

Patrick is not the most honest individual and therefore, his narrative is not necessarily believable. The reader is often confused by Patrick's true intentions in writing this story, as it often seems like he is lashing out at others. This also creates a sort of dramatic irony, in that the reader is able to see things that Patrick is incapable or unwilling to see. Patrick sees the world the way he wishes it to be, the reader can observe Patrick's world from an outsider's standpoint, which is most likely more realistic than Patrick's. McCabe, the author, removes himself completely from this story and the reader may believe by that Patrick Braden actually did write this story.

## Setting

Setting plays a key role in this book. The story takes place in the late 1900s, a time when Ireland was in the midst of a religious civil war. The subplots of this novel revolve around this war, and much of the storyline is driven by events involving the war. Patrick and those around him are clearly shell-shocked by this war. War is the topic at the local bars and murders occur frequently throughout the novel. The war hits very close to home, first when Irwin is murdered, and later when Patrick is at the scene of a bombing.

Other minor factors, such as the era of glam rock, which made Pussy's outlandish dress somewhat acceptable, add to the setting. Music is a reference point throughout this novel, and one can get a sense for the pop culture of the time through the rock stars that are mentioned (David Bowie, Lynsey de Paul).

## Language and Meaning

Some of *Breakfast on Pluto* is written in colloquial Irish, which means some of the terminology may be foreign to some readers. Here is an example of some of the Irish dialect: "It's the politicians wot facks it ap! Let 'em go and fack 'emselves." With a little pronunciation, the reader can figure out the meaning of this phrase, which is one of the most heavily accented Irish phrases in the entire novel. Other terms such as fag (cigarette) and chuffed (angry) appear in the novel, but are always in a context that



allows the reader to determine their meaning. Most of this novel occurs in a rural town, and the language reflects that of a middle class community. The reader should therefore not expect elevated speech, and colloquial Irish seems appropriate for the setting. Patrick is highly effeminate; therefore, most his language in *Breakfast on Pluto* is ultra-feminine. Not only is Patrick's language feminine, but it also has diva/actress tones. This language strongly reflects Patrick's desire to become a woman.

## Structure

*Breakfast on Pluto* is divided into 56 chapters. Some chapters follow the life of Patrick, some his dreams, and others are short stories written by Patrick about various things, most commonly his father and war. The chapters can be incredibly brief, sometimes only as long as a paragraph. This structure is incredibly uncommon and would most likely not be used by many authors. However, the story is supposed to have been written by Patrick, who is not an author. In structuring the book in such a manner, McCabe (the actual author) captures how a person like Patrick might compose a book. The book is Patrick's therapy. It is organized chronologically; however, writing about events after they have occurred, Patrick often references events in the future without giving explanation until a later time. Because of this, the book flows like a stream of consciousness - not necessarily in an organized manner from one thought to the next.



## Quotes

"No! Why should I! When all you want is the impossible - a vagina all of your own!"  
Chapter 10, p. 36.

"If anyone lays a paw on you - just tell them Elephants isn't far away!" Chapter 15, p. 56.

"Father Bernard...must have been tormented, not only by my persistently vindictive missives but by the sight of me strutting about town in the ostentatious manner I did."  
Chapter 15, p. 58.

"I want to paint two thousand dead birds crucified on a background of night." Chapter 19, p. 69.

"Naughty Pussy, gold-digging girl!" Chapter 22, p. 80.

"Oh my silly boy, my Shaunies." Chapter 25, p. 92.

"Oh Dr. (Terence) Harkin? He's leaving. Dr. Fenshaw will be taking over from now on."  
Chapter 26, p. 95.

"Martina! There are things you should know about. These people are just using you! You're only fifteen!" Chapter 29, p. 105.

"I want to hear about him, the man who gave you life! The bastard you hate who dumped you on the step or started proceedings that led to it! We've got to hear, you hear me?" Chapter 31, p. 116.

"You'll have to learn to forgive." Chapter 32, p.124.

"Why is she laughing, for heaven's sake? Doesn't she realize she ought to be dead?"  
Chapter 38, p. 141.

"But it's a long time ago...And we've got to forget. Somehow we've got to forget and forgive." Chapter 42, p. 153.

"I'll kill him! I'll kill him! I'll burn his church and him along with it!" Chapter 42, p. 153.

"Well at least he can say we know him." Chapter 50, p. 182.

"At last it's happened! I'm in love! I've found my Home-Loving Man!" Chapter 52, p. 189.

"Up on the moon/We'll all be there soon/Watching the earth down below/We'll visit the stars/And journey to Mars/Finding our breakfast on Pluto!" Chapter 52, p. 190.

"All I really want is to be left alone here, flicking through my magazines...looking yet again for Mitzi and that old bubble-cut of hers, maybe one day taking the time to write it down for Terence." Chapter 56, pg. 199.

## Topics for Discussion

Discuss whether or not you believe that Patrick is a dynamic character. Support your argument with examples from the text.

Discuss forgiveness as a major theme in this novel.

Is Patrick a believable narrator? Explain your answer, citing the text.

Explain Patrick's concept of love.

How does setting play a major role in this novel?

Why is the book entitled *Breakfast on Pluto* and what is the meaning of this title?

Discuss how Patrick copes with the absence of his mother.