

# **The Bottle Factory Outing Study Guide**

## **The Bottle Factory Outing by Beryl Bainbridge**

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## Plot Summary

*The Bottle Factory Outing* is a novel about the lives of two women who share an apartment in London and work at a wine factory. Brenda, who left her abusive husband in the country to come live in the city, is a shy woman who is afraid to speak up for herself and gets pushed around by other people. Freda, an outspoken dreamer, is bossy and likes to feel that she has control over her less-fortunate roommate. Freda has planned an outing for all of the employees at the factory.

The outing begins poorly. The van that the workers had hired for the outing is missing and some of the workers are forced to go home. Others pile into two cars to go to the countryside. Freda is in love with Vittorio, the nephew of Mr. Paganotti, the owner of the factory. Vittorio, it turns out, is engaged to be married. He is afraid to tell Freda this and treats her poorly. Brenda just wants to be left alone and doesn't even want to come on the outing. She is constantly harassed by Rossi, the manager at the factory, who is always trying to touch her. The group continues on, experiencing one mishap after another.

The group arrives at a castle, where Freda tries to get closer to Vittorio. Patrick, an Irishman who also works at the factory, interrupts them. He confronts Freda about being mean to Brenda and to him. As the group moves on to have a picnic in the park, they notice that Patrick is missing. Freda thinks she sees a shadow and hears movement in the bushes nearby. Then, after hearing Vittorio and Rossi arguing, Brenda discovers Freda lying dead in the bushes.

There is some confusion as the group tries to figure out who killed Freda - was it Patrick, Vittorio, or Rossi? Patrick thinks he has evidence to implicate Rossi, Vittorio thinks that Patrick is the killer and Rossi is quiet and is withdrawn. They load Freda's dead body into the car and continue on to the African safari that they had planned to visit. They leave the body slumped inside the car as they take a bus tour through the safari. Upon returning to the factory in the evening, the men take Freda's body up to the top floor and leave it among some old furniture. The next day all of the workers, except for Mr. Paganotti, know that Freda is dead. They decide to stuff her body into an empty wine barrel and sent it back to Spain, where it will be discarded. They hold a small, awkward ceremony for Freda on the top floor and then her body is shipped away. Rossi confesses to being responsible for Freda's death. He had been making advances to her in the bushes and she fell backwards as she pushed him away. The next day, Brenda packs up her things and goes back to live with her parents, to try to put this experience behind her.

# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

At the opening of the novel, set in London, we see two roommates, Freda and Brenda. They are first introduced to the reader as two women standing at their apartment window looking down on a funeral procession in the street. An elderly woman from an old people's home across the street has died and a few people have gathered in the street to watch the sad procession. We see that these two women are very different; Freda is crying dramatically at the sight of the funeral, even though she did not know the elderly woman who passed away. Brenda, who is easily embarrassed and is even afraid to look out the window, asks Freda why she is crying.

We learn that the two women met in a butcher's shop and have been roommates ever since. Brenda had been married to an alcoholic, whom she left. Freda, who is twenty-six, 5'10" and 224 pounds, has never been married. She is very dramatic and patronizes a theatrical pub every week in hopes of being discovered. Brenda is sickly and withdrawn. She sees herself as having one foot in the grave despite the fact that she is only thirty-two. They share a tiny apartment, so small that they have to share a bed. Freda sleeps naked in their bed, which embarrasses Brenda, who sleeps fully clothed.

The two women work at a wine factory. It was Freda's idea to work closer to the "common people." They tried to get office jobs but did not have the necessary skills. We learn that Freda has planned an outing in the country for all of the employees at the wine factory. Freda is hopelessly in love with Vittorio, who is an employee at the factory and the nephew of the owner, Mr. Paganotti. She is looking forward to getting closer to Vittorio during the outing. In her typical style, Freda tidies up and makes sure the sheets are clean each time she leaves the apartment, in the slight chance that Vittorio might accompany her home.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

The book opens up to the two main characters in the story - Freda and Brenda. Right away, the reader is shown how different the two women are. By giving us their description and a few of their mannerisms, the author has begun to paint a picture of two very different women living together as roommates. The dramatic crying at the window for a woman she never knew shows us that Freda craves attention in her life. Brenda's withdrawn style is a complement to Freda's outgoing personality.

The mood in this chapter is somber. The funeral is a sign of things to come. The introduction of the women's employment at a wine factory sets the scene for subsequent chapters.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

As the two women walk to work, we learn another one of Brenda's strange habits. She puts layers of newspaper between her layers of clothing to keep warm. Freda is embarrassed and does not want to be seen walking in the street together with Brenda and makes her run along in front. As they arrive at the wine factory, Freda takes pleasure in shaking hands with each of the Italian men working there. It is a ritual that Brenda can barely stand but Freda revels in. It is her first chance of each day to make initial contact with her beloved Vittorio. All of the Italian men in the factory have worked there for many years and none of them speak English except for Vittorio and Rossi, the manager. The rest can only speak to each other in their native Italian.

We are introduced here to another woman who works at the factory. Maria, a plain woman who climbs into a mailbag to keep warm at work, simply adores Freda. She sees her as a beautiful strong English girl who has made a difference in Maria's life. She has persuaded her to wear mittens to keep warm and has made their work environment a bit more bearable.

Brenda is tormented at work by Rossi, the manager. Rossi is an older married man who pursues her relentlessly. By her placid nature, Brenda allows this to happen and does nothing to stop him. Rossi regularly summons Brenda into the cellar and on this day he gives her some liqueur to drink and tries to grope her. As Brenda tries to distract him, she mentions that she had seen a funeral earlier that day. Rossi assumes that it was Freda's mother who passed away and gives the two women the rest of the day off.

When Brenda tells Freda about the reason for their sudden day off, Freda is concerned about Vittorio. She immediately wants to know how he reacted when he heard that her mother died. In fact, Freda's mother died when Freda was just twelve years old. Freda invites Maria for tea after Maria finishes her workday and the two ladies sit and talk about the future. Maria reads Freda's fortune in her tea. She predicts men in uniform, horses, lots of weeping and wailing and a white dress with flowers on it. Freda is puzzled because she knows that white is not her color.

In the meantime, Brenda sits alone by the window and watches an elderly woman through the window. She thinks back on her life and is distressed at her own conciliatory nature. In bed that night, she thinks back to her husband, waking her up in the middle of the night and making her look up at the moon through a telescope. She sleeps uncomfortably, as Freda's body heaves peacefully on the other half of the bed beyond the stack of books they have placed between them.



## Chapter 2 Analysis

We witness the interaction that Freda has with the men at work. It is interesting to note how eager she is to communicate with them although some of them are not excited about her presence. The women have only worked at the factory for four weeks and already Freda is bossing around the rest of the workers who have worked there for their entire lives. While some of the Italian men find Freda's behavior charming and sexy, others look at her in contempt. We learn that Vittorio is often rude to Freda, but this does not deter her.

Again, we are shown Brenda's complacent nature when we see her being abused by Rossi. In fact, Brenda tries to draw Freda's attention to Rossi's behavior, but Freda is too caught up with herself to pay attention to her. Since we know that Rossi is married, we see him as a dishonorable man who has no consideration for the feelings of Brenda or anyone else.

There is strong foreshadowing when Maria reads Freda's fortune in her tea. All of her predictions will come true later on. Freda doesn't think much of this fortune and brushes it off.

The work that the men and women do at the factory symbolizes their menial lives. Day in and day out, they put the same labels on the same bottles, not even knowing exactly what the product is. The pay is minimal and the work is hard, but there are no other options for the workers at the factory.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Since everybody at the factory thinks Freda is in mourning, she has decided to stay home for a few days in order to appear proper. She has asked Brenda to steal some brandy from the factory that they can enjoy at home. Brenda was reluctant to do this, but we see her sneaking a bottle into the bathroom at work when no one is looking. As she walks out of the bathroom, she sees Maria approaching a box of old clothes. Mr. Paganotti regularly sets out boxes of old clothes and other miscellaneous items for his employees to take; things he inherits from his many friends and relatives. He is a wealthy man who is adored by all of his Italian employees. He has given them the chance of a lifetime, allowing them to work in a factory and to provide for their families in the city.

As Maria rummages through the box for some shoes, Brenda sees Patrick, the Irishman who works in the factory. He is a bit of a loner among the men, since none of them speak any English. When Patrick hears that Brenda and Freda's toilet is broken, he insists on taking his tools to their apartment after work to fix the problem. Brenda is horrified, since she knows that Freda will disapprove of this brute of a man coming to their apartment.

As Freda mopes about the apartment. She can't help but notice every little detail that is wrong with the place. The furniture is poor and doesn't match, the cracks in the wall are showing, nothing is in order. As she goes outside, she sees a note addressed to her from Vittorio. She is elated. The note says that he will stop by after work to offer his condolences. As she flies back up the stairs to the apartment, she now sees everything in a different, more positive light. Her mood has turned around completely. She washes herself and imagines what it will be like when Vittorio comes to visit.

After work, Brenda waits on the stairs to see who will arrive first. She has seen the note that Freda left for her telling her to stay away from the apartment so that Freda and Vittorio can have privacy.

The first person to arrive is Patrick. He is dressed nicely in a black suit and white shirt. As he begins to work on the toilet, he first removes his jacket and then his shirt. Brenda quickly scrambles to put her undershirt on him to cover him up. In the meantime, Freda and Vittorio are drinking wine in the apartment. Freda feels a bit awkward now that Vittorio is here and almost wishes he hadn't come. As Brenda tries to quietly boil tea for Patrick in the next room, Freda sings for Vittorio. The two of them end up on the bed, kissing.

In the meantime, Brenda hears rumbling downstairs at the front door. It's her mother-in-law, Mrs. Haddon. She has traveled a long way to see Brenda and won't leave until she talks to her. Mrs. Haddon has interrupted Freda and Vittorio's evening and Brenda



rushes out to see her. Mrs. Haddon demands that Brenda give her back the childhood pictures of her son Stanley, who is Brenda's estranged husband. Even though Brenda does not have the pictures, she tells Mrs. Haddon to go downstairs and wait. She then brings down a book and hands it to her, telling her the pictures are inside. They argue for a bit and a gunshot is heard. Both Vittorio and Patrick rush down and grab hold of Mrs. Haddon and pry the gun out of her hand. She did not hurt Brenda, although it appears that she meant to.

The police are called but Brenda refuses to press charges against Mrs. Haddon. The men leave awkwardly. As Brenda and Freda lay in bed that night, Freda inquires as to why Patrick was running around the apartment in an undershirt. Brenda explains that he was just passing by and she had to let him in to fix the toilet. Brenda lays in the dark and thinks back to how Mrs. Haddon must be upset that she wasn't able to shoot her.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Brenda's weak character is illustrated again as she steals wine for Freda, without wanting to do so. The reader also gets a clearer picture of the financial situation of the workers in the factory. Even though these people are hard-working loyal individuals, they are still so poor that they have to resort to wearing dead people's clothing.

As Freda's evening with Vittorio is ruined, we observe her strange behavior towards him. She has waited so long for him to come to her apartment, has dreamed of him constantly and now that he is finally here she wishes he were gone. This shows her hidden fears that she tries so hard to hide. Brenda, on the other hand, is embarrassed by the sight of Patrick's body and tries to please everyone by keeping quiet in the kitchen so as not to disturb Freda.

As the situation with Mrs. Haddon escalates, it is Brenda, who dislikes attention, who is in the center of attention. Patrick, Vittorio and the police are all concerned for Brenda. Freda, therefore, is feeling very left out and wishes that attention was being paid to her.





# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Freda is depressed for several days following the incident. She mopes about the apartment, sometimes in a rage and sometimes falling into long periods of silence. Brenda is especially worried when Freda becomes silent, since this is not her typical style of dealing with problems. We learn that in the meantime, Freda has taken the time to talk to Rossi, to warn him about taking advantage of Brenda. She tells Rossi to stay away from Brenda, that his advances towards her are unwanted. She threatens to tell Mr. Paganotti about him. As she returns to work, Freda has a solemn air about her and Maria wonders what is wrong. She has even turned down Vittorio's invitation to dinner.

Freda has an inner bout of jealousy towards Brenda who has a mother, a father, an estranged husband and even a mother-in-law who traveled across the country to see her. Brenda even attracts Rossi and Patrick. Freda has nobody in this world except for a distant aunt.

Stanley calls Brenda at work one day, but Brenda is cold to him. He says that he can't come down to visit her since his mother is in the hospital; Brenda tells him that she does not want him to visit. Freda resents Brenda and on one occasion, talks to Patrick and tells him to stay away from her. Despite all of this, Freda is looking forward to the company outing and to a chance to get closer to Vittorio. She feels herself coming back to life.

Freda imagines her future life with Vittorio, picturing how glamorously they will live and vacation and raise their children. The women start to prepare for the outing, which is coming up on Sunday. Maria has dug through the box of old clothes at the factory and has found a dress to wear. When she shows it to Freda and Brenda, they both approve. Freda is giddy with excitement as she thinks of the life that she and Vittorio will share. She finds him in the office with Rossi and two women. One woman is Rossi's wife, the other her niece. They are sampling wine and talking. As Freda tries to approach Vittorio, he is cold to her and shies away from her touch, embarrassed in front of the others. Freda is taken back by this and wonders if Vittorio doesn't return her feelings. The air in the wine factory is full of excitement because the men can't wait for the day of the outing.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

In this chapter, Freda is secretly trying to stop the attention that Brenda has been getting. By warning both Patrick and Rossi to stay away from her, Freda is desperately trying to control the situation and come out on top. It is interesting to note that Brenda does not know about Freda's actions and they go on living as they did before. Freda does everything she can to focus all attention on herself.

Brenda, who dislikes attention, does not want attention from her estranged husband. As Freda scrambles to remain popular among the men and especially with Vittorio, it seems that the outing that she had planned is her last hope. Freda dreams of one day rising to a level in society equal to Vittorio, whose family is wealthy. Her imagination runs wild as she thinks of how their life together could be.

It is important to note here that the workers in the factory are very poor despite being hardworking. We see this in Maria, who has worn the same dress for 20 years and has to resort to digging through the clothing of the dead to find something to wear to the outing.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

On Sunday, the ladies are preparing to go to the outing. Freda has wrapped two cooked chickens in foil. She asks Brenda for money for cigarettes, but Brenda lies and tells her she has no money. Actually, Brenda is saving her coins in case of a disaster, in case she has to find her way back from the outing alone.

They walk to the factory and see that the men are standing along the wall of the factory, waiting for the van to arrive. The van should have arrived fifteen minutes before and everyone is getting worried. Freda had made the reservation for the van, which Amelio, one of the employees, was to be picking up that morning. After a few minutes Amelio arrives, distraught and tells everyone that when he went to pick up the van in the morning, there wasn't one available. Apparently, there was no reservation made for their group. A small panic ensues, with the men trying to figure out what to do. In the meantime, Vittorio is cold to Freda and this upsets her.

The group decides to take their cars to the outing. They have two cars available between them, but this is not enough to fit everyone in. When Rossi directs Brenda to the front seat of his Ford Cortina and Freda to the back seat, Vittorio jumps out of the back seat, not wanting to sit next to Freda. After some persuading, Vittorio gets back into the back seat with Freda and Aldo Gamberini. Patrick tries to climb into the back seat on Freda's side, but Freda fights him off, hitting him on the head with the loaf of bread she has brought for the picnic. With Salvatore behind the wheel of the red Mini, along with some other men, the two cars take off. The rest of the men are left disappointed. They are seen walking away down the street with their heads down. Maria has also been left behind.

As Rossi drives away, the feeling in the car is very hostile. Freda and Vittorio are at each other's throats and Freda makes sure to criticize Vittorio and Brenda for every little thing. She pokes Brenda's neck and back from the back seat sharply, mocking her for being such a worrywart. Brenda is embarrassed at the whole situation and is reminded of how her mother-in-law had drowned kittens at the farm. The car speeds past the rows of houses and a Catholic church. Meanwhile, the red Mini has disappeared from view.

As they pull into a gas station, they see the Mini. The men get out and there is a small scuffle because they do not want to pay for gas for the outing. Rossi tells Salvatore that their destination is Windsor Castle. Deep down, Rossi knows he is heading towards the area where Mr. Paganotti's mansion is, although he has never been there. Once the cars are filled up with gas, Rossi speeds down the highway again.

On the side of a busy intersection, Rossi stops the car and the men get out to kick a ball around on the grass. Brenda is very disturbed since the Mini is nowhere in sight. They pile back into the car and finally make it to the castle. As they begin to ascend the steep



steps, Brenda makes sure to leave a note on the window of the car so the passengers of the red Mini can find them when they arrive. Freda again has romantic thoughts of visiting this old castle with Vittorio. It is here, she is sure, that he will feel his deep love for her. She also wonders how to politely ask Vittorio for money so she can buy herself cigarettes.

The men in the Mini finally spot the Cortina. Since none of them speak English, they try to decipher what the note says. It turns out that Patrick, who squeezed into the car at the last minute, does speak English. They understand that the other group has gone to the castle and they leave a note of their own on the Mini as they enter the castle. They are a bit upset when they have to pay an entrance fee, but they enter the chapel in search of the other half of their group.

During this time, Rossi, Vittorio, Aldo, Freda and Brenda are touring the grounds of the castle. Freda is annoyed that some parts are closed to visitors and that Vittorio seems to know more about the history of the castle than she does. From every high vantage point on the grounds, Rossi wonders if Mr. Paganotti's mansion can be seen. He resents the fact that he has never been invited to the mansion. He remembers a time when Mr. Paganotti said he would take him but this has not happened yet.

As the group comes to a quiet path and Brenda sees that the five of them are alone there, she quickly realizes that she has to give Freda and Vittorio some space so that Brenda will not be mad at her later. She increases her speed and is relieved to hear that Rossi is following behind her. She grabs him by the arm and pulls him down a dark passage, claiming that she is feeling ill. Aldo also sees that he is not wanted in the garden and quickly disappears inside.

When Freda sees that she and Vittorio are alone, she sits on a bench next to him. He is uncomfortable and tries to tell her that he is engaged to Rossi's niece. Freda doesn't hear this - all she hears is that he wants her. She tells him that they are meant for each other and that with the right guidance she could learn to be more of a follower and please him with more lady-like behavior. They begin to kiss. At this moment, the men from the Mini come to the walkway and Patrick rushes to Freda and demands to know where Brenda is. They hit and spit at each other, as Patrick calls her a swine and accuses her of beating Brenda. During this fight, Vittorio is ashamed and confused and goes to wait inside the chapel. Freda is furious that he didn't come to her rescue.

The men from the red Mini are seen hurrying back to their car. They are disappointed, since Patrick seems to have left them. They tried to look for him, but to no avail. In the meantime, Rossi is making advances toward Brenda. Even though she says no, he keeps feeling her skin under her clothes. Brenda thinks back to a time back in her native Ramsbottom when she took a ride from a trucker and he took advantage of her underneath a bridge. She swears to herself that if she makes it out of this situation with Rossi, she will never be nice to anybody again.

Just then, Aldo accidentally interrupts them and Rossi reprimands him harshly. Rossi's advances toward Brenda have failed this time. As both groups approach their cars, they



are somber and not saying much. Brenda watches as Freda takes some coins from Vittorio and goes into a shop to buy cigarettes. It is obvious that Freda and Vittorio are barely civil to each other.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

A real feeling of hopelessness is felt as some of the workers decide to go home. They had all been looking forward to this day in the country, a day away from their mundane lives. The mishap with the van foreshadows that the trouble for the group has just begun.

Freda's desperation is becoming more and more apparent to the reader as we see how she acts around Vittorio. He is mean to her and seems to want nothing to do with her and she responds by being rude and belligerent. But secretly, she wishes for the two of them to be together despite his poor treatment of her. When Patrick attacks Freda and Vittorio fails to come to her defense, we see his hostility towards her again.

Brenda's complacent nature surfaces again; in order to please her friend Freda, she is willing to put herself into a compromising situation with Rossi. She tells herself that she feels sorry for Rossi, but actually, she doesn't deny his advances only because she is afraid to.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

We see the whole group preparing for their picnic in the park. Everybody except for Patrick is present. No one knows exactly where he is and Freda says that he went home after their scuffle at the chapel. With Brenda's help, Freda has laid out her embroidered tablecloth on the grass and has put the food out on the cloth. The men, however, are shy about sharing food and each waits, holding his own bread and salami. Finally, Freda convinces them to place their food on the tablecloth and share. Freda gives the best piece of chicken to Vittorio, wondering why he first proclaimed his love and then turned so cold towards her.

Freda suggests that they visit a wild safari park nearby. At first Rossi is unsure, but when she explains that this safari is a drive-through park and they can stay inside their cars, Rossi is more open to the idea. Rossi translates for the men, who don't quite understand but are a bit curious about the park. As Vittorio eats Freda's salad and chicken with great pleasure, she gets up to walk around the fence, hoping he will follow. He does not follow; instead, the men start to kick a ball around on the grass.

As Freda walks deeper into the woods, she has a strange feeling that someone is watching her. As she stops, the movement in the bushes stops; as she starts to move, she hears the rustling of the leaves again. She thinks that it may be the children playing in the park or perhaps a lion that has escaped from the nearby safari. All of a sudden, a pebble hits her in the cheek and another one lands near her foot. Outraged, she runs and hurls a stone into the bushes, only to hear the rustling of the leaves as someone leaves quickly.

As Freda returns to the park to join the others, Brenda is playing ball with the men and yells for Freda to join them. Freda instead sits down in the grass and Vittorio kindly approaches her and pulls her into the game. After a few unsuccessful kicks, Freda falls on her behind and then goes back to sit in the grass.

Freda notices that there are uniformed men with black horses walking through the park. Rossi goes up to greet them. It turns out that the men are exercising the Queen's funeral horses. The uniformed men stop to chat with the group and end up feasting on wine and bread. Then they offer a ride to Freda, Brenda, Vittorio and Rossi. Brenda promptly refuses, but the other eagerly climb on and go for a slow ride. At one point, Vittorio thinks he sees a shadow lurking in the bushes. As they climb off the horses back at the picnic site, Freda's legs are wobbly but she proclaims that she had a beautiful ride. She noticed that Vittorio was admiring her while she was on her horse and this makes her happy.

Rossi gets up and walks to the far side of the park. He motions for Brenda to come along. She sits there dreading what will come next, unsure of how to deal with this



situation. She is afraid of being taken advantage of; but she is also afraid of saying no. She thinks about how she left her abusive husband, Stanley, only to tie herself to her abusive friend, Freda. As Brenda hesitatingly walks towards Rossi, Freda and some of the others seem to be napping in the grass. Rossi takes her hand and tries to lead her away. Brenda, finally gathering her courage, tells him that she can't go with him since Freda might see the two of them. Rossi remembers that Freda has threatened to tell Mr. Paganotti about his advances. This bothers Rossi and Brenda immediately feels guilty for making him feel badly. They walk back to the group. Brenda becomes elated that she was successful in pushing Rossi away but when she tells Freda how she did this, Freda immediately criticizes Brenda for blaming her. Brenda's good mood dissipates.

The two women see Rossi and Vittorio arguing in the distance. Rossi is asking Vittorio to take Freda into the woods and have sex with her. Vittorio is appalled at this; he reminds Rossi that he is engaged to be married and that he would not do such a thing to dishonor his name. Rossi explains that if Freda is disgraced, then she will not be able to tell on Rossi to Mr. Paganotti. Vittorio counters that if he were to take Freda into the woods, she would not feel disgraced. Instead, she would feel happy and would tell the world about her experience with Vittorio.

The men are playing ball nearby and cannot help but overhear the shouting between Rossi and Vittorio. The women strain to hear what the fight is about, but cannot tell. They begin to fight between themselves. Freda is mad that Brenda dragged her into the situation with Rossi and Brenda is upset that Freda got rid of Patrick. Freda lashes out at Brenda with a nasty comment about her yellow teeth. They begin to fight about Stanley. Freda says that he isn't a real man and that Brenda doesn't even know what a real man is. Brenda is reminded of her childhood, when her mother would throw cups in the kitchen in fits of rage and then moments later would be pleasant and smiling again. This had always left Brenda confused. Brenda wants to lash out at Freda, to throw insults at her, but the only insult she can come up with is that Freda is difficult to live with. Freda storms off into the bushes.

As the men continue to play ball, Brenda lies in the grass resting. Rossi runs into the bushes after the ball, in the direction that Freda went. Brenda, content that Freda is no longer alone in the bushes, falls asleep. As she wakes, she sees Rossi stumbling past her towards the car. She sees that he is upset and goes to comfort him. He is hysterical in the back seat and she contemplates sleeping with him in order to ease whatever pain he is feeling. She looks at his wrist to see what time it is and notices that his watch is broken.

Then, as she looks out the car window, she sees Patrick. She runs to him, upset that there is no food left to feed him. The men are curious about where he had been. As they all get dressed after their game of ball, Brenda thinks they should wake Freda who is sleeping in the bushes. After all, they are about to leave to go to the safari, which was Freda's idea in the first place. Patrick tries to stop Brenda from going into the bushes, but she does not hear him. As she goes into the bushes, she sees Freda lying in the grass, eyes open, wet from the rain that is starting to fall. Freda is dead.



## Chapter 6 Analysis

As soon as we read about the uniformed men with the black horses, we think back to Maria's prediction for Freda. We start to see that it is coming true and wonder what will happen next.

The men in uniform signify the group's high status. They command respect and admiration from the workers. On a deeper level, the men are exercising the queen's funeral horses. Again, we have foreshadowing of death and funerals. The group, however, is oblivious to this ominous sign.

Freda continues to try to win Vittorio's attention to no avail. As she walks through the park alone, the noises scare her and the reader is lead to believe that this could be Patrick hiding in the bushes. We wonder what he is doing there and think back to this after Freda is found dead.





# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Vittorio, Patrick, Rossi and Brenda pile into Rossi's car to get out of the rain. They begin discussing the circumstances of Freda's death. Patrick says that Freda must have died from a fall because when he saw her in the grass she was already dead. Vittorio notices the cut on Patrick's eye and remembers how Freda thought she saw Patrick in the bushes. Rossi is whimpering and shaking in the front seat of the car. Brenda wonders how she will tell Freda's aunt and wonders if Freda intended for the van to be missing so that the outing would be a smaller group. Patrick says that they can't just leave the body there, that they have to get Freda out of the rain. It finally hits Brenda that Freda is dead and she begins to cry.

The men in the other car do not realize what has happened. They are huddled in the red Mini to avoid the rain and are waiting for the others to be ready so they can go to the safari. They keep honking the horn and Salvatore even tries to get into the Cortina to find out what the delay is. They go on making jokes and drinking as they wait. The men guess that Freda has had too much to drink and this is why she refuses to come out of the bushes. When they see Vittorio and Patrick hurry into the bushes, they assume that both are enjoying Freda's favors. As they see the two men carry Freda out of the bushes, they laugh at how drunk she is and that she can't even walk. Freda is put into the backseat of the Cortina. Salvatore runs back to the car again and says to follow him because he knows the way to the safari.

As Rossi drives the car, following Salvatore, he is still in a state of shock. He does not speak and is completely still. Brenda is afraid to look back at the back seat, where Freda's body is wedged between Patrick and Vittorio. Brenda wonders if Freda's soul has already gone or if the soul actually leaves the body. She is feeling better after her cry and a bit guilty since she sees how distraught Rossi still is. The two cars pull into a children's zoo and the men in the Mini get out to look at an elephant resting in the grass. The men in the Mini still do not know about Freda and nobody from the Cortina is about to tell them.

The two cars continue the drive to the safari, both paying the entrance fee. The ranger inspects the flimsy roof of the Cortina and tells the group that they have to park the car and get into the bus that will take them safely through the safari grounds.

The Cortina is parked and Freda is left slumped in the back seat as the group piles onto the safari bus. The bus drives slowly past ostriches, lions, tigers and baboons. Patrick is in his seat next to Brenda, trying to explain to her that it might have been Rossi who killed Freda. He says there was glass in Freda's sweater and Rossi's watch has just been mysteriously broken. Patrick explains to Brenda that if they go to the police, the Italian men will all testify against him because they will remember how he argued with Freda in the castle with Freda. Patrick also believes that the men will remember that he



disappeared for a long time and then appeared out of the bushes with his eye bleeding. He is afraid that they will blame her death on him.

Patrick tells Brenda that Freda locked him in a closet in the castle and he had a difficult time getting out. He also says that, while he was playing in the bushes, she threw a stone at him and hit his eye. As Brenda takes all of this information in, Patrick says that it must have been Rossi who killed Freda, since her neck was broken. Brenda thinks it is a pity that the Cortina was not let into the safari, since they could have just dumped her body out along the way. She is both surprised and ashamed by these thoughts.

As the bus returns, Vittorio treats the group to tea and biscuits in the cafeteria. Rossi gets up to walk around outside and Patrick urges Brenda to go speak with him. Brenda realizes that she really does not like Patrick at all. He is bossy and does not seem like the same nice man who fixed her toilet.

Brenda catches up to Rossi and begins to tell him that they should go to the police. Rossi finally begins to speak and remembers that Freda had threatened to tell Mr. Paganotti about his relations with Brenda. He had been angry with her, but didn't think that she would really tell on him. When his wife visited the factory, he held his breath hoping that Freda wouldn't say anything. He also recalls that Freda was always causing trouble by making advances toward Vittorio.

Rossi keeps talking, remembering how Vittorio did not want to go on the outing and made him call the van driver to cancel the van. However, once everybody arrived that morning, it seemed silly not to go in the available cars. When Rossi saw that Vittorio had some feelings for Freda, he suggested that he go in the bushes with Freda to make her happy. Rossi tells Brenda that when he went to check on Freda in the bushes, he saw her talking to Vittorio. He waited nearby and upon returning to the same spot, he saw her dead. Brenda sits confused, since she only saw Rossi coming out of the bushes - not Vittorio.

As she goes back to the group, she urges Patrick to go to the police since it may have been Vittorio who killed Freda. Getting into the car, Brenda notices that she is now wearing all black because she has taken Freda's purple cloak off. As the car passes through the park on its way back, Rossi stops the car near their picnic spot. Both Patrick and Vittorio urge the group to tell each other the truth. Patrick says that since he's been in trouble with the police for minor things, he is afraid to put himself in their hands again.

Brenda thinks about how Patrick reminds her of her Stanley because of the way he talks and his troubles with the police. Stanley was often brought home drunk by the police. She remembers back to the rare occasions when the two of them went to the Legion in town together. She always felt out of place, an outsider among Stanley's friends. When they would return home, Stanley would urinate on the sidewalk of their house.

Brenda thinks that Freda's death may be her fault, since Freda went into the bushes after their argument. Patrick chastises her for blaming herself so easily. Rossi gets out of the car and runs into the bushes, moaning. Patrick decides to give up on the idea of



making the Italian men confess to anything. He just hopes to get Freda's body back to the city as soon as possible. After fifteen minutes, Rossi returns and starts up the car again. Brenda can see that Rossi's fingernails are caked with dirt. Rossi gets back on the highway and soon the group is back at the factory doors.

The men in the Mini are driving along the highway and pondering how Freda could have gotten so drunk. Aldo knows that there will be great stories to tell tomorrow to those unfortunate workers who didn't come on the outing. As they pass the factory, they are surprised to see Rossi's Cortina parked next to the factory. Its passengers appear to have gone inside the factory. No one ever goes into the factory after hours because this would be disrespectful to Mr. Paganotti. When they stop and peek inside the factory windows, they see the men pushing Freda's lifeless body onto the elevator. They are in shock. Aldo notices that he is already wearing black clothing.

The men have taken Freda's body upstairs to the storage area. Brenda waits for them to come back down and thinks that they have forgotten about her. She begins to walk home. Upon arriving at her home, she sees the table laid out for a romantic supper that Freda has prepared in case Vittorio had accompanied her home. Everywhere she looks in their tiny room, Brenda sees Freda's things.

After a while, she hears Patrick in the street, throwing gravel at the window to catch her attention. She thinks back to all that has happened and is scared that Patrick might kill her since she knows too much. She tries to tell him to go away, but he won't. She comes downstairs and as they sit on the step, Patrick shows her a handkerchief. It is Rossi's handkerchief, full of pieces of broken glass, which he took from Rossi's pocket when Rossi was in the woods the last time. Brenda is exhausted and goes upstairs to bed. Patrick gives her the handkerchief to keep. Brenda takes a blanket and pillow and heads towards the bathroom to sleep there.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

Except for Rossi, everyone in the Cortina is rational and unemotional. Brenda breaks down and cries for a little bit, but feels better afterwards. It is almost as if no one has died; the group never even discusses what to do with her body. Since Rossi is in such a state, we can assume that Vittorio will not go to the police so that suspicion will not be cast upon his trusted co-worker. Patrick suspects the same thing and is afraid that he will be turned in to the police because he is the outsider in the group.

There is symbolism here in that, after taking off the purple cloak that belonged to Freda, Brenda is dressed entirely in black. It seems to tell us that Brenda subconsciously knew that death would occur even as she got dressed in the morning. Also, it's almost as if the only alive and lively thing about Brenda was Freda's existence and now that has passed away. The same goes for Aldo Gamberini; he is wearing all-black clothing without even realizing it.



The fact that the men in the mini are not even aware of Freda's death for quite some time illustrates the large gap between the English-speaking workers and the Italians. There is a status gap between the two groups. Even the Italian men who speak English, Vittorio and Rossi, seem to be on the inside circle with the English girls. The Italian speakers don't seem to matter enough to be told what has happened to Freda; they have to find out for themselves by accidentally seeing Freda's dead body being carried upstairs at the factory by Patrick and Vittorio.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

The next morning, Maria is told about what happened to Freda. She sits in shock in Rossi's office. Brenda, who tries to console her, has been vomiting all morning. The men in the factory take turns going upstairs to look at the body and are whispering between themselves. Maria thinks of how she will prepare Freda's body. Mr. Paganotti has called Rossi into his office an hour ago and now he wants to speak with Vittorio as well.

Brenda runs back to the apartment to get a washcloth and some toiletries for Freda's body. On the stairs, she meets the neighboring nurse, who inquires where Freda is. Brenda lies and says that Freda has gone on a holiday to Spain. As she returns to the factory, Rossi and Vittorio are arguing again. Apparently, Mr. Paganotti had called them into his office to tell them that he will be clearing the top floor of furniture to make room for the expansion he has planned. He will be going up there today. They are in a panic and don't know what to do with Freda's body. Brenda suggests that they tell Mr. Paganotti that the elevator is unsafe and block the stairs with furniture.

Brenda is delirious with exhaustion and emotion and falls asleep after sipping some wine. As she sleeps, Brenda dreams that she and Freda are in a movie theater. After waking, Brenda is somehow calmer and is at peace with Freda's death. She decides that there is no point in figuring out who killed her because what's done is done. Brenda goes into the office and offers to give Rossi back his handkerchief. He tells her of their plan; they will put Freda's body in one of the empty wine barrels. They will mark the barrel as broken and upon its arrival in Santander, Spain, the barrel will be thrown out. Brenda warns Rossi that there could be a strike at the loading docks and that they should put wine in the barrel to preserve Freda's body.

In the meantime, Maria has prepared Freda's body. She says that flowers are needed for a proper goodbye. One by one, the workers go into a nearby shop to collect free plastic flowers.

After Mr. Paganotti leaves for the day, all of the workers gather on the top floor for a little ceremony. They drink wine and eat bread and cake, all feeling uncomfortable under the circumstances. Freda's body is laid out on an old couch, in a long white gown, covered in the plastic flowers. Maria says that she got the gown from the boxes that Mr. Paganotti leaves for the employees.

Patrick knocks at the window and is let in downstairs. As he goes up to the top floor, he calls for Brenda. He sees her in a corner, huddled with Rossi who again touching her inappropriately. Patrick grabs Rossi and hits him. The fight is broken up and Brenda and Patrick are told to go downstairs as the men put Freda's body into the barrel.



After a while, Vittorio and Rossi enter the office where Brenda and Patrick have been waiting patiently. Rossi confesses to the killing. He had gone into the bushes and saw Freda lifting up her sweater to reveal her stomach. He couldn't resist her but she was mean to him and pushed him away. She stumbled backwards, breaking her neck. He fell on top of her. His watch hit a rock and shattered. As the three of them listen to Rossi, they seem unaffected by this news. Patrick says that he is glad he knows who did it.

As Brenda returns home alone, she is very lonely. There is nobody to talk to and she keeps seeing Freda's body as it falls backwards in the grass. She thinks back sadly on what has happened. She calls Stanley to tell him that she wants to come back to him, but Mrs. Haddon informs her that Stanley has found another woman and hangs up the phone. The next day, Freda goes to work, having packed up her suitcase. She will go back to her parents' home that evening on the train.

The lorry is outside the factory. Maria is crying. Vittorio tells her to stop crying. As the lorry is loaded with the empty barrels, Brenda can't bear to even look out the window. She is easily embarrassed and doesn't want to be seen gawking down at the road. The large vehicle drives away from the bay as some men watch from the street.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

Again, subtle foreshadowing can be seen in the beginning of this chapter. When Brenda lies to the neighbor and tells her that Freda has gone off on a vacation to Spain, little does she know that this is exactly where Freda's body will be sent.

The situation with the flowers makes Freda's death seem more pathetic and pointless. The workers can't even scrounge up enough money to buy her a bouquet of real flowers; they resort to taking plastic flowers for free from a nearby store. The workers do, however, have enough money to buy bread and cake for themselves. The sight of Freda's body in an old used dress, covered in plastic flowers, makes the reader feel sorry for her as well as for the rest of the workers. There are no kind words said at her "funeral" and no priest is present. The only person present who truly seemed to care for her is Brenda. The rest of the workers are very uncomfortable and wish they were somewhere else.

That Mr. Paganotti is not told about what happened, is a symbol of how much respect and admiration the workers feel for him. They cannot bear to tell him that this is how the outing he had authorized has ended. It is also a sign of how strongly each worker wants to be protected. They do not want the police involved for fear of going to jail.

The book ends in a way that is similar to the way that it began. The author uses the same words and phrases here to indicate the same mood; it is as if Freda's untimely accidental death is nothing more tragic than the natural death of an old infirm woman.



# Characters

## Freda

Freda is a twenty-six year old woman who lives in a tiny apartment in London that she shares with Brenda. She had never been married and dreams of one day having a family and a place to belong. She is tall, overweight and very outspoken. She is constantly frustrated by Brenda's strange mannerisms, but is the one that suggested the two women live together. Freda has dreams of becoming an actress, but in the meantime she works at the wine factory with Brenda. Her imagination and her dreams take over sometimes, as she imagines her future life with Vittorio, the manager at the factory, with whom she is madly in love.

It was Freda's idea to work at the factory. She said that she wanted to be closer to "the common man," when in fact she has no other job skills of her own. Freda does not see herself as part of the lower rungs of society, even though she has no money saved and barely exists from paycheck to paycheck. Freda secretly resents Brenda because Brenda has the attention of both Rossi and Patrick and because Brenda has an estranged husband and a family that loves her. Freda, on the other hand, is alone in this world.

## Brenda

Brenda is a thirty-two year old woman who has left her abusive alcoholic husband with whom she lived on a remote farmhouse in Yorkshire. Her reddish hair is shoulder-length and stringy. She frequently has a toothache and her jaw swells up. She now lives in London, with her roommate Freda. Brenda is withdrawn, easily embarrassed and does not take good care of herself. She finds no joy in life and sees her life as wasted. She comes from a well-to-do family but lives a very simple life. Her father sends her money every week, but this is not enough to live on so she works with Freda at the wine factory. Brenda is easily influenced by Freda because she doesn't have a very strong character of her own. She did not want to work with the men at the factory, but is doing so because Freda decided it was a good idea. As the book progresses, we see glimpses of Brenda's strengthening character, which is shot down by Freda's overpowering personality every time it shows. Brenda did, after all, have the willpower to leave her abusive husband, Stanley, only to find herself in another type of abusive relationship.

## Vittorio

Vittorio is the manager trainee at the bottle factory. He is also the nephew of Mr. Paganotti, the owner of the factory. He speaks in his native Italian and in broken English. Freda has a crush on him and pursues him relentlessly. Although he is engaged to be married, he does not tell this to Freda. He resents her advances towards



him and wishes that she wasn't around. We learn that Vittorio doesn't want to go on the outing that Freda has planned for the group and tries everything to stop the group from going.

## Rossi

As the manager of the bottle factory, he works in an office overlooking the factory floor. He is also Italian, but speaks English. He is married to a woman who is much older than he is and has not given him children. He is infatuated with Brenda and is constantly calling her into the cellar of the factory under the pretense of showing her how the cooling process works. Then he makes advances toward Brenda, who usually lets him touch her for fear of upsetting him.

## Patrick

Patrick is the only male worker at the factory who does not speak Italian. He is Irish and is a loner among the Italian men. He spends some time with Brenda when he helps her fix her toilet. He goes along on the outing, despite Freda's attempts to keep him away. He seems to have a crush on Brenda.

## Maria

Maria is the third female employee at the factory. She adores Freda and is thankful for her suggestions on how to make the workplace better. She wears a mailbag over her legs to keep warm at her workstation. Although she doesn't get to go on the outing with the others, she is the one to prepare Freda's body for burial upon their return.

## Mr. Paganotti

Mr. Paganotti is the owner of the wine factory in London. Many years ago, he brought the Italian men out of Italy and out of poverty to work for him in the city. Therefore, all of his employees are very loyal to him and thank God for being blessed with Mr. Paganotti's kindness. The conditions at the factory are very poor; it is always damp and cold and the men are paid very little. Nevertheless, Mr. Paganotti is seen as the savior in their lives.





# Objects/Places

## The Apartment

The apartment that Freda and Brenda share is across an alley from the home for the old and infirm. It is a tiny room with a small kitchen and a shared bathroom upstairs.

## The Wine Factory

The factory stands on the corner of a street and it is three stories high. The men and women come to work here every day. It is always cold and damp inside and the men sip wine at work all day long.

## The Cortina

Since there is no van available for the trip to the country, Rossi's car is one of the two that is available to take the employees on the outing. Rossi, Brenda, Freda, Vittorio and Aldo Gamberini pile into the car to go to the outing.

## The Mini

Salvatore's car is the second car that is available to take the employees on the outing. Salvatore, Patrick and the other men pile into the car.

## The Castle

The passengers in Rossi's car arrive at the castle first, followed by the passengers in the Mini. Here, Rossi tries to corner Brenda again, while Freda tries to get closer to Vittorio. Patrick interrupts Freda and Vittorio and then Patrick and Freda have a fight.

## The Park

This is the setting where the group stops for a lunch on the grass. Freda spreads out a tablecloth and everyone eats and drinks wine. This is where the group encounters the uniformed men exercising the Queen's funeral horses. This is also where Freda goes into the bushes and is discovered dead.

## Rossi's watch

Brenda notices that the glass cover on the watch is broken following the discovery of Freda's body. Patrick is suspicious of Rossi because of this.



## **The Animal Safari**

After Freda's dead body is discovered it is put back in the Cortina and the group goes to the wild animal safari. They leave Freda's lifeless body in the car as they take a bus tour through the safari.

## **The top floor of the factory**

This is a storage area in the factory. Freda's body is brought here after the outing and is left overnight. The next day, the workers hold a little ceremony on the top floor in Freda's honor.

## **The white dress**

As Maria prepares Freda's body for burial, she finds a white gown in the box of old clothing that Mr. Paganotti has set out for his employees. Maria puts the white dress on Freda's body.

## **The flowers**

Since none of the workers can spare any money for real flowers, they take free plastic tulips from a nearby store to place on Freda's body.

## **The empty wine barrel**

The workers decide to put Freda's body into an empty wine barrel to be transported back to Spain where the barrel will be destroyed.



# Themes

## Loneliness

It is apparent from the very beginning that Brenda is very lonely. She has a withdrawn personality and has given up on finding happiness. Her abusive husband, Stanley, did not provide her with comfort or support, so she found the courage to leave him in the country to come live in the city. She is living in London, but we see that this is not a life, just a means of survival. She gets money from her parents, who live far away. She works at the factory, doing her menial job day in and day out. She is not close to any of her co-workers and gets more attention than she wants from Rossi. Her life with Freda is uncomfortable and the two women rarely get along. After Freda's death, Brenda is so lonely and lost that she even attempts to go back to her abusive alcoholic husband.

What is less apparent, however, is that Freda is just as lonely as Brenda, perhaps more so. On the outside, Freda has a bubbly personality and has many aspirations in life. She dreams of becoming an actress. She also dreams of being part of a family, a community. The only relative she has is a distant aunt. Even though Freda is constantly picking on Brenda and putting her down for her strange ways, secretly she resents Brenda very much. Brenda has the affections of both Rossi and Patrick and this irritates Freda since she can't get the affection of Vittorio. These two women have been brought together by their loneliness and although they are living together, each one is still very much alone.

We also witness Rossi's sexual behavior towards Brenda and ultimately towards Freda and see how lonely he is. Even though he is married, his wife is much older than he is and has given him no children. He resorts to taking his sexual frustrations out on the women at work in inappropriate ways.

## Control

Many aspects of this story are a power struggle. Freda is the most obvious character vying for control; control of the working conditions at the factory, control over Brenda, control over Vittorio. Even when she sees that things not going her way, she still exerts her power over those who don't have a voice as strong as hers. As it becomes more apparent that Vittorio may not be romantically interested in her, instead of moving on, she actually pursues him even more actively. Her constant nagging and correcting of Brenda's behavior shows a weakness in her character. Freda attempts to control the entire group of workers by arranging the outing; when things go wrong from the beginning, she is outraged and ashamed.

Brenda, on the other hand, is desperate to divert attention away from herself. She does not have a controlling personality; in fact, she is very passive and does not see the point in exerting herself. Nevertheless, she gets plenty of attention from Rossi and Patrick



and from her mother-in-law. Again, Freda tries to take the power away by interfering in Brenda's relationships.

Rossi's behavior towards the women is also a pathetic attempt to exert some control over his life. We learn that he is apparently in an unhappy marriage to an older woman and he seems desperate to push Brenda to do things she doesn't want to do.

## Self-preservation

The theme of self-preservation is evident throughout the story. For example, Freda's behavior towards Brenda is very harsh and sometimes demeaning. This is clearly because Freda is very afraid to live her life alone, but does not want to show her insecurity. Instead, she does everything possible to make sure that she remains on top and in control of every situation. She actually thinks that she hides her insecurity very well. She is desperate to be a part of a family and a community and says that she will not die alone.

Rossi's behavior in the park is also a way for him to protect himself. He is afraid of Freda, since she has threatened to tell Mr. Paganotti about the way he treats Brenda. So he asks Vittorio to sleep with her in order to shut her up. Rossi is married and has quite a lot to lose if his inappropriate behavior is discovered. Even though his wife would be crushed, he seems more worried about what Mr. Paganotti will think. In a pathetic attempt to stop Freda from talking, he comes on to her in hopes of pleasing her.

Once Freda's body is discovered, the men in the car are most concerned for themselves. Patrick is afraid the Italians will turn against him; Vittorio is concerned about being blamed for something he didn't do and Rossi is in shock and doesn't confide in anybody at first. This fear and cowardness is what prevents the group from going to the police or reporting Freda's death. At the end of the book, the original employees at the factory are exactly as they were before Freda and Brenda entered their lives.

# Style

## Point of View

*The Bottle Factory Outing* is told from the third person perspective. This allows the readers to see the story in a neutral light and to make their own assumptions about the characters in the story. The reader is allowed into Brenda's thoughts more often than any other character. The author painstakingly paints a picture of Brenda through her thoughts and desires. While Freda shows us her character through words and actions, Brenda's behavior is very reserved. Almost all of the events that we see depicted in the book are events that happen in the presence of Brenda. If she is not present, then we can only speculate on what has occurred.

## Setting

The story is set in London, in the middle of a cold winter. We see much of the interaction between Freda and Brenda in their tiny apartment. It is here that Brenda invites Patrick and here that Freda dreams that Vittorio will accompany her home.

The factory is a central point of the story. It is here that the workers spend almost every day of their simple lives. The conditions are bad; it is always cold inside and the pay is minimal. But the workers still come here every day and don't attempt to find other jobs. It is here that we witness Rossi groping Brenda and Freda coming on to Vittorio. It is also here that Freda's body is brought after the outing and dumped on the top floor.

The outing takes place in several stages: the castle, the park and the safari. At each stage, we see something happening that should not. In the castle, the two groups are separated and each looks for the other. It is also here that Freda and Patrick have their fight. At the park, Freda is discovered dead and the Italian-speaking men are not told about this. At the safari, the group goes on a bus tour, leaving Freda's body in the car to wait.

## Language and Meaning

The language used throughout the book is quite simple to illustrate the simple lives of the factory workers. The author points out times when Brenda speaks in Patrick's dialect, which appalls Freda. There is no cursing in the book. The dialogue between the characters is always direct and to the point; the only character that sometimes blabbers on and on is Freda.

## Structure

The book is divided into eight chapters. As the story progresses, each chapter gets progressively longer.

The author structures the story chronologically. We get a glimpse of Brenda's past, through her thoughts and daydreams. This allows us to have a better understanding of Brenda's character, which adds more background to the story.

## Quotes

"I don't know why you're crying," said Brenda. "You didn't know her."

"I like it," said Freda. "It's so beautiful." Chapter 1, page 7.

"I always wanted to live in a house with a big kitchen. I wanted a mother in a string vest and a pinafore who made bread and dumpling stew." Chapter 1, page 11.

"We could do with a bloody Union man here - the cold, the conditions. Talk about *A Day in the Life Of* - don't you know about the Factories Act?" Chapter 2, page 23.

"Have you got your toothache again?" Freda was annoyed at having to leave early. It didn't suit her; she hadn't had her talk with Vittorio. "Look at the state of you. You've got cobwebs in your hair." Chapter 2, page 27.

"Plumbers don't live here anymore," explained Brenda, echoing what Freda had told her. "It's on account of the high rents. Plumbers can't afford to live. It's the same with window cleaners," she added. Chapter 3, page 44.

"I was wondering," he asked, his brylcreamed head bent low. "Would you have any objection to me removing my shirt?" Chapter 3, page 54.

"You know," said Patrick, "I think a lot of you. No, honest to God I do. I don't like to think of her making a monkey out of you. Why, if I thought that, I'd throttle her - I would so." Chapter 3, page 59.

"Just because you're the manager," she told him spitefully, "it doesn't mean you can wreak your vile will on Brenda." Chapter 4, page 71.

"Good morning," said Vittorio to Freda. "And how are you this wonderful English morning?" Chapter 5, page 87.

"Amelio have a car. Salvatore and Rossi have a car. Nobody else. He want Amelio to drive us in the car to the picnic." Chapter 5, page 89.

"Oh yes," sneered Freda, "we all know about your Outings. I suppose the maids run ahead carrying the garlic sausages." Chapter 5, page 95.

"There was a maniac in the woods," she said, "hurling stones at me. I shouldn't be surprised if it was Patrick getting his own back." Chapter 6, page 127.

"It's probably something to do with us," said Brenda unwisely. "Maybe he's telling Vittorio about you going to Mr. Paganotti." Chapter 6, page 140.

"Freda's gone to sleep in the bushes," said Brenda and looked about for her green shoes. Chapter 6, page 148.



"Why he tell us to get out?" asked Vittorio, gripping the handle of the door in alarm.

"It's the sliding roof," explained Brenda. "It's not safe. The lions might rip it off." Chapter 7, page 162.

"What we do," he said, "is to get her back to London and put her somewhere while I think how to make Rossi tell us what happened. In your room - " Chapter 7, page 169.

"I'm all right now," she said. "I don't mind whose fault it was. I'll give you your handkerchief back if you like." Chapter 8, page 201.

I'm afraid it's not convenient. Mr. Haddon has made other arrangements. A woman from the village - " Chapter 8, page 218.





## Topics for Discussion

Go forward one year. What kind of a life do you see Brenda leading?

Discuss the kind of relationship that Brenda and Freda have.

Discuss the significance of Freda's role in making changes in the working conditions at the factory.

Imagine yourself in Rossi's shoes. How do you think he justifies his behavior with the women at the factory?

Discuss the significance of Freda's obsession with Vittorio.

What is Brenda's motivation at the end of the story, after Freda's death?

Discuss the relationship that Freda has with the men at work. Then, discuss the relationship that Freda thinks she has with the men.