

# **Thanksgiving Study Guide**

## **Thanksgiving by Janet Evanovich**

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## Plot Summary

Megan Murphy is having a makeshift picnic in a park in Williamsburg when she encounters a large, fluffy, friendly rabbit—eating at the hem of her skirt. Patrick Hunter approaches, tells her it's his rabbit and teasingly fusses at her for feeding her skirt to the rabbit. She later sees the same rabbit and takes it back to Patrick, planning to scold him for his lax pet parenting skills. But before she has the chance to tell him what she thinks, a young woman named Tilly Coogan rushes in, hands Megan her young son, says she'll return in a couple of weeks, and rushes out again. Patrick immediately searches for members of Tilly's family but finds she has none listed on Tim's patient information. Meanwhile, Megan has rocked Tim to sleep and discovered that she enjoys mothering the little boy. Patrick says he'll have to hand the child over to child services, but Megan objects. They eventually come to an agreement to have Megan watch the little boy during the day on weekdays when she doesn't work as a visitor's aide for tourists. Megan, who doesn't call herself an "artist", makes teapots for sale in shops around the Christmas season. When Patrick realizes that she has this commitment, he offers to find another sitter, but Megan has by that time become committed to the little boy. She soon falls into a routine with him and notes that she, Patrick, and their families don't seem to consider the possibility that Tilly may return for Tim.

Patrick is operating a fledgling pediatric office and is constantly worried about money. Though he and Megan are immediately attracted to each other, Patrick fears that he doesn't have enough money to support a family and that Megan will feel ignored because of the hours he'll have to devote to the practice for the first years. Megan first says that she doesn't plan to ever marry because of her bad experiences—two failed engagements. However, once Tim is returned to Tilly, Megan finds herself feeling desperate for a child of her own. She soon gets past that but does admit that she wants to marry Patrick—and that she wants it more the longer he puts off proposing. They are at a small bar—The Pit—when Megan proposes. Patrick declines, but before he can explain, they are joined by Dave—Megan's former fiancée who left her standing at the altar in front of some two hundred guests. Dave and Patrick are soon in a contest to determine which will marry Megan. They settle on darts with the agreement that the loser will be forced to marry Megan.

The budding love affair is further complicated by the fact that both Patrick's and Megan's families are visiting. The mothers are immediate friends and begin making suggestions for wedding plans. Both families seem to assume that Patrick and Megan will marry immediately.



# Chapters 1 and 2

## Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Megan Murphy is having a makeshift picnic in a park in Williamsburg when she encounters a large, fluffy, friendly rabbit—eating at the hem of her skirt. Patrick Hunter approaches, tells her it's his rabbit and teasingly fusses at her for feeding her skirt to the rabbit. She sees the rabbit again the following day, and this time it's hopping along the street in the city. Her thought is that the bunny could easily be trampled or killed by a passing motorist. Martha Greenwald tells her Patrick is a pediatrician and that he lives on Nicholson Street. Megan plans to tell him that he's being a bad "pet parent", but must first get the rabbit to Patrick's house. Megan heads in that direction with the large rabbit, finds he's too heavy to carry in her arms and eventually puts him in her cloak. When she arrives, she discovers that "Tibbles" has eaten a hole in the cloak as well. While Megan is gearing up to give Patrick a dressing down regarding his "pet parent" responsibilities, Tilly Cooper rushes in. Tilly is a young mother who has taken her son, Tim, to Patrick's medical practice. She is crying, says that she has to be gone for a couple of weeks and couldn't think of anything else to do with the child, hands him to Megan and rushes out, saying only that she knows he and "Mrs. Hunter" would take care of the child.

At first, Patrick and Megan are sidetracked by the fact that Tilly believes Megan to be "Mrs. Hunter". When Patrick realizes Tilly is actually gone, he rushes outside but can't find her. Patrick says that Tim is one of his patients but that he knows only that Tilly is a single mother, is eighteen, and hasn't had an easy life. He leaves Tim in Megan's care, going to his office to check Tim's file in an effort to find relatives that could be called. Megan objects—being an only child, she knows little about children. Patrick is gone for some time and Megan notes—two hours later when Tim is finally asleep in her arms—that she doesn't know why it took her so long to discover how great babies are. Patrick has burgers and he and Megan share the meal while discussing what to do about Tim. Patrick notes that he should turn the situation over to child services, meaning Tim would be taken into foster care. Megan says she can't stand the thought, having already felt a bond to the child.

As Megan and Patrick share a dinner of burgers Patrick brought back with him, Megan says that it's not as if they found the child in a dumpster. She points out that Tilly came to them and asked for their help. She says that Tilly said she'll return in just a couple of weeks and that they should honor that request. As she prepares to go home, Patrick says she can't "leave him alone with the baby". He argues that he works all day and can't care for the child, meaning he'll have to contact child services. Megan suggests that he get a sitter. Patrick responds, saying, "Okay, I'll let you baby-sit, but only if you agree to have supper with us every night". Megan is "triumphant", and seems to have been manipulated into thinking baby-sitting was her idea and that she'd had to argue Patrick into it.



At five-thirty the following morning, Patrick is banging on Megan's door. She's not yet awake, but rouses herself to accept Tim so that Patrick can leave for the hospital. Megan explains to Pat that she has never seen a baby "up close", because she, as an only child was never exposed to "drool and baby poo". Megan is still dressed in her nightgown and Patrick's attraction prompts him to take her into his arms for a kiss. The kiss deepens, Megan pushes him away, and Patrick berates himself for "attacking" her. Several times during their first meetings, Patrick "tweaks" Megan's nose and kisses her on the top of the head. She says that she hates it when he does that and he admits to himself that he also hates it, but seems to do it so that he can touch her without a serious kiss.

Twelve hours later, Megan is covered with baby food and Patrick is just returning from work. Patrick asks about her day, Megan says she's gotten no work done and explains that she works as a visitors' aide on weekends but makes most of her money by making clay teapots for sale over the Christmas season. Patrick says he hadn't realized she had commitments and offers to find someone else to watch Tim, but Megan declines. At this point, she says that she has started watching Tim and that she'll continue.

As they begin discussing Thanksgiving, Megan quickly becomes caught up in the idea and offers suggestions for a menu—including pumpkin pie, homemade cranberry sauce, and spoon bread. Neither can cook and both say they have little or no experience in the kitchen at all. Over the next few days, Megan will "practice", turning out dishes such as a pumpkin pie. As it turns out, neither will have to do any serious cooking as Megan's mother and Patrick's mother will join forces to prepare the majority of the Thanksgiving dinner.

## Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

The descriptions of Williamsburg will never be offered in great detail, but there are glimpses into the life in this town that seems to exist almost exclusively on the tourist trade. When Megan is first introduced, she's wearing colonial attire—including a mob cap. She'll later mention another woman and say that she always seems so well dressed and pretty. Megan will admit that she can never seem to keep her mob cap on straight and that she's destined to be a peasant. The reader learns that the town includes businesses such as the coopers, the cabinet makers, the milners and the shoemakers, but there isn't really a look into these businesses that some readers would likely have found interesting. There are some closer looks at other places, such as the King's Arms Tavern where Megan and Patrick go on their first date. It's noted that there are minstrels walking around the establishment, entertaining the diners. The waiters are dressed in period costumes and the fare is historically correct—including peanut soup and "sippet".

The "Mrs. Hunter" comment will become a point for teasing between Patrick and Megan. He will often call her "Mrs. Hunter" and will think that having her perform specific wifely duties would be wonderful. Both will continue to waver, often finding reasons to fight the growing attraction. The attraction between Patrick and Megan is



instant and similarly strong on both sides. They'll go through some major upheavals as they try to find a way to handle the love that builds so quickly. Almost from the first meeting, Patrick tells Megan that he's going to have her with him. He doesn't elaborate, and it will be much later before he comes to any sort of conclusion about what he actually wants. When this does happen, he'll admit that he could likely seduce her for a brief sexual encounter but that he doesn't want that after all. His emotions will then roller coaster out of control and he'll later come to doubt that he's ready to take the bigger step to "sign on the dotted line". While both characters will go through some serious periods of doubt regarding their relationship, they each must come to some conclusion in their own way.

Patrick says that he has a brother and three sisters, and that they—along with Patrick's parents—are all coming to Patrick's for Thanksgiving. He points out that now she's "Mrs. Hunter" and that means they must spend Thanksgiving together. Megan objects, but is soon caught up in the excitement of planning, and agrees to help him cook the dinner and to share Thanksgiving. When Megan is on the verge of refusing, he says "Please," and seems so serious that she is taken aback and agrees. He notes that he can't imagine not having her with him for Thanksgiving.



# Chapters 3 and 4

## Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Megan apparently shuts off her alarm in her sleep, so is still in bed when Patrick arrives the following morning. She is awakened by the pounding on the door, but takes time to slip into sweat pants before going downstairs. When Patrick is staring at her, she realizes she has a silk nightgown tucked into her sweat pants, having forgotten to put on a shirt. She goes back upstairs to finish dressing, falls back into bed and goes back to sleep. Patrick notes that Megan Murphy is back in bed and that he's going to have to wake her. He likens himself to Prince Charming. He is delighted with the idea that she has probably been longing for him all night, imagining his passionate kisses. He also decides that she probably opened the door in her nightgown just to give him a clue about her thoughts. Patrick slips off his tie, puts Tim on a pallet on the floor and goes to Megan's bedroom, expecting that she's waiting for him. He calls her "sexy lady" and kisses her, waking her from a sound sleep and prompting her to yell at him. When she next speaks, it's to sway toward him and he says that she's very confusing—all prickly one minute and soft the next. He quizzes her, making certain that she's really awake and won't go back to sleep after he leaves. When she makes her way to the kitchen, she finds that Patrick has left a playpen for Tim and a rose. Patrick says that he'd sent out an "all call" for items for Tim and that the playpen would make Megan's life better while she watches Tim.

That evening, Megan takes Tim to Patrick's house, reads him a story, and puts him to bed. When Patrick arrives home, Megan is "up to her elbows in pie dough". She explains that she's failed two previous attempts but believes she's now managed to make a pie. Patrick notes that she's a "sexy strumpet". Megan is on the verge of responding, then reminds herself that she should "remember Dave", who is a former fiancée who literally left Megan at the altar. She tells Patrick that she has no intention of allowing herself to become involved in a relationship and that she wants him as a platonic friend. He responds that he wants her as his lover.

Megan admits that she's attracted to Patrick, says he has an innocent nose like you'd find on the boy next door, and that he has a "killer behind". As Megan leaves, she vows that she'll be up and dressed the following morning before Patrick arrives, while he notes that this attraction is likely to be a problem for him.

On Friday afternoon, Megan drives to the downtown historic district, situates Tim in his stroller, and the two begin a walk, stopping at Tilly's apartment but finding no one home. Patrick later says that he checks for her every day. As Megan and Tim continue their walk, they drop by the Raleigh Tavern Bake Shop where the women there give Tim a cookie. When they arrive at Patrick's house, he's already warming up soup and bagels for their meal. He says that he has stated his intentions toward Megan, that he should now be patient, but that he's wanting sex. Megan feeds Tim but winds up with a lot of the baby food on herself. She takes a shower, puts on one of Patrick's shirts, and is



toweling her hair when he yells to her that he has something to ask. She goes downstairs and says that she won't marry him before he tells her that what he'd wanted was for her to break the eggs since he'd never mastered that skill. At the end of the evening, Patrick asks Megan to go out to dinner with him the following day, saying that his receptionist's daughter will baby-sit.

They have dinner at the King's Arms Tavern and Patrick is amazed at Megan's appearance. He's surprised when she says she's never eaten at the King's Arms Tavern—a rather exclusive establishment. Patrick says he's a history buff, that his ancestors once lived there, that he was raised in California but felt he'd come home. She agrees. They have peanut soup which Megan loves and Patrick is skeptical of. Patrick asks if she's always so easily satisfied and Megan replies that there are some things a person simply has to find out for himself. She admits that she's waited for Patrick to flirt with her. Patrick says the best part of their date is to come, that he has a new TV and DVD player that were birthday gifts from his parents, and that they'll return to his house for a movie.

Patrick says he has great parents and Megan says hers are also wonderful but that she's grateful they're in Florida. She explains that they have a "super marriage" and want Megan to have the same. Megan admits to herself that waking up in Patrick's bed is appealing and that her emotions weren't listening to reason.

## Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Megan notes that Patrick is thoughtful and that it's "too bad" he has to be good-lucking and so nice. She also notes that it's a good thing her parents live in Florida. This is the first hint Megan's offered of her parents' tendency to become involved in her relationships. She'll later note that her most recent fiancée—Dave—wasn't in love with Megan but had loved her mother's cooking and spending time with her father. Megan tells Patrick that she's "sworn off" men but doesn't yet offer details.

Megan's time with Tim seems to be changing her. She notes that she's spent a great deal of time worrying about trivial things—such as freckles. She realizes that Tim doesn't have the security she had a child—that he doesn't even have a father and that it suddenly seems that he also doesn't have a mother.

Megan and Patrick begin talking about Tim's future in the event Tilly doesn't return. Patrick says that he would adopt Tim, but that the odds of him being able to do so are slim because he isn't married. Patrick's mother and Megan's mother will immediately begin to make plans as if they don't expect Tilly to return at all. The two mothers will go so far as to say that a quick wedding would be best because of the possibility of an adoption.

Patrick lives in a restored historic home that was never a residence but was once an eighteenth-century kitchen. Copper is used to give the room an additional cozy feeling. There's a large fireplace and Megan often pulls a rocker near the fire where she sits





with Tim. On a particular evening, she tells Tim that she's going to read him a story about a little red hen. She talks to the child, and in some ways seems to be deepening her bond with the little boy. When the parents arrive, both will take to Tim immediately and he will become the center of attention and of plans.

Patrick has "stated his intentions" toward Megan and has made it plain that he wants Megan. Megan has said that she has no intention of allowing Patrick to get close to her, but has continually responded to his physical advances and has made a few of her own. It's now interesting that the two will almost trade places, with Megan soon insisting that their relationship go forward while Patrick will say that he's not financially ready to make a serious commitment. As they each battle their emotions and come to terms with their love, they'll have to face their fears.



# Chapters 5 and 6

## Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

Patrick takes the sitter home while Megan builds a fire and settles herself in front of the TV. It takes her several minutes to discover that the TV and DVD player is located in the bedroom. Both pieces of electronic equipment are birthday gifts from his parents. Megan immediately begins to justify reasons for the equipment to be in the bedroom. She reminds herself that Patrick's house is in a historic district and that he's not allowed to have an outside antennae. That means that the second floor would be the best place for reception for the television. Patrick has two movies - Winnie-the-Pooh and "Bridges of Madison County." Patrick suggests that they should watch the cartoon just to be certain that the movie is alright so that Tim won't be disappointed. Megan says the latter is her favorite movie and she cries for the entire show. Megan and Patrick cuddle as they watch the movie and the mood intensifies as the movie ends but Patrick slows the emotions, saying he doesn't want Megan to come to him because she's been "softened up by Clint Eastwood." They are in the throes of passion when Tim begins crying. Patrick says the youngster is teething and Megan irritably asks if he couldn't get a tooth during the daytime.

The following day, Patrick and Tim go to where Megan is working as a visitors' guide. Patrick says Tim slept little though he's sound asleep in the stroller as they walk. Patrick and Megan agree to meet at Patrick's after she's off work and Megan says that even though she doesn't want to get married, she would agree to being "debauched." Patrick feeds Tim while Megan showers and puts the boy to bed. Patrick provides her with some warm brandy and she has some time to think as Patrick showers. Patrick asks if she's sure and she says that it seems impossible to be sure. She says that she'd thought she was sure with David, and that relationship had ended badly. She admits that she'd stood in her closet the night before, looking at the bag that contains her wedding dress, and that the sight of the bag brought back bad memories but didn't change her feelings for Patrick. As she listens to the water in the shower, she notes that the sound has an intimate, "husbandly" quality.

As Patrick is about to join Megan in bed, he says that her kiss tastes of brandy. She says she toasted him while he was in the shower - "To Pat, the cute pediatrician." He says that isn't a romantic toast and she says he should offer a toast. He says, "To Tibbles, for bringing us together," and she agrees that's an appropriate toast. The lovemaking is awesome for both and she believes she hasn't made a mistake by allowing this relationship. As Megan and Patrick cuddle afterward, she says that this is the first time a relationship has felt so right.

Megan wakes the following morning noting that she'd been engaged twice but had never spent the night. She then realizes that it's seven-thirty and Patrick is late for work. She shakes him, talks to him and pushes at him, telling him that he's late for work, but he simply won't come awake. She eventually pours cold water on him to wake him.



Later that day, she is at work in her studio when Patrick arrives, soaked from a torrential rain and explaining that his car window was broken and wouldn't roll up. Patrick's clothes are in the dryer and he is wearing Megan's robe when there's a knock on the door and Megan's parents enter, her mother saying that they couldn't stand the thought of spending Thanksgiving in Florida so far from Megan. Megan's parents take note of Patrick who is wearing only a robe and the fact that Megan is holding a baby. Mike Murphy asks Patrick if he's married to Megan. Patrick says that Megan "won't marry me." Without further warning, Mike hits Patrick in the nose, knocking Patrick to the floor, then says that he feels rather ridiculous having just hit a man in a skirt. Patrick points out that it's a robe, Megan demands that her father take the suitcases to the bedroom, that Patrick get dressed and asks her mother to watch Tim so that she can drive Patrick to the hospital for an x-ray. Mrs. Murphy asks Megan if she is in love with Patrick and Megan assures her mom that it's too soon to "rent a reception hall" or make other wedding plans.

On the way to the hospital, Patrick begins to consider the situation from Mike Murphy's stand and decides that he likes the approach because it means Megan won't be in danger of being seduced as long as her father is around. Patrick says he should order a larger turkey, Megan says she won't be coming for Thanksgiving but Patrick insists that both families join him and Megan agrees.

Mrs. Hunter and Mrs. Murphy talk as if it's an established fact that Megan and Patrick will marry. After Megan has peeled many apples, she points out a blister on her hand and Patrick kisses it. His niece comments and Patrick's mother says it's alright, because people who are going to get married may take such liberties with each other. Patrick whispers to Megan, asking if he missed something and Megan says they're now engaged because their mothers decided so. Patrick asks if they've also set a date and Megan says Christmas. Pat then asks if she's going to go through with it and jokingly says that it would help his tax return. The moms then begin to talk about Tim, that he has Patrick's eyes and resembles Megan around the mouth. Patrick picks up the kidding and Megan tells him that her father's punch in the nose went straight to his brain.

As the Murphys are going back to Megan's house, Mrs. Murphy suddenly remembers that she's talked to Dave, that he asked where Megan lives and that he's "reconsidered." Megan, thinking back to the fact that Dave literally left her at the altar in front of some two hundred guests, asks aloud why she always has to be the "dumpee" and her mother suggests that this might be her opportunity to dump someone - Dave.

## Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

Patrick admits that he wants to hurry their relationship but that he knows he must wait for Megan to decide what she wants. It's interesting that Patrick is anxious for things to progress, but once it happens he'll be the one who is uncertain. As Megan and Patrick are about to go to bed together, she notes that she'd looked at the "bag in her closet" the night before. It turns out this is the bag that holds the wedding dress she'd been wearing when Dave walked away, leaving her at the altar. Megan now says that she



believes it would be wrong to allow that dress to ruin something good—such as her relationship with Patrick. She promises herself she'll take it one step at a time, but that she is willing to take the chance.

Megan calls herself a person who makes things but says that she's not a true artist. She says that she has simply always created—when there was snow, she built snowmen and when there was wind she built kites. She loves to work with clay because it is "malleable" and of the earth.

Megan, Mrs. Murphy, and Mrs. Hunter join together at Patrick's house to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner. The two mothers talk about the upcoming marriage of Patrick and Megan as though it were an established fact and even consider when the ceremony should be held. Mrs. Murphy says that they should marry at Christmas—the sooner the better for the sake of the adoption process. It's Janice, Patrick's sister, who points out to Megan that the two women "hit it off" and that she believes they're planning Megan's wedding. Megan responds that she isn't getting married but Laurie asks if marriage isn't necessary if Patrick is to adopt Tim. Megan says that everyone assumes Tilly won't return for Tim but doesn't discuss her own thoughts on the matter. She abruptly tells Laurie that she believes a Christmas wedding would be appropriate. Both Patrick and Megan talk about marriage but both will later admit that they've pretended but never seriously discussed the issue.



# Chapters 7, 8 and 9

## Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Summary

The following morning, Megan arises early and goes to her workshop where she makes a teapot for Patrick and a bowl for Tim. She meets Patrick on her way back inside and he says that he's missed waking up next to her. She says that if it's left to her mother, they'll wake up next to each other for the rest of their lives. Patrick says it sounds nice, but Megan thinks to herself that he still hasn't seriously asked her to marry him. Patrick admits to himself that he looks and sounds like a fiancée, but hasn't seriously proposed. At two o'clock that afternoon, Megan and her parents arrive at Patrick's house. Megan notes that Patrick's house would be the perfect setting for a wedding and imagines herself, in front of the fireplace, with only family present, who'll remain for "a terrific party".

The men are upstairs watching football, Patrick's mother proudly displays the huge turkey, and Patrick is called down to transfer the bird to the serving platter. He loses his grip and the turkey falls to the floor but Patrick and his mother quickly pick it up and put it on the tray. His mother says it's a good thing the floor was clean, Patrick's niece says she won't eat it because it has "rabbit cooties", and his nephew says the greasy mark across the floor resembles "slug slime". After dinner, Patrick invites Megan for a walk. After agreeing that they wouldn't talk about marriage, Patrick asks Megan if he detects "a broken heart hanging in your closet". Megan is immediately defensive, asking if he's been snooping in her closet. He says it's only an expression, but then questions further. Megan tells of Dave leaving her at the altar. She also says that she's been engaged "three times", but that the first was when she was five and that she later caught Jimmy Fee "carrying Mary Lee Bernard's lunch box for her". She says the second engagement was during college because she'd been made to understand that she should "catch a husband" during college, and that Steve had realized the mistake first, had taken her ring while she napped in the library and left her a note saying he was joining the foreign legion.

Following Megan's admissions, the two contemplate their options. Patrick, a pediatrician in a small town, couldn't live with someone. Patrick isn't yet making much money and isn't certain he can support Megan. He also knows that he's going to be very busy over the next two years and predicts that Megan will feel abandoned. They part without making any promises, Patrick saying that he'll bring Tim to her the following morning and that his family will be gone for the day. Megan's last thought of the evening is that the more time passes without Patrick issuing a proposal, the more she wants to get married.

The following evening, Megan arrives at Patrick's house with Tim, builds a fire, and has the house cozy when Patrick arrives. He asks if she wants a short "sexfest", but they agree that they probably need to talk. Before either can begin, there's a knock at the door, and Tilly Coogan walks in, grabs Tim and hugs him. She has a young man,



Leonard Bell, with her. She introduces him as Tim's dad. Tilly and Lenny had dated in high school but Tilly had refused to marry Lenny, saying they were too young for the commitment. Lenny says that he had joined the Navy after their breakup. Then Tilly discovered she was pregnant and she moved to Williamsburg, leaving behind her own family and not telling Lenny about the child. She says that she had expected that her family and Lenny wouldn't accept the situation and that she felt she was on her own. She doesn't say what prompted her to find Lenny or to seek out her parents, but the reception was positive. Tilly says that the two are now getting married. Lenny says he didn't know about Tim until Tilly sought him out, that he's in the Navy and that Tilly will remain with her parents until his tour of duty is complete. Megan and Patrick gather Tim's belongings and Tilly, Lenny, and Tim leave. Patrick asks Megan if she wants to kiss Tim good-bye, but she declines. She says that it would simply be too hurtful to say good-bye to the little boy.

Once they're alone, Patrick hands Megan a plate, asking if she wants to smash something. She does, saying she feels a bit foolish but admitting it makes her feel better. Patrick asks if she wants another plate and Megan says no, but admits to herself that she wants "another baby". She decides that the "trick" is to get Patrick to want a baby also. Patrick notes the change in Megan's attitude and suggests they go out to dinner. He wants to avoid a romantic dinner spot and so takes her to The Pit, a place that serves "great chili dogs" and where customers play darts.

Megan and Patrick are apparently seen "smooching" in the car, and three teenage boys are making "smoochy kissing sounds" as Megan sits down "with as much dignity as she could muster". Megan orders a "Kamikaze Dog", which is topped with "everything but Astroturf". Megan leans forward, saying, "Let's talk", and Patrick begins telling about his day. Megan says that's not what she has in mind. He mentions the weather. Patrick imagines that she wants to talk about either babies or marriage, and that he isn't eager to talk about either because he is "feeling desperate about both". Megan says people get engaged all the time and that she'll have to take matters into her own hands. Patrick continues to interrupt every sentence until she shouts that she wants to have his baby, adding, "You want to marry me, or what?" Most of the customers in The Pit hear the proposal and the bartender urges them to speak up. Patrick warns himself that he has to handle the situation delicately because she's overwrought over Tim's departure. He says no and Megan turns white. He asks to explain, she says there's nothing to say, that she's headed for a world record on becoming "unengaged", and that she's sorry she doesn't have a ring to return.

Just then, Dave, Megan's former fiancée, approaches. He says that he called Patrick's house and that Patrick's answering service told where he would be. There's instant animosity between the two men. Megan offers Dave her chili dog and he eats it. Patrick notes that Dave is "a yuppie version of Bigfoot. A cross between Gentle Ben and Magilla Gorilla". Dave asks if he's interrupted anything and Megan says her proposal was just turned down. Dave says Patrick is "a jerk", and asks Megan if she's now "up for grabs." Dave has the engagement ring he'd previously purchased for Megan with him—a two carat diamond ring.



Patrick tells Dave that Megan is pregnant and that she'd wanted to marry so the baby would have a father. He also says that the child isn't his. Dave seems to believe it all, especially when Megan says it isn't true and Dave says denial is one of the stages of pregnancy. Patrick asks Dave to "be a sport" and marry Megan. Dave turns to Patrick, saying he should be the one to marry Megan. He then offers to sell Patrick the engagement ring he has, saying it has a flaw in it—a detail he'd apparently hidden from Megan when she previously wore the ring. The bartender then butts in, asking which of the men is going to marry Megan. They discuss settling it by arm wrestling and chess, but settle on darts with the loser being obligated to marry Megan. Dave promises Megan he'll try to lose but easily wins the first game, prompting Dave to object that he's been hustled. The second round is a tie and on the third round, Dave steps away from the bar and Patrick hits him in the rear with a dart. Dave lays across the seat of Megan's car and Megan agrees that Dave can go to her house. Patrick offers to go help get him settled on the couch, but Megan declines, saying her mother will help.

## Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Analysis

Once the meal is finished, Patrick's niece asks if she's to be a flower girl. Patrick says it's Megan's call. Megan says she believes Christmas Eve to be a good date and that the young girl can be a flower girl. Patrick notes that they are playing at a game, similar to Monopoly, and that they are both "moving pieces around the board". He wonders what will happen when they pass "Go". Patrick admits that he's being sucked into his "meddling mother's fantasy", and that he's soon going to have to make a decision about the situation. Patrick and Megan go for a walk and Patrick notes that Cambell's Tavern would be a good place for a wedding, then says, "Oh damn, now they've got me doing it". Both Megan and Patrick continue to waver in their desires, and Megan now admits to herself that she wants Patrick to propose, but that she doesn't want to have to answer him.

After Tilly picks up Tim, Patrick notes that he's a bit "off balance". Megan says he should trust her, that she's got it all figured out. She says that he should trust her and Patrick says he does, but admits that he's worried about her mood as well. Megan continues to flirt with Patrick, going so far as to wonder if she can induce him to have sex with her in the car before they go inside The Pit. She says that getting him to marry her is secondary, and that she wouldn't mind if they got a head start on producing a baby.

Patrick's practice is growing quickly and he says he's getting new patients so quickly that he can't remember their names. He says that's not the kind of practice he wants—that he wants to be "an old-fashioned family doctor" who is invited to events like baptisms and weddings. It's interesting that he so often worries about money—about his ability to financially provide for Megan—but is also anxious to have a small practice. It seems likely that he'll eventually have to choose between the two goals.

Dave indicates that he's interested in Megan and Megan feigns interest of her own, but says to herself that she'd amputate her finger before putting Dave's engagement ring back on. Patrick isn't ready to commit to marriage but he doesn't want Megan to marry



Dave either. He uses the same tactics he'd used to get Megan to baby-sit Tim on Dave now, ensuring that Dave doesn't want to marry Megan and making it seem Dave's idea.

As they leave Patrick at his house, Patrick admits that he is angry because Dave is now going to Megan's house. Megan is on the verge of tears as she drives home. Dave says Patrick is in love with Megan. She says love isn't enough.





# Chapters 10 and 11

## Chapters 10 and 11 Summary

The following morning, Patrick wakes, missing Megan and Tim. He notes that it's a "beautiful day", but that there seems to be no reason to get up without Megan in his bed and Tim downstairs. He walks around Williamsburg with his family, but the thoughts of Dave on Megan's couch continues to haunt him. He finally says he has a "medical emergency" to tend to and leaves. He goes to Megan's house, gives Dave a shot of Novocain and an inflatable donut pillow to sit on and sends him home.

Megan has been dealing with Dave and his demands long enough to be sick of it. She notes that he has a little bell to summon her for whatever he needs and that she's also sick of that sound. Dave tells Megan that it's nice of her to take care of his while he's "crippled", and that it was good to be with her folks as well. He says that it was "just like old times". Megan knows that her mother petted Dave the previous day, feeding him "a week's worth of groceries in a matter of hours", and that Dave and her father had spent hours talking football. As Megan wonders how long it takes a "dart hole to heal", she remembers that it's Patrick's fault that Dave is still on her couch and that she's still waiting on him. When Patrick arrives, Dave asks if it's "that lunatic doctor".

After Dave leaves, Megan announces that she's leaving Williamsburg. She hasn't really considered her options, but knows she can't stay. Patrick asks where she's going and she admits that she doesn't yet know. Megan begins packing and as she puts something in the suitcase, Patrick removes it. He says he's "helping you unpack". He then asks for a good-bye kiss. She first declines, then agrees, but says she's still leaving. She takes only a few things with her, gets in the car and pulls away, leaving Patrick in her drive. He considers his options and that she is leaving because he's "afraid to sign on the dotted line". He follows her, shouting, "I'll sign", and trying to get her to pull over. When she stops at a signal, he is pulling in behind her but his brakes fail and he smashes into her car. Both cars are totaled and a police officer gives them a ride to Megan's. Patrick remains with her, fearing that she's in shock. They cling to each other and Patrick spends the night. The following morning, Patrick notes a change in Megan—that she's stronger. Patrick realizes that the time for pretending is past. He vows to "work it out", and she says that she will also work it out.

Patrick's insurance pays only \$150, citing the value of the car. The cost of repairs is one thousand. She says that without a car she can't leave and can't even go shopping for food. She first plans to starve to death but then finds some crackers and says eating those is even more pitiful than starving. She's at the table when Patrick arrives with Thanksgiving leftovers. He says his car isn't so badly damaged and that he's to pick it up the following day.

The next day, Patrick drops off breakfast and he and Megan briefly flirt, but Patrick has a taxi in the drive and he leaves with her thanks. Later that day, a delivery service drops



a car off at Megan's house. She calls Patrick's office and he answers, having apparently shortened his receptionist's hours in order to make car payments.

Megan lives in a rented house where the owner also owns a horse. Megan says she loves animals and has tried to make friends with the horse, but it has resisted her attempts. The weather has turned bitterly cold now, and there's snow on the ground, prompting the owner's request that Megan feed the horse, which is now confined to the barn. Megan arrives home one Saturday to find that the horse seems to be in some sort of distress. She says that the animal appears to have an upset stomach and wonders how much medicine she'd have to administer to a horse of this size. She calls on Patrick, who agrees that the animal's stomach is distended. Patrick notes that the horse looks as if it had swallowed a car. Patrick soon discovers that the horse is in labor but he soon discovers that one of the baby's hoofs seems to be pointed in the wrong direction. He tells Megan that he has very limited experience with regard to delivering animals, but that he's going to try to help the horse's foal be born. He rectifies the problem and the foal is born safely.

After the mother and baby are comfortable, Megan and Patrick go in the house. Patrick tells Megan that he loves her and she responds that she loves him too. Patrick says that considering their love, he believes it would be alright for him to spend the night. Megan responds, saying, "It'll cost ya". He responds that he'll pay the price but only if she agrees to marry him. He says that it's a "very serious proposal". She asks if a Christmas wedding would be too soon and he responds that it will be too late because he intends to consummate the proposal immediately.

## Chapters 10 and 11 Analysis

On the way to Megan's house, while Dave is still there, Patrick says again that his salary isn't sufficient to support Megan. He drives a beat up car and when Megan once asked why he didn't buy something else, he said he could afford either a car payment or a receptionist, but not both. As he's considering his desire to marry Megan now, he admits that she has a salary as well and that their combined income would likely sustain them, but doesn't dwell on this possible answer to the financial issue that continues to haunt him. It seems likely that he is concerned about the money, but that it's a way to avoid having to seriously consider marriage.

Both Megan and Patrick drive beat-up old cars and it has been a joke between them. Megan once asked Patrick why he drove such an old car and he responded by asking her the same thing. Each say that there are more immediate needs that must be met before there could be a new car.

On the day after the accident, Patrick tells Megan that he's "bowled over" by his recent completion of medical school and his internship. She is understanding and doesn't berate him for his indecision. He notes that she'd been nice to him even though it was his fault her car is totaled. He calls himself "a crumb".



The reader has a limited view of Megan's change of attitude that occurs near the end of the novel. It's Patrick who suddenly notes that Megan is in control and acknowledges that there will be no more pretending. He doesn't elaborate and Megan's thoughts are not completely revealed. It does seem that she's come to a point of accepting that she's in love with Patrick and that it's a deep, abiding love that will wait for him to come to terms with his own feelings and to announce whatever decision he eventually makes.

It's interesting that when Megan encounters the problem with the horse, she doesn't hesitate to call on Patrick. It's noted that she hasn't spoken to him for six weeks, and that the time has crawled, feeling more like six years. She studiously avoids driving by Patrick's house or Tilly Coogan's apartment during those days, but the minute she's fearful for the horse, she doesn't hesitate to call on Patrick for help. It's also interesting that Patrick had been concerned about advancing his relationship with Megan at specific times. For example, he was concerned after watching *Bridges of Madison County* that Megan had been "softened up" by Clint Eastwood. After Tim is returned to Tilly, Patrick worries about Megan's emotional state. Though he could easily have taken advantage of the situation, he doesn't. Now, they are both likely emotionally vulnerable because of participating in the birth of the foal, but both now seem willing to take their love to the next step anyway.



# Characters

## Megan Murphy

Megan is twenty-seven and has just recovered from a broken relationship—her second engagement unless her brief relationship with Jimmy Fee at five years of age counts. Megan says that she caught Jimmy carrying another girl's lunch box, ending the engagement and setting a precedent for the rest of her life. She's briefly engaged to Steve as a senior in college, though she admits that it's only because she'd been led to believe that she should catch a man during college. Her next relationship is with Dave, though Megan says Dave had fallen in love with Mr. and Mrs. Murphy rather than with Megan. After her break-up with Dave, Megan moves to Williamsburg, a historic town that is a major tourist attraction for those interested in history. She meets Patrick Hunter after having had her skirt nibbled by Patrick's rabbit, Tibbles.

The attraction between Megan and Patrick is instant, but Megan continually reminds herself that she's had bad luck with men. For some time, she adamantly refuses to admit that she is in love with Patrick or that they can have a serious relationship. When she loses Tim—a child she and Patrick are temporarily responsible for—she senses the ticking of the biological clock and realizes that she desperately wants a child. It takes only a short time for her to realize that she wants Patrick, though it seems she comes to that conclusion only after Patrick himself seems reluctant to marry. Megan eventually admits her love and patiently waits for the situation to resolve. That happens with Patrick's proclamation of his love for her and his proposal.

## Patrick Hunter

Patrick is a young pediatrician who is just beginning a practice in Williamsburg. He's considered "cute", has a rabbit for a pet, and is bowled over with the demands of his new life. He has taken over a practice and admits that he'd envisioned being a typical country doctor who knows his patients. Instead, he's inundated with new patients and can hardly remember their names. His reaction when Tilly Coogan leaves her child in Patrick's care is a statement of Patrick's personality. Though he admits that he's disappointed in Tilly, he berates himself for not having seen the warning signs and doing something to help Tilly.

Patrick has a way of accomplishing his goals without seeming pushy. When Megan returns Tibbles to Patrick, she's ready to scold him for being an irresponsible pet parent. Patrick laughingly tells her that she's been feeding his rabbit again, pointing out that Tibbles has eaten a hole in her cloak. When she says that Patrick should find a babysitter for Tim, he says that he'll allow her to baby-sit, but attaches some requirements, ultimately convincing Megan that she'd begged for the job and had accomplished something by having won the opportunity to watch the child. A short time after meeting Dave, Patrick convinces him that marrying Megan is a bad idea.



Patrick's attraction to Megan is instant and he immediately tells her that he's going to do everything in his power to capture her for his own. It seems likely that he hadn't intended for that to include marriage, but soon admits that he doesn't want a casual relationship. He is, however, afraid to make the ultimate commitment, and it takes some time for him to come to the conclusion that the obstacles he fears can be overcome.

## Mike Murphy

Megan's father and a former police officer. The first time he sees Patrick is when Patrick's clothing is being dried after a rainstorm, leaving Patrick dressed only in Megan's robe. Megan notes that her father's face turns red and she hopes he's not wearing his gun. After Mike hits Patrick in the nose, Patrick comes to realize that Mike was protecting his daughter. He comes to appreciate the fact that he needn't worry about Megan having other men around as long as her father is putting forth that protective front.

## Tim Coogan

Tilly's son and the child she drops off with Megan and Patrick. Megan quickly becomes attached to Tim and says that she doesn't understand why it took her so long to discover babies. When Tim is taken from her life, Megan wants to replace him with a child of her own. It seems that it takes Tim's presence to point out to Megan that her own biological clock is ticking.

## Tilly Coogan

The young woman who drops her child off with Megan and Patrick, rushing out without any explanation other than the fact that she'll be back in no more than two weeks. Tilly has actually gone to seek out her family and to tell Tim's father of the child's existence. She does return, retrieves Tim, and leaves Williamsburg to rejoin her own family.

## Dave

Megan's former fiancée who shows up in Williamsburg after Megan and Patrick have begun seeing each other. After Patrick hits Dave in the rear with a dart, Dave makes a big deal of being injured. He lays around on Megan's couch, asking her for food and care until Patrick shows up, gives Dave a shot, and sends him home.

## Leonard

Tim's father. Lenny is in the Navy and doesn't know of Tim's existence until Tilly seeks him out. When he sees Tim for the first time, Tilly points out that Tim is very smart and



that Lenny will be proud of him once he gets to know the child. Megan notes that Lenny seems so proud he could burst just upon seeing the child for the first time.

## **Mrs. Murphy**

Megan's mother. Megan says that she loves her parents and that they are great, but that her mother wants Megan to be married. Upon meeting Pat for the first time, Mrs. Murphy asks almost immediately if Megan loves Patrick.

## **Mrs. Hunter**

Patrick's mother. Though she seems somewhat less pushy than Mrs. Murphy, she seems also to take for granted that Patrick and Megan will marry. The two mothers talk about the wedding as if it were a given fact and that they would have the option to make the plans for the event.

## **Martha Greenwold**

The fellow visitors' aide who tells Megan about Doctor Hunter, including the fact that he's "a little disorganized".



## **Objects/Places**

### **Tibbles**

Doctor Patrick Hunter's rabbit.

### **Williamsburg**

Where Megan Murphy and Patrick Hunter live. The town is a historic visitors' center with businesses, people and events similar to those of a century or more earlier.

### **The Historic District**

Where Megan Murphy works as a tourist guide. The district draws visitors who are interesting in the lives of settlers of a century or more before.

### **Nicholson Street**

Where Doctor Hunter lives in "a little white cabin" and where Megan goes to return the rabbit.

### **Merchants Square**

Where Megan's car is parked immediately after her first meeting with Tim at Patrick's house.

### **The King's Arms**

The exclusive restaurant where Megan and Patrick go for their first date.

### **Raleigh Tavern Bake Shop**

Where Megan and Tim stop every afternoon during their walk for a cookie.

### **Campbell's Tavern**

The place Patrick says would make a good setting for the wedding.



## **The Pit**

Where Megan and Patrick go for chili dogs after Tilly picks up Tim. It's also where they run into Dave.

## **Kamikaze Dog**

The chili dog that's "topped with everything but AstroTurf" that Megan orders at The Pit. She doesn't eat it, but Dave does.





# Themes

## Love Conquers All

Though the attraction between Megan and Patrick is instant and impacts both, they are each harboring some doubts about the level of the relationship and their willingness to commit to that level. In Megan's case, the problem is that she's had bad relationships in the past and has officially sworn off men. She tells Patrick that almost from the beginning, saying that she was engaged three times—but that the first probably didn't count because she and the boy were only five years old. However, the remaining two relationships were enough to convince Megan that she isn't capable of holding a relationship together. In one of those cases, she was literally left at the altar in front of some two hundred guests. The humiliation remains part of Megan's life and she has the wedding gown in the closet to help her remember why she won't again be involved in a serious relationship.

Patrick's reasons are different. He says that he's "bowled over" by the demands of starting out his life. He had a fledgling practice and knows that it's going to take time before he's financially secure and has any leisure time to commit to a relationship. He cites those two factors—time and money—as his reasons for avoiding a full commitment with Megan. However, Patrick has had the opportunity to have a less committed relationship with Megan and says that he's not interested in that. It seems that his feelings for Megan are so intense that he knows it's all or nothing. The problem is that he wants the "all", but doesn't feel confident he can make it work.

They each eventually come to the conclusion that they can make it work out. They seem to evaluate their fears and each decides that there is not really anything that can't be overcome.

## Tolerance

On the surface, Patrick seems much more tolerant than Megan. Patrick notes several times that Megan is a strong-willed woman, but says that he's willing to accept that because it's a part of who she is. When Megan is having trouble coping after Tim's departure, Patrick offers her a plate to smash in order to work off some of her anger. She does smash it, though she says she feels a bit foolish for the display. Patrick understands because he is also feeling the strain, and he's willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that Megan gets through the emotional upheaval.

When Megan first confronts Patrick, it's over his pet parenting skills and she exhibits her intolerance at that point, though her scolding is interrupted when Tilly drops off Tim. However, Megan later shows the depth of her tolerance when her mother and Patrick's mother are making plans for Megan and Patrick's wedding. Patrick remarks that she seems to be taking the entire situation well and she says that her jaw hurts from



grinding her teeth. While she may have been tense enough to grind her teeth, she has done so quietly, without confronting the women about their apparent disregard for her input. The other obvious evidence of Megan's tolerance is when she recognizes her love for Patrick and decides that she'll simply wait for the situation to resolve itself. She'd initially planned to run away, but that plan was halted when Patrick totaled her car. However, with the new car she could have left. Instead, she seems to be waiting for Patrick to come to terms with the situation. Patrick himself notes that she's calm and in control, but she's not overtly vocal about what should happen next.

## The Impotence of Family

Both Megan and Patrick come from loving families and it takes Tim to make Megan realize how fortunate she was. One day, as she's walking with Tim and has again checked Tilly's apartment to find that the young mother hasn't yet returned, Megan is suddenly faced with the reality that Tim doesn't have a father and that it could be that he no longer has a mother. Megan says that she's wasted time worrying about something as trivial as freckles while she was surrounded by a loving family in a secure home.

Patrick is close to his family—including siblings—and has made plans to include them all in his Thanksgiving plans. A short time after having met Megan, he realizes that he absolutely can't imagine a Thanksgiving without Megan as well. While Megan does say she's relieved that her parents are in Florida and won't be around for the holiday, she and her parents seem very close. When her parents arrive, she tells Patrick that she won't be coming to dinner, but he insists that both families join together for the event. That does happen and the dinner is a success.

Long before Megan and Patrick decide that they will marry, Megan realizes that the fireplace at Patrick's house would make the perfect backdrop for a wedding. She imagines it as a family get-together with an incredible feast to follow—a testament of her own commitment to family.

# Style

## Point of View

The book is written in third person and alternates between Megan and Patrick's point of view. This works well for the reader because it offers insight into the thoughts of both of the main characters. By not limiting the point of view to only one, both characters are presented on a much deeper level than would have been possible through a more limited point of view. The fact that the reader gets a look into the thoughts of both characters is vital to the story presentation. For example, Patrick is immediately attracted to Megan and announces his intention to have her for his own. However, at the point Tim is returned to Tilly, Megan is suddenly anxious to "make a baby", and sets out trying to convince Patrick of this need. Patrick is suddenly unwilling to be alone with Megan and chooses a well-lit, noisy chili dog place for their evening out. The action would have confused the reader except for the fact that the reader has access to Patrick's thoughts—that he's worried about Megan and that he's suddenly unsure of her emotional state. Later, when Patrick is unwilling to marry Megan, it seems that he's changed his mind. In truth, he's come to consider the magnitude of the step and to worry about his financial standing. There are similar situations with Megan.

## Setting

The story is set in modern day but in the historic town of Williamsburg. The author does not go into detail about the historic significance of the town but most readers will recognize that it's likely Williamsburg, Virginia, where there actually does exist a historic town that matches the general description of the Williamsburg in this novel. The descriptions offered are overall fairly general, but these add a sense of what the town is like for those readers who have not visited Williamsburg. For example, the author mentions Megan walking along with Tim in his stroller one day and they pass several historic places such as the bakery, where Tim is given a cookie. On another day, Patrick is walking through town with his parents, obviously sight-seeing, and they observe businesses that would have been in operation in Williamsburg of the 1700s. When Megan asks where Patrick lives so that she can return his rabbit, she's told that he lives next to the cabinet maker—another profession that would have been vital in the historic Williamsburg period. The author combines the historic Williamsburg with the modern-day people who live and work there, and does this well. The setting, time periods, and people are believable and add credibility to the story.

## Language and Meaning

The book is written in easy-to-read language and is easily understood overall. The setting—a historic village—prompts some references to words that may not be recognized by all readers. For example, Megan's costume while she is working as a



visitors' aide is historically correct, including her "mob cap". In another scene, Megan and Patrick have dinner at the King's Arms Tavern, where they have peanut soup, complete with a "sippet" for dipping. In the case of the mob cap, there is no explanation, though most readers will likely understand that it's a simple cap worn by women of the period. In the case of the sippet, the author explains that it's a bread used for dipping in the soup.

The novel is divided between exposition and dialogue. Overall, both are believable. There are, however, some actions and statements that don't seem to be what a normal person would say or do in that particular circumstance. For example, when the young girl named Tilly Coogan drops her child off at Patrick's house, Patrick and Megan accept responsibility for the child. Tilly is gone for a "couple of weeks" and does not contact Patrick at all during that time to say that she's returning or to check on the child.

## Structure

The book is written in eleven chapters of varying lengths. Several of these are devoted to a day with each chapter beginning when Patrick arrives at Megan's house in the morning to drop off Tim. The story is told in chronological order. Historic information is presented through thoughts and dialogue. For example, Megan "remembers" the garment bag hanging in her closet, which prompts her additional thoughts of Dave and their failed relationship. She talks to Patrick about Dave as well, efficiently presenting the historic information that helps the reader fully understand what's important in the lives of Patrick and Megan.



## Quotes

"Megan wasn't much of a cook, but she'd never made anything that looked as bad as Patrick Hunter's applesauce. She wondered if he misplaced babies at the hospital and melted rubber gloves in the autoclave." Chap. One, p. 11

"I was an only child. I was spoiled and pampered and never exposed to the sordid aspects of life . . . like drool and baby poo." Chap. Two, p. 21

"Good thing they had a six-thirty reservation and had to leave the house immediately. He was afraid once he started fondling Megan Murphy in her bunny dress, he'd lose control." Chap. Four, p. 63

"Destiny had nothing to do with it,' she said, suddenly nervous, not sure if she should let the conversation continue in this direction. 'It was your adventurous rabbit that brought us together.'" Chap. Four, p. 68

"She hadn't changed her mind about marriage, but she thought a birthday kiss would be nice. Everyone needed to get kissed once in a while, and the 'maybe' in her mind had changed to 'probably.'" Chap. Five, p. 75

"When everyone was seated, Pat carved from the top of the turkey, swearing to his niece by the Hippocratic oath that it was impossible for the top of the turkey to have rabbit cooties." Chap. Seven, p. 112

"Megan looked down the table at the butchered carcass and contemplated a marriage ceremony that went: through good times and bad times, in sickness and in health, turkey soup, turkey salad, turkey croquettes . . . till death do us part. Maybe she should reconsider her relationship with Pat. She could put up with his bizarre sense of humor, and she could live with his rabbit. She wasn't sure if she could handle the turkey leftovers." Chap. Seven, p. 112

"She'd been thinking about marriage . . . adoption. She'd learned nursery rhymes and bought books on child rearing. She knew how to play eensy weensy spider. How dare Tilly Coogan come bck to claim her baby after abandoning him?" Chap. Eight, p. 124

"Like Barbie dolls and blue nail polish, Dave was a discarded part of her past, and she



didn't want to hate him. She'd rather file him away with Mr. Potato Head, wondering from time to time what the attraction had been." Chap. Nine, p. 155

"She couldn't go food shopping because she didn't have a car. She was going to starve to death. Good. She felt like starving to death. It was pathetic. She found a box of stale crackers and decided to eat them at the kitchen table with a glass of water, because that was even more pathetic than starving to death." Chap. Ten, p. 175

"Megan, I've delivered a bunch of human babies, a litter of kittens when I was ten, and I've read All Things Great and Small. That's the extent of my veterinary knowledge." Chap. Eleven, p. 191

"In case you're wondering, that was a proposal. A very serious, very binding proposal." Chap. Eleven, p. 195



## Topics for Discussion

How do Megan and Patrick meet? What is Megan's first impression of Patrick? What does she come to believe about him?

Who is Tim? How does he come to be part of Megan and Patrick's lives? How does he tie the two together? What happens to Tim?

Where does Megan live? What does she do for a living? What does Patrick do?

How does Megan's father meet Patrick? What is Patrick's immediate impression? What does he come to realize?

Who is Dave? How does Patrick meet him? What ultimately happens to him?

What is it that keeps Patrick from proposing? How does Megan's attitude change? How does Patrick's change? What's the result?

What happens when Patrick's family and Megan's family meet for Thanksgiving dinner? Describe the parents' attitudes about Patrick, Megan, Tim, and their relationships.