

What's Bred in the Bone Study Guide

What's Bred in the Bone by Robertson Davies

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Part 1 (Pages 1-22)

Part 1 (Pages 1-22) Summary

The book opens with a meeting of the trustees of the Cornish Foundation for Promotion of the Arts and Humane Scholarship. Arthur Cornish, his wife Maria and the Reverend Simon Darcourt make up the members of the board. Arthur, as Chairman of the Board, wants Simon to stop writing his book about the life of Francis Cornish. Arthur's concern is that the book would be embarrassing, since it would reveal a member of a leading Canadian financial family as an art forger. Simon, however, has different concerns about the book. The subject of his book was a very private individual, and Simon is having problems producing facts for his book. He produces two separate obituaries that summarize the life of Mr. Francis Chegwiddden Cornish, neither of which seem able to provide an accurate rendition of the man's life. Simon wants to write a true, accurate biography of his friend's life, but Arthur would prefer a laundered version. Simon says that he will not be bullied and will not be attracted by Arthur's money. If he has to, he will get the book published by someone else. Maria steps in to mediate, and Simon reveals what has been bothering him all along. In order to write the book, he wants to find out the truth about Francis Cornish. He wants to know why, although he was given many opportunities right from birth, he always seemed to make the unusual choices. Arthur chooses this moment to leave the meeting, and Simon and Maria are left to finish the conversation.

Simon admits to having visited Blairlogie, the childhood home of Francis, but he was disappointed because the information he was seeking wasn't there. He believes the early years are pivotal to his story. Maria suggests that he have a chat with the Recording Angel. Maria, going into more detail, discusses the Recording Angel's staff, one of whom is the Angel of Biography, whose name she gives as the Lesser Zadkiel. Simon admits that it is Francis' childhood he is most drawn to. He tells her that he thinks Francis had a daimon (a guardian and manifestation of the artistic conscience). Maria, who has some background in these matters, has heard of one name for a daimon: Maimas. She tells Simon that he needs to listen to the Lesser Zadkiel and Maimas, and then he will have all he needs about Francis.

The author interjects two new characters into the story at the end of the chapter who appear to be looking on but are never seen. The Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimas discuss how even they have forgotten much of Francis' story. Thinking it will be amusing, they decide to review the life of Francis Cornish.

Part 1 (Pages 1-22) Analysis

The first section of the book introduces a couple themes. It introduces the theme of "What's Bred in the Bone," as Simon and Maria discuss the importance of learning Francis' childhood before being able to write a biography of his life. The theme of



"Beyond the Physical Realm" is introduced here as well, when Maria suggests that Simon have a chat with the Recording Angel. At the end of the chapter, the reader is introduced to the Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimas, whose role it will be to reveal Francis' life as it really was and to interpret it. Finally, the themes of "Social Constructs" and "Things Are Not as They Appear" are also dealt with briefly in this section. Arthur, who is Francis' nephew, does not want the biography written because it might reveal Francis as a forger, and that would not be good for the family name. Arthur, here, is caving in to society's expectations of its wealthier families. In doing so, he is encouraging that the secret of Francis' life as a potential forger be kept secret. The theme of secrets and things not being as they appear will show up again many times throughout the book.



Part 1 (Pages 23-72)

Part 1 (Pages 23-72) Summary

The review of Francis' life as viewed by the Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimas begins. Their record begins at Blairlogie with a brief description of the town. Likened to a wedding cake, the town is made up mostly of Scots (as the small, but highly decorated top layer), French Canadians (as the central middle layer), and finally, at the bottom, Poles who are laborers and farmers (the foundational layer). The Scots are Presbyterian, and the French Canadians and Poles are Catholic. The Senator, the wealthiest and most influential man in town, is a Catholic Scot, a rich liberal married to a French woman. The town is puzzled by this man who seems to cross all the lines. The Honourable James Ignatius McRory, the Senator, is Francis' grandfather.

The story begins with the Senator because he is the origin of Francis' wealth. Born in Scotland and brought to Canada by his parents, he grows up determined to put poverty behind him. He is called Hamish by his family, since that is his name in Gaelic. He becomes the owner of a lumber company and a rich man before he turns thirty. He marries a woman he loves and becomes involved in politics as an avid supporter of the Liberal Party. He is appointed to the Senate at forty-five, making him the youngest man in the Upper House.

The observers interject themselves in the story to comment on what they have seen so far. The Daimon Maimas wants to know when they are going to get to Francis. The Lesser Zadkiel calls for patience as Francis must be seen against his background. He reminds the Daimon that they are not bound by time. The Daimon is anxious for his chance to talk. The author returns to the narrative to pick up the story of Francis' grandfather.

Aside from his wife and politics, the Senator's other deep love is for his eldest daughter, Mary-Jacobine. Mary-Jim, as she is called, was named by her Aunt Mary-Ben, the Senator's sister who lives with them. Hamish has great plans for his daughter to marry well, and she must marry a Catholic. As she deserves a much wider circle of suitors, the Senator is determined to present his daughter at Court. He writes letters and meets with Prime Minister Laurier. Finally, after a year, he announces to his wife and daughter that they will be traveling to England. The best suite at the Cecil Hotel is booked for them, and they set off for London. After a whirlwind of shopping and etiquette lessons, the night arrives during which Mary-Jim will be presented to the King. At the ball, the family is introduced to Major Francis Cornish. He has been assigned to their family to ensure they have everything they need. Mary-Jim is overwhelmed by all the splendor, and upon returning to her room requests champagne be sent up.

The observers interject into the story again at this point to briefly discuss the evening and to suggest a look at Major Francis Cornish. Major Francis Cornish serves in the Boer War and when injured, is sent back to England. He receives a small pay from the



army, and as he is the younger son of a good family, he cannot expect to inherit. He decides that his best option is to marry well. Knowing that others in his position are doing well marrying rich American girls, he set his sights on Mary-Jim.

The McRorys stay in England for the London season. Mary-Jim has many admirers, one of whom is Francis. She names him the Wooden Soldier. Major Cornish asks the Senator for permission to marry Mary-Jim, and after conferring with his wife and Mary-Jim, who says she will marry for love, he tells Francis that she is not yet ready to marry.

A month goes by, and Mary-Jim, who has not been feeling well, agrees to see a doctor. She is pregnant. Mary-Jim tells her father about the champagne she requested on the night of her presentation at court. She tells him that such a nice man brought the champagne and that one thing led to another. Convinced that his daughter has gotten herself into a situation beyond her, the Senator does everything in his power to find the man who brought the champagne. Unfortunately, he cannot be found. Mary-Jim's mother responds to the situation in her own way and puts Mary-Jim through a regimen of activities and potions to induce an abortion, but Mary-Jim remains pregnant. Finally, the Senator asks Major Cornish if he is still interested in marrying Mary-Jim. The Major agrees to marry the Senator's daughter as long as the Senator will agree to sign the document that Major Cornish has prepared. It outlines the funds he requires to settle his debt and live in the manner that Mary-Jim has been accustomed to. It also states unequivocally that any children they have will be reared in the protestant faith. The Senator thinks that the amount of money requested is unreasonable, but he is most upset about the item requiring him to agree to raise any children as protestants. However, as he has no other options, he signs the document.

The observers enter the story again to argue over the Senator's response to Major Francis. Daimon Maimas feels that he gave in too easily, but the Lesser Zadkiel thinks that his temperament is the cause of his giving in. He and his daughter, both, are governed by their emotions. Overwhelmed by them, they are both brought to near panic by their emotions. Maimas agrees that this is something he had to deal with in Francis. They discuss briefly the reaction when the Senator tells his family. Mary-Jim does not resist for long. Ultimately, it is what Blairlogie might think that makes the decision for all of them.

When the author returns to the main narrative, he takes the reader back to Canada and to a description of Mary-Ben. She is a deeply religious woman who believes that it is her role in life to serve. When she was a young woman, she was injured, and the result was a permanent injury to her scalp. She cannot wear wigs since the area is too tender, so she has to wear caps made of the softest material. She is housekeeper at her brother's home, and without question she stays behind to watch the house while the family goes to England. She is in charge of the rest of the staff and enjoys visits from the Catholic priests and periodically, Dr. Jerome. Dr. Jerome is the first to be told the news of Mary-Jim's marriage when Mary-Ben receives the letter. On another visit, he learns that they will be spending their honeymoon trip abroad and that the Senator and his wife are on their way home. They are far less communicative than expected, but eventually Mary-Ben learns that the couple was married in a protestant church. Mary-Ben is not told of



the baby until the telegram arrives announcing his arrival. The news is in all the papers. The child is named Francis Chegwidden Cornish. More than a year later, Mary-Jim and Major Cornish arrive in Blairlogie with their child. Dr. Jerome is called to examine the baby and pronounces him an "idjit." He does not expect the child to live long.

A new home is built for the Cornishes. It provides much fodder for local gossip, as does the fact that they attend a protestant church. Another cause of much talk is the fact that the baby is never seen. Four years pass, and Mary-Jim becomes pregnant again. The nurse for Francis Junior quits, and the Senator's cook, Victoria, is called on to look after the child. Dr. Jerome tells the Senator that he is amazed the child has survived this long and that it would probably have been better if he had not survived at all. A few days later, a funeral is held at the Catholic cemetery, and the child's mother does not attend. (Later in the book it will be discovered that the child has not died.) A few months later, Francis Chegwidden Cornish is born and christened in the Anglican Church.

The Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimas have reached the point where Francis joins the story. Though, he admits, the previous information is important because it is what is bred in his bone. The Daimon Maimas, calling himself the Indwelling Essence, says that although Francis is a McRory and a Cornish, he is also what is bred in Francis' bone and "that made all the difference."

Part 1 (Pages 23-72) Analysis

This section of the novel introduces the reader to some of the key players in Francis' life. The description of his grandfather, Aunt Mary-Ben, mother and father are all significant because they are what is bred in his bone. The reader learns that his grandfather is a very influential, wealthy man. His aunt is a very religious woman, and his father is astute, with the ability to achieve wealth and prominence without having to work for it.

The reader is also told of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Francis' brother. This is significant to the theme what's bred in the bone, but the significance will not be shown until later in the book. The birth of Francis the First also is significant to the theme that all is not as it appears, since his conception and birth are kept secret, and when he family finally arrives in Blairlogie, he is kept secreted away where no one can see him.

The theme of social constructs is built upon in this section with the description of Blairlogie and the Senator's role in the town. The Senator manages to break all the social norms and still be the most influential man in the town. He does concede to social constructs when he encourages a hurried wedding for his daughter after she admits her pregnancy, however. He breaks the rules again when he concedes to having his grandchild brought up as a protestant.

The reader is not allowed to forget the theme of beyond the physical realm, as the Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimas pause the record four times to discuss what



they have seen. Their role in the story as observers and interpreters of Francis' life is developed in this section. Finally, at the end of Part 1, the reader is informed of Francis' birth. However, the reader cannot neglect the important information given about Francis' family members as they help to predict what will result from the flesh.



Part 2 (Pages 74-87)

Part 2 (Pages 74-87) Summary

The story picks up in Part 2 when Francis is almost three years old. He is described as first becoming aware of himself in a garden while looking at a flower. His nanny is named Bella-Mae, and she is a member of the Salvation Army church. She disapproves of the picture of Jesus that Aunt Mary-Ben has hung by his bed. Aunt Mary-Ben snatches secret whispers with Francis in which she encourages him to look at the picture before he prays. Bella-Mae dresses up in her Salvation Army uniform and sings hymns for Francis, and Francis marches around the room behind her. He is happy and free from the sad eyes of the picture Aunt Mary-Ben has given him. Aunt Mary-Ben shows Francis her rosary and tells him that she will teach him how to pray and will one day give him a rosary of his own. It will be a secret they will share.

Francis' few conversations with his father consist of admiring his gun or his shiny boots. He rarely sees his mother, but sometimes she puts music on and dances with him. He thinks that is better than anything else. When the war is announced, Major Cornish is named Chief of Military Intelligence, and he and his wife move to Ottawa for the duration of the war.

Francis' education has not been given much consideration, and his family decides that the local school will do fine. Francis is not told anything until the night before he is to attend. Bella-Mae takes him to school. She gives his name to the teacher and leaves. When Francis is called on, he stands and recites his full name. Not understanding his middle name, the teacher asks if he said "chicken," and from then on he is tormented by the other children. The foundation of Francis' lifelong distrust of other people begins in elementary school. The observers interject a brief conversation about Francis' early years. The Daimon Maimas admits that he had a rough idea of the direction he was going to push Francis and that he likes to toughen his charges up early.

Part 2 (Pages 74-87) Analysis

This section describes Francis' preschool years. Francis is introduced to aspects of both the Catholic and protestant religions, and he enjoys each for different reasons. His various family members vie for influence over Francis, each pushing his or her own religion on the boy. The influence of family is both inbred and felt in Francis' environment. This section also introduces the first secret that Francis has to keep. His fervently religious Aunt Mary-Ben expects young Francis to keep secret her Catholic instruction. The picture of Jesus that she has hung by his bed is not questioned and is probably only proof of the fact that his parents never come into his room. The theme of what's bred in the bone is also developed in this section when Francis begins school. The teasing of his classmates over his name helps to develop Francis' deep distrust in other human beings.



Part 2 (Pages 87-100)

Part 2 (Pages 87-100) Summary

When the war shows signs of lasting longer than anticipated, Chegwiddden Lodge is closed up, and Francis is sent to live with his grandparents and Aunt Mary-Ben at St. Kilda. Bella-Mae is left at the lodge as a caretaker. In his new home, Francis is given clothes that are more like what the other children wear. He eats his meals with the adults, and he learns to speak French. Aunt Mary-Ben takes over his primary care, which includes spiritual instruction. An oleograph of Mary is put up in his room, and Francis likes it because it reminds him of his mother.

The move to St. Kilda also means that Francis has to change schools. The new school is awful. Francis has to endure more teasing because of his name, and he is routinely beaten up because he is small. One day, he goes home with a black eye, and Dr. Jerome, after examining him, tells him that to survive at that school he will have to fight dirty.

Francis enjoys the company of Victoria Cameron, the cook. She is protestant and a very good cook. Francis can ask her questions that he does not want to ask Aunt Mary-Ben. The observers pause the narrative again. The Daimon Maimas tells the Lesser Zadkiel that he is molding Francis and refining him. They note the struggle for the boy's soul between the Catholic Aunt Mary-Ben and the protestant Victoria.

Part 2 (Pages 87-100) Analysis

At first, the move to St. Kilda seems to remove Francis' primary source of protestant influence, leaving him only with a very strong Catholic influence. However, Francis gets to know Victoria Cameron at St. Kilda, and she becomes his protestant influence, albeit a very different one than Bella-Mae. The author spends a lot of time describing Francis' varied religious upbringing, which should indicate to the reader its importance later on in the story. The move to a new school proves hard on Francis, but the Daimon Maimas needs to toughen Francis up and decides that this will be a good way to do it.



Part 2 (Pages 100-112)

Part 2 (Pages 100-112) Summary

Francis is taken one night to see Victoria's father and brothers knead the dough at their bakery. He never forgets the experience of helping them knead the dough. At school, his teacher notices his cleverness in art, particularly at creating caricatures. Francis enjoys escaping to the movies, where he particularly enjoys observing the backgrounds and landscapes. His observance of lighting is developed by his grandfather, who teaches Francis the art of photography and understanding how lighting affects a picture. His grandfather allows him into the darkroom to observe the retouching of photographs and even allows Francis to retouch some.

A new character is introduced into the story. Zadok Hoyle is the keeper of the Senator's horses as well as the driver for Devinney's Furniture and Undertaking Parlour. He becomes Francis' hero, second only to his grandfather. When Francis is nine, the war ends, but instead of coming home, Francis' parents set off for England for an indefinite period of time. When Francis is thirteen he comes down with a bad case of whooping cough, and one night, out of desperation, Aunt Mary-Ben calls in Father Devlin to baptize Francis. Francis, delirious at the time, does not understand what is happening. The observers interject again into the story. The Daimon Maimas explains that it was his doing that Francis got so sick. His intention was to introduce Francis to the world of thought and feeling.

Part 2 (Pages 100-112) Analysis

The theme of what's bred in the bone is developed significantly in this chapter. Up until now, the focus has been on Francis' religious upbringing. In this section, Francis' love of art is introduced. His grandfather teaches him the importance of seeing and understanding light. His teacher at school encouraged his love of drawing. This section also briefly introduces Zadok Hoyle, who in upcoming sections will play a significant role in Francis' life.

Francis' religious upbringing is not wholly ignored. When Francis is very sick, he is baptized a Catholic and becomes officially both Catholic and protestant. The theme of beyond the physical realm is dealt with briefly in this section again as the Daimon Maimas causes Francis' illness in order to introduce him to thought.



Part 2 (Pages 112-124)

Part 2 (Pages 112-124) Summary

During Francis' illness, he has plenty of time to reflect. He thinks about the psychological bullying of Alexander Dagg, who taunts him about his mother and the rumored Looner who lives in his attic. He also thinks about Dr. Upper, who has come to speak at his school. His job is "the imparting of sex education to the boys," but his talk raises more questions than answers. Francis is bundled up daily and brought to sit in his aunt's sitting room. Here, he receives visits from Zadok, who comes to build the fire. In the evening, Aunt Mary-Ben says the rosary with him. Aunt Mary-Ben loves oil paintings, and Francis enjoys looking at her pictures. For Christmas, she gives Francis two pieces of artwork. One is a painting of Jesus' head, and the other is a painting called "Love Locked Out." Francis feels the picture is a representation of his feelings for his mother. That night, Francis tries to recreate the picture, standing naked in his room. He will repeat this endeavor many times.

The Lesser Zadkiel feels that the Daimon is letting Francis get too weird, but Maimas remarks that he is just pushing him towards his destiny of being a patron of the arts. It is noted again that pity is not part of his job. His job is to mold people, and sometimes broken hearts are necessary.

Part 2 (Pages 112-124) Analysis

The painting "Love Locked Out" becomes a very important symbol for Francis. Francis views it as a representation of his relationship with his mother, who has not lived in Blairlogie for years. The painting will go on to symbolize other significant relationships in Francis' life. The significance of Aunt Mary-Ben in Francis' life is shown in this section. She introduces Francis to the style of painting that will become his own later in life, proving that what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh.



Part 2 (Pages 124-136)

Part 2 (Pages 124-136) Summary

Aunt Mary-Ben's control of the house includes also the choice of paintings hung on the walls. In the dining room are two impressive pieces of artwork, both religious in nature. Francis is allowed free access to the artwork in the house as well as to his aunt's book collection. From this collection comes Francis' unlikely teacher, a book entitled, "How to draw in pen and ink." In it, the author purports that if you want to be able to draw people, you have to put your hand to drawing anything and everything. Having unlimited access to pen and paper at home, Francis begins to draw. He takes the advice of the author and is never without pen and notebook in his pocket.

One afternoon, Zadok invites Francis to ride with him as he runs his errands. First, they pick up six boxes from a shed by the riverbank, and Zadok calls this the happy call. Then, they set off for the sad call. They pick up the body of a dead man and drive it back to Devinney's Furniture and Undertaking Parlour. Zadok tells Francis that his job is to pick the bodies up, get them ready for the funeral and drive the hearse. As they unload the body, Zadok tells Francis that he is an artist, and Francis confesses to Zadok that he thinks he is an artist too and shows him his notebook. Francis begs Zadok not to tell anyone. He wants to find his own way and not be forced into lessons. Zadok drives Francis home and agrees to let Francis come back and observe what he will do with the body in the undertaker's parlor. Francis wants to know what is in the boxes Zadok unloaded into the stable, and he is told that it is just something the Senator received from Quebec. He tells Francis that everyone has his or her secrets.

The Lesser Zadkiel questions the wisdom of bringing a bootlegger who works in an undertaker's parlor into the life of Francis, but the Daimon Maimas disagrees. He feels that Francis needed a man in his life and as Zadok was something of an artist, he was suitable.

Part 2 (Pages 124-136) Analysis

In this section, Aunt Mary-Ben not only introduces Francis to oil paintings, but through a book in her collection she helps to begin Francis' life as an artist. Through the book "How to draw in pen and ink," Francis learns to first observe and then to draw everything. Secondly, and even more significantly, he is allowed to accompany Zadok to the undertaker's parlor, and there he learns to draw the human form.

The theme of things that are not as they appear resurfaces in this section with the revelation that Zadok is a bootlegger for Francis' grandfather during Prohibition. The author uses Zadok's comment about secrets to foreshadow upcoming events in the book.



Part 2 (Pages 136-150)

Part 2 (Pages 136-150) Summary

Francis is in Devinney's Furniture and Undertaking Parlour watching Zadok prepare the body for a funeral. He has his notebook and pencil with him, prepared to draw. Francis had not realized, until he saw Zadok stripping the body, that he would be able to draw the naked human form, which his book told him was a necessity to becoming an artist. Zadok talks to Francis as he works and tells him about how he learned his trade. He was in the Boer War, and later in England he received some training from a clown who taught him the secret of using powder to prepare dead bodies. Francis is busy drawing the body of Old McAllister and carefully observing Zadok work. That night Zadok takes Francis home and comes into the house with him. As Francis goes to bed, he hears Zadok going upstairs to an area of the house Francis has been forbidden to visit.

Francis continues to observe Zadok, and he continues to draw each body he observes. One night, Zadok is preparing the body of Francois Xavier Bouchard, a dwarf tailor. He committed suicide by hanging himself, and Zadok is convinced it was because of the mean-spirited things people constantly did to "F.X." Francis notices that Zadok treats Francois with the utmost respect. Francis continues to draw, and this hour spent with Zadok and the body of F.X. stays with Francis his entire life.

Francis is a young teenager and is becoming more interested in the human form. At night, when he is supposed to be in bed, he dresses up as a woman and feels that he needs to do so in order to understand the human form. The observers pause the record to comment on Francis' activities. The Lesser Zadkiel feels that the Daimon Maimas is allowing Francis to become too odd, but the Daimon counters that argument with the interpretation that Francis was simply searching for the Mystical Marriage. He was trying to find the unity of the masculine and feminine within himself, without which he would have been useless as an artist. The Daimon also mentions the painting hung in Francis' room of "Love Locked Out." He calls it a prophecy and says that it was the essence of life in the house Francis lived in.

Part 2 (Pages 136-150) Analysis

The theme of what's bred in the bone is developed in this chapter, as Francis uses a very unique opportunity to develop his artistic abilities. Francois Xavier Bouchard, though never a part of the story during his life, will go on to play a significant role later in the book. Francis does not forget his experience with Zadok preparing the body of F.X., and he will impact Francis' art later in life. Francis also learns to observe and see things as they really are. The hint at something going on in the attic of the house and the Daimon's comments about the painting "Love Locked Out" provide foreshadowing of future events.



The theme of social constructs is also dealt with in this chapter. For a family as influential and respected as the McRorys, it is a reversal of social norms that they allow Francis to accompany Zadok on his journeys or to observe Zadok preparing dead bodies. However, Francis only accompanies him at night and keeps his activities and drawings secret, which further supports the theme of things that are not as they appear. Also, the hint of what Zadok is doing in the house will develop the theme of things that are not as they appear. The reader assumes that Zadok is having an affair with Victoria Cameron, since he is entering her area of the house. However, as the story unfolds, the reader will see that things are not as they appear. They are, in fact, much stranger than one would first assume. Those living at St. Kilda, the reader is learning, are very good at keeping secrets.

The theme of beyond the physical realm is developed by Francis' actions in this chapter. Even though he may not realize what he is doing, the Daimon Maimas outlines it clearly for the reader. Francis' search for the Mystical Marriage will continue into his adulthood and come to fruition in his masterpiece, "The Marriage at Cana."



Part 2 (Pages 150-177)

Part 2 (Pages 150-177) Summary

Gerald Vincent O'Gorman is Francis' uncle, married to Francis' mother's sister. Gerald is an astute business man and second-in-command to the Senator in the family business. Events relating to Gerald come to light in a way that greatly affects Francis' future. Gerald has been having an affair with his secretary and has been caught by his wife. The trouble is compounded by the fact that he has just been offered a papal knighthood for his charity efforts during the war. The incident is cause to have his knighthood revoked.

Francis, unaware of Uncle Gerald's situation, has a scandal of his own to deal with. He knows that Zadok is going up to the attic of the house several nights a week. Francis even hears noises, laughter and singing. He decides to sneak upstairs and discover what is going on. He finds a room opposite of Victoria's, blocked by a heavy curtain. To his surprise, Zadok sweeps open the curtain and invites him in. The room is large and bare, except for a hospital bed which holds the oddest looking creature Francis has ever seen. He is small, with a misshapen head and makes strange mewling sounds when he opens his mouth. Zadok tells Francis to come and meet his older brother, Francis the First. Francis faints. Upon regaining consciousness, he is told that his older brother did not die, but has been kept in this attic room ever since the fake funeral. Begging to be allowed to see him again, Francis is sent back to bed. Unable to sleep, Francis tries to process what he has just learned. Uppermost in his thoughts is the desire to draw his brother, "the Looner."

The next night, Francis is back in the attic room with his pencil and notebook. Victoria does not understand why he needs to draw his brother, but Francis knows that drawing is a way of making something his own and that he will never be able to understand and accept the Looner as something related to himself if he does not draw him repeatedly. Francis spends many nights in the attic room. He draws and observes Zadok, Victoria and his brother. Zadok sings in an effort to cheer Francis the First, and the songs are always boisterous and lively.

Hamish and Dr. Jerome are in the study at St. Kilda. Dr. Jerome tells Hamish that he is amazed Francis the First has lived as long as he has. The conversation continues, and Hamish tells the doctor that he is getting out of the lumber industry and is setting up a trust company in Toronto. He is going to set Gerald up as the Managing Director and give him a reason to leave Blairlogie. Francis' father will be given a figurehead role as president, and Hamish will be chairman of the board. Hamish recognizes that Francis is not suited for such a business, but he hopes that Francis' soon-to-be-born brother will be. Dr. Jerome also suggests that Francis be sent to Toronto with Gerald and his family to ensure that he never discovers the truth about his older brother. The observers pause the record again. The Daimon Maimas tells the Lesser Zadkiel that Francis the First is



Francis' Dark Brother, and as such, he is a gift. He is pleased with himself that he introduced Francis to his Dark Brother so early.

Part 2 (Pages 150-177) Analysis

The themes all cross over in this last section of Part 2. Francis' discovery of his older brother is a development that affects all the themes. The fact that Francis has an older brother that is sick is important to the theme of what's bred in the bone. Also, Francis discovers a major secret that has been kept from him and continues to be kept from his mother. In an effort to conceal what would be an embarrassment, the Senator and the doctor have concealed Francis the First in the attic. The theme of social constructs is also dealt with here. An attempt is made to concede to societal expectations. The Senator and the doctor know that killing the child, though easier, is not the right thing to do.

Events are also disclosed in this section that set up a move for Francis to a new stage in his life. Thus far, he has been only influenced by his family and certain people in his small town. With a move to a larger city and a new school, Francis is about to expand his area of influence and discover new aspects of what's bred in his bones.



Part 3 (Pages 180-212)

Part 3 (Pages 180-212) Summary

The Cornish Trust is opened in Toronto and upheld by the reputation of the Cornish name, which is now even more prominent since Major Cornish has been offered a knighthood for his efforts during the war. Francis is sent to Toronto and enrolled in Colbourne College as a boarder, since his parents will be spending most of their time in England. Francis is a decent student, never doing anything to draw much attention to himself. He continues developing his observational skills and keeps to himself. The school is protestant, and Francis thinks it lacks the richness and mystery of his aunt's Catholicism.

Francis is no longer able to keep his drawing secret. His ability at drawing caricatures is greatly prized and noticed by one of his professors. This professor advises Francis to learn something larger than caricatures and suggests Francis look at the art books held in the school library. Francis takes the advice to heart, and in the art books he finds what has been missing in the school's religion. He discovers the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The light that shines out of the pictures feeds his hunger. He has learned the legend of the Holy Grail, and in the light he sees something of that legend. The Holy Grail is the cup that Jesus drank from at the Last Supper, and the legend is that anyone who catches sight of the cup will be granted eternal life.

Francis receives some recognition for a speech he gives, and with his prize money he buys two books which are the beginning of the substantial library Francis will leave behind after his death. Francis continues to do well at school even though his thoughts are dominated by his understanding of the Grail. He feels that it is something better than his present life can provide. He even integrates his feelings about his parents into his Grail fantasy. Rather than see them as neglectful, he idolizes them as distant figures apart from his everyday life. Francis periodically sees his father. Although never speaks about it openly, his father is clearly associated with the Secret Service and is growing to believe that Francis may be cut out for the same type of work.

When Francis is nineteen, he is sent to see a specialist after fainting at a track meet. He is not told his diagnosis, however. He receives the School Prize in Classics and is granted leave to go home for the weekend. When he arrives, he catches his mother kissing Fred Markham. More surprising is their reaction. Rather than acting guilty, they invite Francis to stay and have a drink with them. Francis has not had much occasion to drink, and so when his father opens a bottle of champagne later to celebrate his Classics prize, Francis drinks more than he has ever drunk before. When a girl calls him up to go out to a movie, Francis accepts. After the movie, the girl suggests that they park for a while. They kiss for a while, and Francis assumes that this means they are in love. The girl informs him that in actuality, it is just nice. Francis goes to bed angry that he has been used for someone else's pleasure.



That weekend, Francis has lunch with his father at the club. His father proceeds to overwhelm Francis with information and suggestions. He suggests that Francis continue his schooling at a school nicknamed "Spook" and then go to Oxford. He also suggests that Francis visit his father's relatives in England before he changes schools. He tells Francis that he is aware of his mother's activities and to not worry about it, since she is a loyal wife. He tells Francis a bit about the profession and what he has learned about women and suggests that Francis stick with widows. He suggests that Francis might be well suited for the profession, especially since he has a bad heart. It will help with explaining his lack of real work.

The observers pause the record to allow the Lesser Zadkiel a comment. He feels that Francis missed his chance to ask his father about his older brother. The Daimon Maimas interprets the scene differently. Francis' father was a master at important conversations and had such a hold on this one that Francis wouldn't have been able to interrupt even if he wanted to.

Part 3 (Pages 180-212) Analysis

Francis allows fresh insights and new traditions to influence him, and the theme of what's bred in the bone is expanded by Francis' introduction to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and its connection (in Francis' mind) to the Grail legend. The Grail and Francis' obsession with the fantasy will appear again in the novel.

The theme of things that are not as they appear is developed in this section, since certain secrets are revealed or explained. His father, a great man of secrets, lets Francis in on a bit of secret life in the profession and reveals that he thinks Francis might be suitable to such a job. He also corrects Francis' misunderstanding about his parents' relationship, which turns out to be not as it appears. He finally reveals to Francis his heart condition and its possibilities for use in the profession. This also foreshadows events that occur later in Francis' life.

The theme of social constructs is developed in this section as well. Francis is sent to a protestant school, but he finds the religion there lacking. Rather than finding faith in the accepted religion, Francis finds what he needs in a school of art as well as an old legend.



Part 3 (Pages 212-250)

Part 3 (Pages 212-250) Summary

Francis goes to England to visit his father's relatives who live in Cornwall. He is fascinated by their closeness to the Castle of Tintagel, which is where King Arthur was born. Despite their proximity to the place of legend, Francis discovers that they are not at all enchanted by it. He is ultimately disappointed in his Cornish relatives, whom his father assured him were at least half his roots.

Francis visits London before he returns to Canada, and while there he is invited to lunch by Colonel Coplestone, a friend of his father's. The colonel asks Francis what his interest in the profession is and tells him that they are always on the lookout for promising young men. He then suggests that if Francis is really interested, he needs to start writing regular letters to him. The letters are to be addressed to Uncle Jack and are to contain information about what he is doing and thinking.

Francis' first letter is about the museums that he goes to in London. He talks about the pictures he has seen and admits that he loves the Old Masters, probably because of his Catholic upbringing. He feels that they are statements. He describes a particular painting, "An Allegory of Time," and admits that he does not understand it. He does intend to eventually figure it out. By the time Francis finishes school at the College of Saint John and the Holy Ghost ("Spook"), Colonel Coplestone has developed a fairly large file on Francis. It contains the letters he wrote as well as letters from someone known as J.B. The unnamed writer has kept an eye on Francis and periodically reported his activities to Colonel Coplestone. His reports include the facts that Francis is well-liked but never the most popular, capable of spotting a good picture and acquiring it and that Francis is known for being close with his money. Colonel Coplestone's conclusion is that Francis' time at Oxford will reveal his suitability to the profession.

Francis goes back to Blairlogie for a visit before he leaves for Oxford. It has been ten years since Francis was there and things have changed. Francis pays a visit to Victoria Cameron, who tells him that his older brother has died and that Zadok is quite ill in the hospital. Zadok's health deteriorated rapidly, and his legs had to be amputated, after he was found unconscious outside.

Francis goes to see Zadok in the hospital. While there, Zadok tells him the story about what happened to him after the war. He went from job to job, and one night he was asked to help at an important affair. He was to dress up and do whatever might need to be done. At the end of his shift, he was asked to take a tray of champagne upstairs before he left. He delivered the champagne to the girl in the room and was surprised when she asked him to stay. She told him that he looked like her favorite actor, and he ended up sleeping with her. He tells Francis that it was like a dream and that because of that night, he was able to put the war behind him and get on with his life. He never saw the girl again and in fact didn't even know her name. Shortly after, he moved to Canada.



During a visit with Dr. Jerome, Francis is told to look after the McRory strain, since it is a very strong strain. The doctor is talking about Aunt Mary-Ben's health and long life, but Francis is thinking about his older brother. The doctor tells him that what happened with Francis the First may have been chance or it may have been something that was bred in the bone. On Francis' final visit with his Aunt Mary-Ben, Francis admits that he wants to be a painter, and his aunt is happy for him. She gives him her rosary and makes Francis promise to use it.

The observers pause the record to talk about the story that Zadok told Francis. They see the meaning in it that was missed by the humans involved. The Looner brought love back into the life of Zadok. As for Francis, his older brother was a constant reminder to make the best of whatever fortune has given you. The Daimon Maimas admits that he made sure the Looner was bred into Francis' bone. Looking ahead in the record, he reveals that Oxford will only strengthen what is already bred in Francis' bones.

Part 3 (Pages 212-250) Analysis

Francis' trip to Cornwall develops the theme of what's bred in the bone by giving Francis a chance to get to know the Cornish side of the family. Ultimately, he is disappointed in them. The Grail legend is brought up again in this section and used to compare Francis' fantasy to the reality of his family.

The theme of things that are not as they appear is developed in Francis' conversation with Colonel Coplestone and the subsequent letters he writes. Francis keeps this area of his life secret and willingly writes the letters without understanding fully why or to whom he is writing. Francis' visit to Blairlogie provides some closure before he leaves for Oxford. He learns of the death of his brother and Zadok's continued love and care before he died. Zadok also reveals some very important information, but Francis does not yet understand the significance of it. Zadok's story is yet another thing that is not as it appears.

The discussion between the observers at the end of this section develops the theme of beyond the physical realm. The Daimon Maimas helps the reader to understand the role of Francis the First and the Daimon's intentions in involving him in Francis' life. The Looner, who does not have a large role in the story as it unfolds, turns out to have a profound effect on the lives of those closest to him. He brings love back into the life of Zadok, who loves him like a son, never realizing that he actually is his son. For Francis, the Looner proves to be a constant reminder of the possibilities of chance.

The final scene between Francis and Aunt Mary-Ben provides some closure. Francis never sees his aunt again. Her influence in his life is over. He promises to use the rosary she gives him, but it is never mentioned again. Aunt Mary-Ben hopes to be a spiritual influence in Francis' life, but what she ends up giving Francis is an understanding of the Catholic tradition and a love of the Old Masters. This is bred into the bone of Francis Cornish.

Finally, the Daimon Maimas looks to the future, telling the readers that the next phase of Francis' life will only strengthen what has been bred in his bone. He is no longer a child, and his upbringing and childhood influences are over. What comes next will be the result of this upbringing.



Part 4 (Pages 250-344)

Part 4 (Pages 250-344) Summary

Part 4 begins during Francis' second year at Oxford. In a letter to Uncle Jack, Francis writes about his new apartment off campus and the people who live in his building, particularly one Basil Buys-Bozzaris. Basil invites Francis to join the card games he hosts, and for want of anything better, Francis goes. He notices particularly a man named Freemantle who has the gambler's eye and ends the evening owing Basil money. Francis writes that he will continue to go to these card games because his interest is piqued. Why does Basil have one Dutch name as well as his genuine Belgian one, and is Charles Freemantle really as bent on ruin as he seems to be?

One evening, not long after the events of his letter to Uncle Jack, Francis is working when a girl bursts into his room and asks if he is Francis Cornish. She is Ismay Glasson, a distant cousin from Cornwall. She is a first year student at Lady Margaret Hall. She tells him that she knows all about him from Charlie Freemantle. He invites her to lunch the next day. While at Oxford, Francis spends a lot of time at the museum copying the Old Masters. He is also a member of the Oxford Union, and when they decide that the frescoes on the library walls need restoring, Francis meets the great Tancred Saraceni. Saraceni has the reputation of being the greatest restorer of pictures in the world. After a brief conversation regarding the frescoes, Francis invites Saraceni to dine with him at the Randolph Hotel. They discuss restoring paintings and debate modern art versus old masters. Saraceni tells Francis that he has not found his inner vision. Francis admits that he is trying to, but it doesn't come out in modern art. Francis asks if he can show his work to Saraceni, but since he is leaving the next morning, they make arrangements to meet the next time he is in Oxford.

Not long after Francis' meeting with Saraceni, Francis receives a letter from his grandfather. He writes that he is dying and wants Francis to know that he has stipulated a rather large sum for him in his will. Since Francis is not suitable for the family business, his grandfather wants to leave him enough money to allow him to pursue whatever he wants to pursue. He does caution Francis to learn the language of money. A telegram announcing the death arrives before his letter of farewell could have reached his grandfather. Francis grieves, as he feels his grandfather is the only one who has ever loved the artist in him, but at the same time he also feels free to now do with his life as he likes. When Christmas comes, Francis goes back to Canada to visit his family. The talk is of nothing but the will and Francis' substantial inheritance.

Francis returns to Oxford a rich man, but one whose future is uncertain. Francis is in love with Ismay, but Ismay is not in love with him. Francis guesses that she is in love with Charlie Freemantle. Charlie has great political ideas and is an ardent fan of Marx. He is also spending a lot of time at Basil's card games. Francis sees a lot of Ismay and takes her out for dinner where she lets him kiss her. She also lets him draw her and even consents to him drawing her in the nude. After one such drawing, Francis



confesses his love to Ismay, but she does not reciprocate. She tells him that she loves him but is not in love with him. Francis is miserable.

Francis meets Saraceni when he is back in Oxford, and Saraceni looks over his drawings. He notes that Francis draws in the Renaissance style and only in black and white. Saraceni submits Francis to a test. He has Francis draw a variety of things. At the end, he gives Francis his card with his permanent Rome address and invites him to come. He tells Francis that his talent is substantial but not first-rate.

When Francis asks Ismay what she wants for her birthday, she asks for money. He soon finds out that she has given the money to Charlie to pay for his gambling. Francis is angry, but he gives her another check.

Often, Basil asks Francis to stay after an evening of cards, and they talk politics. Basil's political leanings are much the same as Charlie's. He wants to know if Francis is interested. Francis, being a rich Canadian, has qualities that would be useful to them. Francis asks for time to think about it. He waits until Easter to tell Colonel Coplestone all he knows. The colonel tells him that Basil is well known to those in the profession, but that he is not a significant player. They are more interested in Charlie. The colonel asks Francis to keep him up-to-date on Charlie's activities.

Francis is having a picnic with Ismay, but the topic of conversation is not frivolous. Francis has found out from his bank that Ismay forged the check he gave her by changing the sum from ten dollars to a hundred and fifty dollars, and she has given the money to Charlie. Ismay claims that Charlie was being threatened because of the money he owed to Basil. She promises to make it up to him.

Francis wants his money back and decides to go and see Basil. Basil tells him that he doesn't have the money. He is waiting for his collectors to arrive with it. The collectors arrive upset because when they visited Charlie to get the money, he had taken off. During the argument, Basil reaches for the gun in his pocket, and in the scuffle it goes off. Basil shoots himself in the foot. After making sure Basil gets to the infirmary, Francis goes in search of Ismay. She confirms that Charlie has left for Spain to join the cause.

Ismay's mother invites Francis to stay with them for the two-week break at Oxford, and Francis, unwilling to let Ismay out of his sight for that length of time, agrees. One day, Francis invites Ismay to go to Tintagel with him, and after much teasing about bringing along her younger siblings, she agrees. Francis tells her about the history of the castle, and as Francis tells the story, Ismay becomes more compliant than he has ever known her to be until they finally sleep together.

Francis takes Saraceni's advice about using color seriously, and that means working with oils. After his visit to Cornwall, he goes to Paris and spends the summer months at an art school. After ten weeks, Francis feels he deserves a holiday and decides to go to Rome and visit Saraceni. Saraceni insists that Francis stay with him in his apartment. The apartment is cluttered with Saraceni's collection of art and furnishings. Saraceni invites Francis to stay and work with him, but Francis wants to finish his schooling first.



By then, Saraceni admits, he will be in the midst of a large project that will require Francis to learn to work with old paint.

While in Rome, Francis receives a letter from Ismay. In it, she tells him that she is pregnant and that her family wants them to be married. Francis sends a telegram telling them to proceed with the wedding plans and that he will be with them in a week. Despite the telegram, Francis realizes that he does not want to marry Ismay. He wants to be in love but not tied down to marriage. He cannot leave Ismay alone, and like a Grail knight, he will save her.

Francis receives a telegram from his parents congratulating him and informing him that they cannot make it to the wedding. Also, they tell him to beware of money arrangements. Ismay's father has a few conversations with Francis, the result of which is that Francis will pay them some money quarterly for the first year. After the wedding, Francis will take Ismay and her mother on a trip, and after the baby is born, he will return to Oxford. Two days before the wedding, Ismay and Francis go for a walk. Ismay tells Francis that even though he feels trapped, he still has a chance to leave. Francis stays.

After the wedding, Francis and Ismay travel to Lausanne, where he enrolls Ismay as a student. Francis is back at Oxford for Michaelmas Term. Ismay's mother stays with her while he is gone. He goes back for Christmas and in February when the baby is born. The baby is a girl, and Ismay wants to call her Charlotte. Ismay confesses to Francis that the baby is Charlie's. Back at Oxford, Francis studies hard and graduates First Class. A few days later, Francis receives a letter from Ismay. She writes that she is joining Charlie in Spain and thanks him for the money he deposited for her use in Lausanne. Francis is so angry that he tries to find a prostitute who will let him beat her up with his fists. When he finds one willing to let him, he can't do it and ends up sobbing on the bed. He tells her what Ismay has done, and when he is finished he pays her and leaves.

Francis receives word to meet the colonel. Colonel Copplestone wants him to work with Tancred Saraceni. Saraceni is restoring the Dusterstein collection, and the colonel wants Francis to be Saraceni's assistant and tell them where the pictures are going when they are ready for sale. Francis is not to write reports for the colonel. Instead, he is to see Sir Owens about his heart. Sir Owen will give him a strict regimen and a method of reporting his heartbeats after strenuous exercise. In actuality, he will be reporting on the number of trains passing by Dusterstein on their way to a concentration camp. Francis agrees to do it and asks if he will be paid. The colonel tells him to stop worrying about money.

The observers pause the record to discuss the role of Ismay in Francis' life. The Daimon Maimas admits that Francis thought he had found the Mystical Marriage in Ismay and agrees that he did find part of it in her. He feels that he enlarged Francis' life with Ismay.



Part 4 (Pages 250-344) Analysis

The theme of what's bred in the bone is developed in this chapter with proofs that what is bred in the bone will indeed come out in a person's actions. Francis' misunderstanding and desperate desire for love show themselves in his relationship to Ismay. Francis thinks that he loves her and does not recognize that he idolizes her. Ismay uses Francis' naivete to get money out of him and to get him to marry her without realizing that the child she is pregnant with is not his own. Francis' feelings for Ismay are tied up in his understanding of the Grail. He uses the legend to manipulate events and sleep with Ismay, and then he views himself later as a knight who can rescue her.

Francis' secret life in the profession continues with his letters to Uncle Jack. He observes the actions of Basil and Charlie and keeps Uncle Jack informed. Francis also learns of his inheritance from his grandfather, and rather than loosening his hold on money, now that he is rich, he tightens his hold.

Francis meets Tancred Saraceni in this part of the book and begins what will be a significant relationship. Readers should note an interesting link between Francis' grandfather and Saraceni. Both men are influential in Francis' life, and they are both sources of great wealth for Francis. Francis' grandfather dies and leaves Francis a significant amount of money. Right around the same time, Francis meets Saraceni, who takes over as significant older man for Francis. Saraceni also ends up being the origin of Francis' second great wealth.



Part 5 (Pages 344-388)

Part 5 (Pages 344-388) Summary

Francis has been at Dusterstein for a week and is preparing his first report to send to Sir Owen Williams-Owen. The countess and her daughter Amalie welcome Saraceni and Francis at dinner, and afterwards, Francis is expected to talk with Ruth Nibsmith, the governess, while Saraceni talks with the countess. When Francis begins his work with Saraceni, he is told to call him Meister and that Saraceni will call him Corniche. From September to mid-December, he is given menial jobs to do which include grinding minerals to a powder and mixing them with various oils. He is learning to make the true colors used by the Old Masters.

One day, Saraceni announces that he is going to visit his apartment before Christmas, so their work must wait. Francis asks him what they are doing there. He doesn't want to use the word faking, but it seems strange. Saraceni tells him that he will know more when Prince Max comes to visit for Christmas. Saraceni gives Francis a job to do while he is gone. Francis is to paint a picture. The picture is to be Francis' but is not to look out of place among the other pictures in the castle.

The countess and Amalie leave for Munich, leaving Saraceni, Francis and Ruth alone in the castle. Francis immediately begins preparing his surprise for Saraceni. Francis and Ruth only see each other at dinner. During one of their discussions, Ruth tells Francis that she is studying astrology in Bavaria during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ruth offers to cast Francis' horoscope, and he agrees. This time at the castle is doing much to mend Francis' spirits. He also makes arrangements to pay for someone to look after Charlotte. Although he feels exploited, he is surprised to feel more upset about the state of his bank account. Francis begins his task with preliminary drawings, and when he is ready, he begins to paint. He uses the canvas that Saraceni has given him, and as he works he realizes that he is happy: "The Happy Faker."

Francis and Ruth's relationship develops to the point where they start spending time in bed together. Ruth admits that she is sad to see it end, as the countess and Amalie are coming back to the castle the next day. That night, Ruth presents the horoscope she has cast for Francis. She tells him that because of the placement of the planets, he has a lot of vitality, spiritual guts, intuition and endurance. She concludes by saying that Saturn on the ascent and the sun in midheaven are rare and suggests an uncommon life, potentially some celestial guardianship. Saturn and Mercury are very strong on his chart. He has to make a decision soon, and he is too fond of money. Francis accidentally lets it slip that he is a spy. Ruth responds by telling him that she's glad to finally have learned why he is there.

Prince Max arrives to spend Christmas at the castle. Saraceni shows him what they have been working on, and he is impressed. Among the paintings is the painting that Francis did while Tancred was away. It is a painting of a dwarf, and Prince Max singles it



out, wondering if it could be Drollig Hansel. Saraceni tells Max that he cannot take it because it is a fake; it was painted within the last month. Max, claiming that it is only a painting made in the sixteenth century style, and not an actual fake, convinces Saraceni to let him take it. They spend then next few hours wrapping the panels carefully and putting them in the hogsheads of wine that Prince Max will be taking to England. When they finish, Francis speaks up and asks what it is that they are doing. Max explains that the paintings they have restored are German paintings, which although not worth a lot in the art world, are worth a lot to Hitler, who wants only German works for his museum. They are taking the pictures out of Germany to England where they will be sold back to Germany for artwork that is not German but is worth a lot of money in the art world. The observers pause the record. The Lesser Zadkiel tells the Daimon that the girl did a good job with the horoscope, especially her recognition of the Daimon. The Lesser Zadkiel comments that Francis will suffer the most of this group at the castle if found out because he actually forged a picture. The Daimon corrects him, though. Francis painted an original picture in an individual style. Prince Max and the countess are the ones passing it off as something it is not. The Lesser Zadkiel is pleased that Francois Xavier Blanchard, the dwarf tailor of Blairlogie, is about to burst onto the scene because Francis learned to observe.

Part 5 (Pages 344-388) Analysis

The theme that things are not as they appear is developed substantially in this section of the book. Francis is told to secretly record the number of trains that go by and send the information to England disguised as health reports to his doctor. This activity is kept secret from the others at the castle. His main role as apprentice to Saraceni is not secret; however, the work they are doing (which is unknown to Francis at this point) is secret. Francis and Ruth must keep their relationship secret from the countess and are unable to act like a couple when the countess and Amalie are at the castle. The painting Francis makes while Saraceni is away turns out to be another secret that Francis must keep. If he reveals himself as the artist behind the painting, it will be assumed that Francis is a forger, and his reputation and future career will be ruined. The fact that the painting is of Francois Xavier Blanchard is another secret that only Francis knows.

Another significant part of this chapter is the horoscope that Ruth casts for Francis. She reveals that Mercury and Saturn are important and very visible aspects of his life. She also sees the Daimon Maimas. The observers comment on the accuracy of her horoscope, which reinforces the idea that destiny is fated.



Part 5 (Pages 388-427)

Part 5 (Pages 388-427) Summary

Francis asks Saraceni to tell him who the art dealers in England are, but Saraceni doesn't think Francis needs to know. The Germans are willing to exchange Italian paintings for German ones. That is all he needs to know. Except, Francis contends, that his painting is a fake, and it has gone to London. Saraceni tells him that it is just a student exercise, a test that he has passed. If an expert cannot tell what it is, then that is more reason to be proud of himself. The countess receives a letter from Prince Max relating the story of a newly found painting that is causing quite a stir among a few art experts in London. A mark has been found on the painting that could be a family mark, but it also looks like a gallows with a noose hanging from it. Francis had not expected his mark to be found. He felt it was private, his record of the fate of the dwarf, and he is not happy. Despite this, he can't help enjoying the praise even though he is unrecognized as the painter.

Francis learns a little more of what is going on in the castle. The countess and Saraceni are receiving a quarter of what the dealers receive for the paintings, and the money is ending up in a Swiss bank account. In discussing the Drollig Hansel, as even Francis and Saraceni are now calling it, Saraceni tells Francis that he has mastered technique but that he has not mastered inner conviction. He is now in the frame of mind to work on that.

Time passes, and Francis has been at Dusterstein for three years. On a walk, Ruth admits to Francis that she is in the profession too. She observes what the Meister is doing and what the countess and Prince Max do with what Saraceni does, and she writes letters home to her mother, who sends the letters on to the right people. Francis tells her that he has been studying iconology and is beginning to get bored. Ruth tells him that something will happen soon.

Saraceni tells Francis that he wants him to go to the Netherlands in his place. A painter wants to sell Goring a fake painting. Since Saraceni doesn't have time to go, he is sending Francis in his place to look over the picture, pronounce it a fake and ruin the man's career. The painter has apparently tried to sell fake paintings before, and Saraceni wants him stopped. The issue with the current picture is that the Dutch government wants it if it is real, and the German government wants to buy it from the painter. The picture is in the custody of the Dutch Ministry of Fine Art, and many people have been by to see if it is genuine or not. No one has been able to tell anything conclusively. Saraceni tells Francis that this is a test, a chance to establish himself as an art expert. Francis travels to the Hague.

Francis studies that painting for a long time. He performs a variety of tests on it, and when he tells the judge that he has seen enough, he is told that a group of experts are in the city and anxious to hear what he has to say. Everyone will meet back at the



museum the next day at eleven o'clock. The painter will be there as well. Eating his lunch, Francis is joined by one of the experts. When asked his opinion, he says that he thinks nothing at all. The other expert agrees that there doesn't seem to be any way to prove that the painting is a fake. Francis spends the afternoon at the zoo.

The next day, when everyone is gathered in front of the picture, Francis announces that the painting is not genuine. Rather than this being simply his opinion, he tells the group that he is certain the picture is a fake because of the monkey in it. He went to the zoo the previous day and learned that that particular monkey was unknown in Europe until the sixteenth century. Therefore, it would not have been in the picture if it were truly a van Eyck. In the midst of the discussion caused by Francis' announcement, Letzpfennig, the painter, speaks. He tells them that he painted that picture to prove that there still were people who could paint like the Old Masters. When asked by the judge about trying to pass it off as genuine, the painter confesses that he felt it was the only way to get people to look at his painting.

The international media gets wind of the story, and it becomes a sensation. Saraceni tells Francis that Letzpfennig has killed himself. A note was found that said, "Let them say what they will now; in the beginning they said it was a great picture." The Daimon stops the record for a moment to tell the Lesser Zadkiel that that was the making of Francis. He admits that he nudged Francis to the zoo that day. It gained Francis his reputation. This, however, was not the fame that Ruth predicted.

Part 5 (Pages 388-427) Analysis

Things are not as they appear in this section, picking up this theme again. Ruth reveals her secret to Francis. She is in the profession as well. Francis is sent to declare a painting a fake, and he would not have been able to prove it conclusively except for the nudging of the Daimon. His pronouncement of forgery and the subsequent suicide of the painter are the making of Francis. It is ironic, however, that Francis' reputation is made on the death of another who believes in the same style as Francis and wants the same things artistically that Francis does.



Part 5 (Pages 427-435)

Part 5 (Pages 427-435) Summary

In 1938, when Francis is twenty-nine, the Munich Crisis takes precedence over all other news. Given the state of affairs in Germany, everyone is leaving the castle. Even Ruth has gone back to England. Saraceni gives Francis one final test. He wants Francis to paint on a grand scale in the style of the Old Masters. He gives Francis a triptych, three panels, and tells him to clean it and begin work on it.

Francis is alone in the castle. He has to decide what his masterpiece will be. This painting will be the end of his apprenticeship, and he needs to show what he believes. He decides to paint the myth of Francis Cornish. Because he is to paint in the style of the Old Masters, his theme will be contained in a triptych of the Marriage at Cana.

Saraceni does not return for more than six months. Francis is growing anxious. He has received a letter from Sir Owen Williams-Owen telling him to return as soon as possible since he feels he needs to examine Francis based on the reports he has been sent. When Francis reveals his painting to Saraceni, the Meister stares at it for a long time and performs the same tests that Francis did years ago on Letztpfennig's painting. Saraceni finally tells Francis that he is astonished. He feels that he is finished his apprenticeship. The picture will have to stay in the castle for now, but Saraceni will try and get it to Francis. He then suggests that Francis return to England since he is returning to Italy. In his final words to Francis, Saraceni calls him Meister.

Part 5 (Pages 427-435) Analysis

Although not described in this section, the masterpiece of Francis' career is painted in this section, and the result is the end of Francis' apprenticeship. Saraceni, who gives this as a final task to Francis, pays him the greatest honor by calling him "Meister." What is bred in Francis' bones comes out in his painting. It is significant that he decides to paint the myth of Francis Cornish.



Part 6 (Pages 438-481)

Part 6 (Pages 438-481) Summary

When Francis returns to England, he becomes officially a counter-intelligence man. He is paid a small salary by MI5 to find out whatever he can about certain refugees who are actually German spies. The work is drudgery and becomes dangerous drudgery after the raids on London begin. One night, Francis runs into Ruth Nibsmith, and they renew their friendship. Ruth is working in the Government Code and Cipher department. A couple months later, Ruth is killed in the great fire-raid of December 29.

Francis is promoted to sitting in an office and interpreting reports. A few years go by, and in 1943, his father turns up. He is MI5's Security Liaison Officer for Canada, and he gives Francis news of the family and discusses Francis' job. He suggests that Francis get himself some nice suits if he wants to promote himself in his work. Upon receiving a note from Saraceni, Francis goes to visit Saraceni's wife. She tells Francis that it is her wish that she and her husband might live together again. A few weeks after his visit, her home is destroyed by a bomb. Francis has to write Saraceni and inform him of his wife's death.

Uncle Jack gives Francis a new job: to go to Cardiff and prepare for the time when the country will need to recover its lost art. Francis also takes care of personal issues. He often receives letters from Ismay's parents reporting on the progress of Little Charlie and asking for more money. He also receives a letter from Ismay requesting money. He agrees to meet her after almost ten years. Ismay is now a full-time zealot. Charlie was killed in Spain over gambling debts. Francis tells her that he will continue to support Charlotte but that he will not give Ismay any more money. He tells her that he has made himself a promise to not die stupid.

The war ends, and Francis makes a trip back to Canada before his task in recovering art begins. His grandmother and Aunt Mary-Ben have died, and the family has deemed it his task to take care of any final business in Blairlogie. While home, Francis decides to talk to his mother about his older brother. She tells him nothing except that he died when he was a baby. In Blairlogie, Francis goes to see Dr. Jerome, who is now ninety. The doctor tells Francis that he arranged for his brother to live in the attic of the home. Francis wants to know if, since he has the same parents as the Looner, there is fear of similar traits being found in him. The doctor tells him to talk to his mother about it.

Francis cleans out and sells his family home. When he leaves, the only thing he takes is the painting that hung in his bedroom, "Love Locked Out." Back in England, Francis sets to work in the manor house in Cardiff. He is sent an assistant, Alywin Ross. Their job is to study the pictures so that they will recognize them, even if they have been disguised a bit. Francis and Alywin go to Munich when the Allied Commission on Art moves into action. Saraceni is there along with other expert from the art world. Francis



and Alywin get along very well. Francis thinks that Alywin is brilliant, knowledgeable about art and not without a certain flair.

Among the pictures investigated are the Drollig Hansel and The Marriage at Cana. The Marriage at Cana came from Goring's personal collection. The painting is described by the author in detail. The experts' discussion of this painting takes two and a half days, during which time Ross comments on its resemblance to the Drollig Hansel. Finally, Saraceni rises to speak. He suggests that they are looking at the wrong tradition to try and understand the painting. He tells them that it is a depiction of The Chymical Wedding: the alchemical uniting of the elements of the soul. He suggests that the painting be returned to Dusterstein, since that is obviously where it originated from, and be attributed to The Alchemical Master, since the name of the artist is unknown.

Francis, who has not been able to figure out what to say, later thanks Saraceni for saving him. The observers pause the record again. The Daimon Maimas tells the Lesser Zadkiel that now that Francis has found his soul, his time will be spent trying to understand it and be worthy of it.

Part 6 (Pages 438-481) Analysis

Back in England, Francis spends his time working for MI5. Despite the secrecy required for his job, he no longer calls it the profession. Rather, he calls it what it is, counter-intelligence work for MI5. Although Francis is not happy, he continues in his work. Francis renews his relationship with Ruth, who dies tragically a few months later. Francis is devastated. This section of the novel deals with a few of Francis' loves. Ruth Nibsmith is probably the love of Francis' life. When she dies, Francis throws himself into his work. When he meets Alywin Ross, he allows himself to love again. This time, it is the love of a friend and co-worker.



Part 6 (Pages 481-514)

Part 6 (Pages 481-514) Summary

Francis continues his work with the Commission. At the same time, he continues his secret work with MI5 of keeping an eye on certain individuals. Francis continues to work with Ross, and Ross, because of Francis, soon gains a reputation as a critic. Ross tells Francis one day that he has proved a link between the Marriage of Cana painting and the Drollig Hansel. He says that he believes the picture to be political rather than alchemical. He is going to write an article about it, and Francis decides not to tell Ross the truth about the painting. When the article comes out, it causes quite a stir. Francis' career as a painter is forever ruined. He wants to paint again, but obviously he cannot paint in his usual style. He would have to learn to paint in a contemporary style. However, after an article comes out about Picasso, he decides he couldn't be true to himself and paint in the modern style. Instead, he decides to return to Canada and influence its fledgling art community. Before Francis leaves, he has to detach himself from MI5, and Uncle Jack is not happy about letting him go. Before anything is settled, Saraceni dies, and Francis discovers that he is Saraceni's sole heir. He inherits millions from Saraceni's estate. It takes two years to settle Saraceni's affairs and resign from MI5. Then, he returns to Canada.

Francis settles in Toronto and sets to work managing his new wealth. He sets up a trust fund for Charlotte and makes it clear to the Glassons that, other than a small annual sum, he will no longer be supporting their family. After that, he focuses on using his wealth to encourage art in Canada. The local painters are very independent and do not want Francis' advice, so he has to settle for buying paintings that he thinks are good but that he doesn't like. He becomes something of a dealer. His large apartment becomes quickly cluttered with his collection. He is most satisfied with the paintings that were in Saraceni's collection.

Ross visits Francis periodically and makes it no secret that he wants to become Director of the National Gallery in Ottawa. He wants to raise the level of the gallery to one of world importance. In time, his wish is granted, and he is appointed director. After some time, Ross makes an announcement that he intends to buy six paintings from Amalie von Ingelheim that will put the gallery well on its way to world recognition. The price is in the millions and far more than the gallery actually has to spend. Parties within the government feel that the money can be better spent elsewhere and suggest that Ross be fired from his position. Ross goes to see Francis in the midst of the crisis. He feels that if he could get someone to donate one of the paintings to the gallery, the government would see the resulting interest by the international art world and change their minds about him. Ross wants Francis to be the benefactor. When asked, Ross tells Francis that he wants The Marriage of Cana. Francis tells him that he would have bought any of the pictures but that he will not buy that one. Ross is devastated. Francis will not tell him why, and Ross leaves angry. That night, Francis spends a long time looking at the old print hanging above his bed, "Love Locked Out." The observers pause



the story again. The Daimon Maimas says that he was disgusted with Francis for not buying the painting and nearly deserted him. However, he was told to make Francis a great man, and so he stayed.

Part 6 (Pages 481-514) Analysis

Francis feels responsible for Ross' death, and the painting "Love Locked Out" is an important symbol for love in Francis' life again. Ironically, Francis' masterpiece, the painting that has come to define him in so many ways, is so far from his grasp. Still, when it presents itself, he must keep it distant.



Part 6 (Pages 514-525)

Part 6 (Pages 514-525) Summary

The suicide of Alywin Ross puts Francis in a deep depression that lasts for weeks. In Francis' final years, he makes some friends from within the academic community, one of whom is Professor the Reverend Simon Darcourt. They spend evenings in his apartment listening to music and talking.

Francis spends a lot of time finalizing his will. He gets a signed document from Ismay declaring that Charlotte is not his child and that neither Ismay nor Charlotte can make any claim on his estate. He arranges bequests to relatives. When Francis remembers, he visits his mother. On one such visit, he asks his mother to talk about her youth. She tells him about being in love with an actor when she was young. When she names the actor, Francis knows the truth, that Zadok was the father of Francis the First.

Francis dies on his birthday. He goes out for dinner, and upon returning to his apartment, he lies down on the sofa. As he is dying, he thinks about Ross and The Marriage at Cana. Only a week ago, he bundled up his preliminary drawings and labeled it, knowing that someone would one day find it.

The observers speak at the close of the record. The Daimon Maimas says that his task was to make Francis a great man and posthumously, he will be. He made sure that the metaphors that shaped Francis' life - Saturn, the resolute, and Mercury, the maker, the humorist, the trickster - were bred in his bones and came out in the flesh.

The final scene in the book goes back to Arthur and Maria Cornish. Arthur tells Maria that Simon should go ahead with the book. If a few drawings of Old Masters show up at the National Gallery, it won't be taken that Francis was a faker, just that he was a student of the Old Masters. Arthur wants to get started on the applications to the Foundation, which he considers the more important work.

Part 6 (Pages 514-525) Analysis

The last section of the book draws the story to a close. Francis makes sure that only those he deems worthy receive any of his wealth, and he finally learns the truth about Zadok and Francis the First. The Daimon Maimas tells the Lesser Zadkiel that Francis will be considered a great man, but not until after he is dead. He recalls the horoscope one last time and comments on the fact that he ensured that the metaphors that shaped Francis' life were bred in his bone and came out in the flesh.



Characters

Francis Chegwidden Cornish

Francis is a complex character. He is the main character of the novel, and the author spends a lot of time developing this character. Francis is born in Canada in 1909, in a small town, to a wealthy and influential family. His grandfather is the origin of the family's wealth and a staunch Catholic. Francis rarely sees his parents and so their direct influence on him is slim. Although his father was promised that Francis would be raised a protestant, Francis grows up with an odd mix of both Catholicism and protestantism and is actually baptized into both faiths. This religious upbringing has a strong influence on Francis. Rather than make him a deeply religious man, however, it actually affects his artistic preferences and helps to create "The Marriage at Cana" which is the myth of Francis Cornish.

Francis develops a love of drawing and art early and secretly practices every chance he gets. The major theme of what's bred in the bone is very evident in the life of Francis. His choice of career, his ability to keep secrets and his distrust of other people are all the result of his upbringing.

The theme that things are not as they appear is also developed through Francis. He grows up keeping secrets and knowing that those around him have secrets of their own. His profession as an adult is secretive, and although others think he is a patron of the arts, he actually is working for MI5. The two paintings he creates also become important to this theme. There is much speculation about the origin and painter of these two works of art, and Francis is never able to publicly claim ownership of them.

Daimon Maimas

Daimons are described as spirits of the Golden Age who act as guardians to mortals. The Daimon Maimas is Francis Cornish's daimon. Maimas calls himself a Tutelary Spirit, The Indwelling Essence. Never explaining who his superiors are, he tells the reader that his job is to do well by Francis without showing off. He is told to make Francis into a great man. He is a significant influence in Francis' life, although Francis never knows it. He makes sure Francis is introduced to people who will deeply affect his development, and he makes sure Francis has the experiences necessary to shape him into the man he is to become. The Daimon Maimas is bred into Francis' bone.

Lesser Zadkiel

The Angel of Biography is a member of the Recording Angel's staff. He is described as an angel of mercy since he is the one who interfered when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. The Lesser Zadkiel recorded Francis' life. He made no judgments. He



just made sure that a record was kept. During the novel, he interacts with the Daimon Maimas to provide the reader with observations and interpretations.

Mary-Jim McRory

Mary-Jacobine McRory is the eldest daughter of the Senator and Francis' mother. Her one night with Zadok also results in the birth of Francis the First. Mary-Jim is educated at a convent school and is described as a beauty. When she is eighteen, she is presented at court. Without much debate, despite her vow to marry for love, Mary-Jim agrees to marry Major Francis Cornish when it is discovered that she is pregnant. Although she flirts with almost anyone and has at least one affair, she remains loyal to her husband and never considers leaving him. Mary-Jim is a strong influence in Francis' life despite the fact that he rarely sees her. Francis idolizes his mother and his pain at not really knowing her love affects his own relationships as an adult.

Honourable James Ignatius McRory (the Senator, Hamish)

Hamish is described as a wealthy, influential man. Born into a poor family who immigrated from Scotland, Hamish vows to leave his life of poverty behind and works his way up in the lumber industry until he is a very wealthy man. Hamish also has a passion for politics, namely liberal politics, and by the time he is forty-five he has been appointed to the Senate. His hobby is photography, and he enjoys developing and touching up his photographs in his dark room.

Hamish is an enigma to the people of Blairlogie. He seems to cross all conventional lines, for although he is a Scot, he is a Roman Catholic. He is also a rich liberal, and he married a French Canadian woman. He married Mary-Louise and loves her all his life.

Hamish is the origin of Francis' first wealth and therefore important in his life. Hamish also teaches Francis to see light in a new way when he shows him how to take and develop photographs. Hamish is an astute businessman and recognizes that Francis will not be suitable for the family business. Rather than thrusting something on him that he does not want, Hamish encourages Francis in his pursuit of art and provides the income necessary for such a life. At his death, Francis remembers Hamish as the only one of the family who loved the artist in him.

Aunt Mary-Ben McRory

Mary-Benedetta McRory is described as "a formidable spirit concealed in a little, wincing spinster." Mary-Ben is the Senator's sister and lives with him and his wife at St. Kilda. She believes that God has called her into a life of service and takes her role very seriously. She is a devout Catholic. She is the housekeeper of St. Kilda and holds far greater sway over the workings of that house than is immediately discerned.



As a young woman, Mary-Ben suffered an injury that would affect her entire life. At a garden party in Government House, Mary-Ben was attacked by a Great Horned Owl. The owl was attracted by her hat, which looked to him like a skunk, and when the owl seized the hat, it took a considerable portion of her scalp with it. Her scalp remained too tender for wigs, and so she took to wearing caps made of the softest material she could find. This incident defines her role in life. She has no other choice but to serve.

Mary-Ben loves music and oil paintings and praying. Her influence on Francis is considerable. As his primary caregiver during his childhood, she influences his understanding of Catholicism, art (especially oil paintings) and loyalty. When he is sick, she has him baptized a Catholic, despite his father's adamant desire to have him raised protestant.

Francis the First (The Looner)

Francis the First is born in Europe under a cloud of secrecy. He is the result of one night spent between Mary-Jim and Zadok Hoyle (although neither knows the name of the other, nor recognizes each other when they come to live in the same small town). Francis the First's disabilities are more than likely the direct result of Mary-Louise's attempts to abort the pregnancy. Francis the First is small. His head is very small for his body, and because the top is so small, the lower part seems much larger than it is. He cannot speak.

Francis the First is not expected to live long, and his survival into his teen years shocks everyone. When he is five, the Senator and Dr. Jerome decide that he should be moved to the attic of St. Kilda and pronounced dead to the rest of the world, including his mother. He is cared for by Victoria Cameron, the cook and Zadok Hoyle, ironically, his real father. Francis discovers Francis the First as a child and develops an interest in him. At the same time, Francis the First's existence helps Francis Cornish refine his artistic talent and come to understand himself and his family much more clearly.

Tancred Saraceni

Saraceni is small, very dark and very neat. Tancred is a very well-respected art restorer who makes his home in Rome. Francis meets him at Oxford, and they forge a friendship that lasts until Saraceni's death. Francis becomes Saraceni's apprentice and learns how to mix paint like the Old Masters and how to restore pictures. He also learns from Saraceni the importance of putting his soul into his work. On his death, Saraceni bequeaths his entire wealth to Francis.

Ruth Nibsmith

Ruth is the governess at the castle in Dusterstein. Francis meets her on his apprenticeship. As it turns out, she is also in the profession. Francis and Ruth develop a relationship at the castle, and years later, they meet each other again in London and



rekindle their relationship for a few weeks before Ruth is killed in a bombing. While at the castle, Ruth casts a horoscope for Francis. The horoscope turns out to be very accurate, and at the end of Francis' life, his Daimon comments on the fact that the two strongest forces of his horoscope have been purposely bred into his bones.



Objects/Places

Blairlogie

Blairlogie is the small town in Ontario, Canada where Francis is born and grows up. The town is made up mostly of Polish, French and Scottish people. Blairlogie is a significant place because it epitomizes the theme of social constructs with its the varying ethnic and religious structures. Francis spends his childhood there, so in many ways, Blairlogie is bred in Francis' bones. Although Francis lives in other towns through his life, no other town plays as influential a role (on its own) as Blairlogie does in Francis' life.

The Recording Angel

At the beginning of the novel, mention is made of the Recording Angel. He is described as a bookkeeper, an Angel of Mercy and the Master of Muses. He has a staff, and one of his staff members is the Angel of Biography, The Lesser Zadkiel, who plays an important role in the telling of this story. The Lesser Zadkiel and the Daimon Maimus continually interject their conversation through the movie-like review of Francis' life. The Recording Angel does not actually appear in the book, but Davies mentions The Recording Angel so that readers can understand who The Lesser Zadkiel is and what he does. This concept of other-worldly beings supports both the structure and style of the story as well as the theme of beyond the physical realm.

Chegwidden Lodge

Francis' parents build a large home when they move to Blairlogie, and in remembrance of his father's family back in England, they name it Chegwidden Lodge. Francis spends his early preschool years in this home, although he rarely sees his parents. It is a large, modern house with a great many windows. Despite its appearance of openness, visitors are not readily welcome at Chegwidden Lodge. The very structure and architecture of the lodge points at the book's theme that things are not as they appear because of the contrasting appearance of openness when it is really a private place.

St. Kilda

Francis' grandparents' home is named St. Kilda. Francis lives here for most of his childhood years. It is a mansion and houses the Senator and his wife, Aunt Mary-Ben, Francis, a staff and hidden in the attic, Francis' older brother. It is a house of secrets, further supporting the theme that things are not as they appear. At the same time, it is a fairly significant place in Francis' upbringing, so St. Kilda becomes bred in Francis' bones.



"Love Locked Out"

"Love Locked Out" is a painting that hangs in Francis' childhood room in St. Kilda. It depicts a naked boy weeping in front of a closed door. This picture is a favorite of Francis' and proves to be influential in his life. Francis feels that it is a representation of what he feels, especially as a child, regarding his mother. The picture is the only thing he takes from St. Kilda when he sells the house as an adult. He acts out the scene several times in his relationships with other people.

The Grail

The legend of the Knights of the Round Table and the Holy Grail becomes an obsession with Francis. The legend says that the Grail (the cup that Jesus drank from at the Last Supper) has survived the centuries and that any who find it and look upon it are endowed with everlasting life. King Arthur's knights searched long for the Grail. Francis' understanding of the Grail does not come from books, however, but from the art of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The light emanating from these pictures is like the light Francis imagines of the Grail. Francis searches for his own Grail in life, which is an understanding of who he is as well as a fulfillment of his life as an artist.

"An Allegory of Time"

"An Allegory of Time" is a painting that Francis describes to Uncle Jack in his first letter. It is an example of the type of art Francis is attracted to and desires to copy. He admits to his uncle that he does not understand the painting yet, but he intends to work hard at understanding it. The symbols in this painting are important pieces of what Francis ends up painting in his own pictures.

Dusterstein

Dusterstein is the castle where Francis spends his apprenticeship. It is situated in Bavaria. The castle houses quite a large collection of art, and Francis and Saraceni spend a lot of time restoring this collection to be taken to England and sold back to the Germans in exchange for priceless Italian art. The castle is where Francis develops his relationship with Saraceni and Ruth and where he paints both of his soon-to-be famous paintings. The castle is an example of the theme that things are not as they appear.

"Drollig Hansel"

The painting "Drollig Hansel" is the result of the first major assignment given Francis by Saraceni. He is told to paint a picture that is all his own but that will not look out of place amongst the castle's collection. The painting is a "fugger's jester." When viewed by Prince Max, it is called a Drollig Hansel, and the name sticks. It is a picture of a dwarf in



fool's garb. Known only to Francis is the fact that it is a picture of Francois Xavier Bouchard. When the painting reaches London, it causes quite a stir. The fact that it is not a painting by the Old Masters is not noticed, and much talk is devoted to its history.

"The Marriage at Cana"

The painting of "The Marriage at Cana" is Francis' second major assignment from Saraceni, and the result is the completion of his apprenticeship. The painting is a triptych, a large panel in three parts. Francis paints it as the myth of Francis Cornish, and in describing it to other art experts, Saraceni says that it depicts the Chymical Wedding and was done by an unknown Alchemical Master. This painting, although he can never admit it, is the pinnacle of Francis' painting career and defines him as an artist and a human.

The Profession

Francis' father, and later Francis himself, joins the profession - espionage for MI5. It seems a likely choice given that secrecy is bred in the bone of the Cornishes. Francis' father is quite a respected member of the profession, and Francis does some important work for them himself. In Francis' case, he is to count trains headed to a concentration camp and encode those numbers into a report in his health. For much the book, Francis barely understands or appreciates the importance of what he does for the profession.

Devinney's Furniture and Undertaking Parlour

Zadok Holye works at the undertaking parlor, and this is also where Francis learns to draw the human form. He observes Zadok prepare bodies for burial and spends hours drawing all kinds of different people in his notebook. Devinney's Furniture and Undertaking Parlour becomes bred in Francis' bone as he develops his artistic ability under the guidance of the man who could have been his true father (but was the father of Francis the First). Davies uses humor here to point the reader to his theme of social constructs as he creates a silly image of a furniture store and funeral parlor in the same building... run by a bootlegger.

Cornwall

The Cornish side of the family comes from Cornwall. Francis is delighted to be able to visit the nearby Castle of Tintagel and share the stories of King Arthur, who was born in that castle, with his family. This same castle is where he sleeps with Ismay, whom he thinks he loves, and repeats the same event in his life that occurred in his father's life decades earlier. He ends up marrying a woman who bears a child that is not his own. Ultimately, he is disappointed in the Cornishes because they do not share his love of the King Arthur story. For many reasons, his marriage to Ismay also breaks down. This family, although actually bred in his bone, does not come out in his flesh!

Oxford

Oxford University in Oxford, England is where Francis spends his college years. Here, he meets several people who are influential in his life, including Ismay, Charlie and (most importantly) Tancred Saraceni. Not a lot is said about his schooling, except that he does well and graduates First Class. The importance of Oxford is really in the people he meets.



Social Sensitivity

The title of *What's Bred in the Bone* is taken from an old English proverb: "What's Bred in the Bone will not Out of the Flesh." In a prologue to the novel, Simon Darcourt is explaining to Arthur and Maria Cornish why he is having trouble writing the official biography of Arthur's uncle, the late Francis Cornish, for the Cornish Foundation. Darcourt has discovered that he doesn't know who Cornish was. The verifiable facts "don't add up to the man we knew." Two spirits, the Lesser Zadkiel (the Angel of Biography) and Maimas (Cornish's personal daimon while he lived) have been observing the proceedings and decide to review the record of the life of Francis Cornish. What follows this prologue is that record, interspersed with brief dialogues between the two spirits on the development of Francis' character. The record is divided into two sections: "What Was Bred in the Bone?" and "What Would Not Out of the Flesh?"

The first section is about Francis's early life in Canada up to his graduation from the University of Toronto at the age of twenty-three. The second section is about Francis's later life in Europe and Canada from the time he attended Oxford to his death in Toronto at the age of seventy-two in 1981.

The first section is concerned with the people and the events that formed and shaped Francis's personality and character. His parents are not major influences, for they were largely absent from his formative years in Blairlogie, Ontario, a small city some sixty miles northwest of Ottawa. Blairlogie was a town with a large Roman Catholic population since the majority of its citizens were from French and Polish stock. The Scots made up the upper echelon of Blairlogie society, and they were Presbyterians. Francis's family did not fit neatly into any of these categories. His grandfather, Hamish McCrory, may have come from Scotland as an infant, but the McCrory family was Roman Catholic and he married a French Girl. Francis's mother was one of Hamish's daughters, and she married an Englishman who specified that he wanted his children to be raised in the Anglican Church. Thus, Francis was raised an Anglican while being brought up in a Roman Catholic household where several of the servants were militant Protestants, including his nurse Bella-Mae, who belonged to the Salvation Army, and Victoria Cameron, a stiff-necked Presbyterian who watched over Francis's idiot older brother in the attic, the pathetic Looner. Francis attended Carlyle Rural School where the student population was made up exclusively of rough, crude country children. Francis did not form any lasting friendships here, but he did learn to survive in a hostile environment.

At home, the dominant figure was Francis's Aunt Mary-Ben, the sister of Hamish McCrory, who maintained a household of "pious refinement." She thought of painting as the great art since it made people "see God's work truly." As Francis tells Manfred Saraceni much later, "she insisted that pictures were moral lessons, and told stories." Her Roman Catholic piety was balanced by the stern Calvinism of the Presbyterian Victoria Cameron who cooked for the family and looked after the Looner. She told Francis that Aunt Mary-Ben's "religious pictures and fancy prayers" were "just the R.C. way of deceiving yourself, as if life was a fancy-dress party." For Victoria, everyone was



a sinner, and "happiness for sinners" meant "sin." Consequently, life was not a happy business, but a struggle against the forces of pleasure and temptation.

The two dominant male figures in Francis's childhood were Hamish McCrory, Francis's grandfather, and Zadok Hoyle, the driver and groom for Devinney's undertaking parlor as well as for grandfather McCrory. From these two men, Francis received his first practical training as an artist. His grandfather liked to take photographs of Blairlogie and its citizenry. Francis accompanied Grand-pere on his picture-taking jaunts, and Grand-pere taught him basic principles of light and shading. Zadok Hoyle not only took care of Devinney's and McCrory's horses but also worked as the embalmer at Devinney's undertaking establishment. He allowed Francis to join him on his embalming nights and to make sketches of the corpses. Francis eventually left Blairlogie to attend Colborne College in Toronto, a school for the well-to-do. At Colborne, he fell into the category of New Money rather than Old Money, gaining a reputation as an aesthete because of his knowledge of art and developing an interest in the Arthurian legends. It was while at Colborne that his father suggested that the profession, i.e., espionage, might be a good line of employment for Francis. After Colborne, Francis spent four years at the College of Saint John and the Holy Ghost (Spook) in the University of Toronto, graduating with the Chancellor's Prize in Classics, a sign of distinction but not fashion (classics was definitely not the "in" subject), at the age of twenty-three.

Francis did not readily fit into any category. As a wealthy Canadian, he was interested in subjects (art and classics) that had no status in Canada.

Socially he had developed as a loner, partly because he spent his formative years in a household where he was surrounded by adults of different religious and political persuasions and attended a school where he was ostracized for being different. Spiritually, he was torn between the refined moralizing of Aunt Mary-Ben and the stern Calvinism of Victoria Cameron. His background would inform everything he did for the rest of his life. It was what had been bred in the bone, and it could not be taken away from him.

He went to England to pursue a degree at Oxford in the early Thirties, a time when Europe was in turmoil, revving up for the coming war. Francis's interests, talents, and connections would involve him in two arenas: the world of espionage (the profession) and the world of art restoration. Francis kept himself disengaged from the fashionable political causes of the day — communism and the Spanish Civil War — all the time doing yeoman intelligence work gratis. He came under the artistic domination of Tancred Saraceni, who taught him how to restore (and fake) early paintings, and who was involved in a scheme to swindle the German government out of some of the treasures in German art museums.

The Germans traded these treasures for dubious examples of native art that had been spruced up at the Schloss Dusterstein in southern Germany and shipped out of the country only to be sent back to Germany. By the end of World War II, Francis had gained renown as an art expert, and was asked to head a commission set up by the Allied Forces to restore works of art to their points of origin. Eventually Francis returned

to Canada, hoping to influence the world of Canadian art but discovering that his native country was not receptive to his ideas about art. He became a collector, and when he died, he left behind him a large eclectic collection of art to be disposed of.



Techniques

What's Bred in the Bone is written as a biography of Francis Cornish. It proceeds chronologically, starting with the familial and cultural background of Francis Cornish and concluding with his death. However, it is a biography with a twist. What the reader is reading is "the record, or the film, or the tape or whatever it must be called" of Francis's life on file with the Angel of Biography. The text of the novel might be looked at as source material for a biography of Cornish, perhaps to be written by Simon Darcourt. Short dialogues between two spirits are interspersed throughout the narrative, always relating what has just been presented to the final product, i.e., Francis Cornish's character. These spirits, whether they be recording angels or Greek daimons, represent things that are part of the human experience. According to Darcourt, the Recording Angel "exists as a metaphor for all that illimitable history of humanity and inhumanity and inanimate life and myth that has ever been." The daimons were "spirits of the Golden Age, who act as guardians to mortals." They were not morality policemen but rather "manifestations of the artistic conscience, who supply you with extra energy when it is needed to tip you off when things aren't going as they should." In most of the dialogues, Maimas clearly has the more complicated task. The angel of biography looks simply at the facts, whereas the daimon is interested to see how these particular facts were used to shape a man's character.



Quotes

"Do you know where the extra money came from?' 'No, but that's not the most important thing I don't know. I simply don't know who he was.'" (Part 1, pg. 6)

"Of course everybody is dealt a hand, but now and then he has a chance to draw another card, and it's the card he draws when the chance comes that can make all the difference. And what decides the card he draws? Francis was given a good hand at birth, but two or three times he had a chance to draw, and every time he seems to have drawn the joker." (Part 1, pg. 15)

"Maria, you astonish me! Weren't your childhood years important? They are the matrix from which a life grows." (Part 1, pg. 17)

"I'd know what was bred in the bone of old Francis. Because what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh, and we should never forget it." (Part 1, pg. 21)

"The Senator was the person to begin with, for he was Francis Chegwidden Cornish's grandfather, and the origin of the wealth that supported Francis' life until he gained a mysterious fortune of his own." (Part 1, pg. 25)

"But beneath what the mind chooses to admit to itself lie convictions that shape our lives." (Part 1, pg. 56)

"They'll never raise that one, he said. No point in sparing you, Hamish; the child's an idjit and the mercy is it won't live long." (Part 1, pg. 64)

"I, Maimas the Daimon, the Tutelary Spirit, the Indwelling Essence. Though he was a McRory, and a Cornish, and all that goes with such a mixture, I also was what was bred in his bone, right from the instant of his conception. And that made all the difference." (Part 1, pg. 71)

"It was in kindergarten that the foundations for Francis Cornish's lifelong misanthropy were firmly established." (Part 2, pg. 86)

"It was then that Francis made his great confession. 'Zadok, I think I'm an artist too.' He rummaged in his outer clothes and produced his sketch-book." (Part 2, pg. 134)

"This house where there was so much deep concern for his welfare, but nothing of the love he needed except for the two servants, who did not precisely love him so much as accept him as a fellow-being." (Part 2, pg. 165)

"Francis knew in his heart that life was broader, deeper, higher, more terrifying, and more wonderful than anything dreamed of by Old Money...they emerged, sometimes, in his drawings." (Part 2, pg. 188)



"It was not easy to be a Pre-Raphaelite in Canada in the third decade of the twentieth-century, in a school that was cheerfully Philistine about art (though certainly not about scholarship), but in so far as it could be done, Francis did it." (Part 2, pg. 195)

"Secrecy was bred in Francis' bones." (Part 2, pg. 197)

"I know about the fellow that was upstairs; what explains him? That's not for me to tell you, Francis. That may have been a matter of chance - what they call a sport. Or it may be something that is bred in the bone." (Part 3, pg. 244)

"Ah - for Francis the Looner was a lifelong reminder of the inadmissible primitive in the most cultivated life, a lifelong adjuration to pity, and a sign that disorder and abjection stand less than a hair's breadth away from every human creature. A continual counsel to make the best of whatever fortune had given him." (Part 3, pg. 249)

"So he spent countless hours copying master drawings, analyzing master techniques, and to his astonishment surprising within himself ideas and insights and even flashes of emotion that belonged more to the drawings than to himself. He did not trust these whispers from the past until he met Tancred Saraceni." (Part 4, pg. 264)

"But I must warn you: don't try to fake the modern manner if it isn't right for you. Find your legend. Find your personal myth." (Part 4, pg. 273)

"Hamish was the only one of his family who had ever really looked at him, and considered what he was. The only one of the whole lot, perhaps, who had ever loved the artist in him." (Part 4, pg. 276)

"And never neglect what is bred in the bone. Do you think it was bred in Francis to be a victim all his life? How would that reflect on me?" (Part 4, pg. 342)

"Alone, and only vaguely aware of the Europe that was boiling up toward a war of hitherto unexampled horror almost on its doorstep, Francis found his answer, and it was the only possible, the inescapable answer. He would paint the myth of Francis Cornish." (Part 5, pg. 431)

"He did not feel lonely when he visited the Catholic cemetery, and found the marker for Francis the First, the Looner, the shadow of his boyhood and, if Uncle Doctor was to be believed, still an unexploded bomb in his manhood-the secret, the inadmissible element which, as he now understood, had played so great a part in making him an artist, if indeed he might call himself an artist." (Part 6, pg.459)

"But this is plainly a depiction, given a Christian gloss, of what was called The Chymical Wedding. The alchemical uniting of the elements of the soul, that is to say." (Part 6, pg. 476)

"You have made up your soul in that picture, Francis, and I do not joke when I call you The Alchemical Master." (Part 6, pg. 479)



"The article destroyed Francis forever as a painter." (Part 6, pg. 489)

"It was a two-year job to shake himself loose from MI5 and make the best he could of Saraceni's estate, but at last it was done, and he returned to the land of his birth." (Part 6, pg. 495)

"But the metaphors that shaped the life of Francis Cornish were Saturn, the resolute, and Mercury, the maker, the humorist, the trickster. It was my task to see that these, the Great Ones, were bred in the bone, and came out in the flesh. And my task is not yet finished." (Part 6, pg. 524)



Key Questions

One avenue for discussion of *What's Bred in the Bone* is the elaborate narrative apparatus for this novel. Discussions might revolve around whether it is necessary, whether it illuminates Francis Cornish's character or creates confusion, or whether it is intended to be taken seriously or satirically. A second avenue for discussion is the theme of fakery in the world of art. In particular, Davies introduces the issue of the painter's intention as an element in judging the merits of a picture. One might want to consider whether the artist's intentions are as important as they are made to appear in this novel.

A third avenue for discussion might be to consider whether Davies has succeeded in giving the reader a comprehensive biography of Francis Cornish.

At the beginning of the novel, Simon Darcourt is lamenting that the pieces he has in the Cornish puzzle "don't add up to the man we knew." One might ask whether Davies has solved Darcourt's problem with this novel.

1. Look at the description of *The Marriage at Cana* and at Saraceni's interpretation of the picture before the Allied Arts Commission. Has Francis Cornish succeeded in painting "the myth of Francis Cornish?" If so, what is the myth?
2. Examine the role of money in *What's Bred in the Bone*. How important is the acquisition of wealth in explaining the motives of Cornish and the other characters in the novel?
3. Davies has been criticized for using a quotation from Picasso that in all likelihood is spurious. Look at the way it is used in Part Six. Why is it so important to Cornish that Picasso made these remarks? What is Aylwin Ross's response? Is it important whether the quotation is genuine or not?
4. How useful are the two spirits who act as commentators throughout the novel? Why did Davies include these characters? Could he have told Francis's story just as well without this apparatus?
5. In what ways is Francis shaped by Aunt Mary-Ben, Victoria Cameron, Zadok Hoyle, and Hamish McCrory? Is their influence more or less significant than that of his parents?
6. What did Francis learn by attending Carlyle Rural School? Is his time there well spent or ill spent?
7. Consider the theories of art that are being presented in *What's Bred in the Bone*. What are the essential differences that Davies sees between modern art and pre-Romantic art? Are the distinctions he (or Saraceni or Cornish) makes useful in making judgments about works of art?



8. Francis is attracted to the Grail story in the King Arthur legends. Is this an appropriate myth for Francis Cornish?
9. How successful is Davies at portraying Francis's three love relationships?
10. Should we see Saraceni as a positive, negative, or ambiguous influence on Francis's life?

Literary Precedents

What's Bred in the Bone is not easy to classify. When reviewing *What's Bred in the Bone*, Gerald Jay Goldberg called it "a peculiar amalgam of mystery story, family saga, espionage adventure and portrait of the artist." All of these are popular twentieth-century genres of which many examples may be found, but Davies's novel does not fit neatly into any of them. Jo Allen Bradham sees the novel as joining Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), and Steven Millhauser's *Edwin Mullhouse: The Life and Death of an American Writer, 1943-1954* (1972) as an example of biographical satire. Bradham also sees the novel as containing elements of allegory, a form which was "intended to explain man's journey" in such classic texts of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance as Dante's *Divine Comedy* (c.1310-1321), Chaucer's uncompleted poem, *House of Fame*, Langland's Middle English alliterative poem, *Piers Plowman*, and Edmund Spenser's long allegorical poem, *Faerie Queene* (1590).

Related Titles

What's Bred in the Bone is the second novel in the Cornish trilogy. The first novel *The Rebel Angels* (1981) concerns the disposal of Francis Cornish's estate.

Simon Darcourt and Arthur and Maria Cornish are prominent characters in that novel, Arthur and Maria marrying at the end of the novel. *The Lyre of Orpheus* (1988) concerns the completion and production of an opera by E. T. A. Hoffmann that is funded by the Cornish Foundation.



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