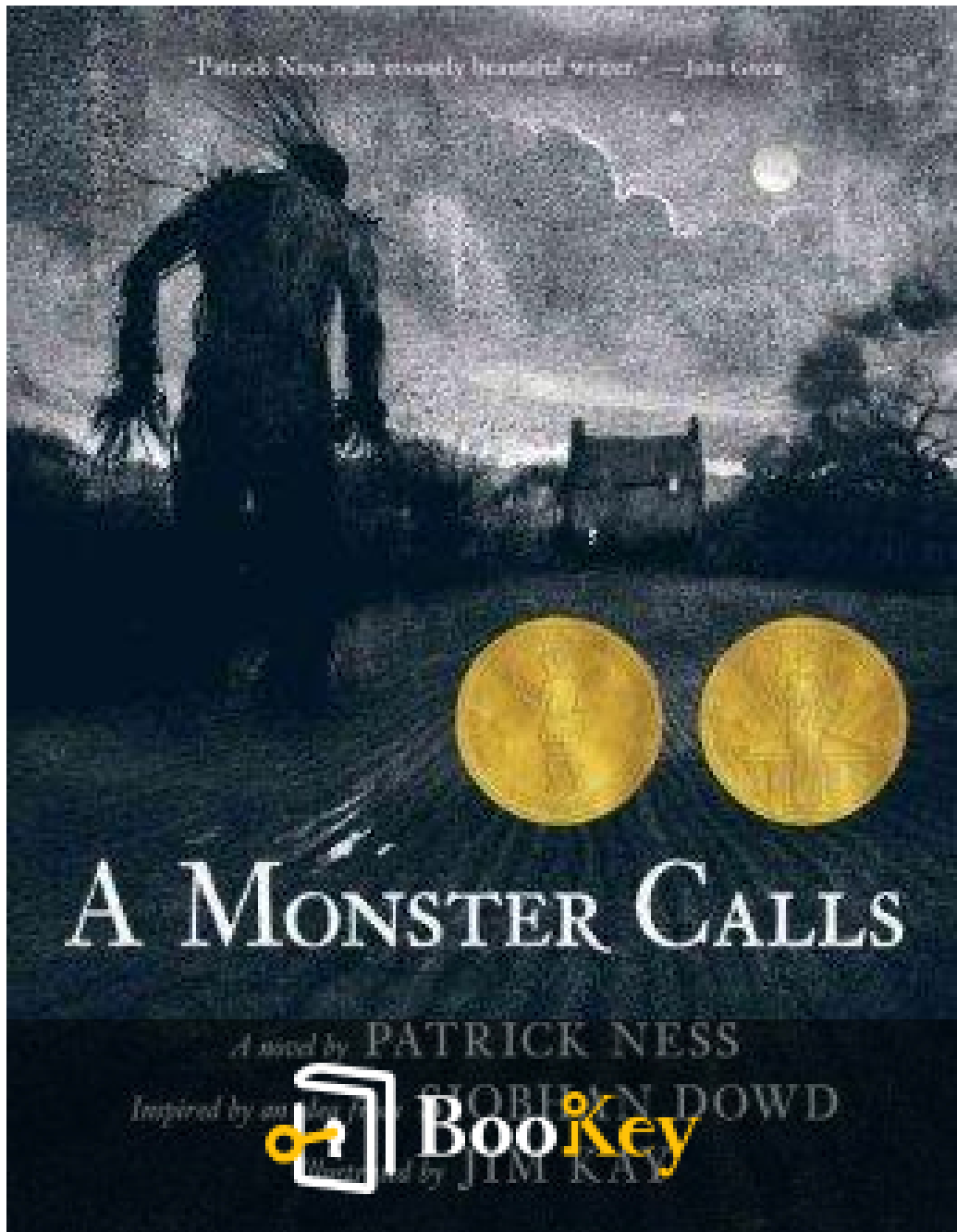


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Patrick Ness



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A Monster Calls Summary

Confronting grief through the lens of a monster.

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About the book

In "A Monster Calls," Patrick Ness masterfully weaves a poignant tale of grief and empathy, exploring the complex emotions that accompany loss through the eyes of a young boy named Conor O'Malley. As he grapples with his mother's terminal illness and the bullying he faces at school, Conor encounters a haunting yet transformative monster that materializes in the form of a gnarled yew tree. This creature, far from a conventional harbinger of terror, offers Conor three stories that challenge his perceptions of truth and accountability, pushing him to confront his deepest fears and desires. With each turn of the page, readers are immersed in a beautifully illustrated blend of fantasy and stark reality, compelling them to reflect on their own struggles with pain and healing, and inviting them to discover what it truly means to face one's demons.

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About the author

Patrick Ness is an acclaimed British author best known for his thought-provoking novels that blend elements of fantasy and realism, capturing the complexities of the human experience through imaginative storytelling. Born on October 17, 1971, in Fort Bragg, California, and raised in the United Kingdom, Ness's writing often explores themes of grief, identity, and the challenges of growing up. He gained widespread recognition with his "Chaos Walking" trilogy and the poignant stand-alone novel "A Monster Calls," inspired by an idea from the late Siobhan Dowd, which addresses profound feelings of loss and acceptance in a beautifully crafted narrative. With multiple awards to his name, including the Carnegie Medal and the Greenaway Medal, Ness has established himself as a significant voice in contemporary literature for young adults.

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Chapter 1 Summary: A MONSTER CALLS

In the opening chapter of "A Monster Calls," we meet Conor O'Malley, a thirteen-year-old boy haunted by a recurring nightmare filled with darkness, wind, and screaming. It's clear that this nightmare is deeply unsettling, featuring hands slipping away that symbolize a struggle he cannot escape. Conor feels trapped in his solitude, choosing not to share the nightmare with anyone—his mother, father, or even his friends at school—highlighting his isolation and emotional burden.

Just after midnight, Conor wakes from this nightmare and hears a strange, persistent voice calling his name. He feels a mix of fear and curiosity, grappling with the idea that monsters are just for children. Eventually, he realizes the voice is not from a dream, but is very real. As he peers out of his window into the night, he sees the yew tree from the graveyard behind his house, which transforms into a colossal monster, looming over him. This creature, with branches forming a terrifying face and limbs, embodies both nature's strength and a wild, monstrous quality.

The monster introduces itself with a rumble, expressing its purpose to "get" Conor, yet surprisingly, Conor doesn't feel fear. Instead, he responds with indifference, revealing a profound disappointment in the monster's arrival. He expected something different and challenges the monster to do its worst, revealing his emotional resilience amidst his inner turmoil.



As the monster pushes against Conor's house, shaking its foundations, Conor displays a defiance that is remarkable for someone of his age. The chapter builds tension as the monster's power is illustrated through physical destruction, contrasting with Conor's calm demeanor. This duality highlights key themes: the struggle against fear and acceptance of pain. The chapter concludes with the monster's ominous warning that Conor will indeed fear before the end, setting the stage for an exploration of the complex emotions and challenges he faces ahead. The vivid imagery of the monster and Conor's emotional landscape establishes a gripping foundation for the story, suggesting that the monster may be more than just a fearsome presence; it may be a catalyst for Conor's journey through his personal struggles.

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Chapter 2 Summary: BREAKFAST

In Chapter 2 of "A Monster Calls," we delve into Conor's morning routine, which reveals both independence and hidden struggles. Conor steps into a silent kitchen, accustomed to the absence of his mother, who is likely still in bed due to her ongoing health issues. This moment underscores Conor's growing responsibility as he prepares breakfast for himself, reflecting the reality of his life where he often has to take care of things alone.

As he sits down to eat, he's consumed by thoughts of a peculiar dream he had the previous night, where a tree seemed to attack his house. However, he convinces himself it was just a dream—until he discovers the spiky leaves of a yew tree scattered across his bedroom floor, a hint that something deeper is at play. This emphasizes the theme of reality versus imagination that runs through the narrative.

Conor's mother finally emerges, and their interaction is filled with an undercurrent of sadness and tension. She thanks him for taking care of the house, revealing her vulnerability. Their conversation hints at Conor's feelings of fear and frustration about his mother's illness, his dislike of where they currently find themselves, and the impending visit from his grandmother, which Conor dreads. This visit symbolizes added complication in his already tumultuous life, as he struggles with the idea of sharing his space and the nagging thought that his mother's condition is worsening.



Amid the heaviness of their situation, they exchange light-hearted banter, especially about the prospect of his grandmother bringing old wigs, which serves as a moment of levity. However, it is tinted with an awareness of the fragile state of Conor's home life, highlighted by the way his mother's health has altered the dynamics between them. As he heads out the door for school, Conor hears her talking to herself about the yew tree, bringing a slightly eerie and contemplative note to the end of the chapter.

This chapter beautifully captures Conor's conflicting emotions – from the weight of responsibility to the desire for normalcy amidst chaos, while also hinting at the supernatural elements that are yet to unfold. The interaction between him and his mother deepens our understanding of their bond, tinged with love and worry, as they navigate their challenging circumstances.

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Chapter 3: SCHOOL

In Chapter 3 of "A Monster Calls," we find Conor O'Malley grappling with the harsh realities of school life and the bullying he faces from Harry and his friends, Anton and Sully. The chapter opens with Conor tasting blood, a result of biting his lip during a fall. This error leads to a vivid recollection of how Harry, once a harmless classmate, has turned into a cruel tormentor since Conor started having debilitating nightmares linked to his troubled home life and his mother's illness. The change in their dynamic underscores a significant theme of bullying and its impact on personal identity.

As Conor navigates the hallways, he tries to ignore the taunts from Harry and his crew, but the emotional turmoil runs deep. When Lily Andrews intervenes, fiercely defending Conor against Harry's mockery, it highlights her courage and the burgeoning friendship between her and Conor. Despite her good intentions, Lily's intervention only escalates the situation, attracting the disapproval of their teacher, Miss Kwan. Conor's instinct to protect his mother from the ridicule leads him to deny that Harry and the others were mocking her, showcasing his internal struggle and desire to shield the people

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Chapter 4 Summary: LIFE WRITING

In Chapter 4 of "A Monster Calls," we find Conor grappling with the complexities of his life after a challenging school day. He feels a heavy weight on his shoulders, having cleverly evaded bullies like Harry and the sharp-eyed Lily. As he walks home, the thoughts of life writing—a school assignment that requires students to reflect on their personal stories—loom large in his mind, filling him with dread. The assignment prompts him to think back on significant moments in his life, like his mother's illness and his father's abandonment, but these memories are bittersweet and painful.

Instead of focusing on his troubles, Conor reminisces about happier times he shared with his mother, particularly a day filled with laughter and a spontaneous trip to the cinema. However, he quickly dismisses the idea of writing about those moments, showcasing his reluctance to confront his feelings or share his true self in his writing.

As he continues home, he encounters Lily, who confronts him about an incident at school that left her in trouble—she feels betrayed by his silence. Their heated exchange illustrates the strain in their friendship, which has been punctured by the revelations surrounding Conor's family struggles. Conor's anger at Lily reveals how deeply he resents her for sharing his difficult truths with others, leading to his isolation. Their once close bond has been overshadowed by the secrets and pain they now carry.



Reaching his house, Conor reflects on his family's situation, marked by his mother's decision to keep their home after his father left. This detail highlights Conor's sense of stability being tenuous, and he can't help but feel nostalgic for a time when his family was whole.

The chapter culminates with Conor's encounter with an ancient yew tree that looms over the graveyard, which he initially dismisses as just a tree. Yet, when he looks again, he perceives it as something much more—a giant with a face that seems aware and alive. This moment serves as a powerful metaphor for the turmoil within Conor; the tree symbolizes the growth of his emotions and the looming challenges he must face, implying that he cannot merely ignore his pain or transform it into stories without confronting it head-on.

Overall, this chapter captures key themes of friendship, isolation, grief, and the struggle to articulate one's feelings. Conor's journey through memory and confrontation makes the reader acutely aware of the internal battles he faces in a world that feels increasingly overwhelming.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Confrontation of Emotions is Necessary for Growth

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 4 of 'A Monster Calls,' you are reminded that avoiding your true feelings, like Conor does with his complicated emotions surrounding his mother's illness and his father's abandonment, only leads to greater turmoil. Just as Conor learns to confront the bittersweet nature of his memories instead of dismissing them, you too can find strength in facing your own challenges and emotions. Embracing the complexities of your experiences and expressing them can lead to personal growth and healing, allowing you to transform pain into a source of understanding and resilience rather than allowing it to isolate you from others.

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Chapter 5 Summary: THREE STORIES

In Chapter 5 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, we dive into Conor O'Malley's tumultuous evening as he grapples with his mother's illness and the solitude that accompanies it. Exhausted from cooking frozen lasagna for his mother, who falls asleep shortly after, Conor takes on household chores, including dishes, while feeling a familiar weight in his chest as he hears her in the bathroom, sick from treatments. This routine has become almost normal for him, highlighting the deepening reality of their struggles.

As the night wears on, Conor finds himself unable to sleep, and as the clock ticks toward midnight, he becomes increasingly restless. When he peers out the window, he encounters a massive, intimidating monster. Faced with the creature, Conor's initial skepticism turns to curiosity, and he engages in a conversation that explores themes of fear and responsibility. The monster insists it is not there to frighten him but rather to help him confront his own hidden truths.

The monster, resembling a tree, declares it has come for a significant purpose: to tell Conor three stories. Each story is tied to the great complexities of life and death, and at the end, Conor will be asked to share his own truth. The dialogue reveals deeper layers of Conor's character, as he struggles with the idea of exposing the reality of his fears, the worst nightmare lurking within him.



As the chapter unfolds, the monster's promises are accompanied by an ominous undertone; Conor realizes this journey may not be as innocent as it appears. Despite the monstrous presence, there's an engaging element of storytelling woven into the narrative, suggesting that stories possess a powerful, sometimes dangerous, essence. The chapter culminates in Conor awakening back in his bed, only to discover that the dream was entangled with reality, as he finds poisonous red yew berries scattered on his floor. This discovery serves as a haunting reminder of the blurred lines between his dreams and the crises he faces in his waking life, encapsulating the themes of fear, truth, and the complexity of emotions tied to love and loss.

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Chapter 6: GRANDMA

In Chapter 6 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, we delve deeper into the strained family dynamics surrounding Conor, his mother, and his grandmother. The scene begins with Conor's grandma arriving, showcasing her unconventional nature compared to typical grandmothers—she's strict, somewhat abrasive, and not the nurturing figure that Conor longs for. While his mother sports a kind demeanor, Conor feels the pressure of expectations from his grandma, who hints at a more stable future for him at an upscale school.

This encounter highlights Conor's internal struggles, as he wrestles with the reality of his mother's terminal illness. His grandma's insistence on discussing potential plans for Conor's future when his mother is gone feels threatening to him. The conversation takes a tense turn, revealing how Conor clings to hope—believing that his mother will get better after her treatments. His denial about the situation creates a rift between him and his grandma, who is frustrated yet caring, trying to prepare him for the inevitable.

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 7 Summary: THE WILDNESS OF STORIES

In Chapter 7 of "A Monster Calls," Conor O'Malley is struggling with the emotional weight of his mother's illness and the trauma of a recurring nightmare that haunts him. It's a dark night in his home, where his grandma has put his mother to bed, leaving Conor alone to grapple with his fears. As he lies on the settee, he can't shake the anxiety about his mother's ongoing struggles after cancer treatment, feeling a mix of anger and helplessness.

Just past midnight, after a tormenting nightmare involving loss and terror, Conor finds solace in the quiet darkness—until he notices a monstrous figure in his backyard. This monster, a colossal yew tree, demands Conor's attention, claiming it's time to tell him stories. Initially resistant, Conor rebuffs the monster, expressing his disbelief and frustration. He lashes out, insisting the monster doesn't understand him at all, dismissing it as just another tree, despite its terrifying form and presence.

Their interaction reveals the depth of Conor's internal turmoil. He grapples with his feelings of fear, anger, and the desire for someone or something to fight his battles for him. The monster challenges him, pointing out that Conor's sarcasm may mask a deeper fear. The creature suggests that Conor is more frightened of things beyond the monster itself.

As their conversation progresses, Conor admits to his hopes that the monster



might actually help him confront his problems. However, he's met with disappointment when the monster informs him that it has come not to slay dragons, but to tell stories—wild and unpredictable tales that could unleash chaos. This notion intrigues and unsettles Conor, touching on the theme of how stories hold power, both to heal and to harm.

The chapter culminates as the monster proposes to tell a tale about the demise of a wicked queen, heightening Conor's anticipation and curiosity. Conor's reluctant acceptance signifies a pivotal moment; he is slowly opening up to the idea that confronting his fears and emotions, perhaps through storytelling, could lead to some form of resolution. This chapter deftly weaves themes of fear, the complexity of grief, and the power of stories, setting the stage for Conor's journey toward understanding and acceptance.

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Chapter 8 Summary: THE FIRST TALE

In Chapter 8 of "A Monster Calls," the monster begins to share an ancient tale that transports Conor to a time before modern conveniences, when the land was lush and green, a small kingdom ruled by a just king. This king had endured great loss, as his four sons fell in battle against various foes—giants, dragons, and wicked men. The tragedy left him with only his infant grandson, who soon became the focus of the king's hope.

As time passed, the king decided to remarry out of necessity and wed a young, attractive princess from a neighboring kingdom. Though she initially ruled well, dark whispers circulated that she might have poisoned the king. When he died before the prince was ready to take the throne, the princess became regent, and while her reign began positively, her ambitions soon turned darker.

Meanwhile, the young prince fell in love with a beautiful farmer's daughter. Unwilling to accept the queen's lurking control over the kingdom, he plotted to escape with her. The monster, who embodies the spirit of the yew tree, explains its connection to the tale.

The couple shared a tender moment beneath the yew tree, but tragedy struck when the prince awoke to find his beloved murdered, blood on his hands, and a bloody knife beside them, implicating him in the crime. Fearing for his



life, he identified the queen as the mastermind behind this treachery.

In desperation, the prince invoked the monster for help. The monstrous presence rallied the villagers after he declared the queen's wrongdoing. Fueled by their beloved prince’s anguish and the sight of the mighty Green Man, they stormed the queen’s castle, intent on justice. The mob's fury led them to her chambers, and as they prepared to enact their vengeance, Conor is absorbed in the tale, rooting for the prince’s triumph.

The chapter captures themes of loss, betrayal, and the struggle for justice. It blends fairy tale elements with darker realities, showing the impact of grief and the pursuit of truth amid overwhelming odds. As Conor listens, he also grapples with his feelings, torn between the tale's brutality and the relief of a vengeful conclusion, revealing his inner turmoil and desires for resolution in his own life.

Key Elements	Description
Setting	The tale shares a time before modernity in a lush kingdom ruled by a just king.
King's Loss	The king lost his four sons in battle, leaving him with only his infant grandson.
Remarriage	The king marries a young princess; initial rule is good but dark whispers about her intentions arise.
Regent's	After the king’s death, the queen’s positive rule turns to darker

Key Elements	Description
Ambition	ambitions.
Prince's Love	The prince falls in love with a farmer's daughter and plots to escape the queen's control.
Tragedy	The prince finds his beloved murdered and is accused of the crime.
Monster's Help	The prince calls on the monster for aid, rallying the villagers against the queen.
Mob Justice	The villagers storm the queen's castle seeking vengeance.
Themes	Loss, betrayal, justice, inner turmoil, and the complexity of grief.
Conor's Relation	Conor relates to the tale, reflecting on his own struggles and desires for resolution.

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Chapter 9: THE REST OF THE FIRST TALE

In this chapter of "A Monster Calls," Conor engages in a thought-provoking dialogue with the monster about the first tale it shares. Initially perplexed by the story of a prince who overthrew a queen, Conor learns that while the queen was deemed evil, it was the prince who murdered the farmer's daughter, not her. The monster reveals that it saved the queen from being executed by the angry villagers, transporting her to a distant village for her safety. Conor is shocked and struggles to comprehend how a murderer could be spared while an innocent girl was killed.

The monster evokes vivid images of the prince's morally questionable actions, illustrating his manipulation of the truth to justify his violent deeds. As the story unfolds, the monster clarifies that the prince, despite his heinous act, believed he was acting for the greater good. Conor's outrage grows as he discerns the prince's actions were driven by a desire for power rather than true justice, challenging Conor's understanding of heroes and villains.

Through their exchange, the monster emphasizes that morality isn't always

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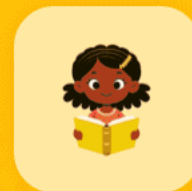
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Chapter 10 Summary: UNDERSTANDING

In Chapter 10 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, we witness a tense interaction between Conor and his friend Lily. The chapter opens with Lily attempting to forgive Conor for a recent incident that got her in trouble. Conor, still grappling with the trauma of his mother's illness and the emotional weight of the monster's story, is irritable and dismissive. He feels isolated, especially since Lily once shared his family's struggles with others, which led to alienation from his peers. The chapter starkly illustrates Conor's growing disconnect from his classmates and the painful reality of being treated differently because of his mom's cancer.

As they walk to school, their conversation escalates, revealing the cracks in their friendship. Conor lashes out, insisting he feels nothing but resentment towards Lily, blaming her for his troubles. This encapsulates a central theme of the chapter: the struggle for understanding and connection in the midst of pain. Conor feels immense guilt and anger, which manifests in a fierce internal battle.

The chapter then shifts focus to school, where Conor experiences bullying from Harry and his cronies. The scene captures the harsh realities of school life, highlighting how Conor has become a target due to his vulnerability. Conor's interactions with Harry demonstrate an intense psychological duel, as Harry asserts dominance while Conor remains defiantly quiet, refusing to



show fear. Their standoff is interrupted by a teacher, Miss Kwan, whose attempt to offer support only adds to Conor's discomfort. He feels unworthy of sympathy and pushes away help, internalizing his struggle instead of sharing it.

Ultimately, the chapter paints a vivid picture of Conor's complex emotional landscape. It explores themes of loneliness, the struggle between strength and vulnerability, and the difficulty of seeking help. Conor's anger, guilt, and fear resonate throughout the narrative, capturing the deep scars left by his mother's illness and how it affects his relationships and sense of self. As he stands alone after Miss Kwan leaves, the isolation he feels is palpable, highlighting the burdens he carries and his reluctance to confront them.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The struggle for understanding and connection amidst pain

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 10, Conor's interaction with Lily highlights the profound impact of seeking understanding and connection during our most challenging times. You may find yourself feeling isolated, misinterpreted, or distant from others when facing personal hardships. This chapter serves as a reminder that reaching out for connection can illuminate the path through darkness, encouraging you to share your struggles instead of pushing others away. Embracing vulnerability and opening up to those around you can foster deeper relationships and mutual support, allowing you to navigate life's trials collectively.

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Chapter 11 Summary: LITTLE TALK

In Chapter 11 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, Conor O'Malley's day takes a heavy turn after school when he finds his grandmother waiting for him at home, her expression filled with worry. She informs him that his mother needs to go back to the hospital, and Conor, stunned, struggles to process the news. His grandmother's mention of pain that the medicine can't relieve drives the reality of his mother's illness deeper into his heart, filling him with dread.

When Conor is told he'll stay with his grandmother for a few days, he questions what is wrong with his mother, only to be met with vague reassurances from his grandmother. This lack of clarity leaves him feeling uneasy. His father, who lives in America, is flying in for a visit – an event that surprises and perplexes Conor since his father hasn't come around often and has been largely absent from his life.

Conor then heads to his room where his mother lies on his bed, seemingly trying to maintain a facade of calmness. Nonetheless, her pale appearance and the pain etched around her eyes tell a different story. Their conversation grows serious as Conor asks her about her condition, and she exchanges words of love and reassurance with him. She tries to downplay her health struggles, telling him that this latest treatment isn't working but indicating that adjustments can be made. However, Conor's instinct tells him that



there's more beneath the surface.

A poignant moment arises when Conor mentions the yew tree visible from his window. It's a symbol of both life and death—a reminder of his mother's illness and the fear of losing her. His mother asks Conor to keep an eye on that tree while she's away—this request carries a weight of hope that she'll return.

As they both gaze out at the yew tree, Conor is momentarily comforted, yet they both know the gravity of the situation remains unchanged. The chapter captures Conor's emotional turmoil, highlighting themes of fear, love, and the struggle to cope with loss. The vivid descriptions of his interactions with his mother and grandmother emphasize the complexity of relationships strained by illness, while the recurring symbolism of the yew tree serves as a poignant reminder of the fragile nature of life.



Chapter 12: GRANDMA'S HOUSE

In Chapter 12 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, Conor finds himself five days waiting for the monster, feeling an awkward mix of anticipation and uncertainty. He's at his grandma's house, a place that feels more sterile and strict compared to his own home. His grandma is a strict and meticulous woman, always insisting on cleanliness and order, which frustrates Conor. As he prepares for a visit from his father, who is flying in from America, he reflects on the uncomfortable family dynamics: his mother is in the hospital, and he senses that the visit will lead to another serious discussion.

Conor's relationship with his grandma is strained, partly because of her domineering nature and partly due to the grief they both share regarding his mother's illness. The chapter highlights the mundane yet tense atmosphere, painting a picture of Conor's isolation in the guest room filled with impersonal decor that doesn't reflect him at all. His longing for connection and support is palpable, especially as he awaits his father, uncertain about how to engage after so long apart.

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Chapter 13 Summary: CHAMP

In Chapter 13 of "A Monster Calls," Conor O'Malley shares a tense dinner with his father, who has traveled from America to visit him during a difficult time with his mother's illness. Their conversation reveals the strain in their relationship, with Conor feeling skeptical about his father's attempts to show affection and support. His father greets him with a cheerful nickname, "champ," which Conor finds strange and distracting. As they wait for their pizzas, the mood shifts as they discuss Conor's mother, who has been very sick. Conor's father tries to reassure him, but Conor struggles to accept the implications of his mother's continued illness and the changes in his life.

Conor's frustration bubbles to the surface when the subject of living arrangements comes up. His father suggests a visit to America where Conor could meet his half-sister, but Conor's feelings of dislocation intensify. He adamantly rejects the idea of moving in with his grandmother, painting a vivid picture of her house as stifling and unwelcoming. He expresses a deep yearning to live with his father instead, revealing both a desire for connection and a need for stability amidst the chaos caused by his mother's sickness.

As the conversation escalates, Conor discloses an unusual experience: a tree that has been visiting him in dreams, speaking to him and leaving signs in



his room. His father is bewildered and concerned, urging Conor to stop his fantastical claims, which highlights a rift between their perspectives. While Conor yearns for understanding, his father struggles to connect with him emotionally, emphasizing the need for bravery without comprehending Conor's profound fear and grief.

The chapter ends with a light-hearted moment as they share a meal, but the larger themes of fear, isolation, and the burden of expectation linger beneath the surface. Conor is caught between the harsh reality of his mother's illness, his longing for a father's presence, and the fantastical comfort offered by the mysterious tree. This blend of reality and imagination reflects Conor's inner turmoil as he navigates this challenging time in his life.



Chapter 14 Summary: AMERICANS DON'T GET MUCH HOLIDAY

In this chapter of "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself grappling with the complexities of his family and emotions during a difficult time. He and his father arrive at Conor's grandmother's house, but the visit is tinged with tension. Conor's father, who has moved to America, explains that he's only there for a few days, which disappoints Conor. Despite his father's attempts to lighten the mood, Conor feels abandoned and frustrated, reflecting on the strained relationship with both his father and grandmother.

Once inside the quiet house, Conor lets loose his pent-up frustration by jumping on the expensive settee, a moment of rebellion against his anxiety and feelings of isolation. The house symbolizes a place of emotional disconnection, and it's here that Conor becomes fixated on his grandmother's clock, a relic that feels indifferent to him. In a feverish state, he manipulates the clock, breaking its mechanism and freezing the hands at 12:07. The act of destruction parallels Conor's internal chaos, showcasing his desire to exert control in a turbulent situation.

Suddenly, the monster appears, towering over him in the cramped room. It brings both fear and a sense of hope, as Conor wonders if this encounter is a dream. The monster, with a wicked grin, announces it has come to tell Conor the second tale, promising it will conclude with more destruction. Intrigued,



Conor finds himself drawn into the monster's narrative, knowing that the story will reflect the darker aspects of human nature.

As he prepares to listen, the chapter encapsulates key themes of grief, abandonment, and the struggle for understanding amidst chaos. Conor's defiance against his situation highlights his inner turmoil while his engagement with the monster suggests a longing for confrontation and truth. This moment serves as a catalyst for the stories to come, setting the stage for deeper explorations of Conor's emotional landscape.

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Chapter 15: THE SECOND TALE

In this chapter, the monster continues its storytelling, taking Conor into a time long ago when the landscape was transforming due to industrialization. Factories sprawled across the land, casting shadows over nature, while people increasingly focused on the material world, unable to see the beauty around them. But even in such a greying world, patches of green still existed if one looked closely.

They find themselves in a vibrant field where the monster introduces a bitter man known only as the Apothecary, who collects herbs and remedies. As factories encroached, his walks in search of ingredients grew longer, deepening his resentment for a world that seemed to have forgotten the old ways of healing he practiced. The villagers began to avoid him, turning instead to newer, modern remedies, which only fueled his bitterness further.

The monster then shifts the scene to a parson's home, where the parson and his two daughters, who bring him joy, are introduced. The Apothecary desires something from the parson—the beautiful yew tree that grows in the

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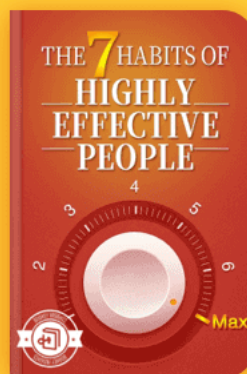
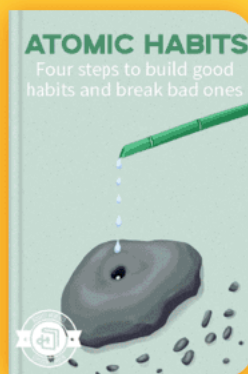
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Chapter 16 Summary: THE REST OF THE SECOND TALE

In Chapter 16 of "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself engulfed in a tumultuous encounter with the monster, who reveals a second tale woven with powerful themes of belief and selfishness. Conor is initially shocked to learn that the monster has turned its fury on the parson's house, believing the parson to be the true villain for not seeking help from the Apothecary to save his daughters. As the monster lays waste to the parsonage, it challenges Conor's understanding of good and evil, asserting that the parson's selfishness directly led to his daughters' deaths.

This confrontation forces Conor to reflect on moral ambiguities; the parson, while ultimately a coward in his crisis, is portrayed as a healer who lost faith at a critical moment. The monster questions Conor's loyalties and urges him to embrace the destruction as a form of release. As the parsonage crumbles around him, Conor's anger rises and he succumbs to the monster's influence, reveling in the chaos. He commands the monster to destroy everything in the house, unleashing his pent-up emotions in a cathartic frenzy of demolition.

Through the destruction, Conor feels a sense of power and satisfaction, indicating how deeply internal conflicts can manifest in external actions. When the destruction finally halts, it mirrors Conor's tumultuous feelings



about his own life and the challenges he faces, particularly surrounding his mother's illness. The chapter encapsulates the complex interplay of rage, grief, and the desperate need for resolution, while portraying the monster as both a guide and a reflection of Conor's inner turmoil. Ultimately, the aftermath reveals that this chaos has repercussions that linger on, leaving Conor in the wreckage of both the parson's house and his own emotional landscape, hinting at the struggles yet to come.

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Chapter 17 Summary: DESTRUCTION

In Chapter 17 of Patrick Ness's "A Monster Calls," we witness a chaotic scene where Conor's world shatters both literally and emotionally. The chapter opens with Conor standing amidst the wreckage of his living room, a devastating sight where furniture is destroyed, and the air is thick with despair. He is in shock, hands bloody and torn, struggling to comprehend the chaos that surrounds him. The monster had promised destruction, and now he's left questioning his own role in this event.

As he grapples with his thoughts, he hears his grandmother pull into the driveway, leaving him with a sense of dread. Conor fears that his actions, whether intentional or not, would make him unworthy of love or acceptance, especially from his father. When his grandmother enters, she is initially oblivious to the mess around her, but as she registers the devastation, her expression shifts from exhaustion to horror. Conor sees her anguish manifest as deep, guttural groans that transform into wild, heart-wrenching screams. This moment makes Conor feel utterly terrified, as he realizes the depth of their shared suffering over his mother's illness.

His grandmother's scream isn't directed at him; instead, she turns her grief and frustration toward the last standing piece of furniture—the display cabinet. With a visceral need to express her own pain, she destroys it, adding to the mess Conor has created. The raw emotion in this scene illustrates the



overwhelming sorrow they both carry, but it also solidifies the rupture in their relationship. After her outburst, she retreats to her room, leaving Conor alone with his feelings of guilt and fear.

Feeling lost, Conor attempts to clean up the destruction but is ultimately overwhelmed by the enormity of it all. He works late into the night, gathering fragments of what was once his home, but the mess is too immense. As dawn breaks, he retreats to his own room, still stained with the remnants of the chaos, and notices that his grandmother is still awake, weeping—a poignant reminder that both their lives have been irrevocably altered by the situation with his mother.

This chapter highlights key themes of destruction, grief, and the struggle for connection amidst chaos. Conor's actions represent not just physical destruction but also the emotional turmoil that swirls around both him and his grandmother as they navigate their shared loss. Their reactions to the chaos reveal the deep fractures in their relationship, illustrating how grief can isolate even those who are suffering together.



Chapter 18: INVISIBLE

In Chapter 18 of "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself isolated in the schoolyard, feeling invisible to everyone, including his friend Lily, who's surrounded by girls but doesn't acknowledge him. This sense of invisibility mirrors the turmoil he feels inside, exacerbated by his mother's worsening health. At home, breakfast with his father is tense; silence hangs heavily between them, and a conversation about his mother reveals that she's taken a turn for the worse. Conor is desperate to see her, but his father insists he go to school first, urging him to be brave amidst their family crisis.

At school, Conor struggles to focus, skipping over assignments and feeling the weight of his classmates' distance, as if he's emitting a bad vibe. Then Harry and his friends approach, and for a moment, Conor braces himself for confrontation. However, instead of violence, Harry simply stands there, locking eyes with Conor, who challenges him to act. The moment hangs in the air, tension thick enough to cut. When the bell rings, signaling an end to the standoff, Harry walks away, leaving Conor feeling even more alone, as if he's completely overlooked by the world around him.

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Chapter 19 Summary: YEW TREES

In Chapter 19 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, Conor visits his mother in the hospital, where her struggle with illness is palpable. As he enters the room, the sight of her frailness weighs heavily on him, yet she manages to muster a smile despite the clear toll that her condition takes on her. The conversation begins with tender moments as she affectionately brushes his hair, but they both know the gravity of their reality.

Conor learns that her treatments are not going as well as hoped—some have failed earlier than expected, bringing a sense of urgency to their situation. The conversation reveals his mother's resilience, as she mentions a new medicine derived from yew trees, hinting at a connection to life and hope, even in dire circumstances. She drops hints about the nature of the tree outside their home, representing not just her treatment but also the intricate relationship between nature and health.

Despite the heaviness of the news, Conor's mother tries to uplift him, insisting it's not too late and encouraging him to believe in the power of healing. She talks about how wondrous nature can be, reflecting a theme of hope and the unexpected sources of comfort and healing that might come from it. The bond between mother and son deepens as they share this critical moment, wrestling with fear, uncertainty, and the flickering light of hope. Conor, still grappling with his own emotions, holds onto her words,



reminded of the monster's earlier assertion that belief is a vital part of healing. Their conversation poignantly illustrates the struggles of a family facing cancer while weaving in the themes of hope, the power of belief, and the healing aspects of nature.

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Chapter 20 Summary: COULD IT BE?

In this chapter of "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself grappling with his swirling emotions and thoughts while in the hospital where his mother is being treated. His mind races with the possibility that the monster he encountered might be there to help heal his mother with a special medicine made from yew trees. Despite his deep longing for hope, he doubts the monster's purpose, pushing against the comforting thought that maybe it has arrived to save his mother.

As Conor steps into the hospital corridor, he overhears a heated argument between his father and grandmother, hinting at underlying tensions in their family. When his father approaches him, he delivers the unsettling news that he must return to America that evening due to his newborn daughter's illness. Conor struggles with the reality of his mother's condition and the implications of his father's departure, clinging to the belief that the new medicine will heal her.

The conversation between Conor and his father reveals the harsh truth of their situation. Conor's conviction that the medicine will work clashes with his father's somber acknowledgment that it might not be enough. His father's attempt to prepare Conor for the worst and his plea to acknowledge the difficult reality brings a moment of painful clarity to Conor. The weight of the situation begins to sink in, as his father acknowledges the unfairness of



their circumstances, painfully aware of how much Conor is being asked to shoulder.

In this emotional struggle, Conor resists the idea that stories don't always end happily, a lesson imparted by the monster. The narrative beautifully captures his internal conflict—his yearning for hope and denial of impending loss—culminating as he resolves that the monster's arrival must mean something significant. Conor's determination is palpable as he believes that the monster came for a reason, using it as a way to cling to hope amidst the chaos.

As Conor heads back into the hospital, he is left to contemplate the next hours, marking time until 12:07, when perhaps he believes something decisive will happen. Conor's journey in this chapter highlights themes of hope, denial, and the painful confrontation with reality, as well as the struggle to navigate love and loss in the face of impending tragedy.



Chapter 21: NO TALE

In Chapter 21 of "A Monster Calls," we find Conor grappling with the weight of his mother's illness and the tension between his grandmother and himself. After being dropped off at his grandmother's house, Conor is left to his own devices, especially as his mother sleeps, exhausted from her treatments. The silence in the house is palpable, and Conor feels isolated, caught between the emotional turmoil of his family and the truth of his mother's condition.

Determined, Conor summons the monster, a figure that has both intrigued and haunted him. He desperately asks if the monster can heal his mother, and their conversation reveals Conor's struggle as he seeks clarity. The monster, embodying a yew tree known for its healing properties, suggests that healing is possible if it's meant to be. This only heightens Conor's frustration as he insists on a clearer answer, showcasing his inner turmoil and desire for hope in an impossible situation.

As their dialogue unfolds, the monster's playful yet ominous demeanor

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Chapter 22 Summary: I NO LONGER SEE YOU

In Chapter 22 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, Conor is grappling with the heavy burden of his mother's illness. The narrative opens with a tense car ride to school, where Conor desperately wants to go to the hospital instead. His grandmother remains distant, offering short answers that deepen Conor's sense of isolation. He longs for hope, believing that the monstrous entity he's encountered can heal his mother, convincing himself that its purpose must be to save her.

However, at school, Conor feels utterly alone. He sits apart from his classmates during lunch, the noise around him a stark contrast to his internal turmoil as he fixates on his uneaten food. Just as he sinks deeper into his thoughts, he is suddenly bullied by classmates Anton and Sully, who spill his drink and mock him. A silent confrontation ensues with Harry, who ultimately delivers a chilling blow: by shaking Conor's hand, he declares, "I no longer see you." This moment encapsulates Conor's feelings of abandonment and invisibility amidst his struggles. As Harry walks away, leaving Conor feeling more isolated than ever, the digital clock in the dining hall ticks on, mirroring the passage of time in Conor's life as he awaits the next story from the monster that haunts him.

This chapter powerfully highlights themes of loneliness, bullying, and the desperate hope for healing. Conor's emotional state is palpable, and his



interactions reveal deep character development as he confronts both his pain and the cruelty of those around him.

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Chapter 23 Summary: THE THIRD TALE

In Chapter 23 of "A Monster Calls," the tension escalates as Conor O'Malley confronts the relentless bullying from Harry and his friends. The chapter begins with a powerful metaphor from the monster about an "invisible man," symbolizing how Conor often feels unseen and neglected by those around him. As Conor pursues Harry, who is oblivious to Conor's presence, the monster's voice echoes in his mind, asking if one is truly there if nobody acknowledges them.

Conor's frustration peaks, leading him to confront Harry directly, grabbing him by the shoulder. Harry pretends to be confused but quickly turns hostile, accusing Conor of trying to gain sympathy because of his mother's illness. The scene shifts as the monster intervenes dramatically, knocking Harry off his feet, causing chaos in the dining hall and showcasing Conor's internal struggle and growing anger.

The monster's presence heightens the stakes as Conor demands recognition from his peers, questioning why they cannot see him. While Harry challenges Conor, questioning his pain and urging him to reveal his "terrible secrets," Conor remains unwavering, propelled by the monster's encouragement. The other students look away, embarrassed, further emphasizing Conor's sense of isolation.



Conor’s anger mounts as he processes Harry's cruel words and the feeling of being invisible. The monster's final instruction resonates deeply within him: to "make them see." This chapter is crucial in developing themes of identity, visibility, and the struggle against overwhelming emotions, illustrating Conor’s journey toward confronting his pain and asserting himself in the face of unbearable bullying. As the tension escalates, it sets the stage for a climactic moment that challenges both Conor's self-perception and the perceptions of those around him.

Key Element	Summary
Chapter Number	23
Main Character	Conor O'Malley
Conflict	Conor faces relentless bullying from Harry and friends.
Metaphor	The "invisible man" symbolizes Conor's feelings of being unseen and neglected.
Confrontation	Conor confronts Harry, who initially feigns confusion, then turns hostile.
Monster's Role	The monster intervenes, knocking Harry down and heightening tension.
Key Themes	Identity, visibility, and the struggle against overwhelming emotions.
Ultimate Demand	Conor seeks recognition and validation from his peers.
Climactic	Conor is challenged to confront his pain and assert himself against

Key Element	Summary
Moment	bullying.

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Chapter 24: PUNISHMENT

In Chapter 24 of "A Monster Calls," we find Conor O'Malley in an intense confrontation with his headmistress and Miss Kwan after a major incident at school. Conor has been involved in a violent altercation with a bully named Harry, resulting in serious injuries for Harry, including a broken arm and a nose. The headmistress struggles to understand the situation, clearly shaken by the gravity of the incident and the potential legal repercussions from Harry's parents.

Conor, feeling the weight of his actions and the tumult in his life, tries to explain that it wasn't entirely his doing; he insists that the monster—an ancient being that has been guiding him—was the one who physically harmed Harry. This revelation highlights Conor's internal struggle and the confusing nature of reality versus the monstrous power he has felt. As he reflects on the moment, he remembers the chaotic aggression of the monster, who expressed a determination that Harry would no longer be invisible, suggesting that Conor's actions were both a release of his pent-up frustration and a confrontation with his own painful existence.

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Chapter 25 Summary: 100 YEARS

In this poignant chapter of "A Monster Calls," Conor faces a devastating moment as he meets his mother in the hospital, where it's clear that her condition has worsened. Initially hopeful, Conor is uplifted to see her awake and smiling, but he soon realizes that her appearance is deceiving; her smile doesn't reach her eyes, and a heavy sadness looms over their conversation. His mother acknowledges the gravity of the situation, revealing that the latest treatment isn't working and that she doesn't have any more options left. Conor's denial and anger manifest as he confronts her about what he perceives to be lies; she had expressed hope in the treatment that has not come to fruition.

Their dialogue is raw and painful, filled with unspoken feelings of fear and sadness. Conor grapples with the anger he feels—not only against the situation but also towards his mother, whom he accuses of lying about her condition. She reassures him that it's natural and acceptable to feel this anger. The conversation deepens as she encourages him to express his emotions, underscoring the importance of acknowledging his pain without shame. In a tender moment, she shares her wish to have more time, expressing a mother's longing to protect her son, leaving Conor with the weight of grief mixed with regret and fury.

When she eventually drifts into a drug-induced sleep, it crystallizes the



inevitability of loss they both face. Conor, feeling overwhelmed, opts to go home—not to his grandmother’s house, but to the one with the yew tree, symbolizing his confusion and his struggle to find solace. This chapter captures the themes of loss, acceptance, and the complexity of emotions as Conor navigates his reality, highlighting the profound bond between mother and son in their last moments together.

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Chapter 26 Summary: WHAT'S THE USE OF YOU?

In Chapter 26 of "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself confronted by the stark reality of his mother's illness as he enters a home that feels alien to him. His grandmother drops him off, urging him to join her at the hospital for dinner, but Conor is determined to return to the yew tree that looms over the churchyard, driven by desperation and anger.

His journey to the tree is charged with emotion; he struggles through his childhood memories as he navigates his backyard and even tears his shirt in his haste. When he finally reaches the yew tree, he shouts at it, demanding that it wake up and heal his mother. This raw display of frustration culminates in him kicking the tree, symbolizing his inner turmoil and impotence against the situation. The tree, however, is alive and speaks back, confirming that it doesn't have the power to cure his mother.

This powerful confrontation reveals deeper layers of Conor's pain. He lashes out at the tree, blaming it for his suffering, feeling trapped by stories and the pity he receives from others. But the monster, towering over him, reminds him that he called for it and that it comes not to cure his mother but to aid him in his own healing. Conor struggles to acknowledge his emotions, particularly the fear of losing his mother. He wants desperately to hold on to hope but can't bring himself to say the harsh truth about her condition.



Amid his anger and sorrow, he finally admits his need for help, showcasing vulnerability that contrasts sharply with his earlier bravado. The monster acknowledges this moment, preparing to share the fourth tale, hinting at an important lesson within Conor's journey. As they are enveloped in mist and transported into the nightmare, the chapter poignantly captures themes of grief, acceptance, and the complexities of emotional healing, emphasizing that sometimes, facing one's own pain is the first step to understanding and overcoming it.

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Chapter 27: THE FOURTH TALE

In Chapter 27 of "A Monster Calls" by Patrick Ness, Conor finds himself amidst a gripping and terrifying confrontation between his fears and the reality of his mother's struggle with illness. The chapter opens with Conor feeling utterly helpless, trapped in a dark void as the monster looms over him. This darkness symbolizes his long-standing anxiety about his mother's health, a shadow that has haunted him since she first became sick.

As the monster insists that it is time for the fourth tale, Conor, gripped by fear, protests that he doesn't know any tales. The monster, however, emphasizes the necessity of telling this story, warning him of the dire consequences if he refuses. Conor's desperation to return to his mother reflects his deep emotional turmoil and the suffocating nature of his nightmares.

Suddenly, Conor is transported to a clearing where he sees his mother at the edge of a cliff. Though she appears frail, she smiles and reassures him that everything is fine, but Conor instinctively knows something is dreadfully

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Chapter 28 Summary: THE REST OF THE FOURTH TALE

In the climactic moments of Chapter 28 from "A Monster Calls," Conor O'Malley is ensnared in a terrifying nightmare that feels all too real. The yew tree monster looms behind him, urging Conor to confront a deeper truth about his feelings regarding his mother's illness and his sense of helplessness. This moment pulls him deeper into a struggle between denial and acceptance, as he grapples with the agonizing reality he has been avoiding.

As the nightmare darkens, Conor desperately recalls the moment he lost his mother, repeating that she "fell" from his grasp. The monster insists that he has to speak the truth—his truth—about what happened. Conor finds himself caught in emotional turmoil, battling invisible tendrils of despair that threaten to bind him forever. He screams for help, but the monster reminds him that only by acknowledging his own feelings will he be freed from this nightmare.

The interaction becomes a pivotal moment of character development for Conor. He knows the truth but fears the consequences of voicing it. The monster's insistence weighs heavily, pressing him to confront his inner conflict—not just his grief and anger, but the painful realization that he could have held on longer to save his mother. As the pressure mounts, Conor



finally breaks down, and through tears and anguish, he acknowledges that he wanted her to go, revealing the depth of his despair and the burden of guilt he feels.

This cathartic admission unleashes a fury of emotion embodied by the fire that envelops him and the world around. As he cries out in pain, the fire symbolizes the pain of loss and the release of his pent-up sorrow. In this overwhelming moment, Conor finds a sense of relief, recognizing that facing his truth, painful though it is, is necessary for healing. The chapter ends with Conor welcoming the consuming fire, interpreting it as the punishment he believes he deserves for his feelings of defeat and surrender.

The themes of grief, acceptance, and the struggle to confront one's own emotions echo throughout this passage, highlighting the challenges of dealing with loss and the journey toward self-acceptance. Conor's character arc reaches a critical junction as he learns that acknowledging the truth, no matter how painful, is an essential step toward finding peace.



Chapter 29 Summary: LIFE AFTER DEATH

In Chapter 29 of "A Monster Calls," Conor awakens on a hill, alive but filled with despair. He grapples with overwhelming guilt regarding his mother's illness, feeling he deserves the worst for his thoughts of wanting her suffering to end, even if it meant losing her. As he confronts the monster, which represents his fear and emotional turmoil, Conor shares his feelings of hopelessness and loneliness, revealing a deep conflict within himself.

The monster listens patiently, asserting that Conor's mixed emotions—wanting to end the pain while simultaneously hoping for his mother's recovery—are part of the complex nature of humanity. Conor struggles to accept that it's not his fault his mother is dying, despite his inner turmoil insisting otherwise. The monster teaches him that while thoughts can be contradictory, what matters is one's actions rather than what one thinks.

As the conversation deepens, Conor learns the importance of speaking the truth about his feelings, even when those feelings are painful. This understanding begins to lift some weight off his chest, allowing him to breathe more easily. Despite his exhaustion and sorrow, the monster encourages him to rest, promising that he will be there when Conor sees his mother again.

Just before succumbing to sleep, Conor asks the monster why it always



comes at 12:07, hinting at his need for clarity and understanding, but he drifts off before receiving an answer. This chapter emphasizes themes of grief, the complexity of emotions, and the healing power of truth. Through Conor's journey, we see a young boy wrestling with his feelings and gaining insight into the duality of human experience.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of acknowledging one's feelings and truths

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing at the edge of your own fears and sorrows, feeling as if the weight of the world is pressing down on your chest. Conor teaches us that even in our darkest moments, what truly matters is not the guilt or shame we carry for our thoughts, but the courage to confront and express our feelings. Life may overwhelm you with complex emotions, and it's easy to feel lost or selfish; however, by embracing and speaking your truth, even when it's painful, you begin to lighten your burden and open the door to healing. This chapter inspires you to acknowledge your inner conflicts and communicate your truth, for in doing so, you find strength, compassion, and ultimately, a clearer path forward.

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Chapter 30: SOMETHING IN COMMON

In this gripping chapter from "A Monster Calls," Conor wakes up unexpectedly in the dark next to the yew tree behind his house, bewildered and disoriented. His grandma rushes to him, a mix of relief and frustration on her face. Her hug is tight and desperate, revealing the anxiety she's been carrying as she scolds him for worrying her. Conor tries to explain he was fulfilling a need deep within him, but he quickly realizes there's no time for explanations.

As they hurry to get in the car, Conor notices his grandma's tears and shaking hands, which raises alarms in his mind. The tension in the car is palpable as they speed away without a clear explanation, evoking a sense of urgency that hints at something dire happening.

Conor hints at remorse but is met with his grandma's poignant acknowledgment that it doesn't matter. Their shared understanding of their complex relationship becomes the focus, as she candidly admits they are not a natural fit but must learn to navigate their new reality together. With the

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Chapter 31 Summary: THE TRUTH

In this poignant chapter from "A Monster Calls," Conor finds himself in a hospital room alongside his grandmother, waiting for his mother, who is gravely ill. They are filled with a mix of apprehension and hope, especially as they witness his mother's weakened state—her breathing strained and her eyes closed. When Conor's mother speaks, her voice is barely recognizable, yet it shows her desire to connect with them both.

As tension builds, the monster from Conor's earlier encounters makes its presence felt, urging him to confront his fears and speak the truth. It guides him gently but firmly, reminding him that only by embracing honesty can he face the impending reality of losing his mother. Conor's emotional struggle is palpable—he grapples with fear, sorrow, and the weight of what's to come as the clock ticks toward midnight, heralding a time he instinctively knows is significant.

After a moment of soul-searching, Conor takes his mother's hand. Although she briefly opens her eyes, he realizes that a profound change is drawing near. As the moment of truth arrives, Conor's emotions spill forth, and he articulates his deepest fear: his longing for his mother to stay. This simple yet powerful confession releases an overwhelming tide of tears, revealing the depth of his love and despair.



In a touching exchange, his mother acknowledges his feelings, and Conor finds a sense of comfort in the monster's presence, which reassures him that he can hold onto his mother for now, even as he prepares himself for the inevitability of parting. The chapter encapsulates themes of love, loss, and the courage to face one's fears, illustrating Conor's journey toward acceptance as he learns that sometimes letting go is part of holding on.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embracing honesty allows us to confront our deepest fears and emotions.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing in a hospital room filled with uncertainty, just like Conor, holding onto the hand of someone you love. In that moment, you realize that it is in the raw expressions of our fears and desires that we truly connect. By voicing our truths, we can confront the often overwhelming realities of life, much like Conor's powerful confession to his mother. This act of vulnerability frees us, allowing for profound moments of understanding and acceptance. Life, with its inevitable challenges, becomes navigable when we embrace honesty, reminding us that facing our fears—however daunting—can ultimately bring us closer to those we cherish.

