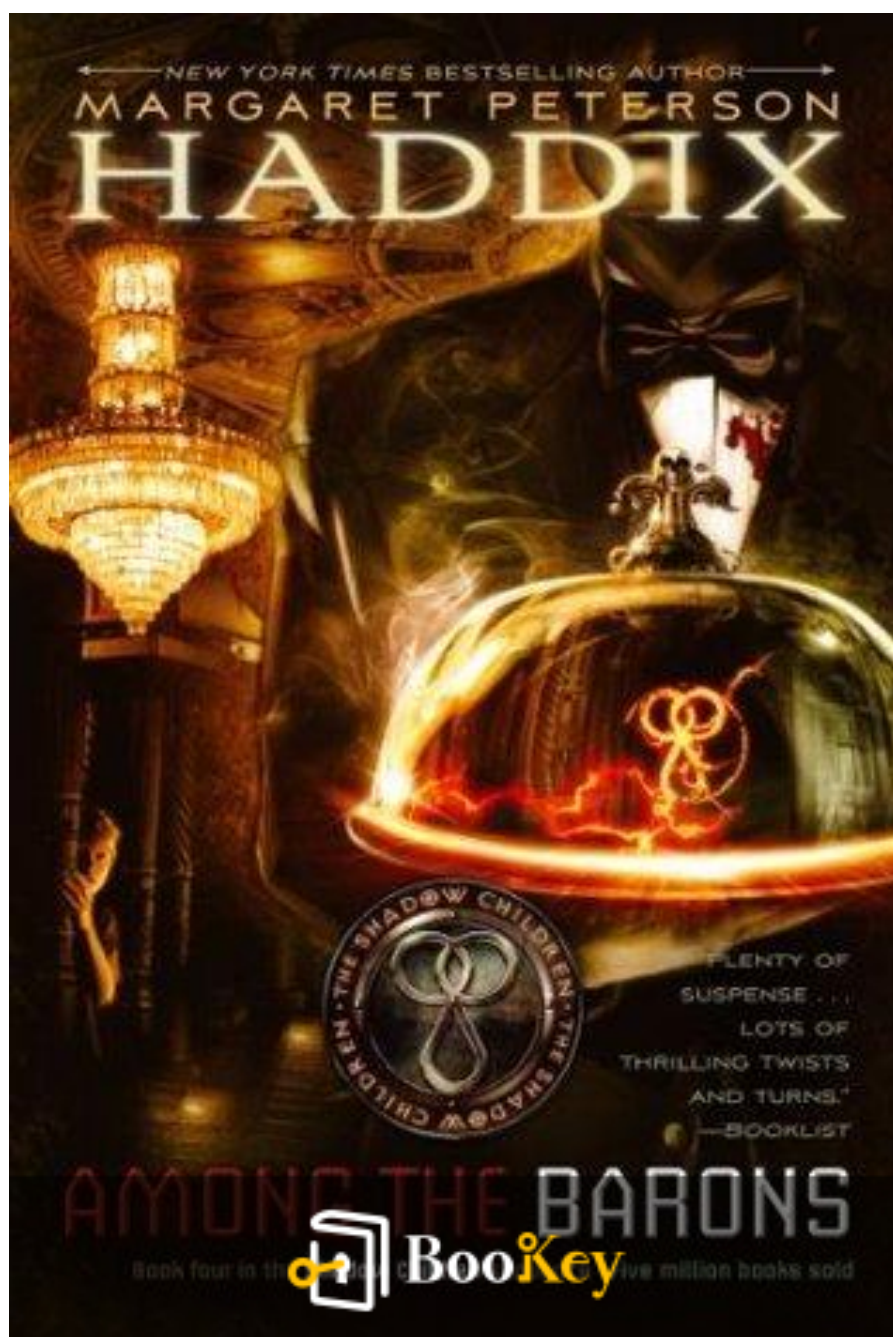


Among The Barons PDF (Limited Copy)

Margaret Peterson Haddix



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Among The Barons Summary

Secrets and survival in a divided society.

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About the book

In **Among the Barons**, Margaret Peterson Haddix masterfully weaves a tale of survival, identity, and the struggles of youth in a dystopian society where loyalty and deception collide. Set in a future ravaged by social inequality and corporate oppression, the story follows young Shadow, a boy who has recently assumed the identity of a deceased Baron in a desperate attempt to escape his past and carve out a new future. As he navigates the treacherous landscape of power struggles among the elite, Shadow must confront not only the moral complexities of his deception but also the haunting truth that even a new name cannot erase the burden of his former life. This exhilarating journey into a world where every choice can be a matter of life or death invites readers to question the very nature of identity and to consider what sacrifices one is willing to make for freedom and belonging.

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About the author

Margaret Peterson Haddix is a renowned American author celebrated for her contributions to children's and young adult literature, particularly in the genres of science fiction and thriller. Born on April 9, 1964, in Washington Court House, Ohio, she has dedicated her career to crafting engaging narratives that often explore themes of identity, ethics, and the complexities of society. With a degree in journalism from Miami University, Haddix initially worked as a newspaper reporter before turning to fiction, where she gained widespread acclaim for her series such as "The Shadow Children" and "The Missing." Her books, characterized by compelling characters and intricate plots, resonate with young readers and encourage them to ponder significant societal issues. Throughout her career, Haddix has received numerous accolades, solidifying her position as a prominent figure in contemporary children's literature.

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Chapter 1 Summary:

In Chapter 1 of "Among the Barons" by Margaret Peterson Haddix, we dive back into Luke Garner's life at Hendricks School for Boys, just a few months after he first arrived. The story begins with a familiar call for Luke, a stark contrast to his previous anxieties about interacting with authority figures. Once terrified at the thought of seeing the headmaster, he now shoulders a newfound confidence, having matured since his initial days at school.

As Luke heads to see Mr. Hendricks, his friend Trey, who has been living in fear and caution, accompanies him. Trey has become emblematic of the fear that lingers in many of the boys at the school—a result of being illegal children in a society that cracks down on larger families. Luke senses this fear but is also aware of a broader hope shared among the boys that one day they might be seen as legitimate and reunite with their families. This hope has become a driving force for Luke, who is determined to help his friends reclaim their identities.

Luke reflects on his past life on the farm with his family and the pain of having to leave them behind due to being a third child, which the oppressive government deems illegal. His resentment toward the society that made him invisible fuels his determination to challenge the status quo. As he steps out into the sunlight, the previously caged boy begins to feel a sense of



empowerment from his anger.

Upon arriving at Mr. Hendricks's house, Luke is greeted warmly by the headmaster, who reveals that Luke's brother, under the assumed name Smits, will be joining him at Hendricks starting tomorrow. This shocking news leaves Luke both excited and worried, as he tries to imagine his brothers in a place where they would feel stifled and trapped. The chapter effectively establishes key themes like identity, the struggle against oppressive systems, and the importance of family ties, setting the stage for Luke's continued journey in a world that seeks to suppress him and his peers. As the chapter closes, the anticipation for what this new development might mean for Luke and his quest for freedom deepens.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Your Identity and Challenge Oppressive Systems

Critical Interpretation: Just like Luke's journey of self-discovery and determination in 'Among the Barons', you too can find inspiration in embracing your true identity, regardless of societal constraints. The contrast between Luke's initial fears and his growing confidence illustrates the power of resilience and the importance of standing up against oppressive systems that try to diminish your worth. This chapter encourages you to challenge the status quo in your life, find strength within your anger and hope, and never lose sight of your values and the people you love, as they are what help you reclaim your identity and navigate the complexities of your own journey.

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Chapter 2 Summary:

In Chapter 2 of "Among the Barons," Luke is confronted with the startling news from Mr. Hendricks that a boy named Smits, who is identified as his brother, will be attending their school the next day. The revelation leaves Luke in shock, as he grapples with the implication of having to pretend to be Lee, the identity of his deceased older brother. He expresses his disbelief, questioning why Smits would miss him when they've never met. Mr. Hendricks insists that for safety's sake, Luke must act the part of Lee and even feign familiarity with Smits.

The dialogue between Luke and Mr. Hendricks is tense, juxtaposing Luke's youthful defiance with Mr. Hendricks's cautious wisdom. The mention of Jason, a former student who was a Population Police spy, adds an undercurrent of fear and tension to their conversation. Luke recalls the dangers of their world and the risk of revealing their identities, feeling a mixture of safety in their current environment but also the weight of reality that Mr. Hendricks emphasizes.

Luke feels the intense pressure of pretending to be someone he is not, illustrated vividly when he studies a photo of Smits, perceiving an air of superiority that makes him feel inadequate. He suggests to Mr. Hendricks that they could refuse Smits entry to the school, but the response underscores the vulnerability of their situation—Smits's family, being influential, cannot



be easily disregarded.

Through Luke's internal struggles and Mr. Hendricks's insistence on caution, the chapter highlights key themes of identity, the burden of deception, and the ever-present tension between safety and the harsh realities of their world. As Luke grapples with his circumstances, the reader can feel his apprehension and desire for genuine connection, layered with the weight of societal expectations and familial legacies.

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Chapter 3:

In Chapter 3 of "Among the Barons," Luke is anxiously waiting at the top of the steps of Hendricks School for his brother, Smits Grant, to arrive. Although Luke tries to convince himself that he's excited to see his brother, the reality is that he feels panic and dread about facing Smits. He contemplates hiding inside to avoid their encounter altogether, but he quickly realizes that would mean missing meals with his friends, which he doesn't want to do.

As Luke watches a black, luxurious car approach the school, a wave of anxiety washes over him. The car is impressive, with its tinted windows, leading Luke to fear that he might have to meet the entire Grant family at once, which he finds daunting. When the car finally stops, a well-dressed chauffeur emerges, followed by Smits, who Luke recognizes from a photograph.

Feeling the pressure to greet Smits eagerly as instructed by Mr. Hendricks, Luke awkwardly makes his way down the stairs. He feels utterly unprepared

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Chapter 4 Summary:

As dinner unfolds at the school, rumors about the new student, Smits, quickly spread. He's portrayed as a spoiled boy who insists on having his own big room and exclusive catering services instead of enjoying the communal meals. Luke, feeling a mix of pride and apprehension, is the only one among his friends who knows the truth: Smits is his brother. During dinner, Trey and the others pepper Luke with questions about Smits, teasing him about their stark differences, including the fact that Luke doesn't share Smits's taste for the finer things.

When Smits arrives at their table, he carries an air of confidence that captivates the other boys, who quickly make room for him. Luke introduces him, trying to maintain his composure as Smits flaunts his charm, shaking hands and making small talk in a way that feels insincere to Luke. It's clear to Luke that Smits is putting on a performance, behaving more like a politician than a brother. Despite this, Smits disparages the school food and acts as though he has elevated standards, which makes Luke feel embarrassed for both himself and their situation.

When Smits leaves the table with a casual wave, defying school rules without a second thought, Luke and his friends are left bewildered. The interactions reveal an uncomfortable contrast between Luke's modesty and Smits's brash entitlement. This chapter highlights themes of sibling rivalry,



identity, and social dynamics, capturing a moment where loyalty and embarrassment collide as Luke grapples with his brother's arrogance and the expectations that come with being related to someone so different from himself.

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Chapter 5 Summary:

In Chapter 5 of "Among the Barons," Luke experiences a pivotal moment as he revels in the joy of playing games with the other boys at Hendricks School, something he feels passionate about. He fought to provide this release for his friends, who had spent their lives in silence and stillness due to the oppressive Population Law. Luke recalls the games he played with his own brothers, and he is determined to help his friends enjoy similar childhood experiences. After months of practice, the boys are starting to improve, showing a glimpse of the carefree lives they can lead.

However, the excitement of game night is abruptly halted when Ms. Hawkins, the school secretary, orders Luke to meet his brother, Smits, instead. This command disturbs Luke, who has grown attached to the routines he's established, and he is uncertain about Ms. Hawkins's intentions. As he walks to meet Smits, he wrestles with doubts and a sense of foreboding, particularly because he doesn't know much about Smits and their strained relationship.

When Luke meets Smits, he finds him eager and slightly overconfident, asserting his desire to see the school grounds. Their walk begins with small talk, and Luke tries to provide answers that reveal the peculiar nature of the school, which lacks windows to accommodate some students with agoraphobia. Smits's criticism of the conditions and his focus on his



privileged status contrast sharply with Luke's background. Luke feels uncomfortable and conscious of the gaps in their understanding of one another, particularly Smits's oblivion to the struggles of boys like Luke, who have lived in hiding.

As they explore the school grounds, especially the garden and the woods, Luke's pride in these places clashes with Smits's indifference. Luke wants to share the beauty and significance of the areas that symbolize freedom and growth for him, but he doubts Smits can appreciate them. The tension grows as Luke attempts to dismiss his brother's superficial remarks while wishing to protect the sanctity of his experiences.

Ultimately, the chapter culminates in a poignant moment when Smits, looking pale and vulnerable, asks Luke for help and requests that he be called "Lee," indicating a desire to forge a stronger connection or perhaps escape the confines of his own identity. This request highlights themes of identity, brotherhood, and the struggle for acceptance, setting the stage for potential complications in their relationship as they navigate the realities of a world shaped by the population control laws. Luke's journey touches on the contrast between the innocence of childhood and the harsh realities they must confront, inviting readers to reflect on the importance of freedom and the power of connection.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The desire for connection and understanding bridge differences between people.

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 5, as Luke and Smits navigate their relationship, a profound revelation emerges: the need for connection transcends socioeconomic barriers and personal experiences. This teaches us that by reaching out and striving to understand others, we can forge meaningful relationships that enrich our lives. It reminds us that every individual, regardless of their background, has a story worth hearing, and that embracing our differences can lead to empathy and brotherhood. Such insights inspire us to foster connections in our lives, whether with friends, family, or strangers, leading to greater compassion and unity in a world often divided by circumstance.



Chapter 6:

In Chapter 6 of "Among the Barons," we find Luke grappling with his new identity as he interacts with Smits, a younger boy who expresses concern about the mysterious death of a child named Lee. Luke, still naive about the world and its dangers, asks Smits for clarification but quickly realizes there's a deeper issue at play regarding Lee's death. Smits seems anxious and elusive, hinting at something sinister without fully explaining.

Their conversation is abruptly interrupted when a massive man named Oscar appears, charging down the hill with an imposing presence that leaves Luke in awe and terrified for anyone who might oppose him. Oscar reveals he is Smits' bodyguard, hired by his parents, and is frustrated with Smits for endangering himself. The interaction between Smits and Oscar unfolds like a high-stakes comedy where Smits mocks Oscar, who struggles to maintain his authority amidst the boy's antics. Although Oscar is built like a tank, his inability to control Smits makes Luke realize there's more complexity to their relationship.

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busy schedules. The summaries are spot
on, and the mind maps help reinforce wh
I've learned. Highly recommend!

Alex Walk

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Chapter 7 Summary:

In Chapter 7 of "Among the Barons," Luke finds himself facing an unexpected daily reality when he discovers that Smits is in all his classes. Smits, who is boastful and cheeky, takes every opportunity to belittle Luke, flaunting that he's the "smart one" in the family due to Luke's previous difficulties at school. Their dynamic creates a palpable tension in the classroom, especially when Smits introduces his intimidating bodyguard, Oscar, who wields a sledgehammer. Smits claims this is meant to address safety concerns about emergency evacuations, a thought that had never crossed Luke's mind given the perilous outside world they live in.

Despite the seriousness of Oscar's presence, Smits uses it for comedic effect, and while the rest of the class seems enthralled, Luke feels increasingly isolated and discomforted. He notices that conversations in the dining hall often revolve around Smits, who is seemingly enjoying lavish meals, highlighting the stark differences in their lives. As dinner conversations drift to speculations about Smits' gourmet dinner, Luke grapples with his own insecurities.

By the end of the day, exhaustion weighs heavily on Luke. Just when he thinks he can escape into sleep, he's jolted awake by Oscar. The hulking man urges Luke to follow him quietly, igniting a mix of fear and curiosity in Luke's mind. He worries that his roommates may be watching, wondering if



he should trust Oscar. Despite Oscar's insistence that there's nothing to fear, Luke's instincts scream otherwise, showcasing the theme of trepidation that runs through the chapter as he struggles with both external threats and internal anxieties. Oscar's presence looms large, blending danger and mystery, as Luke contemplates what this summons might mean for him.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Confronting Fears and Insecurities

Critical Interpretation: This chapter teaches us that fear often manifests in the form of external pressures and internal insecurities, much like Luke's experience with Smits and Oscar. It highlights the importance of confronting these challenges head-on rather than succumbing to isolation or doubt. You might find that acknowledging your fears can empower you to navigate complexities in your life, just as Luke is urged to follow Oscar despite his uncertainties. This moment reminds you that bravery is not the absence of fear, but the will to move forward despite it.



Chapter 8 Summary:

In Chapter Eight of "Among the Barons," Luke wrestles with fear and anxiety as he reluctantly leaves his bed, feeling vulnerable and alone. Guided by Oscar, he finds himself high up in the school, faced with the bitter grief of Smits, who is sobbing for the brother he lost, Lee. As Luke sits beside Smits, he realizes the depth of the younger boy's sorrow, which brings back his own painful memories of being separated from his loved ones. Luke can relate to the pain of loss, knowing he might never see his brothers, Matthew and Mark, again.

Luke awkwardly tries to comfort Smits, unsure of how to respond to such profound grief. Smits reveals he had a nightmare in which Luke was shot by a soldier while skiing, a nightmare loaded with the realities of their current world, where the threat of the Population Police looms large. This revelation momentarily binds the two boys as Smits seems to be trying to communicate an important truth about danger through his dream.

In a light-hearted attempt to distract Smits, Luke jokes and encourages him to think about happier memories, even as he senses the darker undercurrents of their situation. They share memories of childhood, with Smits reminiscing about a red wagon and the joys of being pulled around, while Luke candidly admits longing for his mother's care. Even though these memories connect them, they serve as reminders that Smits's life with Lee can't be revived,



highlighting the broader theme of loss amidst the struggle for survival in a harsh world.

This chapter deepens the complexity of both boys' characters, illustrating their shared pain yet distinct experiences of loss, while threading in themes of loyalty, friendship, and the dire reality they face together. Luke's protective instincts emerge as he navigates the precarious relationship with Smits, revealing both his empathy and the weight of his own fears in a world where trust is both a necessity and a risk.

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Chapter 9:

In Chapter 9 of "Among the Barons," Luke's world is shaken again with the return of Mr. Talbot, the man who helped him assume the identity of Lee Grant. Mr. Talbot is a reminder of both the danger and camaraderie Luke has faced since his life turned upside down when he had to go into hiding after the Government put strict population controls in place. Memories of his friend, Jen—who died in pursuit of freedom for third children—loom over Luke, intensifying his worries as he navigates his complicated feelings about trust and safety.

Mr. Talbot arrives unexpectedly during science class, trying to lighten the mood by inviting Luke and his classmate Smits to lunch at Mr. Hendricks's house. However, the invitation is met with apprehension from Luke's classmates, who are understandably tense in the presence of someone who has had ties to the Population Police. Luke feels a mix of excitement and anxiety as he leaves with Mr. Talbot, wishing he could ask about the many questions swirling in his mind, including the mysterious circumstances of Lee's death and Smits's unsettling presence.

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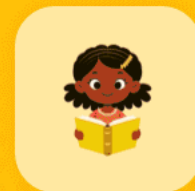
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Chapter 10 Summary:

In Chapter 10 of "Among the Barons," not much changes in Luke's life after Mr. Talbot's visit. He goes through his regular school routine, attending classes and taking notes, but he can't escape the looming presence of Smits and Oscar. Smits returns to school with an arrogant attitude, while Oscar stands like a threatening shadow, bringing a fearful silence to their class. Luke is aware of the resentment directed towards him from some classmates, feeling guilty for the troubles brought by Smits and Oscar.

As weeks go by, Luke anticipates some explosive incident, but instead finds himself submerged in ordinary subjects like math and literature. However, each night, he is summoned by Smits, who unravels tales of his past with Lee, the boy he supposedly replaced. These stories are disjointed and confusing at times, jumping from one memory to another. They range from mischievous pranks as children to the absurdities of life among the rich, characterized by lavish parties and a host of servants. Through these recollections, Luke starts to piece together a strange sense of his own past, though it feels foreign to him compared to his hard upbringing.

Gradually, Luke becomes a part of Smits's stories, engaging and recalling moments alongside him. He learns about Smits's privileged life full of extravagant experiences, a world starkly different from his own, filled with love, affection, and hard work from his parents. This contrast deepens when



Luke asks about Smits's mother, and Smits admits to only vague memories, suggesting she was often absent, lost in a life of entertaining.

In a vulnerable moment, Smits acknowledges Luke's efforts to stay awake and listen, revealing a more human side beneath his bravado. He tells Luke that none of the turmoil in their lives is his fault, and unexpectedly admits he kind of likes him. This moment of connection hints at the possibility of friendship, despite their contrasting backgrounds, and emphasizes themes of identity, memory, and the complexities of relationships in a world where trust is tenuous and histories intertwine in unexpected ways. The chapter concludes on a note of intrigue, as Luke navigates his complicated feelings towards Smits while grappling with his own identity amidst the chaos.

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Chapter 11 Summary:

In Chapter 11 of "Among the Barons," Luke struggles with exhaustion after a long night spent worrying about the future with his friend Smits. He feels drained as he makes his way back to his room, almost succumbing to fatigue. Just as he finally lies down, loud alarms shatter the silence, urging all students to evacuate immediately due to a fire in the school. Confused and panicked, Luke tries to communicate with his roommates amid the chaos but learns they're hesitant and fearful.

When the loudspeaker directs them toward a secret door in the wall, Luke initially hesitates, uncertain whether it's a safe escape route or a trap. However, the scent of smoke pushes him to act. Realizing they may be trapped if they don't leave, he begins to urge his friends toward the exit, even dragging one, Robert, who is paralyzed by fear. Their history teacher, Mr. Dirk, appears just in time to help get Robert moving and leads the students down to safety.

Once outside, Luke feels a rush of relief but quickly remembers the others. With Mr. Dirk, he returns inside to ensure all students are evacuated. In the haze of urgency and chaos, Luke loses track of time as he helps pull boys from their beds and cramped hiding spots, focusing solely on getting everyone out safely. Eventually, they manage to rescue everyone on the second and third floors, but Luke's heart sinks when he remembers Smits,



who may still be on the fourth floor.

This chapter powerfully illustrates themes of bravery, friendship, and leadership. Luke's transformation from a confused, exhausted boy to a determined leader showcases his growth. It highlights the urgency of the situation and the importance of standing up for others in times of crisis, even when fear is palpable. The scene is intense, filled with panic and adrenaline, as Luke navigates both physical and emotional challenges in a harrowing situation.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of bravery in the face of fear

Critical Interpretation: In the chaos of an emergency, like the fire at the school, you may find yourself paralyzed by fear, just as Luke and his peers did. Yet, it is in these moments of panic that you can choose to rise above your fears and become a beacon of hope for others. By taking action, even when the odds seem stacked against you, you not only help those around you but also discover your own strength and potential for leadership. Luke's courageous decision to lead his friends to safety illustrates the profound impact of bravery, inspiring you to face your own life's challenges with determination and compassion.

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Chapter 12:

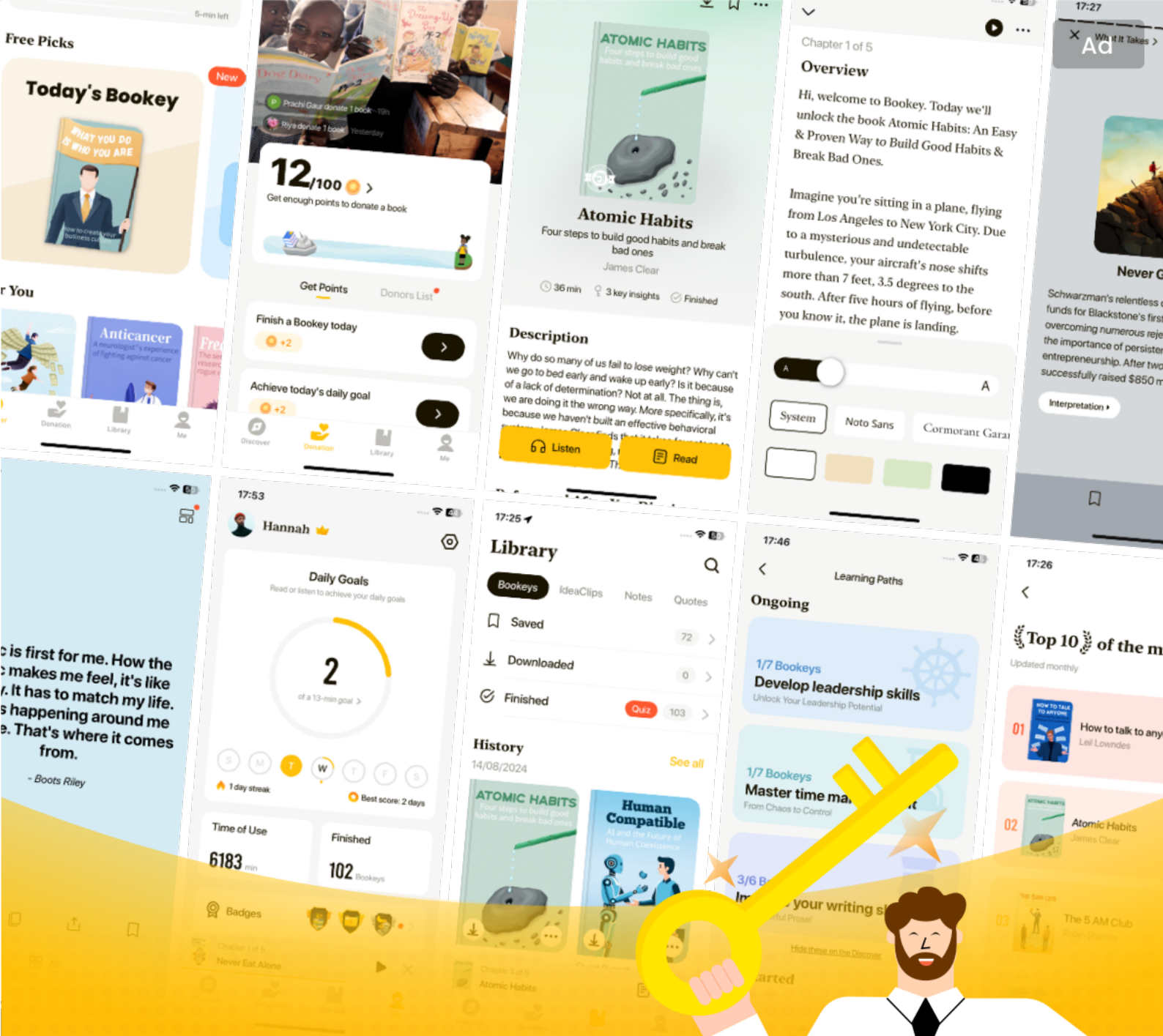
In Chapter 12 of "Among the Barons," the tension heightens as Luke grapples with the aftermath of a fire at the school. Eager to race back upstairs to find his friend Smits, he is halted by Mr. Dirk, who insists that the evacuation plan was a success and praises the hidden corridors designed to prevent the boys from panicking. Luke, however, is far from reassured. His focus is solely on finding Smits, and he brushes off Mr. Dirk's chatter.

As he scans the yard filled with terrified classmates, Luke notices their emotional turmoil, evident in their trembling hands and tears. Despite their shock, he presses on, asking everyone if they've seen Smits, but to no avail. This search reveals not only his loyal nature but also the deep sense of fear permeating the group—fear possibly amplified by their sudden evacuation from the safety of their beds.

Mr. Hendricks, despite being in a wheelchair, tries to comfort the younger boys and eventually encounters Luke. When Luke demands to know if everyone is safe, Hendricks delivers a bombshell: Smits and Oscar are at his

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Chapter 13 Summary:

In Chapter 13 of "Among the Barons," Luke finds himself grappling with a whirlwind of emotions and responsibility after a fire alarm disrupts the boys' routine. He has a strong urge to ask Mr. Hendricks questions and uncover the truth behind the panic, but the headmaster quickly shifts his focus to reassuring the frightened boys. Luke is keenly aware of the unease among his peers, with many huddled in fear, reminding him of their earlier progress toward bravery; now, that sense seems to vanish in the face of danger.

As they move to Mr. Hendricks's house, which becomes a safe haven, the boys eagerly crowd together, sharing hot apple cider and biscuits amidst cheerful chaos. Luke feels a mix of relief and pride for having acted bravely during the crisis, in contrast to his classmates, who now appear anxious and uncertain. Conversations among them reveal a growing frustration, particularly directed toward a fellow student, Smits, who is absent from the group. Luke is caught in a dilemma, knowing that Smits isn't truly his brother and feeling some guilt tied to his role as Smits's protector.

Trey, one of the boys still grappling with his fears, openly admires Luke's courage, calling him a hero, though Luke is uncomfortable with the title. They share a moment of camaraderie, and Luke offers Trey a chance to be the hero next time, reflecting on the nature of bravery and cowardice. Yet,



Trey's newfound desire for bravery highlights how the fire has altered his perception of himself, adding depth to his character.

As Mr. Hendricks announces that everything is safe and classes will be canceled the next day, the boys muster a weak cheer, but the earlier tension lingers as they head back to their rooms. Luke is then singled out by Mr. Hendricks, who needs his assistance regarding Smits and another character, Oscar. This sets up a pivotal moment where Luke must confront not just the external challenges posed by the fire but also the complexities of his relationships. The chapter underscores themes of bravery, the impact of fear on identity, and the importance of support in times of crisis, leaving readers eager to see how Luke navigates his responsibilities.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Bravery can inspire others.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing amidst uncertainty, your heart racing as fear grips those around you. In this moment, you have the power to be the beacon of courage; just like Luke did when the fire alarm disrupted the routine of his peers. Your actions, even ones that seem small, can instill bravery in others, encouraging them to confront their own fears and challenges. While Luke felt uneasy being labeled a hero, his example empowered Trey to aspire to bravery himself. This chapter reminds you that in life's trials, stepping up not only transforms your own identity but also ignites a spark in those around you, fostering a community of strength and resilience.

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Chapter 14 Summary:

In Chapter 14 of "Among the Barons," Luke finds himself alone in the aftermaths of a troubling fire that erupted in Smits's room. As Mr. Hendricks wheels himself over, he instructs Luke to investigate Smits's space for anything unusual—despite Luke's instinct to voice his suspicions about Smits being responsible for the fire. Uncertainty weighs heavily on Luke as he grapples with the realization that he may be caught in the middle of two conflicting stories.

Once inside the school, the oppressive smell of smoke greets him, contrasting sharply with the cold comfort of the night air outside. As he pushes open the door to Smits's room, the devastation is striking: charred remnants of a once-normal living space lay scattered about, yet Luke's determination keeps him searching for answers. His mind races with questions—why would Smits burn his own room, and what role did Oscar play in this chaos?

Despite the fear clawing at him, Luke methodically examines Smits's belongings, noticing the burnt comforter and melted technology. Each item heightens his anxiety and curiosity until he finally discovers something tucked inside the cot's mattress: two identification cards that look suspiciously like fakes. This moment starkly shifts the narrative, igniting Luke's internal conflict and propelling the stakes higher as he must decide



how to handle his find, which could have implications beyond Smits's immediate crisis.

Themes of bravery, loyalty, and the search for truth ripple through this chapter, as Luke confronts not only the physical dangers but also the moral dilemmas of standing by his friends and the cause he believes in. The scene effectively colors Luke's character development, portraying him as a reluctant hero caught between fear and his sense of duty, highlighting the complexities of friendship and the consequences of standing up for what is right.

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Chapter 15:

In Chapter 15 of "Among the Barons," Luke discovers two I.D. cards linked to Smits and Oscar, raising unsettling questions about their true identities. One card shows a picture of Smits but a different name—Peter Goodard—while the other merely has a name, Stanley Goodard. Confusion overwhelms Luke as he contemplates whether these are their real identities or if they're undercover. It's a tense moment, heightened when Mr. Dirk unexpectedly appears, prompting Luke to hide the cards in his pajamas.

As the plot unfolds, Luke retrieves a sledgehammer from under Smits's bed, which becomes another critical clue tying Oscar to the earlier fire. When Luke shares his findings with Mr. Hendricks, he must hide the I.D. cards, creating further suspense about their implications. Mr. Hendricks is deeply concerned about Oscar's potential deceit, leading Luke to realize just how dangerous the situation might be.

When Luke finds Smits in a state of panic, the emotional tension escalates. Smits reveals he set the fire to try and get rid of Oscar, showing his

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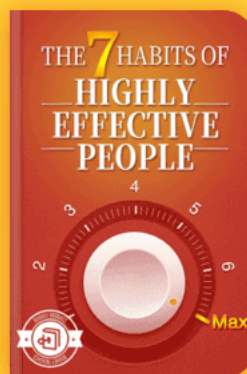
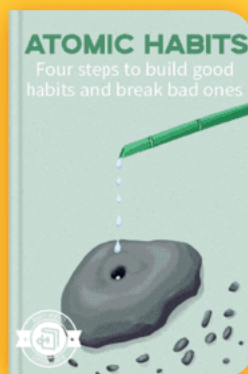
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Chapter 16 Summary:

In Chapter 16 of "Among the Barons," Luke is faced with a harrowing reality as he grapples with the idea of leaving Mr. Hendricks' protective environment to go live with the powerful Grants. Frantic and anxious, Luke confronts Mr. Hendricks, who explains that Luke's father, a formidable figure, has ultimate control over his life and can order him to go anywhere. Despite Luke's pleas, Mr. Hendricks can only assure him of his own vulnerability, revealing the gravity of their situation.

Desperately, Luke suggests adopting a different identity from the fake IDs he possesses, hoping to escape the mandate of becoming Lee Grant. However, Mr. Hendricks warns him that identities come with their own complexities and that for some reason, those in charge want Luke to assume his designated role as Lee. This leaves Luke feeling trapped, conflicted, and fearful.

He reflects on his earlier conversation with Trey, who regarded him as a hero. Luke wishes he could emulate that bravery, but his fear only deepens as he anticipates life with the Grants. He raises concerns about being discovered as an imposter by the Grants' servants and guests, but Mr. Hendricks reassures him that they are not worried about such details, urging Luke to trust in himself.



As he prepares to leave for the Grants' home, Luke repeats Mr. Hendricks' words, "you'll be all right," trying to muster some belief in them. The chapter intensifies the themes of identity and power, showcasing Luke's struggle against the control exerted over him and his desperation for safety and the right to choose his path. The contrasting feelings of fear and cautious hope make his situation all the more poignant, setting the stage for the challenges he will face in his new life with the Grants.

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Chapter 17 Summary:

In Chapter 17 of "Among the Barons," the story takes a turn as Luke, now disguised as "Lee," arrives at the opulent Grants' mansion with Smits and Oscar. Luke feels overwhelmed by the luxury surrounding him—from the sleek limousine to the jaw-dropping chandelier at the mansion, which seems like it could be made of diamonds. As they approach their home, Luke's memories of his family's farm and the simple life he left behind fill him with longing.

Smits, with his brash demeanor, mentions how their parents frequently change servants, subtly hinting at the precariousness of their situation. This dynamic showcases the tension among the boys, particularly as Oscar calls out Smits for his past misdeeds linked to a fire that endangered many lives. Luke shares Oscar's anger, feeling both betrayed and concerned about the consequences of Smits's actions.

Upon entering the mansion, Luke is greeted unexpectedly with warmth by Mrs. Grant, who embraces him and showers him with attention, starkly contrasting with her lack of affection towards her own son, Smits. This moment illuminates the fractured relationship within the Grant family and provides insight into Smits's deep-seated yearning for acknowledgment and affection from his parents. As Mrs. Grant ignores Smits and showers Luke with love, a mix of emotions flashes across Smits' face—pain,



disappointment, and envy.

The disconnect in familial love is palpable, leaving Luke confused about why the Grants have chosen to include him in their family dynamic while neglecting Smits. This chapter not only vividly depicts the stark differences in social classes but also delves into themes of family dynamics, longing for acceptance, and the complexities of friendship and loyalty in the midst of a masquerade. Ultimately, Luke is left feeling lost and unsure of his place in this lavish world as he is sent to his new room, unaware of what awaits him next.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of genuine connection over material wealth

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate through life, this chapter reminds you that no matter how luxurious your surroundings may become, the value of genuine relationships and meaningful connections far outweighs any material possession. Just like Luke, who feels an emptiness amidst the extravagance of the Grants' mansion, it's crucial to seek out and cultivate true friendships and familial bonds that give you a sense of belonging and love, rather than getting lost in the superficiality of societal status.



Chapter 18:

In Chapter Eighteen of "Among the Barons," tension simmers as Luke finds himself in a lavish but intimidating new environment after following the chauffeur into the home of the Grants. The chapter opens with Smits expressing relief over feeling "safe," but Luke can't shake the sense that danger still lurks. Upon entering Lee's room, Luke is captivated by its luxuriousness, which starkly contrasts with his previous living conditions. The room is filled with fun items like a video arcade, sports equipment, and musical instruments, highlighting the life of the boy he is impersonating.

As Luke explores, a mix of curiosity and unease surrounds him; he searches for personal touches that might indicate Lee's true existence but finds nothing to suggest a real boy ever inhabited the space. This realization hits him hard, further deepening his sense of isolation and dread. The meticulousness of the room feels almost eerie, leading him to ponder the idea that Lee might have vanished without a trace.

Shifting to Smits's room next door, Luke finds his friend lying on the bed,

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Chapter 19 Summary:

In Chapter 19 of "Among the Barons," Luke finds himself caught in a perplexing and uncomfortable situation at the Grant household. The day drags on as he wanders around, feeling out of place and constantly monitored by the staff, who seem to be aware of his every move. He experiences a series of awkward conversations, a reminder of the life he's pretending to live as "Lee," Smits's alter ego. When he finally joins the family for dinner, he is unprepared for the formalities expected of him, especially when Mrs. Grant scolds him for not wearing a tuxedo like the others.

Luke manages to change into appropriate attire with the silent help of Oscar, a servant who comes to his rescue. However, the dinner is tense and devoid of warmth. The food, while plentiful and exotic, feels overwhelming, especially since the Grants and Smits barely engage in conversation. Luke notices that while he is trying to enjoy the experience, Smits appears sullen, and Mr. and Mrs. Grant treat both boys with indifference, almost as if they're an afterthought.

Amidst the lavish meal, Luke is surprised by the boys' nonchalant attitudes towards the food they don't finish, and he grapples with the stark contrast between their dining habits and the realities of a world still recovering from famine. Despite the numerous courses, the atmosphere remains cold, and



conversation is nearly nonexistent, emphasizing the isolation Luke feels.

In a moment of embarrassment, he is chastised by Mrs. Grant for eating too hastily, leading to a moment of humiliation when he drops his spoon. When Smits is finally excused from the table, Luke struggles with feelings of nausea and confusion about his place in this world that is so unlike his own. He reflects on his uncomfortable position and wonders about the intentions of those who have shown him kindness, like Smits and Oscar. The chapter encapsulates themes of identity, belonging, and the stark divide between privilege and the harsh realities of life outside the Grants' bubble.

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Chapter 20 Summary:

In Chapter 20 of "Among the Barons" by Margaret Peterson Haddix, we find Luke awakened abruptly in the middle of the night by an unsettling voice—it's Mr. Grant, who ominously tells him to come with him. Confused and apprehensive, Luke hesitantly follows Mr. Grant through a dimly lit and maze-like house, feeling a mix of fear and dread as he reflects on his past experiences of being summoned by authority figures.

When they reach a closed door that had previously been locked, Mr. Grant opens it effortlessly and takes Luke into an office filled with shadows and an intimidating mahogany desk. There, they are joined by Mrs. Grant, who seems eager but also calculating as she inspects Luke. Their discussion centers around altering Luke's appearance, considering braces, hair dye, and contacts to help him fit into their plans. Luke, feeling objectified and treated as a mere pawn in their scheme, struggles to assert his identity amid their talk of transformations.

The conversation takes a dark turn when Mrs. Grant gravely states their objective: they want Luke to die. This chilling revelation leaves Luke in shock, underscoring themes of identity, coercion, and the value of human lives—especially in the eyes of those who seek power.

This chapter expertly builds tension through Luke's internal conflict and the



unsettling atmosphere created by the Grants, ultimately leaving readers anxious about Luke's fate and the moral implications of their sinister goals.

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Chapter 21:

In Chapter 21 of "Among the Barons," tension escalates as Luke finds himself trapped in a soundproof room with Mr. and Mrs. Grant, parents of the boy whose identity he has been using, Lee. Initially panicked, Luke hears Mr. Grant's admission that another boy has been pretending to be Lee, raising his anxiety about his secret being exposed. The Grants explain their deep grief over Lee's death, portraying him as a gifted but stubborn boy who got into trouble. They detail their convoluted plan to stage Luke's death to help their surviving son, Smits, cope with Lee's passing.

Mrs. Grant describes Lee affectionately, while Mr. Grant focuses on his rebellious nature, highlighting the conflicting views of their son. As they ask Luke to take on the full persona of Lee, they plan for him to be "publicly showcased" before staging a dramatic death for him, which would allow the family to express their sorrow freely without the stigma of Lee's past actions. Luke, however, feels conflicted. He grapples with the weight of embodying another boy's life and the emotional complexity that entails.

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Chapter 22 Summary:

In Chapter 22 of "Among the Barons," Luke faces a desperate choice as he reflects on the idea of returning to a life of hiding. He resists the notion of going back to living in the attic with his family, as it would mean relinquishing the freedom he's fought for. Despite the Grants' wealthy and powerful position, they cannot grasp the depth of his struggle as a third child, someone who has always lived in the shadows.

Luke confronts Mrs. Grant, who coldly dismisses his concerns, revealing their manipulative intentions. She threatens Luke, implying that if he fails to follow their plan to stage his death, they wouldn't hesitate to expose him to the Population Police. This realization leaves Luke feeling powerless and terrified, as he recognizes he is merely a tool for the Grants, valued only as long as he serves their needs.

After their meeting ends, Luke is left feeling disillusioned while changing back into his pajamas. The conversation plays through his mind, reinforcing his fears that the only alternative the Grants offer is a life that feels like death itself. Yet, as despair sets in, a newfound resolve ignites within him. Instead of succumbing to their demands, he decides he won't return to hiding. He remembers references to an underground resistance against the government and thinks about the friends he lost touch with who might still be involved in this fight.



Luke's thoughts turn toward making contact with Mr. Talbot, believing he could find a way to protect himself from the Grants' treachery. He rediscovers a sense of agency that he thought lost, realizing that even as a kid without legal status, he can still take action and shape his own destiny. The chapter poignantly illustrates themes of courage, identity, and the struggle for freedom, highlighting Luke's transformation from a passive character to one determined to resist oppression.

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Chapter 23 Summary:

In Chapter 23 of "Among the Barons," Luke is roused from his sleep by Oscar, who discreetly leads him to a secret office within the Grants' home. This moment reveals a significant shift in Luke's understanding of his situation—he feels both nervous and curious about the clandestine room. Once inside, Oscar confides in Luke, explaining that they share a common cause in opposing the oppressive Government and its allies, the wealthy Barons.

Oscar, initially perceived as a self-righteous bodyguard, reveals a more complex character. He shares his own history of rebellion and poverty, highlighting his disdain for the unfair treatment of ordinary people. As they talk, Luke is both surprised and impressed by Oscar's background as a member of the underground resistance, which has been working for years to challenge the Government. Oscar recounts how they resorted to sabotage and subversive actions against the Barons, including the tragic death of the original Lee Grant, who was killed during a mission.

The dynamics change as Luke learns about the trustworthiness of various characters, including Mr. Talbot, who is portrayed as a Baron unworthy of trust, contrasting sharply with Lee's involvement in the resistance. Luke grapples with feelings of powerlessness and moral complexity as he realizes how he plays a role in this larger scheme. Weighing the hefty implications of



their plans, Luke's sense of identity becomes entwined with Lee's legacy, pushing him to reconsider his position.

Luke's conversation with Oscar reveals the Grants are being blackmailed concerning Lee's death, and they plan to use Luke's identity to fake his death, diverting attention from their secrets. As Oscar reveals the grim truth that Smits is to be used in Luke's place for this deception, the stakes escalate dramatically. Luke is thrust into a moral quandary, feeling both valued for the role he plays and fearful of the consequences that await him. The chapter's tension showcases themes of legitimacy, courage, and rebellion against systemic injustice, all while intertwining personal and political conflicts. The revelations lead to an urgent sense that Luke must navigate this treacherous landscape carefully, which leaves readers eager to discover how he will respond to the mounting pressures around him.

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Chapter 24:

In Chapter 24 of "Among the Barons," tension mounts as Luke grapples with a difficult choice after a startling revelation from Oscar. Luke is caught off guard when Oscar suggests they fake Smits's death—an audacious plan intended to protect Luke and help him gain power as a Grant. Oscar believes that with Luke posing as Lee Grant, he could effectively become an influential player in the ongoing struggle against oppressive forces. However, Luke is immediately troubled by the implications of this plan, especially regarding Smits, who has already endured considerable pain and loss.

Their conversation reveals a significant character divide: Oscar embraces ruthless pragmatism, viewing Smits as expendable in the fight for freedom. He taunts Luke for expressing concern over Smits's well-being, unveiling a darker side to rebel ideologies where collateral damage is accepted. Luke, however, remains empathetic, haunted by personal connections to Smits and yearning for a solution that avoids further suffering. He struggles with feelings of loyalty and guilt, feeling the weight of responsibility for someone

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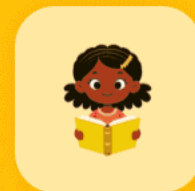
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Chapter 25 Summary:

In Chapter 25 of "Among the Barons," Luke wakes up to a bright sun that feels almost deceptive against his inner turmoil. He contemplates the chaotic nature of his situation, recalling his mother's advice to count his blessings. However, each blessing reveals a new layer of danger, leading him to feel even more confused and anxious. He grapples with trust issues, particularly regarding his relationships with Oscar and Smits. Oscar, who seems to know more than he lets on, poses a potential threat, making Luke question his intentions and whether he's truly being protected or manipulated.

Feeling desperate, Luke resolves to contact Mr. Talbot, hoping for guidance. He tries to engage Smits, who is still groggy and unaware of Luke's underlying tension. Luke's attempt to appear carefree and nonchalant crumbles when Smits reveals he knows about previous prank calls, suggesting their father's strict household rules. This leads Luke to realize that they are essentially prisoners, further highlighting his feeling of entrapment.

As the chapter unfolds, Oscar enters the room, revealing that he had been eavesdropping on Luke and Smits. This deepens the sense of surveillance and distrust, with Luke feeling caught between the manipulative presence of Oscar and the innocence of Smits. The atmosphere is thick with anxiety as



Luke struggles with the weight of secrets and the implications of his loyalty to both boys, leaving him uncertain about who he can actually trust. The chapter explores themes of betrayal, uncertainty, and the complexities of trust among siblings, all occurring against the backdrop of a tense and precarious environment.

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Chapter 26 Summary:

In Chapter 26 of "Among the Barons," Luke experiences a whirlwind of anxiety and confusion while at the Grants' house. After a shower, he strangely chooses to keep the fake IDs for Oscar and Smits with him, feeling a mix of paranoia and instinct to protect his secrets. His interaction with Oscar on the stairs leaves him heartbroken; Oscar's dismissive behavior makes Luke realize that he's truly lost the opportunity to join the cause, which weighs heavily on him.

Despite a hearty breakfast, Luke struggles with restlessness and fear of what the day could bring, knowing he could be caught in the dangerous plots unfolding around him. He finds himself pondering the alliances in this high-stakes game, feeling trapped between the manipulations of the Grants and Oscar. He questions the truth of everyone's intentions, not even sure if Oscar might actually be an informant, or if the Grants are hiding their true nature behind wealth and sophistication.

As he wallows in his thoughts, Mrs. Grant's sudden entrance jolts Luke back to reality. She eagerly informs him about an upcoming party, which is clearly a significant event in their world. Luke's nervousness intensifies as he realizes he will be expected to play a role, perhaps one that exposes him further to dangers he wishes to evade. The superficiality of Mrs. Grant and her laughter, which feels insincere to Luke, highlights the deceit permeating



the family dynamic. The chapter ends on a tense note as she prepares him for a transformation with a makeover, indicating that Luke is being pushed further into a life that he neither understands nor wants to embrace. This evokes themes of identity, manipulation, and the struggle for autonomy in a world where trust is fleeting and dangers are ever-present.

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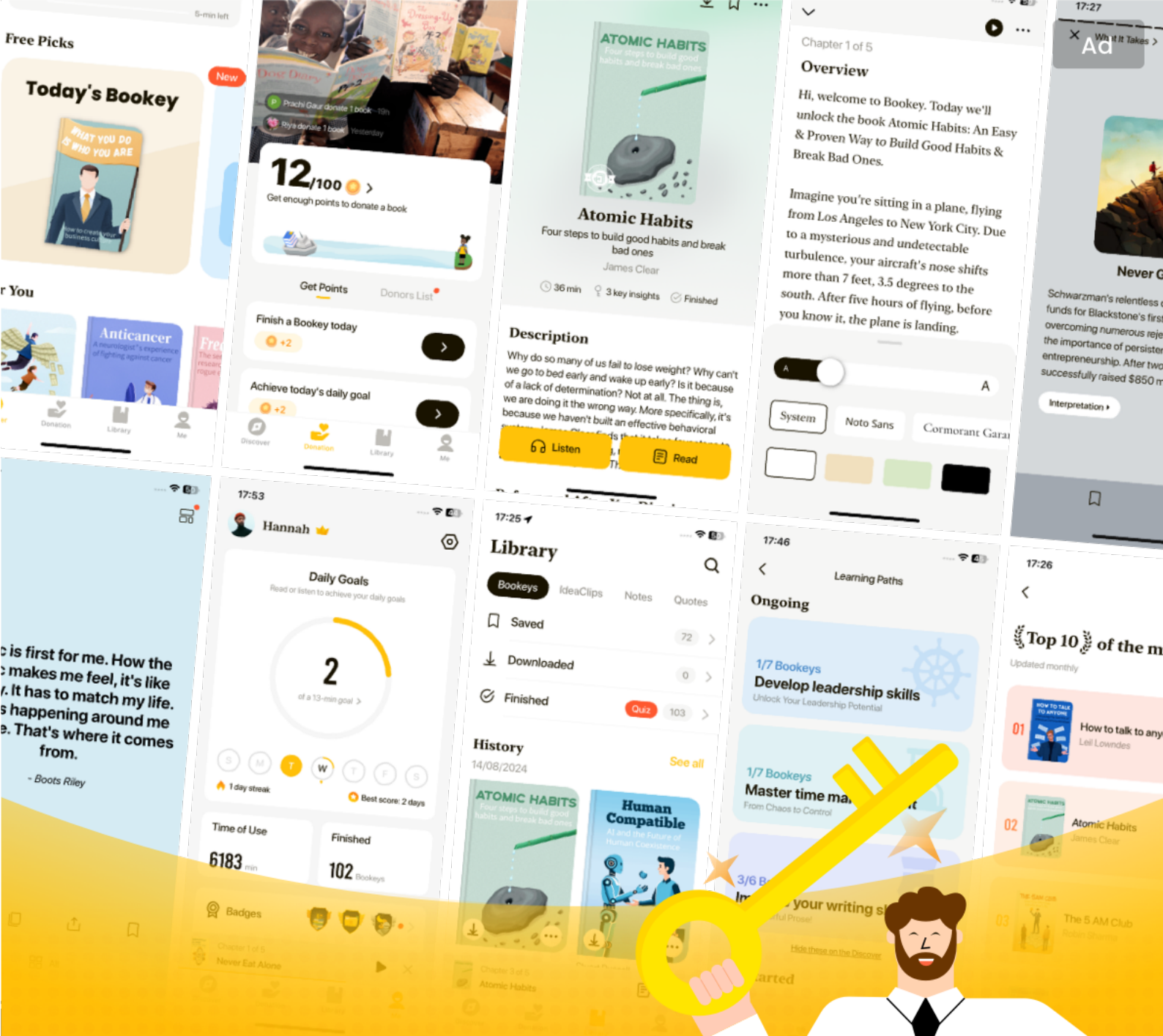
Chapter 27:

In Chapter 27 of "Among the Barons," the scene is set at the lavish Grants' house, where preparations for a party are in full swing. The atmosphere is charged with a sense of impending conflict, particularly for Luke, who has undergone a physical transformation to fit into his role as "Lee Grant." With braces hurting his mouth and his hair dyed unnaturally dark, Luke feels out of place and fearful. The pressure intensifies as Mrs. Grant instructs him and Smits to make a grand entrance, which Luke suspects is part of a dangerous plan to keep up appearances after the recent loss of Smits's brother, Lee.

As guests begin to arrive, Luke grapples with his unease about the false identities and the potential dangers lurking in the mansion. The arrival of the president, whom Mrs. Grant flutters over, strikes Luke as surreal and alarming, given the president's role in enforcing strict population controls. During the party, Luke's friend Nina appears disguised as a servant, providing a glimmer of support amidst the facade of luxury and deception. Their exchange reveals the roots of their friendship and deepens Luke's sense of camaraderie in this hostile environment.

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Chapter 28 Summary:

In Chapter 28 of "Among the Barons," tension heightens as Luke attends a party at the Grants' house, feeling overwhelmed by the polite yet stifling environment. He's been enduring endless handshakes and greetings under Mrs. Grant's watchful guidance, but the atmosphere quickly shifts when it's time to bid farewell to the president. The facade of normalcy is abruptly shattered when a chandelier crashes down, thanks to the instinctive heroism of Trey, who tackles Luke to safety just in time.

As the chandelier falls, chaos erupts. Luke suffers minor injuries from the shower of glass but is more concerned about keeping his composure in the face of danger. He witnesses the fallout of the event, where Smits, paralyzed by fear, believes that his family has been killed. In a moment of raw sincerity, Luke reassures Smits by insisting that he's still alive, thus reaffirming their bond as "brothers."

This chapter emphasizes themes of bravery and the complexity of identity, as Luke steps away from the pretenses of his facade to show genuine compassion. Trey's quick action establishes him as a loyal friend, highlighting the strength of their camaraderie amid peril. Luke's declaration to Smits carries an air of hope, suggesting that family ties can remain strong, even in the darkest moments. The incident not only tests their character but also propels their relationships into deeper territory, showcasing the power



of friendship and loyalty in times of crisis.

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Chapter 29 Summary:

In Chapter 29 of "Among the Barons," chaos ensues after an attempt on the president's life, which mistakenly results in the death of Luke's parents when a chandelier falls during a party. The tension in the air is palpable as guards lock down the estate and interrogate terrified guests. Luke, visibly shaken, steps forward to assert control, channeling the confidence of the recently deceased Mr. Grant. He successfully convinces the guards to limit their inquiry and allows the guests, who show little compassion for Luke's tragedy, to leave in a hurry.

As the scene clears, Luke is left facing the staff, realizing he has unwittingly become their leader. Overwhelmed yet determined, he issues commands to clean up the aftermath of the party and deal with the tragedy striking his family. Meanwhile, Oscar, a menacing presence from the past, reveals himself to be more than just a servant; he was orchestrating events from the shadows, attempting to pit Luke against his friends and ultimately against the Grants.

Inside the estate, Luke discovers a key from Oscar, which signifies access to a secret room where he and his friends gather. Smits, still in shock over his own family's turmoil, opens up about Oscar's manipulation and dark intentions, including blackmail against the Grants. The truth becomes blurry as doubts about Oscar's motives linger. Luke wrestles with feelings of guilt



over letting Oscar slip away, sensing that Oscar's vendetta against Barons, including his own family, runs deeper than he initially realized.

As Luke, Smits, Nina, and Trey search the cramped room for answers, they confront their shared trauma and the weight of their past interactions with Oscar. They begin piecing together the deception and the tragedy that has unfolded. Behind Smits's distressed façade lies raw sorrow, revealing that beneath Oscar's threats lay the ugly truth of parental love and betrayal.

Luke's resolve hardens as the chapter concludes, igniting a sense of agency in him and the group. He recognizes that they must figure out not only how to survive but also how to combat Oscar's ongoing schemes while navigating the treacherous world of power and loss. The chapter encapsulates key themes of deception, the struggle for control amidst chaos, the bonds of friendship, and the quest for truth against a backdrop of emotional upheaval.

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Chapter 30:

In Chapter 30 of "Among the Barons," the tension peaks as Luke and Smits take a courageous step to reclaim their identities and seek safety. After a harrowing journey, they decide to leave the chauffeur and their companions, Trey and Nina, and take a detour to Luke's family home. Luke's deep desire to reconnect with his past and family drives him to make this choice, even though he knows it could complicate matters with Mr. Talbot. Upon arriving, Luke is met with a warm but cautious welcome from his mother, who is overjoyed yet concerned about the safety of having him back.

Luke's homecoming is bittersweet; while he's thrilled to be reunited with his family, he carries the weight of recent traumatic experiences, including witnessing deaths and grappling with the aftermath of lies and betrayal. He introduces Smits, now a part of his life, as his new brother, highlighting themes of shared grief, loss, and the search for belonging. Their connection fosters a protective instinct in Luke, as he now finds himself assuming a caretaker role for Smits, who is still reeling from the tragedy of losing his parents.

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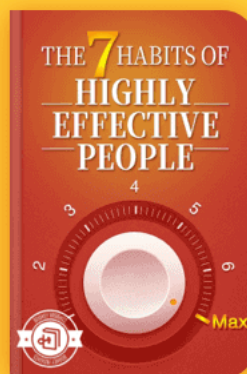
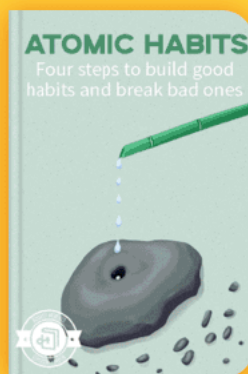
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