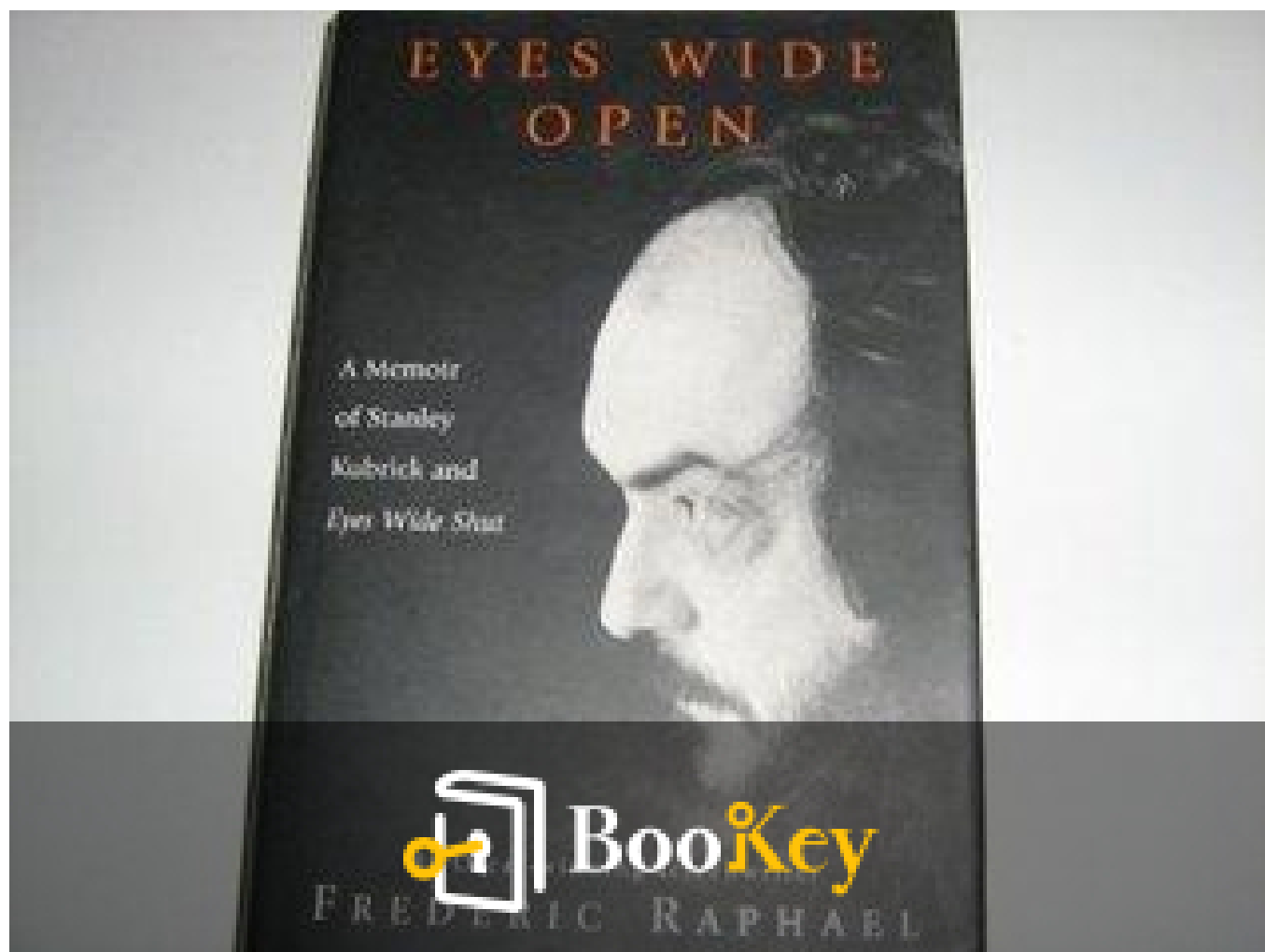


Eyes Wide Open. PDF (Limited Copy)

Frederic Raphael



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Eyes Wide Open. Summary

Perceiving Life Beyond Illusion and Pretense.

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About the book

In "Eyes Wide Open," Frederic Raphael invites readers into a richly woven tapestry of observation and insight, challenging us to confront the multifaceted nature of perception and the complexities of human experience. Through a narrative that oscillates between sharp wit and profound poignancy, Raphael explores themes of identity, culture, and the tension between our inner selves and the external world that shapes us. The author beckons us to question not only what we see but how we see it, urging a deeper awareness of the subtleties of life that often go unnoticed. This thought-provoking work not only captivates the intellect but stirs the soul, making it an essential read for anyone eager to engage with the world in vibrant Technicolor rather than muted shades of gray.

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About the author

Frederic Raphael is a distinguished British author, screenwriter, and critic, renowned for his prolific contributions to literature and film across several genres. Born in 1931, he has built a diverse career that spans over six decades, earning accolades for his sharp wit and insightful commentary on societal norms and human relationships. His literary work often reflects his rich intellectual background—having studied at the universities of Cambridge and the University of Chicago—and draws from personal experiences that inform his nuanced perspectives. In addition to his novels, Raphael is celebrated for his screenplays, including the Oscar-nominated work on Stanley Kubrick's "Barry Lyndon." With a keen ability to blend humor with profound themes, Raphael's writings resonate with readers and critics alike, establishing him as a significant figure in contemporary literature.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1

In the spring and summer of 1994, Frederic Raphael began receiving intriguing inquiries from Warner Bros. through his agency, the William Morris Agency. Each time his agents sought clarity regarding the reason for the calls, they were met with vague responses, leaving them to speculate about the nature of the potential project. During one of these conversations, he discovered that an American TV company was interested in adapting "The Prisoner of Zenda," a story he had an affinity for since childhood. This sparked his consideration of writing a four-part miniseries.

1. The opportunity presented itself against the backdrop of personal contemplation. Frederic's wife, Sylvia, advised him not to pursue the project simply for the sake of having work, encouraging him to focus on his true desires instead. However, tempted by the potential financial reward, he ultimately decided to meet with Peter Pieter, an American executive involved in the project, and proceeded to Paris.

In Paris, Frederic found himself in a busy restaurant, waiting for Peter Pieter. During this time, he engaged in conversation with a sidekick. They discussed the ambitious nature of Pieter's plans, revealing the executive's unyielding personality in the pursuit of success. Frederic was both unimpressed and intrigued, watching as they ended up discussing the cinematography rather than the project at hand.



2. When Pieter did arrive, his demeanor was less than professional, having kept Frederic waiting and appearing disheveled. As they began discussing "The Prisoner of Zenda," it became clear that Pieter intended to manipulate the project to secure a more significant opportunity—a proper movie adaptation rather than a mere miniseries. Frederic played along, masking his skepticism about the integrity of the project.

Returning from the lunch meeting, Frederic faced a series of unexpected calls, including an exciting proposition from renowned director Stanley Kubrick. Initially taken aback, he realized he had to decide quickly whether to abandon "The Prisoner of Zenda" for the opportunity to work with Kubrick. He acknowledged both the professional and moral implications of this decision, weighing the pressures of contracts against his creative aspirations.

3. The narrative delves into Raphael's background and previous collaborations, recalling his earlier experiences in the industry. His thoughts drifted back to a significant dinner he had attended with Stanley Donen and Kubrick, where he had discussed the artistry of filmmaking. Raphael was motivated by his past successes but also felt haunted by the imposing shadow of Kubrick's directorial prowess.

While in Menorca, Raphael anxiously awaited Kubrick's call amidst a



personal backdrop of relaxation. He received an evocative script from Kubrick that rekindled memories of his own creative journey—embraced with the uncertainty of whether he would honor his existing commitments or embrace what could be a more fulfilling opportunity.

4. As Frederic navigated through these intertwined narratives—the chaotic world of Hollywood meetings, personal reflections on his career, and the potential collaboration with Kubrick—he ultimately embraced the idea that dreams and reality are inseparable. His discussions with Sylvia emphasized this belief, leading him to challenge the boundaries of his commitments while seeking artistic integrity.

Raphael's journey encapsulates themes of ambition, the weights of industry expectations, and the necessity of balancing personal aspirations with financial motives. Throughout, the narrative invites readers to ponder the nature of success and the artistic journey—laced with intrigue, personal dilemmas, and the enduring question of what it means to create meaningful work.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embracing Artistic Integrity Over Financial Gain

Critical Interpretation: In the labyrinth of choices that life presents, you face moments that challenge your core beliefs and desires, much like Frederic Raphael experienced. Imagine being offered a lucrative opportunity that tempts you away from your true passions, pulling you into the dizzying world of expectations and contracts. Raphael's journey teaches you the importance of prioritizing your artistic integrity over immediate financial rewards. When you find yourself at a crossroads, remember that true fulfillment lies not in mere success but in the authenticity of your pursuits. Allow this insight to inspire you to follow your creative instincts, re-evaluate your commitments, and ultimately make choices that resonate deeply with your inner values and dreams.



Chapter 2 Summary: 2

In Chapter 2 of "Eyes Wide Open" by Frederic Raphael, the narrative unfolds an engaging dialogue between Raphael and the legendary director Stanley Kubrick as they explore the cinematic adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's novella. The chapter reflects on the intricacies of storytelling, the nature of dreams in film, and the challenges of transforming a historical piece into a modern context.

1. The chapter opens with a discussion about the portrayals of dreams in cinema, revealing a fundamental disconnect between the fluidity of dream experiences and the fixed frames of movies. Raphael and Kubrick critique the dated nature of Schnitzler's story, evoking both interest and skepticism about its adaptability. They ponder the erotic undertones of the novella and contemplate Kubrick's motivations behind wanting to set the film in the 1890s, questioning whether it can resonate with contemporary audiences.

2. Raphael grapples with the challenges of adapting the novella, acknowledging that he feels the need to translate the story from fin-de-siècle Vienna to modern-day New York. The dialogue illustrates the inherent complexities in adapting older narratives, particularly regarding evolving gender dynamics, marriage, and sexual relationships. Both men echo the sentiment that while societal assumptions have shifted, some fundamental themes remain universal and relevant.



3. As they delve deeper into the story, the conversation reveals Kubrick's enigmatic demeanor; he is portrayed as both a demanding and unassuming collaborator. Their mutual respect is evident, yet there is a power dynamic at play, with Raphael keenly aware of Kubrick's status and the weight he brings into their partnership.

4. The narrative captures the intricacies of Hollywood's contract culture, with Raphael expressing a caution born from past experiences with industry pitfalls. The discussions around contracts symbolize a broader industry critique, where the writer's vulnerability is laid bare against the backdrop of collaborative film-making, emphasizing the need for legal safeguards.

5. Raphael's insights into the thematic structure of Schnitzler's work lead to a moment of clarity about the narrative's progression. The dialogue illustrates the contrasting perspectives on how to convey dreams and reality in film, and the realization that some elements may be more effective when subtly hinted at rather than explicitly shown.

6. The chapter concludes with a sense of anticipation as the groundwork is prepared for Raphael to begin writing. He acknowledges his apprehension but remains committed to crafting an adaptation that maintains the essence of Schnitzler's narrative while resonating with a modern audience. The dynamics of their relationship, characterized by both collaboration and



hesitation, set the stage for a creative journey that promises challenges but also the potential for artistic success.

Overall, this chapter encapsulates the early stages of an ambitious project, highlighting the dialogues about adaptation, the nature of art, and the partnership between two significant figures in cinema.

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Chapter 3: 3

In Chapter 3 of "Eyes Wide Open" by Frederic Raphael, the dialogue between S.K., presumably Stanley Kubrick, and E.R. unfolds rich complexities about collaboration in the film industry, artistic integrity, and the nuances of storytelling. The conversation reveals a blend of admiration, tension, and intellectual camaraderie in the creative process.

1. Creative Collaboration: E.R. expresses amazement at Kieslowski's achievement of making ten films in one year, which leads to a discussion about embarking on similar ambitious projects, highlighting the pressures and expectations in the film industry. E.R. offers to write stories for S.K. under specific, albeit humorous, conditions—emphasizing the nature of creative bargaining.

2. Character and Story Development: E.R. attempts to conceptualize stories that reflect a New York sensibility, moving away from English social nuances. As he writes, he becomes increasingly absorbed, finding joy in the creative process despite the looming completion of a contract. There is a

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Chapter 4 Summary: 4

Frederic Raphael's "Eyes Wide Open" delves into the complexities and nuances of filmmaking through the author's personal experiences, particularly highlighting the challenges he faced while collaborating with the legendary director Stanley Kubrick. This chapter unfolds a vivid narrative of Raphael's journey from scriptwriting to directing, illustrating the dynamics of creative collaboration and the psychological intricacies of being a writer in the film industry. Below are key points summarizing the content of Chapter 4:

- 1. Directing Opportunity:** Raphael's journey commenced when he proposed to write and direct *The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt*, a decision that surprised even him but underscored the rapid decision-making culture of American cinema. The production weathered a storm both literally and metaphorically, as the author navigated the challenges of directing his debut work.
- 2. Set Authority:** Raphael shares a formative experience regarding authority on set. During filming, he asserted his role as the director against his assistant's impulsive decision to call "cut," revealing insights about command and industry norms. He juxtaposed his experiences with that of other esteemed directors like Stanley Kubrick, illustrating the pressures and expectations placed on those in leadership roles in filmmaking.



3. Self-Reflection on Directing: Despite briefly enjoying the director's role, Raphael confesses doubts about pursuing directing further, suggesting that the artist's life of a writer, who needs only a pencil and paper, aligns better with his temperament. This comparison highlights the different worlds of writing and directing, shedding light on the inherent complexities of each.

4. Narrative Development: As he worked on the screenplay inspired by Arthur Schnitzler's **Traumnovelle**, Raphael discusses naming characters and fleshing out their backstories. He emphasizes the importance of swiftly filling the pages of a script, acknowledging that creating something, even if imperfect, is essential for moving forward artistically.

5. Character and Scene Design: The chapter captures Raphael's creative process in designing characters like Bill and Alice, using autobiographical elements and real experiences to enhance authenticity. His choice of settings and scenarios reflects a balancing act between emotional depth and narrative progression.

6. Engagement with Kubrick: The dialogue between Raphael and Kubrick illustrates the tension and excitement of collaboration, where Kubrick's direct feedback pushed Raphael to refine his writing while also feeling the weight of meeting the director's expectations. Their exchanges reveal Kubrick's keen eye for detail and refusal to accept mediocrity.



7. Personal Stakes and Emotions: Raphael details a personal emotional response following Kubrick's encouraging reaction to his draft, spotlighting the vulnerability and apprehension of sharing one's creative work. The balance between seeking validation and preserving artistic integrity emerges as a recurring theme in their interactions.

8. Cultural and Thematic Observations: There are reflections on broader socio-political themes such as identity, ethnicity, and the undertones of Jewish heritage in cinema. The ambiguity of motives and character depth poses significant contemplative aspects for both Raphael and Kubrick, hinting at the complexities ingrained in storytelling.

9. Evolution of the Script: Key moments in the screenplay, particularly concerning realism and tone within character interactions, change as Raphael adjusts the narrative based on feedback. His aim to capture contemporary New York life authentically drives revisions, reinforcing his belief that film demands both creative evolution and responsiveness to direction.

10. Legacy and Reflection: The chapter wraps up with Raphael contemplating the gravity of collaboration with a director of Kubrick's caliber, recognizing it as a pinnacle experience in his career. The emotional and psychological stakes depicted throughout articulate a deep appreciation



for the art form and the inherent challenges of creative expression.

Through this chapter, Frederic Raphael not only chronicles his personal journey but also paints a broader portrait of the challenges and rewards of creative collaboration in cinema, ultimately questioning the definitions of artistry, authority, and success.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 5

In Chapter 5 of "Eyes Wide Open" by Frederic Raphael, the complexities of Stanley Kubrick's character and his filmmaking process are explored, with a notable emphasis on the interplay of personal experience and artistic expression. The chapter delves deeply into Kubrick's unique perception of identity, particularly regarding his Jewish heritage, and how it reflected in his work, or perhaps lack thereof. He maintained a distinct distancing from direct encounters with themes of anti-Semitism and Jewish culture, despite his lineage, leading to questions about the psychological undercurrents in his art.

1. Kubrick's Disconnection from Jewish Identity: The text begins by examining Kubrick's assertion about his Jewish identity, separating it from his personal and artistic life. While he displayed a nuanced understanding of human behavior, he refrained from addressing themes of anti-Semitism or the complexity of Jewish identity directly in his work. His films, while rife with violence and darkness, reflect his fears and experiences in life rather than a direct commentary on Jewish existence or issues.

2. Artistic Control and Paranoia: The narrative suggests that Kubrick's tendency to confront horror through his films was an expression of his own fears in life, allowing him to control violence in an artistic realm. There's a suggested paranoia about critics and the media, leading him to erect barriers



that protected him from scrutiny while fostering an elusive public persona.

3. Struggles during Apprenticeship: Raphael shares anecdotes about Kubrick's early career struggles, highlighting the rejections and difficulties he faced as a burgeoning filmmaker. His attempt to adapt Louis Begley's **Wartime Lies** reflects his fascination with themes of deceit and survival, but illustrates his challenges in translating personal visions into successful cinematic narratives.

4. The Film Development Process: As Raphael collaborates with Kubrick on scripting, he unveils details about Kubrick's demanding nature and his meticulous approach to filmmaking. The director's insistence on control is evident in his rejection of overt character analyses and his preference for voiceover as a narrative device—creating ambiguity and allowing the viewer to assign meaning rather than presenting explicit motives through dialogue.

5. Scene Construction and Narrative Cohesion: The chapter emphasizes struggles and discussions around the film's narrative structure, particularly the importance of maintaining cohesion in storytelling. Raphael's concerns about character depth and emotional resonance clash with Kubrick's tendency to prioritize visual impact and thematic ambiguity. The dialogue showcases a tug-of-war between the writer's intentions and the director's vision, illustrating the inherently collaborative yet contentious nature of



filmmaking.

6. Evolving Collaboration and Tensions As the writing progresses, the evolving dynamics between Kubrick and Raphael gather intensity. The author's feelings of being both valuable and disposable to Kubrick reflect a nuanced view of artistic collaboration. The tension surrounding feedback, revisions, and the looming possibility of acknowledgment versus obscurity culminates in an exploration of the writer's vulnerabilities and aspirations within the creative process.

7. Conflict Over Creative Control: The chapter culminates in a pivotal moment of conflict regarding the handling of the script and the decisions made without Kubrick's approval. Raphael recounts a confrontation regarding his submission to agents, reflecting the intricate balance of trust, artistry, and commercial realities. Here, the battle for artistic integrity versus production demands becomes palpable.

Through these events, Kubrick emerges as a complex figure marked by ambition, vulnerability, and a persistent quest for perfection. Raphael's observations provide a rich tapestry of insights into the director's psyche and the challenges of bringing a unique artistic vision to fruition while navigating the politics of collaboration and filmmaking.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Complexity of Identity and Artistic Expression

Critical Interpretation: Imagine stepping into the shoes of an artist whose brilliance emerges not from what he directly portrays, but from the shadows of his own complexities and disconnections. In Chapter 5 of 'Eyes Wide Open,' the exploration of Stanley Kubrick's relationship with his Jewish identity serves as a powerful reminder that our personal narratives, while intricate and sometimes conflicting, profoundly shape our creative outputs. You may find yourself questioning how much of your own experiences and identity you consciously incorporate into your life and work. Just as Kubrick's films reflect his fears and understandings without overtly addressing his heritage, you might be inspired to embrace the nuances of your own identity—a source of strength that, while sometimes distanced from direct expression, enriches your world and art in unforeseen ways. This chapter beckons you to confront the parts of yourself that linger beneath the surface, urging you to understand that your complexity can fuel your creativity, and that acknowledging—even embracing—this complexity can lead to profound personal and artistic growth.



Chapter 6: 6

In the sixth chapter of "Eyes Wide Open" by Frederic Raphael, the inner workings of a film project with Stanley Kubrick, tentatively titled "Eyes Wide Shut," unfold through a mix of dialogue and introspection. Rafael expresses his frustrations and insights regarding Kubrick's creative process, illuminating the complexities of their collaboration.

1. The collaborative tension is evident as Raphael struggles with Kubrick's aloofness and unpredictability. Kubrick's dismissal of the title "The Female Subject" in favor of "Eyes Wide Shut" reflects the power dynamics at play. Raphael perceives Kubrick's reluctance to embrace artistry or theory, favoring a more conventional, almost routine filmmaking approach that stifles innovation.

2. The nature of their working relationship is characterized by a rollercoaster of admiration and discontent. Raphael notes how Kubrick isolates himself from influences that could challenge his vision, resulting in a paradox where his meticulousness breeds insecurity. He seeks to avoid unexpected

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Chapter 7 Summary: 7

In Chapter 7 of "Eyes Wide Open" by Frederic Raphael, the author delves into the intricate and often tense relationship between screenwriter Raphael and director Stanley Kubrick as they navigate the challenges of adapting Arthur Schnitzler's work for the screen. The chapter illustrates the creative tension inherent in the filmmaking process, as both parties seek to find common ground while retaining their artistic visions.

1. Creative Vision and Adaptation: The chapter begins with the contrast in approaches to the screenplay; initially, Kubrick seemed open to varying interpretations but later expressed a desire for a more straightforward adaptation. This shift indicates the struggle between maintaining originality while adhering to commercial expectations in filmmaking. The ongoing dialogue about the final scene highlights the need for emotional depth and authenticity rather than mere exposition.

2. Revisions and Artistic Integrity: Raphael recounts the arduous process of rewriting scenes to satisfy Kubrick's demands for specificity while keeping the essence intact. This iterative process reveals the often frustrating reality faced by writers when their creative input is subject to interpretation and reduction in the pursuit of cinematic clarity. Raphael likens this experience to creating a "color-it-yourself book" where his contributions are diluted, striving for Kubrick's approval.



3. The Dynamics of Collaboration: The conversation shifts to their shared focus on the actors capable of delivering the intended emotions, drawing a parallel between the art of writing and acting. Kubrick's unwavering high standards foster a complicated relationship that oscillates between admiration and tension. The author reflects on how, despite the creative exhaustion, the collaborative effort remains a privilege that breeds a yearning for the artistic camaraderie established through their regular exchanges.

4. Kubrick's Unique Directorial Style: The narrative also highlights Kubrick's idiosyncratic directorial philosophy, aligning his penchant for precision with a disdain for verbosity. The chapter reflects on how Kubrick's editing reduced the screenplay to a more skeletal format, often sacrificing the richness of language for the sake of succinctness. This reduction triggers Raphael's contemplation about the essence of cinematic storytelling, as he grapples with the duality of his role as a writer and as a critical observer of Kubrick's revisions.

5. Response to the Rewritten Script: Upon receiving the newly revised script, Raphael experiences mixed emotions. Although he sees his original ideas and lines, many have been replaced with more basic dialogue, instigating self-reflection on the value of his creative contributions. The act of critiquing the script lays bare the underlying power dynamics in their



relationship; Raphael is positioned as both the confidant and the critic.

6. Anticipation and Closure: The chapter culminates in an encounter where Raphael is invited to provide his thoughts on the latest version of the screenplay. This moment symbolizes the mutual respect embedded in their partnership, as Raphael acknowledges the vulnerabilities inherent in the creative process, embodying the collaborative spirit between creator and director. Despite their differences, the ongoing dialogues suggest the intertwined nature of their artistic pursuits and reinforce the notion that their partnership, despite its strains, is pivotal to the filmmaking journey.

Throughout Chapter 7, Raphael vividly captures the complexities of artistic collaboration, shedding light on the patience, negotiations, and eventual camaraderie that can emerge from the often fractious process of bringing a script to life in the cinematic world.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Power of Collaborative Creativity

Critical Interpretation: Journey through the intricate dance of creative collaboration where opposing visions can cultivate a richer outcome. Picture yourself in the shoes of a writer working alongside a demanding director, much like Frederic Raphael with Stanley Kubrick. Embrace the idea that tension and negotiation can lead not just to frustration but to a deepened artistic integrity and emotional resonance in your projects. Just as Raphael had to revise repeatedly to meld his unique voice with Kubrick's vision, you can find inspiration in the challenges of collaboration. Consider your own partnerships: when faced with conflict, instead of retreating or resisting, why not lean into the dialogue, see it as a chance to enhance your work, and allow the interplay of ideas to elevate your creative expression? Let the friction you encounter in your endeavors remind you that true artistry is often born from the delicate balance of negotiation and respect.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 8

In Chapter 8 of "Eyes Wide Open," the narrative revolves around the professional relationship between Frederic Raphael and the renowned director Stanley Kubrick as they collaborate on the script for "Eyes Wide Shut." The dialogue between them captures a mix of gratitude and tension, reflecting the dynamics of their creative interaction.

1. The chapter opens with a back-and-forth about the script, where Frederic is tasked with rewriting to align with Stanley's vision. There is a recognition of the pressure involved; Frederic understands the weight of the creative process on Kubrick's shoulders, as he must assimilate the script to fit his directorial style.
2. Their exchange showcases the complexity of their relationship: while Kubrick expresses appreciation, Frederic's feelings are more nuanced, combining relief and a sense of cautious camaraderie. This dynamic illustrates the often tumultuous yet essential bonds formed in the creative sphere, where ideas and ownership can be drastically challenged.
3. Despite the initial struggles with the script—shaped by previous revisions—Frederic passionately revises and expands on what Kubrick had provided, seeing it as an opportunity to contribute meaningfully. This indicates his investment not just in the script but in the success of the film,



particularly recognizing and valuing the star power of Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

4. Communications between Kubrick and Frederic transition from transactional to more collegial, hinting at a growing mutual trust. Frederic's willingness to go beyond contractual obligations reflects his commitment to the project, and their discussions about the industry reveal their shared understanding of the film-making process.

5. As work progresses, Frederic feels a sense of liberation in his revisions, suggesting an evolution of their professional relationship into a partnership of sorts. The narrative underscores the creative tension inherent in scriptwriting as they navigate Kubrick's meticulous demands while maintaining the essence of the original work.

6. The chapter closes on a poignant note, marking the bittersweet culmination of their collaboration when "Eyes Wide Shut" finally begins shooting. Frederic's reflections conjure a blend of pride and sorrow, aware that Kubrick has, after years of attempting to adapt Schnitzler's work, finally brought his vision to fruition.

7. Ultimately, the narrative transitions to a somber conclusion with the announcement of Kubrick's death. Frederic recalls the artistic journey they've shared and underscores his satisfaction in having played a role in



enabling Kubrick's filmmaking dreams, highlighting the impermanence of life and legacy in the arts.

Through these reflections, the chapter presents a rich tapestry of creativity, partnership, and the complexities that accompany artistic collaboration, ultimately evoking a sense of nostalgia for both the process and the individuals involved.

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