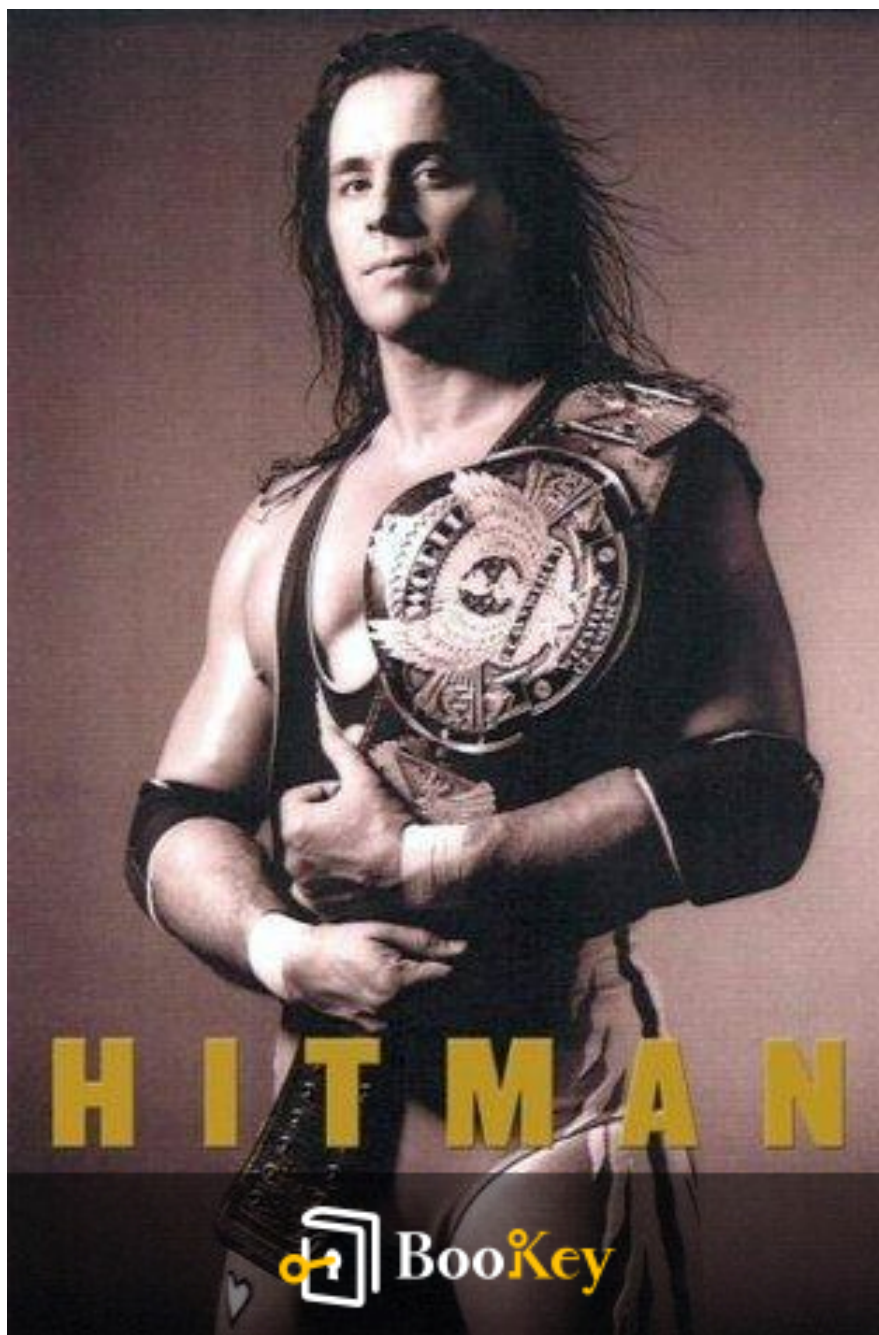


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Bret Hart



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Hitman Summary

A Champion's Journey Through Wrestling and Personal Struggles.

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About the book

"Hitman: My Real Life in the Cartoon World of Wrestling" by Bret Hart is a compelling memoir that takes readers deep into the heart of professional wrestling, revealing the grit, passion, and personal struggles that defined his extraordinary career. Hart, revered as one of the greatest wrestlers of all time, offers an insider's perspective on the ruthless yet captivating world of sports entertainment, where the lines between fiction and reality blur. From growing up in the infamous Hart wrestling dynasty in Calgary to experiencing the heights of fame and the crushing lows of betrayal, this book chronicles his journey with raw honesty and remarkable detail. With an exploration of themes like family loyalty, sacrifice, and the pursuit of excellence, readers will be drawn into a riveting tale that transcends the ring, compelling them to confront the highs and lows of their own life's battles.

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About the author

Bret Hart, a Canadian professional wrestler, author, and actor, is best known for his time with the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and World Championship Wrestling (WCW) during the 1990s. Born on July 2, 1957, in Calgary, Alberta, Hart comes from a legendary wrestling family, which includes his father, Stu Hart, a prominent figure in the wrestling world and the founder of the infamous Hart Dungeon. With a career spanning over two decades, Hart garnered acclaim for his technical wrestling skills, charismatic persona, and storytelling abilities, earning the moniker "The Hitman". His memoir, 'Hitman: My Real Life in the Cartoon World of Wrestling,' offers a candid and introspective look at his life both inside and outside the ring, highlighting the personal and professional struggles he faced, and providing an unfiltered insight into the chaotic world of professional wrestling.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1

In "Hitman," Chapter 1 titled "Hart Boy," Bret Hart reflects on his early memories of wrestling and the deeply intertwined lives of his family in Calgary, Alberta. This chapter begins with a vivid childhood recollection from 1960, when a three-year-old Bret and his siblings watched their father's wrestling show on television. The drama unfolding onscreen, particularly the frightening moment when Kowalski seemed to injure Tex McKenzie, immediately captivates young Bret, setting a foundation for his fascination with wrestling.

1. The Hart Family Dynamics

The chapter paints a lively portrait of the Hart family, with Bret as the youngest of nine children whose mother, Helen, is often preoccupied with the chaos of family life. Their father, Stu Hart, is depicted as a determined yet oftentimes imperious figure, balancing his wrestling career with family responsibilities. Despite the family's ups and downs, including moments of financial strain and tension, there exists an underlying deep bond among the Hart siblings, who often engage in playful, competitive wrestling matches and other adventures.

2. The Origins of Wrestling Fame

Bret traces his father's rise from poverty in Saskatchewan through his successes as a wrestler in the U.S. and his eventual establishment of a

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wrestling territory in Calgary. The timeline provided illustrates how television revolutionized professional wrestling, making it a popular form of entertainment during their childhood years. The financial struggles following a decline in television popularity reveal the tenuous nature of the wrestling business.

3. Lessons in Life and Loss

As Bret recounts his experiences with death at a young age, he learns about the impermanence of life through the loss of Riotcall Jim Wright, a wrestler close to their family. His mother explains death with grace but also reveals her pragmatic belief in providing for the family, emphasizing the reality of their situation as performers in a demanding industry.

4. The Challenge of Growing Up in the Hart Household

Bret paints a colorful image of growing up in a large, boisterous household filled with rough-and-tumble play and sibling rivalry. He shares anecdotes about his brothers that depict the nearly constant competition and training he underwent even as a young child, with wrestling skills being imparted through spirited family matches. He has a complicated relationship with each sibling, including a protective older brother and intense rivalries spurred on by their father's expectations.

5. Adventures, Struggles, and the Awakening of Resentments

The narrative touches upon Bret's perspectives on womanhood, family trees,

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and the expectations placed upon him. Experiences from running away as a young boy due to parental tensions to contributing at Clearwater Beach exhibit how he learned to navigate love, anger, and vulnerability within the family structure. He examines the push and pull of familial relationships intertwined with the demands of wrestling life.

6. The Transformation of Wrestling into a Business

With the influx of characters like Sweet Daddy Siki into the wrestling scene, the chapter explores how wrestling gradually shifted from simply a sport to a spectacle. Bret observes how various personalities contribute to the industry's evolution and public perception, realizing the complex performance aspects tied to wrestling that would later shape his own career.

Bret Hart's narrative is rich in detail, blending vivid childhood memories and reflections on family life while offering insight into the wrestling industry. The chapter's evocative storytelling serves to lay the groundwork for understanding both the pressures and bonds of the Hart family as they navigate the professional wrestling world. The reader is drawn into a world where familial loyalty, toughness, and ambition coalesce amid the backdrop of the wrestling ring.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Importance of Family Bonds and Support

Critical Interpretation: In the heart of your journey, as you navigate the complexities of life, remember the strong bonds that shaped Bret Hart's early years. Imagine standing in the chaotic, love-filled atmosphere of your own family, where each voice echoes the laughter of competition and playful rivalry. Just like Bret, you too can draw strength and inspiration from the relationships you cultivate. Embrace the support that comes from those closest to you; it will be your foundation in times of struggle and your cheerleaders in moments of triumph. In a world filled with challenges, let the unwavering loyalty of your loved ones remind you that together, you can rise above and achieve greatness.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 2

Throughout the year, my focus on academics dwindled, but I did join the wrestling team alongside my brother Dean. However, a demanding training session before the provincial championships left me so sore that I performed poorly, contemplating giving up wrestling altogether. My siblings, already engaged in professional wrestling, had their own struggles; Bruce suffered an injury and required surgery, while Smith dealt with personal scandals that involved my former girlfriend, Marla, and the birth of an illegitimate child—issues that threatened the family’s carefully cultivated reputation.

Despite family strife, I aimed to join the football team in the fall. This endeavor required rigorous training, which I undertook seriously, even as my growth in strength and height caused tension among my siblings. The summer was marred by the death of my grandfather, prompting a move into his basement room—an unheated space that became my refuge.

Morning drives with my father to wrestling practice marked a turning point in our relationship, allowing us to bond over shared discussions of his life and disappointments with my brother Smith. This newfound intimacy created complexities in our family dynamics, particularly during heated moments when I felt wronged by my father’s actions. A particularly troubling incident during football season saw him physically overpowering me in an altercation after a minor argument with my sister. Yet, I vowed



never to allow such treatment again, and ultimately, this incident led to him apologizing, marking a shift in our relationship.

As the fall approached, Stampede Wrestling regained my interest with the arrival of new personalities like Kendo Nagasaki, reflecting the excitement surrounding the sport. My experiences in wrestling began to awaken my own ambitions, and by the time I was sixteen, I was delving into greater personal relationships, largely influenced by my brothers' introductions to the opposite sex and the excitement surrounding wrestling events.

Transitioning into competitive wrestling, I was determined to make a name for myself and carried the expectation of winning the gold medal that had previously eluded my brother Dean. Through my dedication, I clinched the city championship, which filled my father with pride, though an injury ultimately prevented me from achieving a provincial medal afterward. My personal life continued to unfold with ups and downs, including my relationship with my girlfriend Sue, which ended due to family interference and external pressures.

After several struggles, including academic setbacks and coaching biases against me due to my wrestling lineage, I decided to pursue other career paths like film school, which ultimately didn't fit my focus. Instead, my wrestling background soon found me in conversations about my potential within the industry, particularly when well-known figures began to take an

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interest in my career.

Amid the tumultuous nature of my family's wrestling legacy, I found myself juggling various roles within the industry—initially as a referee before taking on wrestling training—which allowed me to gain insight into the business of wrestling itself. The comedic yet serious dynamic of travel, partnerships with seasoned wrestlers, and personal challenges formed the tapestry of my early career journeys that were as much about survival as they were about success.

By the time I ventured into professional wrestling, breaking in during my first matches, I faced the intimidating reality of the ring against seasoned competitors. My initial debut revealed the raw realities of the wrestling world and what was to come—pain, resilience, and the push toward personal legacy amidst the struggles of familial expectations and the demanding nature of pro wrestling culture.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resilience in the face of adversity

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 2 of 'Hitman,' the narrative illustrates the profound importance of resilience when faced with overwhelming challenges. Whether it was the physical exhaustion from demanding training sessions, familial struggles, or personal conflicts, the protagonist learns that perseverance is vital. This could inspire your life by reminding you that, even in your lowest moments, you can choose to rise above and fight through difficulties. Every setback, whether in academics, relationships, or personal endeavors, could be reframed as a stepping stone towards achieving your dreams. By embracing resilience, you can transform your struggles into strengths, using them to motivate and propel you forward, just as the author did within the tumultuous world of wrestling.

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Chapter 3: 3

In Chapter 3 of "Hitman" by Bret Hart, the chaos and unpredictability of life as a professional wrestler are vividly detailed through Hart's experiences in Puerto Rico. Frenchie and Fidel confront a hostile crowd, and amidst the tumult, Hart's instincts kick in as he watches the riot unfold and contemplates the dangers surrounding wrestling fame. He recalls the physical and emotional toll of performing and reassesses his commitment to the sport as he suffers through sickness and injuries, including a painful shoulder.

The chapter delves into Hart's recovery from illness and the dietary choices made to sustain his health during grueling matches. A humorous interchange occurs when Smith, his wrestling partner, encounters a Puerto Rican girl named Maria, injecting camaraderie and personal connections into their otherwise challenging existence. Their experiences at La Concha, a luxurious hotel, become pockets of comfort amid their hardships.

Hart's wrestling journey begins to shape who he is, as he learns valuable

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Chapter 4 Summary: 4

In Chapter 4 of "Hitman" by Bret Hart, the author intricately paints a vivid picture of life wrestling, showcasing both its humor and the seriousness woven through the fabric of the sport. The chapter begins with a focus on Harley Race, a legendary figure in wrestling, whose toughness and charisma command immense respect. Harley's physical resilience is highlighted through his impressive strength and numerous battles, both in and out of the ring. The Hart family, noted for their own contributions to wrestling, holds Harley in high esteem, reflecting the mutual respect that defined their relationships within the wrestling community.

The narrative shifts to a lively wrestling event, capturing the eclectic atmosphere of a packed pavilion. Hart describes unexpected moments of levity, such as a chimpanzee that joins a wrestling match, leading to both laughter and frustration among the wrestlers. This incident epitomizes the blend of theatrics and athleticism characteristic of wrestling, while also illustrating the tension between wanting to be taken seriously and the inherent silliness of the performances.

Hart details his interactions with notable wrestlers, including André the Giant, who brings his own charm and familiarity to the locker room. The camaraderie and playful banter among wrestlers reveal the close-knit nature of the wrestling community, even as they express concerns about their

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physical well-being.

As Hart prepares for his match against Dynamite Kid, he reflects on the exhausting schedule and camaraderie shared with fellow wrestlers. Although they ultimately receive praise for their performance, Harley reminds them of the risks associated with taking excessive bumps in the ring. The authenticity of their experiences is emphasized, as Hart recounts his drive with André to the airport under chaotic circumstances, culminating in a humorous yet tense encounter with a police officer.

The chapter further explores the challenges of sustaining wrestling territories and the competitive nature of the industry. Hart recounts the ups and downs experienced by wrestlers, such as Big Jim Neidhart's transition to football and the struggles faced by various wrestlers in maintaining their status within the industry. The narrative weaves personal relationships into the story, notably Hart's budding romance with Julie, which adds a layer of depth and emotional resonance against the backdrop of wrestling's relentless pace.

The chapter's progression underscores the unpredictability of wrestling as it delves into Hart's desire to break out of his father's territory and forge his path. Opportunities arise and slip away, as the narrative shifts to important upcoming events and the whirlwind of matches that characterize Hart's life. The dream sequences hint at his aspirations and fears, capturing the essence

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of a performer striving for recognition amid an unforgiving environment.

As Hart prepares for a significant transitional moment in his career, the chapter concludes with reflections on wrestling's realities—its challenges, camaraderie, and the emotional stakes involved in the quest for success. Ultimately, this chapter chronicles a period of growth for Hart as he navigates the complexities of the wrestling world while striving to make his mark.

1. **Character Profiles:** Through detailed descriptions, Harley Race's respect within the wrestling world is established, alongside Hart's reflections on André the Giant and the humor that punctuated their experiences.
2. **Camaraderie and Competition:** The camaraderie among wrestlers is depicted through shared moments, contrasting with the competitive challenges they face in sustaining their careers and territories.
3. **Realities of Wrestling:** The chapter illustrates the physical and emotional toll wrestling takes on its performers, highlighting conversations about bumps and injuries that resonate throughout their lives.
4. **Personal Relationships:** Hart's connections, particularly with Julie, are woven into his wrestling narrative, adding personal stakes to his professional journey.
5. **Dreams and Aspirations:** Hart's aspirations and frustrations are echoed in the dream sequences, capturing his desire for recognition and the

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impending challenges as he prepares to leave his father's territory for new opportunities.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of camaraderie amidst competition in life.

Critical Interpretation: In the unpredictable arena of life, just like in the wrestling ring, the bonds we forge with those around us serve as our lifelines. When faced with challenges, remember the camaraderie shared among wrestlers like Bret Hart and Harley Race. Recognize that while striving for personal success is vital, the support and friendship of others can uplift you, helping to navigate the hurdles along the way. Embrace your relationships, share laughs, and find strength in unity—allowing you to tackle life’s uncertainties with a robust support network that doesn’t just celebrate your victories, but also provides comfort during setbacks.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 5

On a lively Friday evening, the narrator reflects on Cowboy's joy after winning the World Midget Championship, excitedly preparing to celebrate with champagne. Amidst the match festivities, the narrator documents his insights into wrestling, emphasizing the importance of match structure, such as avoiding two consecutive disqualifications and ensuring realism in outcomes. The camaraderie in the wrestling territory, filled with both veterans and newcomers, fosters a relaxed atmosphere where everyone, including the narrator, works hard and remains respectful.

A significant moment arises when Leo, a seasoned wrestler, insists the narrator take the North American Heavy-weight title from him, highlighting the challenges of balancing personal desires with business considerations. A gripping match ensues, marked by skillful wrestling maneuvers where Leo expertly plays his role, even sustaining a bloodline for dramatic effect without causing real harm. Following the match, the narrator contends with minor injuries but remains motivated and reflective.

As the narrator travels through various locations for matches, including a deeply personal struggle involving a new opponent, Duke Myers, he navigates interpersonal relationships complicated by the wrestling lifestyle. He balances his budding relationship with Julie against the backdrop of wrestling tours, all while managing the pressures of family legacy and the



wrestling business.

The narrative shifts to Japan, where the narrator and his brother Keith are picked up by influential wrestlers and immersed in a new wrestling culture. Adjusting to their unfamiliar surroundings, they encounter challenges with Japanese wrestling styles that demand adjustments in their techniques. Despite these difficulties, the narrator finds moments of joy, forming connections with local culture, while grappling with homesickness and the harsh realities of the wrestling world.

Returning home, personal relationships deepen and evolve, with the narrator pondering over Julie's acceptance of his wrestling lifestyle. Tensions mount during family gatherings, with sibling dynamics complicating personal and professional lives as wrestling continues to demand sacrifices. Through further conflicts and triumphant matches, including memorable bouts against prominent wrestlers like Nick Bockwinkle, the narrator establishes himself within the wrestling scene, culminating in a powerful birthday moment and pivotal encounters that define his wrestling journey.

As the summer closes, the narrator navigates the conflicts within his family and peers, all while striving for recognition in the wrestling world, set against an increasingly complex backdrop of love, ambition, and legacy.

Element	Summary
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Element	Summary
Setting	Friday evening, celebratory atmosphere after Cowboy wins Championship.
Main Themes	Wrestling dynamics, personal vs. professional balance, camaraderie, legacy.
Key Moment	Leo offers narrator the North American Heavy-weight title; dramatic wrestling match ensues.
Narrator's Journey	Faces injuries, navigates personal relationships, especially with Julie amid wrestling life.
Japan Experience	Adapts to new culture and wrestling styles; struggles with homesickness and professional challenges.
Family Dynamics	Tensions arise during family events; complicates personal and professional life.
Character Development	Narrator establishes his identity in wrestling through key matches and personal reflections.
Climax	Birthday moment and matches against notable wrestlers define narrator's journey.
Conclusion	Narrator seeks recognition in wrestling while managing love, ambition, and family legacy complexities.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Pursuing Passion Amidst Challenges

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 5 of 'Hitman,' you witness the intense struggle between personal desire and professional ambition, particularly through the protagonist's journey in wrestling. This serves as a powerful reminder that dedication to one's passion can come with sacrifices and challenges. Imagine stepping into your own arena, whether it's pursuing a career, hobby, or personal dream, and feeling the weight of expectations from others. You might face setbacks, complex relationships, or moments of self-doubt, just as the narrator does. But in embracing these struggles and prioritizing what you love, much like the narrator balances wrestling and family, you find growth and fulfillment. His journey encourages you to invest in your passions wholeheartedly—understanding that while challenges may arise, the joy and connections you create along the way are what truly define success.

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Chapter 6: 6

The narrative unfolds in a vibrant and tumultuous backdrop, where a diverse cast of wrestlers from various corners of the globe congregates in Germany for a tournament rich in tradition and dedication. Among them is Axel Dieter, a seasoned German babyface who epitomizes the old guard, contrasting starkly with emerging talent. The author recounts his initial experiences in this foreign land, reflecting on the stark age disparity between the aging German wrestlers and the youthful challengers from around the world. Each match evoked fervor from the crowd, revealing the enthusiastic spirit of the German fans.

1. The author, wrestling under the name "Bob Della Serra," faces off against the masked French Canadian, UFO. Their match, a homage to traditional wrestling, garners applause, yet the reality of the author's standing begins to set in. Despite a great performance, the author's future appearances dwindle, as he is perceived as a threat to the established veterans. Encouraged by his temporary success, he faces the unsettling prospect of being sidelined in favor of others, notably his partner Jim, who is built up as a top heel.

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 7 Summary: 7

In late October, a bus trip to Saskatoon brought a mix of excitement and tension among the wrestlers on board. Bret Hart sat with Bruce, while the new recruit, Karl Moffat, made his first road trip, still starstruck by the experienced wrestler, Bad News Allen. As the camaraderie unfolded, Bruce shared the false tidbit that Bad News's daughter had been accepted into Juilliard as a prodigy, leading Karl to confront Bad News with congratulations. This sparked Bad News's fury when he revealed that his daughter had lost her hands in an accident, showcasing the intense emotions within the wrestling world. Karl, terrified by the encounter, broke down in tears, while the rest of the wrestlers laughed at the absurdity of it all.

The journey continued with Karl spiraling into a drinking binge to cope with his embarrassment, prompting more chaotic hilarity among the crew. After a late-night return to Calgary, unresolved tensions simmered, notably concerning Bad News's volatile persona. His earlier actions had already garnered him bad standing with the commission, and the repercussions of his temperament would soon lead to a series of unfortunate events.

Meanwhile, Bret received promising news from Leo Burke about an opportunity in Toronto with the Crocketts, though he faced the challenge of adopting the moniker "Buddy The Heartthrob Hart" due to another wrestler's name. Despite his disdain for it, this opening was a chance Bret

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had been waiting for.

Plans were made for a significant match involving multiple wrestlers, but trouble loomed as the head of the Calgary Boxing and Wrestling Commission eyed Bad News with disapproval. Tensions reached a boiling point during a match where Bad News's recklessness led to chaos, ultimately resulting in his suspension and the wrestling promotion's downfall. The atmosphere grew darker as love and violence collided in the ring, and the fallout threatened the future of the wrestling territory.

As Bret prepared to fly to Toronto, the looming media scrutiny around the wrestling industry added to the pressure on him and his family. Facing another child on the way and dealing with personal strife only heightened Bret's anxiety as he stepped into a new chapter of his life.

The narrative transitions to Bret's experiences in Japan, where he wrestled with familiar faces but also faced new challenges, including navigating personal relationships with family and contemporaries alike. Surrounded by the evolving wrestling landscape, including the rise of figures like Hulk Hogan, Bret grappled with both professional and personal dilemmas.

Amidst mounting pressures and the realization that he needed to adopt new strategies to contend with the competitive nature of professional wrestling, Bret struggled with his identity and choices in a business increasingly

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dominated by physical appearance and substance use. Faced with the tough decision to use steroids, the consequences of doing so affected his health and values.

Around this time, significant family developments occurred with the birth of Bret's son, deepening his commitment to provide for his family. But the turmoil within his personal life, compounded by the wrestling world's shift towards steroid use and the eventual sale of the family's wrestling promotion to Vince McMahon, left Bret feeling torn.

The final matches with the Calgary promotion brought mixed feelings of closure and uncertainty. While celebrating achievements in the ring, Bret felt the weight of nostalgia and sadness as the long-standing wrestling tradition came to an end. As wrestling transitioned into a new era under WWF's influence, Bret recognized that the bonds formed with fellow wrestlers were invaluable but also faced an intriguing crossroads in his own career.

This chapter encapsulates the complex world of wrestling intertwined with personal struggles, showing Bret Hart's growth, the trials and tribulations of the wrestling business, the simultaneous rise and fall of personal and professional allegiances, and the inevitable changes that reshaped the wrestling landscape forever.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Vulnerability

Critical Interpretation: Throughout the chaos and tension of Chapter 7, you witness the poignant emotional struggles that come with life's challenges—whether it's facing embarrassment, navigating personal relationships, or coping with the volatile nature of your environment. Just like Karl, who let his vulnerability be seen, it's a powerful reminder that embracing our own shortcomings can lead to growth and connection. Instead of hiding behind a facade or trying to appear strong, consider allowing yourself to show your authentic self. In doing so, you can create deeper connections with those around you, invite support during tough times, and ultimately pave the way for genuine resilience and personal evolution.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 8

In the heart of Chapter 8 from "Hitman" by Bret Hart, the author immerses us in his tumultuous journey as he transitions into the WWF (World Wrestling Federation) during the mid-1980s. This chapter captures the essence of resilience, personal struggle, and the cutthroat world of professional wrestling. By recognizing the duality of his experiences, Hart presents a narrative both rich in detail and laden with emotional complexity, allowing us to comprehend the psychological toll of a life spent grappling with self-doubt, familial loyalty, and the evolving landscape of wrestling.

1. As Hart made his way into the WWF, he found himself in Japan undergoing a wrestling tour, driven by skepticism regarding the promises made to him. Despite his accomplishments, a lingering sense of failure overshadowed his confidence as he grappled with feelings of inadequacy compared to his peers, especially Tom and Davey, who were thriving while he felt like a mere shadow.
2. Upon returning to Calgary for his WWF debut, the stark contrast between his past as a local star and his new role as an undercard competitor became painfully evident. The small, unenthusiastic crowd in Calgary reflected the harsh reality he confronted: no longer the big fish in a small pond, he was merely another name in the lineup.

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3. Hart's road experience gave him insight into the WWF's prevailing culture, filled with rowdy antics and camaraderie, yet he also met with the harsh truth that his standing was tenuous. A conversation with Dave Schultz offered a moment of solace and an affirmation of his skills, contrasting the trials he endured while trying to establish his place in this new organization.

4. The logistics of traveling between venues showcased the exhausting grind of life on the wrestling road. Hart's journey included flying on commercial jets and navigating unfamiliar surroundings, encountering characters and dynamics that left a lasting impression on him, such as the notable encounter with Pat Patterson, who acknowledged him as part of the wrestling fraternity despite his rookie status.

5. Hart's initial paydays in the WWF revealed the potential financial rewards entailed in this new chapter of his career, yet they were juxtaposed with relational strains back home as his wife, Julie, expressed doubts about the sustainability of his wrestling future. The tension between professional ambition and personal fulfillment became a recurring theme.

6. As the WWF's national expansion led by Vince McMahon gained momentum, the groundwork for the landmark event, WrestleMania, began to take shape. McMahon's visionary idea would not only revolutionize wrestling but also transform Hart's career along with the entire industry; however, it instilled fears among the wrestlers regarding the enormity of the

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stakes involved in one monumental show.

7. With family dynamics playing a critical role, Hart faced additional complexity as his brother Bruce pursued a competing promotion initiative, sowing seeds of discord concerning their father Stu Hart's legacy. This incident further compounded Hart's internal conflict regarding loyalty to family versus ambition within the wrestling business.

8. Through the subsequent months, Hart navigated a tumultuous pathway filled with both personal victories and setbacks, culminating in confrontations with the realities of drug use and the pressures of sustaining a career in professional wrestling. He illustrated the darker side of the industry that entailed reliance on substances to maintain a competitive edge.

9. As Hart worked diligently to secure his position within the WWF while experimenting with various gimmicks and angles, he ultimately embraced the uncertainty of his trajectory, buoyed by the support of friends in the ranks and the camaraderie that characterized the wrestling culture.

This chapter ultimately serves as both a reflection on Hart's initial trials in the WWF and a commentary on the broader experiences within the wrestling world during an era of transformation. Each detail contributes to the richer tapestry of his narrative, which embodies the struggles, triumphs, and hard-won lessons of a career that is anything but predictable.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embracing Uncertainty and Resilience

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 8 of 'Hitman,' Bret Hart's journey into the WWF exemplifies the importance of embracing uncertainty and resilience when faced with daunting challenges. Just as Hart navigates the unpredictable waters of professional wrestling, you too will encounter periods in your life where the future seems murky and your path unclear. This chapter inspires you to muster the strength to forge ahead despite self-doubt, showing that it is in these moments of trial that you can discover your true potential. Remember, just like Hart, every setback can serve as a stepping stone that helps you grow and galvanize your resolve, shaping you into a more resilient individual capable of overcoming life's obstacles.

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Chapter 9: 9

At 1 a.m., I found myself at George's hotel room, where he was winding down after a long day of television work. My hesitation to embrace a cowboy persona led to an unexpected spark of imagination, suggesting a new tag team identity called The Hart Foundation, alongside Jimmy Hart and Neidhart. George, patient and understanding, reassured me that my promising looks wouldn't suit a villainous role, yet he remained optimistic about crafting a unique character for me.

Tension filled the Detroit dressing room as we faced the repercussions of a damaging report that aired, threatening the wrestling industry. However, the press inadvertently resulted in increased interest, solidifying Vince McMahon's principle that any publicity is good publicity. As developments unfolded back in Calgary, Bruce Hart's partnership fell apart, leading to the launch of Stampede Wrestling without his involvement, and my involvement in the WWF became increasingly uncertain.

I took a leap of faith and reached out to George, who confirmed that my

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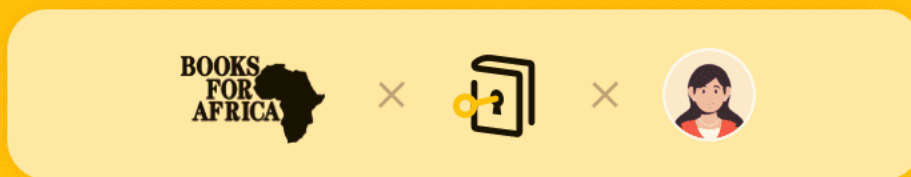
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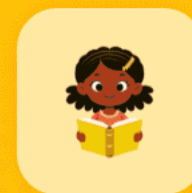
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Chapter 10 Summary: 10

Chapter 10 of "Hitman" by Bret Hart delves into the complexities of life as a professional wrestler, highlighting personal achievements, familial connections, the dynamics of camaraderie and rivalry in wrestling, as well as the perils that accompany fame.

1. The Professional Landscape: The chapter opens with the major stars of wrestling, specifically Hulk Hogan, who bask in well-earned luxuries. Hart reflects on his experience in a battle royal that leads to camaraderie among wrestlers, illustrating his respect for peers like André the Giant. The storytelling captures the intricate choreography of a wrestling match as well as the unspoken bonds formed backstage. When Hart suggests a change to André's finishing move, it symbolizes a culture where respect and expertise allow for collaborative creativity.

2. Shared Struggles and Triumphs The narrative describes the journey of wrestlers transitioning from modest beginnings to newfound success, with moments of celebration shared among friends. Jim Neidhart and Hart have formed a powerful partnership in The Hart Foundation, showcasing the importance of collaboration amongst wrestlers. Hart reminisces about supporting his family while grappling with the burdens of financial responsibilities after achieving his dream of a big home.

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3. Family Dynamics: Hart's relationship with his parents is portrayed through his visits home where he comforts his mother amid her fears for their struggling wrestling promotion. His encouragement for his brother Owen to enter the wrestling business speaks to Hart's protective and guiding role within his family. The bond shared by the Hart family, intertwined with the realities of the wrestling world adds emotional depth to the narrative.

4. Life on the Road: Hart and Neidhart's close friendship shines through their humorous interactions while on the road. Despite the high-stakes wrestling environment where teams often face internal strife, their relationship remains steadfast as they support one another. The pay structure and the inequalities in earnings among wrestlers are also depicted, illustrating the unpredictable nature of fame and financial security.

5. The Effects of Fame and Lifestyle Choices: As the chapter progresses, the darker sides of the wrestling lifestyle emerge. Hart candidly acknowledges temptations surrounding substance use, having seen peers struggling with addiction. Through his reflections on personal choices concerning women and nightlife, he openly grapples with guilt but simultaneously recognizes pride in his dynamic lifestyle devoid of deep-seated troubles.

6. Risks and Rewards in Business: Themes of ambition, professional rivalry, and job security are further explored when Hart tries to get Owen a

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tryout with the WWF. Hart's interactions with Vince McMahon underscore the cutthroat nature of professional wrestling. The chapter reveals Hart's frustration with promotional decisions that affect his career trajectory and those of his family members.

7. Embracing Change and Adaptation: The narrative also encapsulates the period of change in the wrestling industry, especially with new talents emerging. Hart reflects on the challenges posed by the evolving landscape of the WWF and the way it affects seasoned wrestlers. Competition heats up, signaling an uncertain future as they navigate unfamiliar dynamics in the company.

Ultimately, Chapter 10 of "Hitman" encapsulates the thrilling yet tumultuous life Bret Hart lived as a professional wrestler, revealing his dedication, ambitions, and the heartfelt bonds formed along the way, all while navigating the complex professional wrestling environment and its inherent struggles.

Section	Summary
The Professional Landscape	Highlights the life of major wrestling stars, camaraderie among wrestlers, and the collaborative nature of wrestling creativity, represented by Hart's interaction with André the Giant.
Shared Struggles and Triumphs	Describes wrestlers' journeys from humble beginnings to success, emphasizing teamwork in The Hart Foundation and Hart's financial responsibilities to his family.

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Section	Summary
Family Dynamics	Details Hart's close bond with his family, his support for their wrestling promotion, and his encouragement for his brother Owen to join wrestling.
Life on the Road	Depicts Hart's friendship with Neidhart, their humorous interactions, and the financial inequalities wrestlers face, highlighting the unpredictability of fame.
The Effects of Fame and Lifestyle Choices	Examines the temptations of substance use and the lifestyle choices wrestlers face, combining feelings of guilt with pride in his vibrant life.
Risks and Rewards in Business	Explores professional rivalry, job security, and Hart's frustrations with promotional decisions affecting his and Owen's careers amidst the competitive wrestling business.
Embracing Change and Adaptation	Reflects on the evolving wrestling industry and the challenges it presents to seasoned wrestlers, as competition increases and dynamics shift within the WWF.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Collaboration and Respect Among Peers

Critical Interpretation: As you reflect on the camaraderie Bret Hart describes among wrestlers, let it inspire you to appreciate the power of collaboration in your own life. Just like Hart's suggestion to André emphasized a culture of respect and collective creativity, remember that true success often comes not just from individual talent but from the ability to work with others. By valuing the opinions, skills, and perspectives of those around you, you can forge deeper connections and unlock new possibilities. Embrace teamwork in your endeavors, whether in professional settings or personal pursuits; for when you collaborate with respect, you not only elevate your achievements but also enrich your journey, weaving a tapestry of shared triumphs and challenges.

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Chapter 11 Summary: 11

In the later chapters of "Hitman" by Bret Hart, the narrative dives into the chaotic and tumultuous world of professional wrestling, focusing on the challenges faced by the author and others in the WWF during the late 1980s. The text captures a vivid blend of personal reflection, professional insights, and interpersonal relationships within the wrestling circuit.

1. The chapter begins with an encounter between Bret and Vince McMahon, who forgets an important discussion amidst the chaotic aftermath of a recent firing. The camaraderie and tension in the locker room are palpable, particularly with new rules regarding the practice of blading in matches to safeguard wrestlers' health. This ban comes too late for Bret, who is left with deep scars from earlier matches.
2. As The Hart Foundation gains momentum, Bret recounts a pivotal angle where he and Jim Neidhart interfere in a match involving the Honky Tonk Man and Macho Man Randy Savage. The moment they confront Miss Elizabeth, igniting the crowd's fury, proves to be a masterful way to build heat for their heel personas, showcasing Bret's storytelling abilities in the ring.
3. However, the joy is short-lived as intricacies unfold with the revelation from Dino Bravo that Bret and Jim will soon drop their tag titles to a new



team, Strike Force. The last-minute update leaves them feeling blindsided, reflecting the unpredictable nature of their professional lives and the financial implications of losing the belts.

4. The grueling life on the road for wrestlers is detailed, illustrating both the physical and emotional toll it takes. Bret shares a humorous yet telling anecdote of a wild night in a hotel, highlighting the camaraderie among wrestlers and the stress relief sought through camaraderie and escapism.

5. The narrative shifts as Bret anticipates a match against Macho Man, expressing both excitement for the opportunity and trepidation regarding directives from Vince to alter the match's strategy. Both he and Macho suffer injuries during the match, exemplifying the high-stakes environment of wrestling where pain is a common companion.

6. The introduction of the Survivor Series as a new pay-per-view event is a landmark moment, representing the expansion of wrestling's mainstream appeal. Bret's performance draws praise, yet he reflects on the disconnect between the high expectations of the wrestling sheets and the realities faced by wrestlers.

7. Amidst the excitement of the industry, familial pressures weigh heavily on Bret, paralleling his professional trajectory with the struggles of his family back in Calgary. Each family member represents a different facet of

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the wrestling world, from Owen's struggles to carve his path to the broader struggles of their father's fading promotion, Stampede Wrestling.

8. As tensions mount both personally and professionally, Bret navigates the pressures of maintaining his reputation while also contending with Vince's expectations. The sting of being overlooked for bigger opportunities, despite his talent and popularity, grows increasingly palpable.

9. The chapter closes with Bret contemplating his future in wrestling after a series of tumultuous events, including the near-fatal car accident involving his brother Davey Boy Smith. This incident prompts an introspection about the volatility of the business and the fragile line wrestlers walk between success and disaster.

Bret Hart's narrative illustrates not only the high-octane world of wrestling but also the profound relationships, both supportive and adversarial, that shape the lives of those within it. The emotional depth, rich storytelling, and candid reflection offer a compelling insight into the life of a wrestling superstar during an era of change. As Bret continues to navigate the challenges posed by injuries, family dynamics, and the cutthroat nature of the wrestling business, his journey becomes an emblem of resilience in the face of adversity.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resilience in the face of adversity is key to success.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine stepping into the chaotic arena of your own life, a world filled with challenges, setbacks, and unexpected turns. Just like Bret Hart navigates through the unpredictable nature of professional wrestling, you too can learn to face your struggles head-on. The lesson here is about resilience—embracing the tough moments, understanding that pain and hardship are integral to your journey. Each obstacle you encounter, much like Bret's injuries and career setbacks, can inspire you to grow stronger and more determined. So, the next time life throws a curveball your way, remember that perseverance will always be your best ally, transforming struggles into stepping stones toward your goals.

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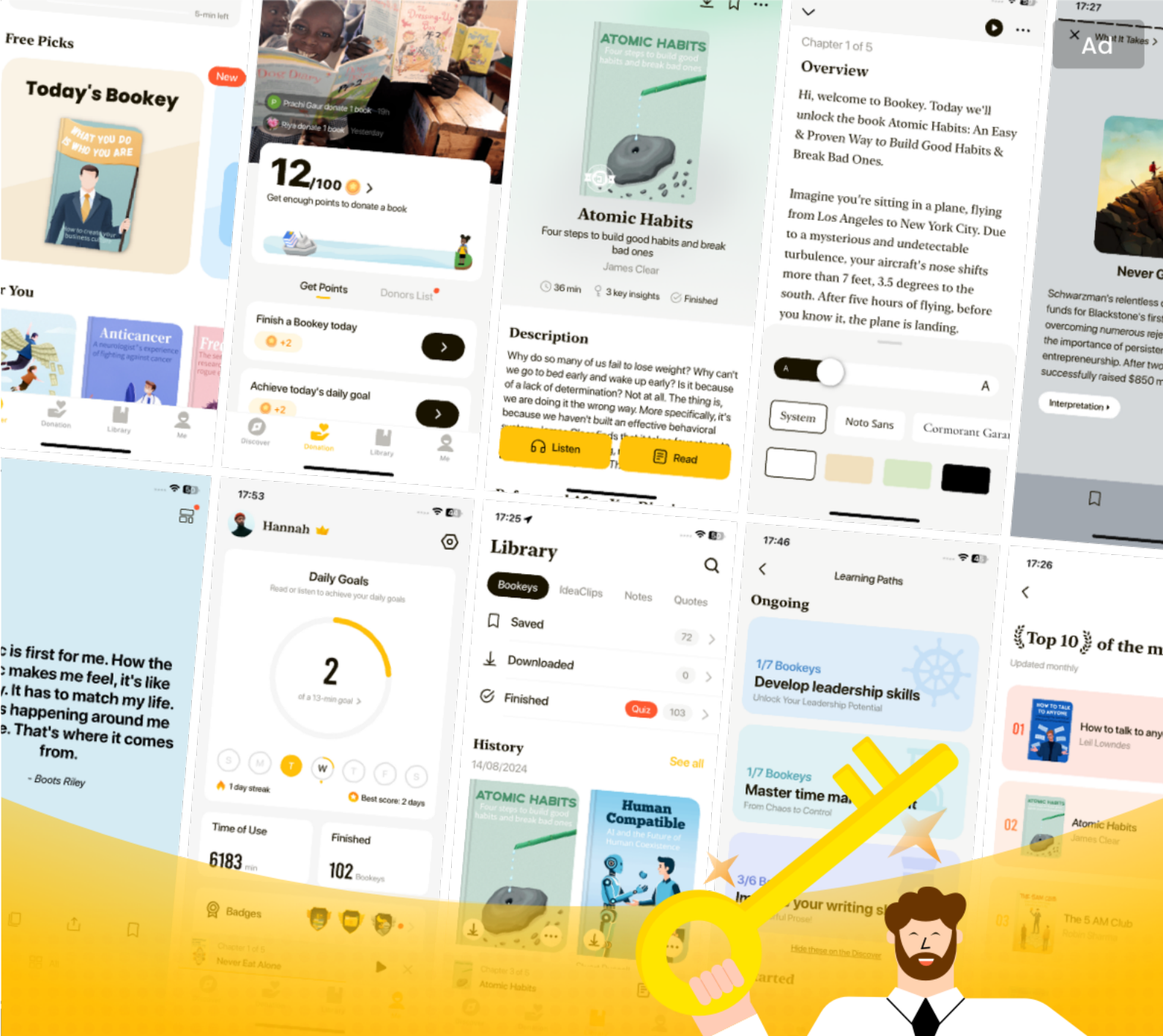
Chapter 12: 12

As I strolled through Le Jardin des Fontaines Pétrifiantes, memories of our first night in London flooded back. The televised wrestling special drew significant attention in the UK, where fans were eager to witness the likes of Hulk Hogan and André the Giant, who had just begun to make a mark there. The atmosphere in the dressing room was palpable, especially as Rollerball Rocco and other English wrestlers prepared for their opening matches, looking on in envy at the WWF stars. Despite their long and arduous journey through the wrestling circuit, Roller's excitement over Hogan's presence contrasted sharply with the reality that Hogan barely recognized him, highlighting the stark shift in their fortunes over the years.

After an exhausting show where I had to put over Dino Bravo following my own brief moment of glory, I found solace on a bench, reminiscing about the chaotic tour that began in Brussels. That night, amidst a raucous atmosphere in a rock bar, I got heavily intoxicated with my wrestling colleagues, including Jim Duggan. The revelry descended into a series of misadventures that culminated in broken glass and escalating tensions back at the hotel,

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Chapter 13 Summary: 13

In Chapter 13 of Bret Hart's "Hitman," the narrative unfolds through a blend of personal reflection and events within the world of professional wrestling. The chapter portrays the emotional and professional challenges Hart faced during this turbulent time in his career.

1. The chapter begins with a drunken escapade that sets the tone for a chaotic start to the day. Hart finds himself recalling a wild night, leaning on a stripper, and capturing the camaraderie and humor shared among wrestlers, particularly the antics of Vince McMahon.
2. A few days later, while on a plane, Hart is approached by an all-girls basketball team that recognizes him. Their admiration brings a lighthearted moment amidst the darker themes of the chapter, showcasing Hart's rising popularity. The subsequent family gathering during Christmas reveals a bittersweet personal side, as Hart reflects on family, particularly concerns about his brother Rhett's health.
3. The plot takes a significant turn when Roddy Piper informs Hart about a planned title change, which would see him lose the Intercontinental Championship to Jacques Rougeau, the Mountie. This news brings a mix of anxiety and opportunity for Hart, as he prepares to reclaim his title at WrestleMania VIII.



4. The narrative shifts to the tensions in the wrestling industry, specifically the allegations surrounding steroids and misconduct, painting a grim picture of backstage politics. Hart witnesses the consequences as some wrestlers are let go while others are caught up in scandals.

5. The chapter elaborates on Hart's perspective regarding the evolving dynamics within the wrestling industry as Vince McMahon seeks to push new talent, leading to many of Hart's contemporaries being left behind. Hart's approach to work, professionalism, and dedication to the craft stands in stark contrast to the antics of those around him.

6. As Hart navigates the ups and downs of his successes, including a memorable WrestleMania match against Piper where he puts on a brilliant performance, he is confronted with personal dilemmas—particularly within his marriage and the strain of constant travel on his family life.

7. The chapter culminates with Hart's growing frustrations with Hogan, illuminating the competitive tensions between the two. Hart feels betrayed when Hogan refuses to put him over, forcing Hart to confront the realities of his position within the business. The scene becomes emotionally charged as Hart stands firm, choosing to assert his own worth despite the pressures from Hogan and Vince.



8. Ultimately, Hart's resolve to showcase his talent and integrity shines through amid the chaos of personal struggles, professional rivalries, and the often murky morality of the wrestling business. He emerges determined to prove himself, reflecting a fierce dedication to his legacy as a performer, culminating in a pivotal wrestling tournament that signifies both a personal and professional turning point.

Throughout Chapter 13, Hart's narrative offers a candid glimpse into the wrestling world of the early '90s, revealing not just the physicality of the sport, but the emotional stakes and complex relationships that define it. The chapter resonates with themes of loyalty, competition, and the pursuit of respect, ultimately capturing Hart's unwavering commitment to his craft.

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Chapter 14 Summary: 14

In Chapter 14 of “Hitman” by Bret Hart, the narrative dives deep into the intricate world of professional wrestling during a pivotal time in the early 1990s. For any wrestler striving to achieve greatness, the duality of being a skilled athlete and an exceptional storyteller is emphasized. A champion, in particular, must possess the ability to adapt and elicit the best performance from every opponent, regardless of their wrestling style. Hart reflects on the changing landscape of the wrestling industry, demonstrating how the champions of his era, such as Hulk Hogan, were often perceived as power-holding despots, a dynamic that Hart struggled with as he sought to carve his own legacy.

The summer of 1993 sees Yokozuna dominating the scene, while Lex Luger is uplifted as the new American hero, a transformation led by Vince McMahon with meticulous marketing strategies. Hart, who felt pushed aside in favor of others, wrestled with thoughts of leaving the WWF for the lucrative opportunities offered by WCW. The wrestling industry, caught in a fierce tug-of-war between Vince McMahon and Ted Turner, fostered an environment of competitive aggression that Hart navigated with caution.

During this tumultuous period, Hart faced personal challenges as he learned of his family’s financial troubles linked to their past wrestling endeavors. Overhead was the pressure to secure his own standing in a rapidly evolving

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profession, with his brother Owen Hart expressing frustration at his own wrestling prospects. The fact that Hart sought to elevate Owen and renegotiate his contract with Vince further showcases his commitment to family loyalty amidst career ambitions.

Hart's reflections paint a picture of the volatile nature of wrestling relationships, particularly highlighted in anecdotes involving wrestlers navigating the social scenes of bars, encounters with aggression, and the consequences of substance use. He recalls moments involving his peers, including the struggles of Shawn Michaels, revealing the real-life vulnerabilities of individuals often seen as larger-than-life characters in the ring.

His experiences lead him to contemplate Hollywood aspirations, alongside wrestling engagements—balancing his growth in the sport with personal transformations. The tension crescendos towards the SummerSlam '93 event, where Hart's character intersects with his familial ties, leading to a confrontation with Jerry Lawler that showcases their storytelling prowess in the ring.

The chapter culminates in an exploration of Hart's relationship with his family and the wrestling business, illustrating his commitment to family unity while striving for professional recognition. As he prepares for WrestleMania X, Hart recognizes the delicate balance of personal and

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professional lives. Confrontations with his brother Owen are framed through a lens of sibling rivalry that plays out in their matches—a powerful testament to how the wrestling business can intertwine with real familial bonds.

Overall, this chapter weaves together the complexities of ambition, familial ties, and the demanding landscape of professional wrestling, capturing the emotionally charged atmosphere of Hart's journey. This narrative not only reflects the struggles within the wrestling industry but also the personal battles faced by the athletes behind the personas.

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Chapter 15: 15

In this intense chapter, the narratives of success, personal challenges, and the evolving wrestling landscape converge around Bret Hart, prominently featuring his emotional journey, significant matches, and complex relationships within the wrestling industry.

1. Yoko's Challenge and Matches The chapter opens with a portrayal of Yoko (Yokozuna) grappling with the looming threat of losing his top position, reflecting the uncertainty that often accompanies a champion's fall from grace. This feeling resonates with Hart, who recalls his own experiences as an ex-champion. The matches that ensue are emblematic of typical wrestling tragedy and triumph, with Lex Luger suffering a lackluster defeat due to a disqualification orchestrated by a guest referee. Meanwhile, Hart participates in a high-stakes match against Yoko that epitomizes the classic David vs. Goliath motif, signaling Hart's resilient comeback as he regains the WWF World Heavyweight title amidst chaos and near-disasters in the ring.

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Chapter 16 Summary: 16

In January 1996, the wrestling world was abuzz with upheaval as top stars from the WWF, including Diesel and Razor, considered signing with WCW. Shawn Michaels was particularly anxious about the potential departure of his allies, revealing his deep-seated desire to work alongside them, despite my encouragement to explore partnerships with fresh talent like Vader and Austin.

My own match against Shawn at WrestleMania XII, predetermined to favor him, had been orchestrated without my prior consultation. Nonetheless, I agreed to his victory, positioning Shawn for a clean win that would resonate throughout the industry. Meanwhile, I was preparing for a significant hiatus from wrestling to focus on acting, specifically a role in "Lonesome Dove." However, Vince wanted me to continue working overseas, which I accepted as a way to maintain my performance level.

During a tour of India, I encountered various challenges, from dealing with the stark contrasts between wealth and poverty to witnessing disturbing moments, such as the casual defecation on the beach and violent street encounters among the desperate. Yet amid the hardships, I was struck by the sense of community and resilience displayed by the local children, which provided a poignant contrast to my own frustrations, particularly upon discovering a billboard in my likeness promoting counterfeit "Hitman"

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jeans.

Back in North America, Diesel and Razor confirmed their intended shift to WCW, feeling my own standing as champion might be diminished by the changes around me. Then, a title match event brought unsettling memories of my recent struggles, where once again, external factors intervened in my defense. Despite retaining my championship, I faced criticism for being supported through interference, hampering my credibility as a babyface champion.

This up-and-down trajectory continued as Vince and I mapped out the future of my character, which seemed increasingly convoluted and perplexing. The climate unfurled dramatically, with Shawn displaying heightened arrogance and undermining others, including myself. Amid these wrestling political intrigues, Shawn's contentious relationship with Diesel and Razor reflected a larger factionalism at play.

As I navigated a challenging stretch in my career, the toll of wrestling and behind-the-scenes politics wearied me. I further trained hard, determined to outshine younger competitors, including Shawn who seemed willing to disregard the community ethos that I valued.

Once WrestleMania XII occurred, with the torch officially passed to Shawn, I left with a heavy heart, contemplating my future. I remained committed to

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returning stronger and the ensuing months in the dressing room reflected a deepened rivalry with Shawn that had morphed into a real tension. The political maneuvering around me continued, and as the demand for me to work with lower tier projects increased, my fighting spirit remained unwavering.

Eventually, the greater wrestling community saw radical changes when the nWo invaded WCW, altering perceptions and strategies across the board. The very essence of wrestling dynamics shifted, demanding a reevaluation of alliances, characters, and ambitions that resonated with a larger audience craving authenticity—a reminder that the industry's pulse was deeply intertwined with the tumult of personal vendettas and ambitions.

1. **Shifting Alliances:** The tensions over potential high-profile departures indicated not just growth but deepening fissures within the wrestling community, as factionalism and allegiances became the bedrock of the industry's evolution.

2. **Resilience in Adversity:** The experiences in India served as a poignant reminder of the stark contrasts in themes of survival amidst poverty, juxtaposed with my struggles in the wrestling domain, providing both reflection and renewed determination.

3. **Impact of Performance:** The evolving narrative from my

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championship status to being overshadowed by Shawn's charisma highlighted the sensitive nature of character perception in wrestling, dictating how audiences connected with each performer.

4. Authenticity and Connection: The demand for authenticity amidst the political landscape reinforced that real connections with fans were formed through shared experiences and narratives, a lesson that would shape my approach to character development moving forward.

5. Emerging Rivalries and Future Dynamics: My eventual decision to embrace a new character trajectory, influenced by the industry's needs and Vince's vision, took shape against a backdrop of rivalries and relationships that continuing to unfold and redefine my legacy.

Ultimately, the complexities of trust, respect, and character were integral in navigating the professional wrestling landscape, and they shaped not only personal trajectories but the wider narrative arc of the industry during this transformative era.

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Chapter 17 Summary: 17

In the narrative of Chapter 17 from "Hitman" by Bret Hart, a significant transformation occurs in Hart's professional life as he transitions from being a long-standing babyface (hero) to a heel (villain) in the wrestling world. This shift not only reinvents his character but serves to energize the wrestling narrative itself.

- 1. Character Evolution:** After ten years as a babyface, Hart recognized the need for a fresh direction in his character to sustain engagement and excitement. He eventually agreed to a heel turn, which, despite his initial discomfort, he embraced as a necessary evolution in his wrestling career.
- 2. WrestleMania XIII Match:** The pivotal match against Stone Cold Steve Austin illustrates Hart's commitment to delivering a gripping performance. Their plan involved aggressive exchanges right from the outset, creating a realistic and immersive experience for fans. Hart proposed that Austin should get "a little juice" to enhance the intensity, leading to a bleeder spot during the match, a significant risk that both wrestlers agreed upon.
- 3. Intense Rivalry and Storytelling:** The rivalry between Hart and Austin was fueled by their contrasting personas, making their match one of the most talked-about events in wrestling history. Hart utilized psychological



storytelling — evoking hope in the audience through Austin's struggle against the sharpshooter, a hold Hart made infamous.

4. Fan Reaction and Transition: The match led to a dramatic shift in audience perception, with Hart receiving boos while Austin gained cheers. This audience double-take reflected Hart's effective positioning as a heel, which in turn revitalized fan interest in wrestling.

5. Post-WrestleMania Development: Following WrestleMania, Hart's character continued to deepen with engaging promos where he expressed dissatisfaction with American fans and the industry, using real emotions and frustrations to create a captive storyline. This newfound heel persona struck a chord, resonating in his promotional work leading up to events like Survivor Series.

6. Conflict with Shawn Michaels: Hart navigated complex relationships within the wrestling hierarchy, particularly dealing with Shawn Michaels. When tensions escalated, Hart's willingness to engage in a brawl with Shawn was emblematic of the growing feud that would culminate in a pivotal match at Survivor Series.

7. Impact of External Struggles: The chapter captures the tension in Hart's professional and personal life, addressing backstage drama, the pressures exerted by Vince McMahon, and the struggles of fellow wrestlers

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like Pillman, highlighting the darker side of wrestling amidst the glamor of the sport.

8. Final Stages and Uncertainty: By the end of the narrative, Hart contemplates his legacy and future as tensions between him and the wrestling promotion escalate. With suspicions of betrayal in the air and a precarious contract situation, Hart faced an uncertain path ahead, which would eventually lead to the infamous “Montreal Screwjob” at Survivor Series.

Through this chapter, Hart expertly encapsulates the intricate dynamics of professional wrestling — character development, audience manipulation, personal conflicts, and the broader impact of the wrestling business, ultimately setting the stage for his definitive legacy within the sport.

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Chapter 18: 18

In Chapter 18 of "Hitman" by Bret Hart, the narrative unfolds with a tense build-up to the pivotal events surrounding Hart's exit from the WWF and the infamous Montreal Screwjob. The chapter captures Hart's emotional turmoil as he grapples with conflicts over his championship, loyalty, and the direction of his career.

1. Disrespect from Shawn Michaels: Hart's initial confrontation with Shawn Michaels reveals a rift in professional respect. Michaels' refusal to acknowledge Hart's offer to put him over during their match reflects a deep-seated arrogance, leading Hart to contemplate a different route for his championship title.

2. Contract Negotiations and Dilemmas: Hart recalls the financial figures involved in his potential move to WCW, particularly Bischoff's enticing offer compared to Vince McMahon's struggles to retain him. The weight of his decision weighs heavily on Hart as he contemplates expressing gratitude to fans and fellow wrestlers for their support if he leaves.

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Chapter 19 Summary: 19

In Chapter 19 of Bret Hart's book "Hitman," Hart reflects on the tumultuous events that followed the infamous Montreal Screwjob, where his character was effectively killed by Vince McMahon in an effort to rewrite history. Hart reveals how he transformed from a disgraced figure in the WWF to a misunderstood hero within the wrestling community after confronting Vince.

1. **Lost Identity:** The chapter begins with Hart expressing how Vince McMahon began to erase him from the WWF's history. Amidst facing legal threats from McMahon for his infamous punch, Hart received calls of support from respected figures in wrestling, each emphasizing the importance of standing his ground and protecting his legacy. Renowned wrestlers like Dory Funk and Harley Race affirmed Hart's actions were commendable, giving him a sense of pride amidst the chaos.

2. **Transition to WCW:** Hart navigated the murky waters of transitioning to WCW, where he was surrounded by a mix of old friends and erratic management. His initial experiences revealed that although WCW presented new opportunities, it also had its share of wolves, including self-serving personalities like Hogan and Bischoff, who engaged in petty power plays.



3. Struggles with Personal Relationships: Despite his professional triumphs, Hart faced struggles in his personal life, particularly with his marriage to Julie. Tension brewed at home as they coped with Hart's changing career trajectory, resulting in emotional distance and threats of divorce. He found solace in his children but felt overwhelmed by his shattered life, deeply missing the camaraderie of his former WWF colleagues.

4. Wrestling Industry's Dark Side: The narrative highlights a grim reality—multiple wrestlers were facing severe personal crises, highlighting the pervasive issues of substance abuse within the wrestling community. Hart's reflections capture the sorrow of losing friends and colleagues to addiction and the rampant toxic culture that seemingly prioritized profit over the well-being of its performers.

5. Owen's Tragic Death: The chapter culminates in the heartbreaking news of Owen Hart's death during a stunt, sending ripples of sorrow through Hart's family and the wrestling world. As the family mourned, Hart shared his struggle with grief, the media frenzy surrounding Owen's death, and the looming legal ramifications. In this turbulent period, Hart became his brother's spokesperson, seeking justice for Owen while grappling with his own heartache.

6. Confrontation with Vince: Following Owen's death, Hart eventually

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found a way to meet Vince McMahon. Their conversation highlighted Vince's regrets over his previous actions towards Hart. While Vince extended an olive branch and offered to restore Hart's legacy, it also underscored Hart's decision to distance himself from the WWF for the foreseeable future.

Through vivid storytelling, Hart masterfully encapsulates the interconnectedness of personal struggles and professional dilemmas, illustrating how the wrestling industry grapples with its tumultuous past while shaping the future of its athletes. The chapter is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices wrestlers make for their craft, the burden of legacy, and the harsh realities that accompany fame in the world of professional wrestling.

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Chapter 20 Summary: 20

The chapter unfolds with a poignant exchange between Bret and Vince, where Bret expresses his fear of losing his legacy and the deep emotional impact of Owen's tragic death. The two spend hours reminiscing about Owen, ultimately driving to Calgary for his funeral, a solemn event that sees a gathering of family, friends, and wrestlers—testament to Owen's impact in the wrestling world.

1. **The Funeral:** The funeral for Owen Hart is a bittersweet occasion marked by raw emotions and family tensions. Bret grapples with his mixed feelings towards Vince McMahon, who is both a part of the funeral and a source of animosity for Bret due to past grievances. The funeral is highly public, reflecting both Owen's life and the media spectacle surrounding it. The Harts are divided, with various family members holding different views about how to handle Owen's legacy, and Martha, Owen's widow, is steadfast in her quest for justice, demanding accountability from the WWF.

2. **Family Clashes:** The aftermath of Owen's death sees escalating conflicts among the Hart siblings, with accusations of jealousy and betrayal surfacing. Bret finds himself in a protective and defensive position, striving to support Martha while facing resistance and hostility from Ellie and Diana, who are quick to defend Vince. This fracturing of familial bonds adds to Bret's emotional toll, as he seeks to uphold Owen's memory while



navigating a minefield of conflicting loyalties and desires from his family.

3. Grieving and Reflection: The chapter shifts tone as Bret reflects on his grief with haunting memories of Owen and the sense of loss that permeates his life. He recalls the moments that defined Owen's passion and his own regret over past conflicts. With each recollection, Bret's heartbreak becomes more palpable, underlined by a poem from his brother Smith that encapsulates their shared sorrow and the void left by Owen's absence.

4. Legal and Career Ramifications: As the narrative progresses, the implications of Owen's death extend beyond personal loss into the realms of legal battles and Bret's wrestling career. The complexities of lawsuits against the WWF further complicate relationships within the Hart family, prompting Bret to feel isolated and exploited amidst the ongoing negotiations. His determination to see justice done for Owen's death signals his commitment to family, even as it threatens to fracture his own relationships with siblings who see things differently.

5. Return to the Ring: Despite the emotional turmoil, Bret finds himself drawn back to wrestling as a form of catharsis. He struggles with his identity as "The Hitman," reflecting on the authenticity of his character and the business itself. His eventual return to the ring is clouded by injuries and confusion, with his long-term health coming into question. Bret's wrestling matches serve as both an outlet for his grief and a reminder of the physical

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toll that the business has taken on him through the years.

6. Final Showdowns: The chapter culminates in Bret participating in what unknowingly becomes his last competitive match, where the physical stakes and emotional weight of his career collide. His experiences in the ring become intertwined with memories of Owen, and as Bret navigates the complexities of his final battles, it dawns on him that his journey has both parallels to and diverges from his brother's legacy.

As the chapter closes, the profound impact of loss, familial discord, and the wrestling business merges, presenting a raw, honest portrayal of Bret's life as he contemplates the future of his career and the legacy he will leave behind.

Section	Summary
Funeral	The funeral for Owen Hart is filled with emotion and family tension, with Bret conflicted about Vince McMahon's presence. The event highlights Owen's impact, showcasing family divisions and Martha's demand for accountability.
Family Clashes	Post-Owen's death, family conflicts intensify among the Hart siblings, with Bret defending Martha against accusations from others, complicating his emotional grief and loyalty to Owen's memory.
Grieving and Reflection	Bret reflects on his grief, recalling poignant memories of Owen and regrets over past disagreements. A poem from brother Smith expresses their collective sorrow over Owen's absence.
Legal and Career	The death triggers legal complications and strains Bret's relationships within the Hart family, as he navigates lawsuits against WWF while



Section	Summary
Ramifications	seeking justice for Owen, which isolates him from his siblings.
Return to the Ring	Despite struggles, Bret returns to wrestling as a coping mechanism, reflecting on his identity and health. His matches become reminders of his grief and the physical toll of the sport.
Final Showdowns	The chapter culminates with Bret's last competitive match, blending physical stakes with emotional weight, as he recognizes the parallels between his journey and Owen's legacy.

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Chapter 21: 21

In this emotionally charged chapter from "Hitman," Bret Hart delves into the profound struggles and challenges he faced following a severe concussion that abruptly halted his wrestling career. He grapples with the realities of his condition while reflecting on the heavy toll it takes on both his mental and physical well-being.

1. Diagnosis and Career Threat: Bret receives the disheartening news that his career may be over due to the severe concussion. He's warned by his doctor, a member of the NHL injury committee, about the lasting impacts of repeated head trauma, including the stark reality faced by Muhammad Ali. This news leaves Bret devastated as he contemplates what life would look like without wrestling after 23 years in the profession.

2. Isolation and Emotional Struggles: Struggling with the aftermath, Bret isolates himself at home, finding solace only in the companionship of his pug, Coombs. With persistent headaches and an inability to engage in activities he once enjoyed, Bret's emotional state spirals, leaving him

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Chapter 22 Summary: 22

Upon returning to Calgary a week late from my trip, I was met with devastating news about my mother's health. Due to heightened security measures at LAX, she had been stranded for a day without her diabetes medication, leading to her eventual collapse into a coma. Her unfortunate misfortune, I can't help but link to the events orchestrated by terrorist groups. My mother remained in the ICU, enduring immense suffering, while family tensions rose, exacerbated by the release of Diana's controversial book detailing her personal grievances, including accusations against my brother Davey.

In the chaos of these events, my mother eventually passed away, bringing a painful closure to her suffering. I was filled with regret as I spoke to her spirit, lamenting that her last moments were marred by darkness. Shortly after her passing, Ed Whalen, a close family friend, also died, marking a period of deep mourning in our circle.

In subsequent months, visits from friends like Tie Domi provided some humor amid the ongoing grief. A trade-off proposal from Carlo, involving a potential return to wrestling, sparked a wave of emotions. Despite the enticement of memorabilia for my book, I was steadfast in my desire for a genuine reconciliation with Vince McMahon, rather than a mere appearance at WrestleMania.

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Tragedy struck again when Davey died suddenly from a heart attack at the young age of thirty-nine, which only added to the heavy burden of grief. His memorial services were marred by family disputes, and I found myself giving a heartfelt eulogy, reminiscing about the good times while bearing the weight of unresolved anger and regret.

I battled personal struggles, including the ongoing divorce from Julie and a profound sense of loss that I carried like a weight on my shoulders. Determined to make changes, I set out to cut ties with those who did not respect my needs, including my agent Bruce. However, a bike accident soon added to my woes, resulting in a severe injury that culminated in a stroke, altering the course of my life dramatically.

As I lay in the ICU, undergoing extensive rehabilitation for the stroke, I felt the emotional toll of my condition, displaying behaviors common to stroke patients. I wrestled with feelings of self-pity, yet also felt gratitude for the support surrounding me, particularly from Julie and the likes of fellow wrestlers and friends who came to visit. The road to recovery was daunting, but moments of kindness from nurses and family served as beacons of hope amidst a backdrop of sorrow.

Months passed, and I began to reclaim parts of my former self, slowly regaining strength. An interaction with a young boy in a wheelchair helped

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shift my perspective, igniting the courage within me to confront the challenges ahead. Though the time leading up to my departure from Calgary was layered in sadness due to past memories, it marked the beginning of a new chapter, such as my travels to Australia, paving the way for continued healing and growth.

1. My mother's untimely death was linked to the aftermath of heightened security due to terrorism, showcasing how personal tragedies are often interwoven with larger societal issues.
2. Diana's controversial book release strained family ties and reflected the complicated nature of personal relationships.
3. The loss of Davey and subsequent familial disputes during his memorial highlighted the persistent effects of grief and unresolved family tensions.
4. A debilitating stroke and subsequent rehabilitation journey forced a reassessment of identity, relationships, and purpose in life.
5. Finding inspiration through the suffering of others marked a transformational moment in my recovery, pushing me towards acceptance and resilience.

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