

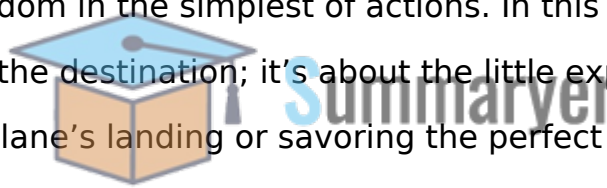
Chapter 58

In Chapter 58, Henk van Veen finds himself aboard a plane, indulging in the simple pleasure of a perfectly poached egg. He shares his appreciation for the dish with Ashley, a young steward, offering his insights on what makes a poached egg truly exceptional. For Henk, the quality of the egg begins with the source—only free-range eggs should be used, as he believes they provide the richest taste and the most vibrant yolk. The color of the yolk, he insists, should be a deep orange, not the pale yellow often seen in the British version. He likens the texture of the yolk to that of molten lava, smooth and flowing slowly enough to allow the toast, his personal version of Pompeii, to absorb its warmth without quickly succumbing to destruction. This detailed description showcases Henk's passion for fine food, highlighting his refined tastes and the joy he takes in discussing even the smallest details.

Henk goes on to criticize the current trend of sourdough toast, proclaiming that only seeded granary toast should be paired with poached eggs. His critique takes on a philosophical tone as he humorously quotes Spinoza, making a playful yet pointed remark about modern culinary choices. Henk's philosophy on food, while seemingly trivial to others, offers a glimpse into his character—he is someone who approaches life with a deep, sometimes eccentric, level of thoughtfulness. As he continues to savor the meal, he reflects on the rare but impressive feat of having such a carefully prepared dish served while in-flight. The experience sparks a thought in Henk's mind: he should visit the chef after the flight to express his gratitude and perhaps get their contact details for future occasions. Henk's appreciation for good food goes beyond the act of eating; it's about building connections and recognizing quality wherever it's found, even in an unexpected setting like a plane.

While enjoying his meal, Henk's thoughts turn to the task at hand. He is currently tracking a string of murders that span from South Carolina to St. Lucia, and now, he's

on his way to Ireland. Mark Gooch, the next victim in the chain of deaths, is expected to be found in Cork, and Henk eagerly anticipates arriving before Amy Wheeler and her group. There's a thrill in Henk's mind as he thinks about the small joys in life, like the sensation of standing during the plane's descent, which he compares to an adventure in itself. Despite Ashley's insistence that he should buckle up for safety, Henk persuades her to let him stand, relishing in the slight risk of it all. This small act of rebellion against authority reflects Henk's adventurous nature—he finds excitement and a sense of freedom in the simplest of actions. In this moment, he is reminded that life isn't just about the destination; it's about the little experiences along the way, like standing during a plane's landing or savoring the perfect poached egg.



The chapter reveals much about Henk's character. He is a man who values the finer things in life, from the perfect poached egg to the thrill of a risky move on a plane. Yet, beneath this enjoyment of life's pleasures lies a deeper, more complex pursuit. Henk is also a man driven by darker motives, tracking a series of murders that connect seemingly unrelated events across multiple locations. His journey, while marked by small personal victories like enjoying a meal or standing during a flight, is ultimately about a much larger and more dangerous mission. As he reflects on his travels and the thrill of the chase, Henk is ever-conscious of the larger context—his pursuit of justice and the consequences of the actions he's taking. The chapter presents a multifaceted view of Henk, balancing his love for life with his pursuit of a higher purpose, keeping readers intrigued by the interplay of his passions and darker undertakings.