

Chapter 106

In Chapter 106, Patch arrives in Washington, D.C., feeling like an outsider, yet deeply captivated by the city's unique charm and energy. The grandeur of the surroundings contrasts with his inner discomfort, as he steps into the high-end steakhouse where he is to dine with Sammy. As they sit down for an extravagant meal, Patch is immediately struck by the expensive nature of the dinner, unsure whether the hefty price tag reflects the age of the steak or its sheer extravagance. Trying to keep things simple, Patch orders a more modest dish, but Sammy's playful teasing about his choice brings a touch of humor to the evening. Sammy indulges in a bottle of costly wine, reminiscing about a deal they made in the past, while Patch finds himself lost in thought, reflecting on his own history and the challenges that continue to follow him.

The mood of the dinner shifts from light-hearted banter to more serious conversations as Sammy begins discussing the growing interest in Patch's art. His recent successes have not gone unnoticed, and Sammy seems eager to capitalize on this newfound attention. However, Patch, grappling with his financial constraints, resists Sammy's suggestions to sell off family heirlooms, especially given the emotional significance these items hold. His mother had always dreamed of owning their family home, and Patch cannot bear the thought of sacrificing that dream for a short-term gain.

Sammy's persistent attempts to encourage Patch to part with his belongings reflect their differing attitudes toward success, wealth, and the value of family heritage. Despite this, their conversation remains light-hearted at times, with Patch's curiosity shifting to a waitress named Melissa. Though he initially finds her appealing, he is soon put off by how familiar she seems, causing his interest to fade as quickly as it arose.

As the evening continues, their conversation delves deeper into their personal lives. Patch is intrigued to learn that his former love, Misty Meyer, has moved on to Harvard, although she still works as a bartender. This revelation piques Patch's curiosity, as he

reflects on their past relationship and what could have been. Sammy, eager to redirect Patch's focus, prompts him to consider his current reality and the choices they both made in love and art. This transition in their conversation highlights the complexities of life, where past loves and future aspirations often intertwine. Just as the dinner reaches its conclusion, a waitress slips her number into Patch's pocket, a gesture he ultimately dismisses. After exiting the restaurant, he discards her number without a second thought, perhaps reflecting his own internal conflict between fleeting connections and his deeper emotional needs.



Later that evening, Sammy takes Patch back to his penthouse in a taxi, and Patch is immediately struck by the luxurious surroundings that seem so far removed from his own reality. The opulence of the penthouse stands in stark contrast to the simplicity Patch has grown accustomed to, leaving him to contemplate the vast differences in their lifestyles. Sammy, now heavily intoxicated, begins to reminisce about a Mark Rothko painting he purchased in his youth. As he reflects on his own artistic journey, Sammy shares how his passion for art led to financial success, but the differences in their perspectives on wealth and love become apparent. While Sammy sees art as a means to attain wealth and status, Patch is more focused on the emotional resonance and personal meaning that art can bring. As Sammy drifts into sleep, Patch is left alone with his thoughts, gazing out at the moonlit city. The enormity of the world before him weighs heavily on his mind, but with it comes a growing resolve to reconnect with his lost love. He silently vows to search for the connection that once gave his life meaning, the promise of something deeper now blooming inside him as he contemplates the path ahead.

This chapter is an exploration of Patch's internal conflict, as he navigates the stark contrasts between his personal values and the world of wealth and art that surrounds him. While Sammy's lavish lifestyle represents a version of success that Patch feels disconnected from, the chapter also highlights Patch's longing for something more meaningful—his search for true connection, both in love and in art.