

Chapter 21_My Best Friend ...

In the chapter "MY BEST FRIEND ..." from *Mother Night*, the narrator reflects on his relationship with Heinz Schildknecht, his closest friend in Germany during the tumultuous war period. The narrator begins with an admission, expressing that he borrowed rather than stole Heinz's motorcycle. Their friendship deepened during their post-marital struggles, with late-night conversations often fueled by alcohol.

During one such conversation, Heinz confides that he loves his motorcycle more than he loved his wife, a confession that moves the narrator to refute such a claim. Yet Heinz insists on the truth of his feelings, highlighting the depths of his despair as he reveals sacrifices he made for cigarettes that led to the loss of his wife and possessions. This dynamic showcases the absurdity and tragedy of their war-torn existence, where material objects began to hold greater significance than human connections.

Heinz shares that losing his wife left him with nothing but a motorcycle, a black-market item. He recalls the offer he received for the motorcycle, which forced him to confront his prioritization of material over emotional attachments. This conversation leads to a larger discussion about human nature, with Heinz asserting that all people are inherently insane and act without reason.

The narrative further describes Heinz's late wife, who was obsessed with success stories, seeming to celebrate those thriving in positions that perpetuated suffering and destruction. As the war nears its end, Heinz and the narrator struggle to find refuge from the chaos that has taken over their lives, poignantly illustrated by their shared drinking spots turning into accoutrements of war.

Eventually, the narrator feels compelled to test the strength of their friendship by asking to borrow Heinz's motorcycle for a visit to his in-laws. Heinz's unwavering trust culminates in the narrator taking the motorcycle and leaving for good, marking a poignant and bitter farewell.

In the aftermath, the narrator learns of Heinz's fate through the Haifa Institute, discovering that Heinz is now a ground-keeper in Ireland and an expert on Hitler's death. The narrator concludes with a fond but bittersweet message to his long-lost friend, musing on the absurdity of their lives and the realities of war. Through this complex reflection on friendship and loss, the chapter encapsulates the surreal experiences that defined their existence against a backdrop of devastation.