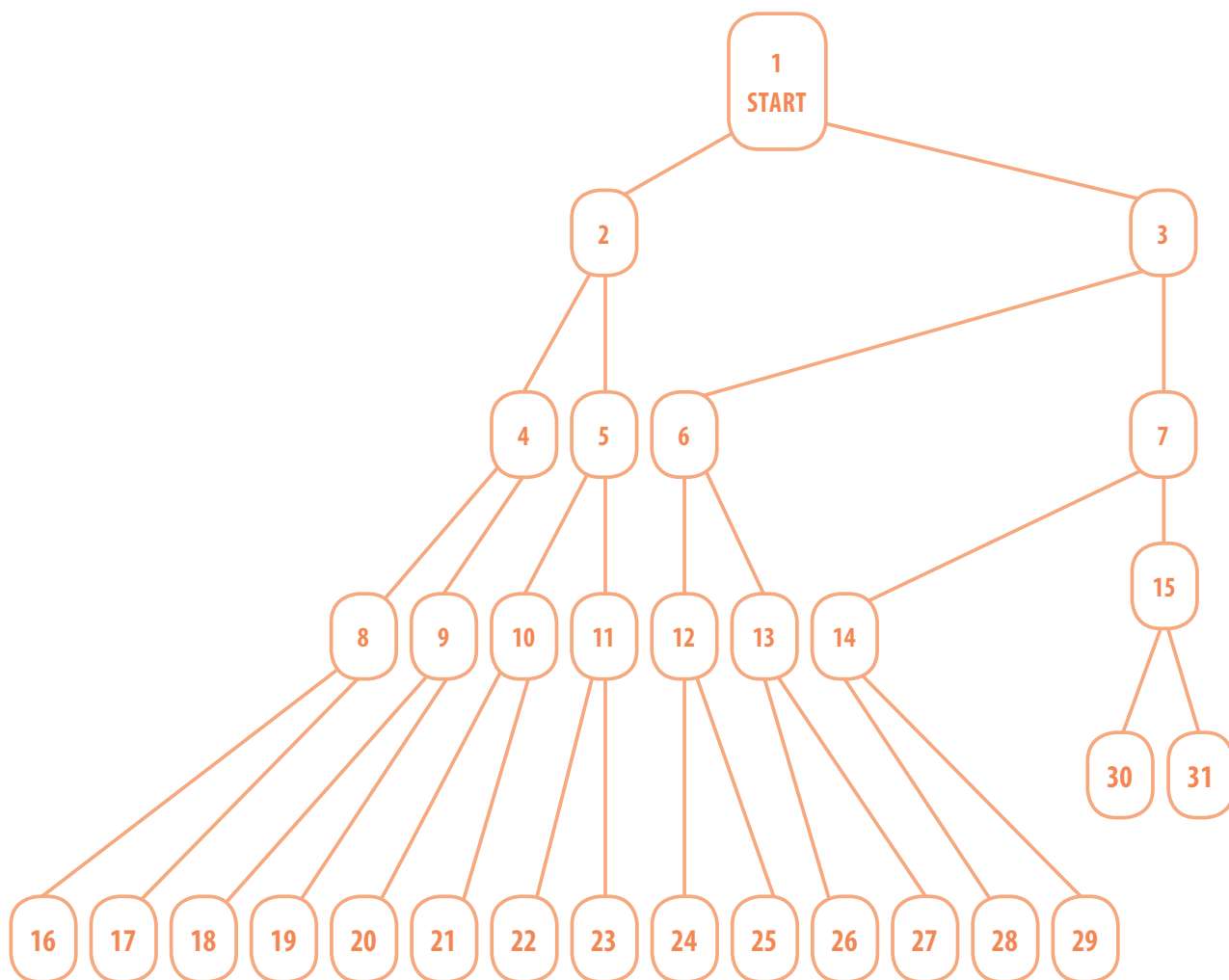


A NOTE ON HOW TO READ THE BOOK

Each chapter ends with a choice. Make the choice and go to the appropriately numbered chapter. To ensure you don't miss anything or read anything twice, here is a map of the books chapters.



1 DO YOU EVER wonder where life is taking you?

Back then, it was a question that **haunted** me. I was 21-years-old, with no girlfriend and no money. I lived in a **poky** flat on the 10th floor of a block, where the lift rarely worked, and the **stairwells** were full of racist graffiti and smelled of urine.

It could all have been different, though. I went to a decent school, worked hard, and played **cello** in the school orchestra. At 18 years of age, I received a place at Magdalen College, Oxford, to study **Classics**, and everything, as they say, was looking rosy. But it didn't last, and 8 months later, I **was out on my ear**.

After that, I began to lose hope. When I woke up in the morning, my first thought was that I had another day to **get through**. Then, I would go to work, where I stood, mostly bored, behind the **counter** of my father's friend's sandwich shop in a **gloomy** street beside St. Paul's tube station.

Dozens of people a day **stepped in** out of the shadows, each with a different face and a different story. The **traders** from the banks and the corporate lawyers came in for their sandwiches and cappuccinos **throughout** the day. I would look at them, many of them younger than me, with their Rolexes and Blackberries, and think I might have become one of them. The homeless came in for cups of water and the **previous** day's sandwiches, which I kept under the counter for them. I'd look at them and worry that it was how I might **end up**.

wonder – zastana-
wiać się

back then – wtedy

haunt – prześladować

poky – ciasny

stairwell – klatka

schodowa

cello – wiolonczela

Classics – filologia

klasyczna

be out on your

ear – znaleźć się na

bruku

get through –

przetwrać

counter – lada

gloomy – ponury

dozens – dużo, wiele

step in – wchodzić

trader – handlowiec

throughout – przez

cały (czas)

previous –

poprzedni

end up – skończyć

(jako)

miserable – żałosny

regret – żal, smutek

rouse – pobudzać,
ożywiać

stray – bezpański

wander – wędrować

work out – zrozumi-
mieć, załapać

spell – zaklęcie

soulless – tu: bezoso-
bowy, bez życia

lounge – siedzieć

wygodnie, objąć się

sane – przy zdrowych
zmysłach

leafy – bujny, tu:
zielony

come along – poja-
wiać się, przychodzić

sweep – zamiatać

breadcrumbs –
okruszki

wobbly – rozklekota-
ny, chwiejny

My life seemed to be a **miserable** balance of **regret** and fear.

The only thing that occasionally **roused** me during the long days were the tourists on their way to St. Paul's or the Tower. Like **stray** dogs they **wandered** nervously in, speaking strange languages, trying to make themselves understood. I watched them sometimes while they were trying to **work out** the menu, wondering what their lives were like; what they dreamed about as they lay in bed in the darkness in Hiroshima, Athens, Reno or Moscow. And then, suddenly, they were asking me for a cheese and ham baguette, the **spell** was broken, and I would remember who and where I was.

At the end of the day, I joined the anonymous masses on the tube, returning to my **soulless** flat for another wasted evening **lounging** on my bed, watching films or surfing the internet. The only things that kept me **sane** were my three loves in life: football, cricket and women. I played two very well and had had mixed results when it came to the third. The limited success didn't, however, stop me hoping that there was a bright future out there for me – a girlfriend who might become a wife, with whom I'd have a couple of kids, and we'd all live happily ever after in a nice house in **leafy** Surrey. Something, I believed, would eventually **come along**.

And then, one day, it did, although not in the way I was expecting. I was **sweeping** the **breadcrumbs** from under the shop's **wobbly** tables and noticed something on the floor. When I picked it up, it was an old, black and white photo of a girl

purred in a German accent. “But I adore her work. Can you smell the sea...taste the salty air... It is as if God...” But, before she could finish, Gabriel returned. “You’ve met Nico then? She’s my muse. All of my visions are visions of her,” he smiled.

I **hit it off with** Nico immediately and we spent a couple of hours together. At first we talked about the pictures, and then about other things; and all the time I was aware of the aura of great beauty into which I was **trespassing**. As the other guests left, we said goodbye to Gabriel and continued the evening in a cellar bar in King’s Cross. When it closed, we exchanged numbers and I **set off** alone into the London night.

As I was about to go into the tube station, my phone rang. Nico’s number **flashed** on the screen. “Do you want to go to Berlin?” she asked **straight away**. “When?” “We’re leaving on Tuesday,” she said. “Come on, run away with me,” she said, before explaining that she was delivering some paintings to the German capital and needed a companion for the drive across Northern Europe. **?**

2. go – p. 14

3. don't go – p. 21

hit it off with sb –

polubić kogoś

trespass – wkraczać

(na cudzy teren)

set off – wyruszać

flash – pojawiać się,

zabłyśnąć

straight away – od

razu

1. Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. The narrator, Hugo, lived in a well-kept block of flats. T / F
 2. Hugo seemed rather content with the job he had. T / F
 3. Hugo was very popular with women. T / F
 4. The man who came to reclaim his photo left
a reward. T / F
 5. Apart from Gabriel's, there were other exhibitions
staged that evening. T / F
 6. The narrator took an instant liking to Nico. T / F
-

2. Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

stairwell counter gloomy miserable spell wobbly

1. I'd rather you didn't put those cups of coffee on this table. It's
a bit
2. It's high time they renovated our The walls are
dirty and the plaster is coming off.
3. It is such and dull days like today that make me
really depressed. I wish it would stop raining.
4. It's shocking that some people should live in such
conditions, isn't it?
5. The medicine man uttered a few magic words and broke the
.....
6. I've got to get back to the shop. I think I've left my wallet on the
.....

3. Fill in the gaps to create expressions from this chapter.

1. I met Julian at a party and we _____ it off straightaway.
We've been close friends ever since.
2. Much as I like sport, golf is not my _____ of tea. I prefer something that makes me sweat.
3. – You don't happen to know anyone who could put me up for a few days, do you?
– As it _____, my kids are away on a school trip so you could stay at mine.
4. We arrived in Warsaw at 7 p.m. on the _____ so we had some time to spare before the flight.
5. The company is not keeping their side of the _____, so we're going to sue them.
6. This is the third time this week you've been late. If it happens again, you'll be out on your _____.